

### **CHRIST'S PURPOSE FOR A GIFTED PEOPLE: PAUL'S HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH ON THE USE OF PSALM 68.18 IN EPHESIANS 4.8**

O PROPÓSITO DE CRISTO PARA O POVO COM DONS: A ABORDAGEM  
HERMENÊUTICA DE PAULO NO USO DO SALMO 68.18 EM EFÉSIOS 4.8

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#### ABSTRACT

The interest on the study of the use of the Old Testament in the New is bringing forth a new entire sub-discipline within the scholarship of the biblical studies. This article seeks to offer a sample of this approach by considering Paul's use of Psalm 68.18 in Ephesians 4.8. In this verse, the apostle wants to show Christ as the gift-giver of his church, therefore adopting a targumic source and early Christian tradition in order to clarify the whole Christological significance of faith in Jesus as not only the promised Messiah, but also as the incarnation of the very God of Israel. Jesus is God's gift to the church, as well as Christ's sacrifice is Jesus' gift to his chosen people.

**Keywords:** Christology. Jewish Literature. Pauline Theology. Spiritual Gifts.

#### RESUMO

O crescente interesse no uso do Antigo pelo Novo Testamento tem proporcionado o surgimento de uma nova subdisciplina dentro dos estudos bíblicos. Este artigo

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procura oferecer uma amostra desta abordagem utilizando como exemplo a adaptação paulina do Salmo 68.18 em Efésios 4.8. Neste verso o apóstolo enfatiza Cristo como o doador dos dons espirituais para a sua igreja, a partir de uma fonte targumic e da tradição cristã primitiva, esclarecendo o significado cristológico da fé em Jesus não apenas como o Messias prometido, mas também como a encarnação do próprio Deus de Israel. Jesus é o dom de Deus para a igreja, assim como o sacrifício de Cristo é dom de Jesus para o seu povo escolhido.

**Palavras-chaves:** Cristologia. Literatura judaica. Teologia paulina. Dons espirituais.

## INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the use of Psalm 68.18 by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4.8.<sup>2</sup> The reasons for such academic surveys on this particular issue range from questions about the scarce use of quotations from OT writings to speculations about the influence of Gnostic teachings.<sup>3</sup> Surely, however, we can say that Ephesians 4.8 shows that Paul quotes part of Psalm 68.18, though in a manner quite different from the MT or LXX.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond this, I will argue that although Psalm 68 presents itself as a song of victory from God on Mount Sinai, Paul's use in Ephesians is intended to emphasize that Christ has enabled his people to act powerfully with God in triumph over the enemies. Whereas God "gave" Christ to the church as a gift of his love to serve as head over all things, now Christ himself "gives" gifts of love to his people. I will unpack this argument by examining it from the following perspectives: (1) the NT context for Ephesians 4.8, (2) Psalm 68 in the Old Testament context, (3) Psalm 68.18 in Jewish interpretation, (4) Psalm 68.18 in Ephesians, and (5) Paul's hermeneutical use of the Psalm 68.18.

## 1. THE NT CONTEXT FOR EPHESIANS 4.8

The Letter to the Ephesians is clearly divided into two sections: *What God has done for us* (chapter 1-3), and *What God wants us to do* (chapters 4-6). The first half presents

<sup>2</sup>LUNDE, J. M.; DUNNE, J. A. Paul's Creative and Contextual Use of Psalm 68 in Ephesians 4.8, in WTJ, 74 2012, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>BARTH, Marcus. *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*. New York: Doubleday, 1974. p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>In this paper I am not engaging the thorny discussion of Ephesians' authorship. Hence, from now on I will be identifying the apostle Paul as the author of this epistle.

the extent of God's calling, affirming the unification of Jewish and Gentile believers as "one person" (Eph. 2.15). The readers need to know how to live as the body of Christ, in mutual experience of Christ's love (Eph. 3.16-19). In the second half, Paul strongly upholds the way of life that is worthy of God's calling for every Christian. He shows the manner of walk expected of this unified body, which is perfectly accomplished by God's own power through the ministry of gifted disciples.

But how to move from one half to the other? For Paul, the answer is *by being a prisoner for the Lord*, living a life worthy of the calling received from God (Eph. 4.1). As Frank Thielman puts it, Paul is effectively saying that "those for whom God has done so much should live in a way that is consistent with what God has done for them",<sup>5</sup> thus describing that all the members of the body must be united in faith in Christ. This is the way to remain in a stable and growing body in living union with the Head.<sup>6</sup> Each believer has been given a gift, and each must "walk" on the basis of the holy revealed Truth, namely, Jesus, the Christ.

Therefore, Ephesians 4.7-16 emphasizes the value of working in community for the good of all. Everyone in Christ should appreciate the contributions of his or her brothers and sisters, because when each person does his or her assigned tasks, the whole kingdom benefits. That is why Psalm 68.18 is used by Paul as a quotation followed by a brief exegesis (68.19 MT; 67.19 LXX), which portrays the Lord as a victorious king returning from battle with the spoils of war from his conquered enemies. The Lord gives these gifts just as ancient kings shared the spoils with his army, but in the Lord's case, they are actually gifts from the Spirit which benefit all believers.

## 2. PSALM 68 IN THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT

Many scholars consider this psalm as one of the most difficult texts in the Psalter, not only in terms of its meaning, but also due to its structure and date.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, one of the main reasons for its difficulty is because it contains several unique words and expressions,<sup>8</sup> which may possibly suggest problems with the inherited version's integrity (e.g., between homogeneous composition and apparent

<sup>5</sup> THIELMAN, Frank S. *Ephesians in Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale & D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. p. 819.

<sup>6</sup> HOEHNER, Harold W. *Ephesians: An exegetical commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. p. 528.

<sup>7</sup> DAHOOD, Mitchell. *Psalms II (51-100): A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. p. 133.

<sup>8</sup> KNOHL, Israel. Psalm 68: Structure, Composition and Geography in *JHS*, 12, 2012. p. 3.

disunity).<sup>9</sup> Also, its specific historical setting is complex, which prompts scholars to adopt diverse opinions about its main purpose, ranging from a specific use within corporate worship,<sup>10</sup> to collective reminder about the Old Testament episode when the ark of the covenant was transferred from the house of Obed-Edom to Mount Zion (2 Sam. 6.12),<sup>11</sup> to the idea that the psalm serves as a collection of traditions referring to the Israelite place of worship.<sup>12</sup>

However it is at least possible to affirm that the central section of Psalm 68 (vv. 12-24) refers to the main theme of war and victory, and traces the broad strokes of God's faithfulness across Israel's history. After an initial praise for God's battle against enemies and protection for the poor (vv. 1-6), the psalmist recalls God's triumphs in the past: Exodus, Sinai, Canaan, and Mt. Zion (vv. 15-18). Then, he describes how God's dominion ranges over the whole earth, and how God pours his blessings over his chosen people with care and deliverance, subjugating their enemies. Thus the psalmist highlights the worshipers' prayer to God for the day when he will rule over all the kingdoms of the earth (vv.19-31). Finally, the psalmist concludes with praise for both the memory and anticipation of God's mighty acts (vv. 32-35).

There are two accounts at the centre of the psalm (vv. 17-20): the past victory and the future hope. Psalm 68 reaches the climax of its historical survey when speaking about God moving from Sinai into the temple on Zion. The military victories were given by God to his people so they could finally reach Jerusalem. These victories were gifts to accomplish the much desired salvation and deliverance from the hands of enemies.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. PSALM 68.18 IN JEWISH INTERPRETATION

Psalm 68 is largely a psalm of praise to God for what He has done in the history of Israel. According to its superscription, this is a "Psalm of David", leading many to believe that David is the subject of much of this psalm, including verse 18. However, not all commentators agree on such an interpretation. Rather, some maintain that

<sup>9</sup> Cf. especially the discussion presented in ALBRIGHT, W. F. *A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems* (Psalm LXVIII) in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 23 (1951). p. 1-39. Albright contends that Ps 68 is a catalogue of about thirty incipits of Hebrew lyric poems, though he admits that the editor may not have recognized that he was dealing with such a collection.

<sup>10</sup> WEISER, Artur. *The Psalms: A Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press: 2000. p. 481-484.

<sup>11</sup> KIDNER, Derek. *Psalms 7-72: Tyndale OT Commentaries*. Downers Grove: IPV, 2009. p. 238-240.

<sup>12</sup> KRAUS, Hans-Joachim. *Psalms 1-59: A Continental Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993. v. 15, p. 49-51.

<sup>13</sup> WILSON, G. H. *Psalms I: The NIV Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. p. 941-943.

in the context of the passage, the event described by such phrases as “ascending on high” and “leading captivity captive” does not refer to David, but to Moses receiving the Torah.<sup>14</sup> Some scholars argue that Paul would have had this understanding in mind when referencing this verse because of the rabbinic literature of the time and its influence on his thinking, though they will also admit that dating this literature before the time of Ephesians is very difficult.<sup>15</sup>

Surely, there are contextual reasons for understanding the passage in this way. Psalm 68.7-10 speaks of Moses receiving Torah, while v. 17 refers to Yahweh's presence at Sinai. Thus, the phrase “You have ascended on high” could sensibly speak of Moses ascending Sinai, while “You led captive your captives” could also refer to him leading the Israelites through the wilderness, as the targum states: “You ascended the firmament, Prophet Moses; you took captivity captive; you learned the words of the law; you gave them as gifts to the sons of man”.<sup>16</sup> Here, Moses receives the Law and gives it to Israel; while “sons of man” might indicate humanity as a whole (or the Jews). Moses climbs up where Yahweh comes down, rather than going up on Sinai. The “you” refers to Moses, who ascends to heaven, and the subject of “captivity” was Torah.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the reference to “receiving gifts among men” is a reference to receiving Torah from God in order to give it to the people.<sup>18</sup>

However, according to Marcus Barth, this interpretation is not accurate because of the phrase “you received gifts among man”, a statement that implies the reception of gifts not from God, but from people, and therefore this exchange does not take place in heaven, but on earth. That is why there are several divergent understandings of this phrase even among Jewish interpreters. For example, (1) Moses received Torah “by the virtue of Israel” (Pesiq. Rab. 47.4); (2) Moses received Torah “because of the merits of the man; meaning the pious Abraham” (Sop. 16.10; Midr. Ps. 22.19; Exod. Rab. 28.1); (3) Moses received Torah as recompense for the insult that the heavenly angels gave to him when they called him “man” (S’abb. 89a); (4) Moses received Torah “as a mere man” (Pesiq. Rab. 20.4); and (5) Moses received Torah “which was bestowed upon Israel as a gift, at no cost” (Midr. Ps. 68.11).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> GRUBER, Mayer I. *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2007. p. 449. Also, a good survey was made by BRUEGGEMANN, Walter and BELLINGER JR, W. H. *Psalms: New Cambridge Bible Commentary*. Cambridge: University Press, 2014. p. 292-298.

<sup>15</sup> E.g., HARRIS, W. H. *The Descent of Christ*. Leiden: Brill, 1996. p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> Tg. Psalms 68.19.

<sup>17</sup> GOLDINGAY, John. *Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. p. 325.

<sup>18</sup> O'BRIEN, Peter T. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. p. 292.

<sup>19</sup> BARTH, 1974, p. 475-478.

Also, assuming the traditional association of Psalm 68.18 with Moses, some scholars have suggested a relation between this text and the Pentecost narrative, the harvest festival at which Jews since the second century BC (Jub. 6.11-22) had celebrated the giving of the law to Israel.<sup>20</sup> With all this in view, it then becomes possible to posit a Christian polemic against this tradition in the New Testament, according to which Christ (not Moses) gave the Spirit (not Torah) on the Christian (not the Jewish) Pentecost.<sup>21</sup> For instance, this polemic may be visible in Acts 2.33, the point at which Peter's Pentecost sermon may be subverting Jewish understanding of Psalm 68.18.

#### 4. PSALM 68.18 IN EPHESIANS

Paul's use of Psalm 68.18 helps form his teaching that Yahweh's action in dealing with Israel must be seen in light of Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. He employs a variant form of v. 18, saying that the word "gifts" means something that is "given" rather than "received", thus referring to the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers whom Christ gives as gifts to his church. Thus, although Paul starts his quotation with "therefore, it says" (διὸ λεγεται), his words differ from both the MT and the LXX, using 'giving' (ἔδωκεν) rather than 'receiving' (ἐλάβες) gifts. At first glance, Paul's employment of targums would be a possible explanation for this variation, but the Targum on the Psalms (along with that of Job) contains many more variants from the MT than other Targums,<sup>22</sup> while its style suggests that it is really "an eclectic combination of a number of Targumim".<sup>23</sup> Although it is true that Ephesians 4.8 is the only case among Paul's quotations from the Psalter where there may possibly be targumic influence, that does not prevent us from asking the following question: Is Paul really citing Scripture in this verse? Or is he rather quoting a piece of Christian tradition related to Psalm 68.18?

There is a huge academic discussion on this issue. Some scholars affirm that by quoting from Psalm 68.18, Paul is intentionally adopting the rendering of the Aramaic Targum in order to fit it in his own text, even if this means he employs a "traditional paraphrase of the Hebrew Old Testament in the Aramaic vernacular".<sup>24</sup> Others think

<sup>20</sup> See especially LINCOLN, A. T. *The Use of the OT in Ephesians* in JSNT, 14 (1982), 19-21; HARRIS, 1996, p. 143-145; and MORITZ, T. *A Profound Mystery*. Leiden: Brill, 1997. p. 62-65.

<sup>21</sup> THIELMAN, 2007, p. 821.

<sup>22</sup> BACHER, W. *Targum in The Jewish Encyclopedia*, XII, New York, 1906. p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> ROBERTS, B. J. *The Old Testament Text and Versions*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1951. p. 209.

<sup>24</sup> E.g., ATKINSON, Basil F. C. *The Textual Background of the Use of the Old Testament by the New* in *Journal of the Transactions of the Victorian Institute* 79 (1947). p. 60.

that this is a problem, since a simple comparison between the Targum and Ephesians 4.8 is enough to show that a completely different interpretation of the passage is given in the two places, and the only thing that is identical is the use of the verb “gave”.<sup>25</sup>

If Ernest Best is right, Paul’s main intention is to alert his readers that he is about to quote from Scripture, thus showing that although the differences between his quotation of Psalm 68.18 and the text in both the MT and the LXX are dramatic, the Jewish exegetical tradition is itself responsible for such alteration.<sup>26</sup> Since both the Targum and Ephesians 4.8 mention the “ascent to heaven” and not the receiving of gifts, as in the MT, Paul may have been aware of the Targum,<sup>27</sup> or used an exegetical tradition that stands behind the Targum,<sup>28</sup> in order to show that he decided to use such a tradition in order to say that Christ, not Moses, ascended, and not merely to heaven but “far above all the heavens” (Eph 4.10).<sup>29</sup> This would explain why Paul changes “you captured” - the reading in the MT and the LXX - to “he captured”, and the third verb “you received” (MT:  $\text{תָּרַדְתְּ$ ; LXX:  $\epsilon\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon\varsigma$ ) to “he gave” ( $\epsilon\delta\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu$ ).

However, this is not enough to solve the problem. Lunde and Dunne suggest that if Paul is drawing on Jewish or Christian tradition, the citation from the Old Testament is not so relevant. But if it is the other way round, that is, if the larger context contributed to Paul’s argument, it is plausible that Paul’s citation is the fruit of his meditation on the psalm as a whole.<sup>30</sup> Thorsten Moritz agrees with this possibility, asserting that Paul uses the psalm in its larger context in order to present to the Ephesians a typology between Yahweh (in the psalm) and Christ (in his death and resurrection).<sup>31</sup>

A little differently, Ellis thinks that Paul has unexpectedly reshaped Psalm 68.18 by reversing its contextual flow so that the form of the citation now applies to Christ’s role. According to Ellis, Paul’s shift reflects a classic example of *midrash pesher*, a method in which “the exposition of the text determined the textual form of the quotation itself”.<sup>32</sup> In this same line, Martin Pickup affirms that Paul does not reject the grammatical-historical intent of Psalm 68. As much as he reads the psalm praising

<sup>25</sup> E.g., HARRIS, 1996, p. 61.

<sup>26</sup> BEST, Ernest. *Ephesians*: International Critical Commentary. London: T&T Clark, 1998. p. 378-385.

<sup>27</sup> BARTH, 1974, p. 476.

<sup>28</sup> LINCOLN, 1982, p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> THIELMAN, 2007, p. 823.

<sup>30</sup> LUNDE; DUNNE, 2012, p. 115-117.

<sup>31</sup> MORITZ, 1997, p. 73.

<sup>32</sup> ELLIS, E. Earle. *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003. p. 144.

Yahweh's march to the promised land in continuity with God's greatest triumph, when he would finally establish his kingdom through the Messiah and defeat every enemy once and for all. So Paul is "rereading Psalm 68 within that eschatological context".<sup>33</sup>

For Thielmann, the influence of Psalm 68 on Ephesians is much more pervasive, because the typology that Paul implies between Yahweh's work in Israel and the Christ's work in his resurrection shows that Paul was concerned to develop this parallel throughout Ephesians. Thus his citation in Ephesians 4.8 should therefore be understood as the consummation of his meditation on the psalm, in light of its fulfillment in Christ, rather than an *ad hoc* midrash which undergirds Jesus' ascension and subsequent bestowal of the Spirit. Thielmann here clarifies that Paul is aware of the early Christian polemic against the association of Moses, the Torah, and Pentecost with Psalm 68.18.<sup>34</sup>

Following this thought, Peter O'Brien adds that Paul and the early Jewish Christians wanted to show that Christ's ascension to heaven - and subsequent gift of the Spirit at Pentecost - had trumped Moses' ascent to heaven and subsequent mediation of the law to Israel. In this regard, Ephesians 4.9-10 explains Christ's descent not as his descent into the underworld, but as the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. That is why Paul decided to change "you received" for "you gave", because by using "he ascended on high", Paul does not refer to Moses' ascent to the firmament at the giving of the law, but of the Messiah's ascension to heaven, which may very well be signified by this phrase, "on high" (Ps. 102.19 and Jer. 25.30). In short, Christ's ascension to heaven fulfills the type of the high priest entering into the most holy place, interceding for God's people, and sending down the Spirit with his gifts and graces to them.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, two helpful contributions are made in this regard. First, Richard Taylor affirms that there is a variant reading evidenced by Targum Psalms and the Peshitta. Paul used 'midrash peshet' exegesis, selecting this variant textual tradition because it suited the rhetorical needs of his argument. This view allows Taylor to argue that the reversal of meaning in the altered citation is not to be originally attributed to Paul, since this tradition was used as an analogical use of Psalm 68, wherein the

<sup>33</sup>PICKUP, Martin. NT Interpretation of the OT: The Theological Rationale of Midrashic Exegesis in JETS 51.2 (2008), p. 369.

<sup>34</sup>THIELMANN, 2007, p. 822-823.

<sup>35</sup>O'BRIEN, 1999, p. 292-293.



former passage provides a pattern for the latter.<sup>36</sup> Secondly, in his article about Paul's interpretation of Psalm 68, Silvia Scholtus argues that Ephesians 4.8 relates to the tradition of Targum Psalms, affirming that the interpretation found in Ephesians makes it possible to discern Paul's hermeneutical assumptions, especially in regard to the new spiritual age inaugurated by the Christ event, the gift of apostleship, and the continuity between Old Testament promises and their fulfillment in Christ. Thus Paul would be appropriating interpretative traditions in light of the the entire message of Ephesians, connecting it with the significance of divine gifts and the way God fills the church with them.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, a recent contribution made by Seth Ehorn is very helpful for understanding the whole context of this complex discussion. In his historical research, Ehorn suggests that it is crucial to discuss the question of the author's *Vorlage*.<sup>38</sup> "Was the author of Ephesians depending upon an early Jewish tradition that had an altered text? A Christian traditional reading? The Hebrew Bible? Or, the Greek Bible?"<sup>39</sup> In his Survey, he discovered five categories of interpreters, each responding with their own answers to the question of Paul's citation.<sup>40</sup>

(1) *From Early Judaism to NT*. This perspective suggests that Paul drew from an interpretive tradition evident within early Judaism that incorporated the influence of a Targum, the Aramaic paraphrase which Paul would have heard read in the synagogues (see discussion on Taylor and Scholtus above); (2) *From Early Christianity to New Testament*. This perspective supports the idea that Paul drew upon an Early Christian reading of Psalm 68 in which the textual alteration had already occurred, for instance, in other NT literature, suggesting that Christian tradition prior to the writing of Ephesians had already begun interpreting Psalm 68 in relation to Christian Pentecost. (3) *From Early Judaism to New Testament*. According to this approach, Paul presents a counter-reading of Psalm 68 in dialog with early Judaism. That is, the interpretive trajectories of latter rabbinic readings of the psalm may possibly be read back to an earlier date, and perhaps Paul presents a reactionary reading in

<sup>36</sup> TAYLOR, Richard A. The Use of Psalm 68.18 in Ephesians 4.8 in Light of the Ancient Versions in *BSAC* 148 (1991). p. 336.

<sup>37</sup> SCHOLTUS, Silvia. Exégesis e Interpretación Paulina de Salmos 68.18 en Efesios 4.8-10 in *DavarLogos* 9.2 (2010). p. 180-182.

<sup>38</sup> A *Vorlage* (German, prototype or template) refers to a prior version or manifestation of a text. For instance, the original-language version of a text which a translator works into a translation is the *Vorlage* of that translation.

<sup>39</sup> EHORN, S. M. The Use of Psalm 68(67).19 in Ephesians 4.8 in *Currents in Biblical Research*, 12 (2013): 97.

<sup>40</sup> EHORN, 2013, p. 99-109.

dialog with its early Jewish context. (4) *From Hebrew Bible to New Testament*. Another take in the question, this view supposes that Paul drew from the Hebrew Scriptures in a potential metathesis between לקח ('to receive') and תלך ('to give'), either in a manuscript tradition no longer extant, or in the Jewish exegetical procedure Paul here employs. (5) *From LXX versions to New Testament*. For this fifth option, Paul drew from the Greek Scriptures and has altered Psalm 67.19 by himself, in order to produce an innovative reading that emphasizes the unity of the "one body".

Ehorn summarizes his findings this way: (1) studies on Paul's use of Psalm 68 should be able and willing to consider the questions behind his hermeneutical approach, (2) it is necessary for interpreters to see the LXX discretely, especially when examining the broader context from whence a citation comes,<sup>41</sup> and (3) it is necessary to abandon the opinion that Paul summarizes the psalm entirely, for such an opinion unfairly judges Paul from the perspective of the tradition of Jewish biblical exegesis. Therefore, Ehorn concludes that "to accuse Paul of 'misquoting' in this manner would require the same accusation to be issued against many other interpreters of the era (e.g., Qumran pesherists, Philo)".<sup>42</sup>

## 5. PAUL'S HERMENEUTICAL USE OF THE PSALM 68.18

Bearing in mind this Christological understanding of Scriptures, Paul finds support for his statement about the various gracious gifts of Christ to his people. There is, in the end, no need to deny Paul's use of a rabbinic type of midrash interpretation, because even if we do not agree with it, Paul is very clear in assigning both the *ascent* and the *descent* to the only One who distributes gifts in the Church, and that he is the reason for the fulfillment of all things.

Therefore, we can assert that Paul uses Psalm 68.18 in order to identify two main themes: (1) the giving of gifts to the church by the risen Christ, and (2) the triumph of Christ over the hostile powers. Paul recalls for his readers that, when God raised Christ from the dead, he seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all authority. And if the church is the place through which spiritual gifts are to be distributed and exercised, it is also the place where the manifestation of God's power happens, mainly through the testimony and preaching of all believers (Isa. 56.3-7; 61.6;

<sup>41</sup> For Ehorn, it is methodologically problematic to insist on the significance of the Greek Bible for Ephesians, on the one hand, only to turn and examine the Hebrew context, on the other.

<sup>42</sup> EHORN, 2013, p. 114.

66.18-21).<sup>43</sup> That is why Paul's language about the divine gifting has important social consequences, namely, it legitimates communal leadership structures and requires the active participation of the community. Christ gives gifts to each member (Eph. 4.7), just as he gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers' (Eph. 4.11).

That is the victory of Christ! He is acting as God himself, accomplishing the victory against powers and majesties, and distributing those very gifts that enable his people to stand firm against all tribulation, so that everyone can reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. This is Christian maturity, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4.13).

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<sup>43</sup> SHKUL, Minna. *Reading Ephesians: Exploring Social Entrepreneurship in the Text*. London: T&T Clark, 2009. p. 196.

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