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WHAT IS THE LXX?

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QUESTION: What is the LXX?

ANSWER: A figment of someone's imagination.

EXPLANATION: First, let's define what the LXX is **supposed** to be. An ancient document called "The Letter of Aristeas" revealed a plan to make an **OFFICIAL** translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) in Greek. This translation was to be accepted as the official Bible of the Jews and was to **replace** the Hebrew Bible. Supposedly this translation work would be performed by 72 Jewish scholars (?), six from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The supposed location of the work was to be Alexandria, Egypt. The alleged date of translation was supposedly around 250 BC, during the 400 years of silence between the close of the Old Testament in 397 BC and the birth of Christ in approximately 4 BC (due to a four year error in the calendar).

It has become known as the Septuagint, "The Interpretation of the 70 Elders". Also it is represented by the Roman (?) numerals whose combined value is 70, hence L-50, X-10, X-10. Why it isn't called the *LXXII* I'll never know.

This so called "Letter of Aristeas" is the **sole** evidence for the existence of this mystical document. There are absolutely **NO** Greek Old Testament manuscripts existent with a date of 250 BC or anywhere near it. Neither is there any record in Jewish history of such a work being contemplated or performed.

When pressed to **produce** hard evidence of the existence of such a document, scholars quickly point to Origen's Hexapla written around 200 **AD**, or approximately 450 years later than the LXX was supposedly penned, and more than 100 years after the New Testament was completed. The second column of Origen's Hexapla contains **his own** (hardly 72 Jewish scholars) Greek translation of the Old Testament including spurious books such as "Bel and

the Dragon", "Judith" and "Tobit" and other apocryphal books accepted as authoritative only by the Roman Catholic Church.

Proponents of the invisible LXX will try to claim that Origen didn't translate the Hebrew into Greek, but only copied the LXX into the second column of his Hexapla. Can this argument be correct? No. If it were, then that would mean that those astute 72 Jewish scholars added the Apocryphal books to their work **before they were ever written. (!)** Or else, Origen took the liberty to add these spurious writings to God's Holy Word (Rev. 22:18).

Thus we see that the second column of the Hexapla is Origen's personal, unveilable translation of the Old Testament into Greek and nothing more.

Eusebius and Philo, both of questionable character, make mention of a Greek Pentateuch. Hardly the entire Old Testament and not mentioned as any kind of an officially accepted translation.

Is there ANY Greek manuscript of the Old Testament written BEFORE the time of Christ? Yes. There is one minute scrap dated at 150 BC, the Ryland's Papyrus, #458. It contains Deuteronomy chapters 23-28. No more. No less. If fact, it may be the existence of this fragment that led Eusebius and Philo to **assume** that the entire Pentateuch had been translated by some scribe in an effort to interest Gentiles in the history of the Jews. It most certainly cannot be a portion of any pretended official Old Testament translation into Greek. We can rest assured that those 72 Jewish scholars supposedly chosen for the work in 250 BC would be just a mite feeble by 150 BC.

Besides the non-existence of any reason to believe such a translation was ever produced are several hurdles which the "Letter of Aristeas", Origen's Hexapla, Ryland's #458, and Eusebius and Philo just **cannot clear.**

The first one is the "Letter of Aristeas" itself. There is little doubt amongst scholars today that it was **not** written by anyone named Aristeas. In fact, some believe its **true** author is Philo. This would give it an A.D. date. If this were true, then its **REAL** intention would be to deceive believers into thinking that Origen's second column is a copy of the LXX. A feat that it has apparently accomplished "in spades".

If there **was** an Aristeas, he was faced with two insurmountable problems.

First, how did he **ever** locate the twelve tribes in order to pick his six representative scholars from each? Having been thoroughly scattered by their many defeats and captivities, the tribal lines of the 12 tribes had long since dissolved into virtual non-existence. It was **impossible** for **anyone** to distinctly identify the 12 individual tribes.

Secondly, if the 12 tribes **had** been identified, they would not have undertaken such a translation for two compelling reasons.

(1) Every Jew knew that the official caretaker of Scripture was the tribe of Levi as evidenced in Deuteronomy 17:18, 31:25,26 and Malachi 2:7. Thus, **NO** Jew of any of the eleven other tribes would **dare** join such a forbidden enterprise.

(2) It is obvious to **any** reader of the Bible that the Jews were to be distinctly different from the Gentile nations around them. Unto them was given such distinct practices as circumcision, Sabbath worship, sundry laws of cleansing and their own homeland. Added to this is the heritage of the Hebrew language. Even today, practicing Jews in China and India refuse to teach their children any language but Hebrew. The Falasha Jews of Ethiopia were distinct among the many tribes of their country by the fact that they jealously retained the Hebrew language as an evidence of their Jewish heritage.

Are we to be so naive as to believe that the Jews who considered Gentiles nothing more than **dogs,** would willingly forsake their heritage, the Hebrew language, for a Gentile language into which would be translated the holiest possession of all, their Bible? Such a supposition is as insane as it is absurd.

"What then," one might ask, "of the numerous quotes in the New Testament of the Old Testament that are ascribed to the LXX?" The LXX they speak of is nothing more than the second column of Origen's Hexapia. The New Testament quotations are not quotes of any LXX **or** the Hexapla. They are the author, the Holy Spirit, taking the liberty of quoting His work in the Old Testament in whatever manner He wishes. And we can rest assured that He certainly is not quoting any non-existent Septuagint.

Only one more question arises. Then **why** are scholars so quick to accept the existence of this LXX in the face of such irrefutable arguments against it? The answer is sad and simple.

Hebrew is an extremely difficult language to learn. It takes years of study to attain a passing knowledge of it. And many more to be well enough versed to use it as a vehicle of study. By

comparison a working knowledge of Greek is easily attainable. Thus, IF THERE WAS an official translation of the Old Testament into Greek, Bible critics could **triple** the field of influence overnight without a painstaking study of biblical Hebrew. Unfortunately, the acceptance of the existence of the Septuagint on such thin evidence is based solely on pride and voracity.

But stop and think. Even if such a spurious document as the LXX really did exist, how could a Bible critic, who, in reference to the King James Bible, say that "No translation has the authority of the original language, " claim in the same breath that his pet LXX has equal authority with the Hebrew Original? This scholarly double-talk is nothing more than a self exalting authority striving to keep his scholarly position above those "unschooled in the original languages."

If you accept such an argument, I have a bridge to sell you in Brooklyn!

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