

THE ROLE OF THE LXX IN JAMES' USE OF AMOS 9:11-12 IN ACTS 15:15-18

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Amos 9:11-12 is a significant passage in Old Testament Greek studies as well as theological studies in the New Testament. There are significant differences between the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Old Greek (LXX)¹ which are noteworthy. Is it possible that the LXX translation is based upon a different *Vorlage*? When James quoted Amos 9:11-12 in Acts 15:15-18, he appeared to quote the LXX rather than the MT. By doing so, did James affirm that the LXX in Amos 9:11-12 is the original reading, and thus superior to the MT? Conversely, if the MT is the original reading, why did James use the LXX rather than the MT?

The article herein will seek to answer these questions through an exegetical analysis of Amos 9:11-12 based upon a comparison of the LXX and MT. The examination will include a textual critical evaluation of the Greek readings compared with the MT. After having studied Amos 9:11-12 in context, this research will examine how James used Amos 9 in Acts 15.

THE STRUCTURE OF AMOS

The structure of Amos is rather straightforward. Although it is possible to go into further detail with the outline, for the purposes of this study the main structure of Amos will be sufficient. The development of the book focuses mainly upon judgment, both upon Israel's enemies as well as upon Israel itself. The emphasis is reflected in the following outline.²

- I. Oracles of Judgment (1:3—4:13)
 - A. Against the nations (1:3—2:3)

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¹ Septuagintal scholars often make a distinction between the Pentateuch Greek translation (LXX) and the remainder of the Old Greek translation (OG). Noting this distinction, this article will utilize the common terminology of most commentators by referring to the Greek translation (as a whole) as the LXX.

² Adapted from R. Reed Lessing, *Amos* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2009) 10–11.

- B. Against Judah (2:4-5)
 C. Against Israel (2:6—4:13)
 II. Woes and Lamentations (5—6)
 III. Visions of Judgment (7:1—9:10)
 IV. Future Restoration of Israel (9:11-15)

ANALYSIS OF AMOS 9:11-12 IN THE LXX

[11] ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκεῖνη ἀναστήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπρωκυῖαν καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπρωκότα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀναστήσω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτὴν καθὼς αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος, [12] ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατὰλοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν τὰῦτα.³

[11] On that day, I will raise up the fallen tent of David and I will rebuild its fallen things, and its destroyed things I will raise up. And I will rebuild it just as the days of old, [12] so that the remnant of mankind and all the nations upon whom my name is called will seek [me], says the Lord, the God who does these things.⁴

“On that day” (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκεῖνη) is the translation equivalent to the MT and delineates the following verses as referring to a specific time in the future. Throughout the book of Amos, the author depicted “that day” to include Israel’s punishment for sins and great oppression (2:16; 3:14; 5:18, 20; 8:3, 9). The descriptions correspond to what other Old Testament passages describe as “the latter days” of Israel and is likely equivalent to this expression.⁵ For example, Deuteronomy 4:25-29 speaks of the exile and the oppression of Israel because of their sins. However, in verse 30 Moses said that in the latter days Israel will return to God and He will restore them. Likewise, Hosea 3:4-5 describes a time in which Israel is punished, having to dwell in exile without sacrifices or king. However, in the latter days, Israel will return to David their king and to Yahweh, which will lead to their restoration.

³ Unless otherwise noted, all Old Testament Greek quotations are taken from Alfred Ralphs, ed., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004).

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are author’s own translation.

⁵ Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977) 123; Thomas J. Finley, *Joel, Amos, Obadiah* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1990) 322.

Similar to Hosea 3:5, Amos 9:11 promises a restoration of the Davidic kingdom: “I will raise up the fallen tent of David and I will rebuild its fallen things, and its destroyed things I will raise up” (ἀναστήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπρωκυῖαν καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπρωκότα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀναστήσω). God promises to “raise up” the fallen tent of David and its “fallen things.” Abbot-Smith listed “tent” (σκηνήν) as one of the normal translations of “booth” (ἡρῶ), although there are other possible Greek words that are sometimes used.⁶ Some have conjectured a plural reading of ἡρῶ, which relies upon a consonantal Hebrew text, and would require a different pointing than in the MT. However, no ancient version has a plural in its translation, and there is no reason contextually that a plural should appear here.⁷ Therefore, the singular ἡρῶ (as reflected by the LXX σκηνήν) is how the text must be understood.

Some have seen this reference to tent/tabernacle in Amos 9:11 as a specific reference to the Christ as described in John 1:14,⁸ yet this seems forced upon the text here. One commentator suggested that the original Hebrew is a reference to modern Tel Deir.⁹ Others have suggested that it should refer to Jerusalem itself.¹⁰ The greatest problem with understanding the “tent of David” as referring to a place is that it does not correspond contextually with verse 12. In the Hebrew, the antecedent of “they will possess” (יִרְשׁוּ) recalls verse 11 (and being plural, it is unlikely this would refer to any location).¹¹

There is another option that seems best, which is to understand the antecedent as a reference to the Davidic dynasty. One may support this understanding with another LXX passage – Isaiah 16:5 – which uses “in the tent of David” (ἐν σκηνῇ Δαυὶδ) in reference to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy through the Messiah.¹² Hence, it is possible that the Greek translator of Amos intentionally used similar language because he

⁶ George Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921; reprint, Oxford: Oxford City Press, 2011) 408.

⁷ James D. Nogalski, “The Problematic Suffixes of Amos IX 11,” *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993): 415.

⁸ Lessing, *Amos*, 587.

⁹ Douglas Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 398. The city name is ἡρῶ in this view and a strategic outpost for the Davidic dynasty.

¹⁰ Kenneth E. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 61–63.

¹¹ W. Edward Glenny, *Finding Meaning in the Text: Translation Technique and Theology in the Septuagint of Amos* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 220.

¹² *Ibid.*

understood the messianic nature of this passage.¹³ The emphasis upon the Davidic dynasty connotes with it implications for Jerusalem and the nation of Israel (cf. 9:14-15); however, those are not the primary focus of verse 11.

In the Greek translation of verse 11 there is a notable difference from the MT, and that is the unification of the possessive suffixes. The MT uses three different suffixes to describe the tabernacle of David; it uses a 3rd person (fem. pl.) suffix to describe the breach (בְּרֵיחַהּ), a 3rd person (masc. sg.) suffix to describe what is torn down (יִרְחֹבְהָ), and also a 3rd person (fem. sg.) suffix in verse 11c to describe the rebuilding process (בְּרֵיחֶיהָ). However, the Greek translator made all these suffixes parallel by using the feminine singular demonstrative pronoun (ὡςῆς) and (ὡςῆν). Therefore, the translator ensured that the reader understands all these pronouns as referring to the tent (σκηνήν). Clearly, the LXX and MT are in disagreement here. Is the LXX a translational decision working from the MT, or is the translator working from a different Hebrew *Vorlage*?

The manner in which English translations resolve these changes is consistent with the LXX interpretation. The New American Standard, for example, states, "I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its [booth] breaches; I will also raise up its [booth] ruins and rebuild it [booth] as in the days of old." One should note the importance in understanding that the early versional witnesses struggled with this text too. Notably, the Syriac and Vulgate did not homogenize the suffixes like the LXX, but neither did they reflect the MT readings. Nogalski provided a chart which compares the four major sources.¹⁴

	Breaches Suffix	Ruins Suffix	I Will Rebuild "it" Suffix
MT	Fem. Pl.	Masc. Sg.	Fem. Sg.
LXX	Fem. Sg.	Fem. Sg.	Fem. Sg.
Syriac	Masc. Pl.	Masc. Pl.	Fem. Sg.
Vulgate	Neut. Sg.	Neut. Pl.	Masc. Sg.

¹³ The Hebrew could be alluding to the fact that the Davidic dynasty is normally called a house (2 Sam 7:11, 16). However, as a consequence of all the sorrow and humiliation David's house had experienced, it was only a lowly tent (which is not even standing upright). Amos would then be emphasizing the current dilapidated status of the Davidic dynasty, which God promises will be restored to complete supremacy in the future. See Feinberg, *The Minor Prophets*, 123.

¹⁴ Nogalski, "Problematic Suffixes," 4:14.

The chart demonstrates that the issue is complicated, and there is no consistent agreement among the versions. The LXX suffixes differ from the MT, Syriac, and Vulgate in that it utilizes a standardized feminine singular in each instance. The MT, Syriac, and Vulgate appear to be trying to emphasize some difference in referent by each using a variety in gender. Hence, although not certain, it is unlikely that that Syriac and Vulgate were working from a Hebrew text which corresponds to the LXX. Further, one thing also appears certain: that the Greek translation is least likely to be original since it has eradicated the problem entirely. The observation herein demonstrates that the translator of Amos was willing to modify his translation, even if it changed the intent of the Hebrew.¹⁵

Verb	I will raise	I will wall up	I will raise	I will rebuild
	אָרַם	בְּרֵיחַהּ	אָרַם	בְּרֵיחֶיהָ
	ἀναστήσω	ἀνοικοδομήσω	ἀναστήσω	ἀνοικοδομήσω
	the fallen booth of David	their breaches	his ruins	it (the booth)
Object	אָתְּחַבֵּת דָּוִד בְּרֵיחֶיהָ	אֶת־בְּרֵיחֵיהֶם	בְּרֵיחֵיהֶם	בְּרֵיחֶיהָ
	τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν περτωκυῖαν	τὰ περτωκότα αὐτῆς	τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς	αὐτὴν
Referent	Full Statement	Collective Statement	David	Booth

The willingness to amend the translation is also evident in how the translator chose his verbs. Not only have the pronouns been equalized, but also the first and third verbs are translated the same (ἀναστήσω), in addition to the second and fourth verbs (ἀνοικοδομήσω).¹⁶ The choice represents another adjustment of the text which is not present in the MT.¹⁷ Although possible to ascribe these factors to a different *Vorlage*, the

¹⁵ *Editor's Note*: several maqqefis are absent due to a format incompatibility between documents, and are not the fault of the contributor.

¹⁶ Glenn, *Meaning in the Text*, 218.

¹⁷ Although the first and third verbs are the same in the Majority Text, the second and fourth are different.

preponderance of the evidence suggests that these are stylistic refinements made by the translator to ensure a smooth reading of the text.¹⁸ Henceforth, the vastness of the evidence seems to point to the MT as the original reading in verse 11.¹⁹

If the MT is the proper reading, then how is the reader to understand the different suffixes? The best solution is probably to view verse 11 in syntactical parallelism,²⁰ which is supported by both the grammar as well as the suffixed pronouns. The preceding table (p. 111) illustrates the syntactical parallelism.

In this view, the suffixed pronouns progress from more general to specific. The 3rd person (fem. pl.) suffix in the MT is taken as a collective that refers to the entire phrase, “booth of David.”²¹ The 3rd person (masc. sg.) suffix refers to a specific part of the phrase, David, and the 3rd person (fem. sg.) suffix refers to another specific part of the overall phrase, the booth. The understanding expressed herein corresponds to the parallel structure of the phrases and demonstrates why the MT text would contain different suffixes in verse 11.

The four parallel statements previously cited all refer to an aspect of the promise of God to restore the tent of David. The fourth of these statements stresses the extent of the restoration of the Davidic dynasty, “And I will rebuild it just as the days of old” (καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτὴν καθὼς αἰ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος). The Greek phrase “days of old” (αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος) is equivalent to the Hebrew עֲלֵי יָמֵי, and also appears in Micah 7:14 and Malachi 3:4. All three passages involve anticipating the future wherein Israel and her king are restored to their former glory and prosperity among the nations. Amos’ prophecy proclaims that the house of David

¹⁸ Glenny, *Meaning in the Text*, 218.

¹⁹ Nogalski, “Problematic Suffixes,” 414.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 416.

²¹ Similar occurrences of a plural suffix being used in reference to a singular feminine noun are Numbers 27:17 and Jeremiah 51:43. Genesis 30:43 and 1 Samuel 25:18 are examples where the singular collective “sheep” receives plural adjectives. See Emil Kautzsch, ed., *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd English ed., trans. and ed. Arthur Ernest Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910) 428 (§132g), 462–63 (§145c). Contra Walter C. Kaiser, “The Davidic Promise and the Inclusion of the Gentiles (Amos 9:9–15 and Acts 15:13–18): A Test Passage for Theological Systems,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20 (June 1977): 101.

(which currently is only a fallen tent) will be restored to its former glory in the future.²²

Commentators view verse 12 with the most scrutiny because the differences between the MT and the Greek translation are quite significant. The Greek reads, “so that the remnant of mankind and all the nations upon whom my name is called will seek [me]” (ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ’ οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς). The reading differs from the MT reading, “so that they might possess Edom and all the nations who are called by my name” (עַדְמָא וְכָל־עַמְּוָתָא יִרְדּוּ בְּיָמַי).²³

The differences between the Greek and Hebrew include different verbs, different subjects, and different direct objects. The significant discrepancies contain both textual-critical issues as well as theological. How is one to account for the noteworthy differences?

There are three main options that may account for the differences. First, the Greek translator may have had a different *Vorlage* in front of him. Second, he may have been working from the MT but misread it. Finally, it is possible that he made a translational decision that departed from a literal translation. The issue is compounded because there may be a combination of these factors involved.

Some have surmised that the translator misread יִרְדּוּ for יִשְׁרְדוּ, confusing a *yod* (י) for a *daleth* (ד).²³ According to such a view, it is further suggested that Edom (עֲדוֹמִים) may have been spelled with a defective *holem* in the translator’s *Vorlage*, thus giving the same three consonants that could be confused for man (אָדָם).²⁴

There are a few problems with this theory. First, for it to be true, the translator’s *Vorlage* would have to either be missing the direct object marker (תָּא), or else he would have to ignore it based upon how he was viewing the verb. Second, the presence of a defective *holem* is conjecture that is based upon no manuscript evidence. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the approach bases its theory upon the confusion of two letters, which are not normally confused.²⁵ In essence, the entire theory depends upon the misreading of one letter, thus making the theory as a

²² Verses 13–15 expand upon this prophecy and note that the restoration of the Davidic kingdom will result in a return from captivity and a prosperous dwelling in the land for the people of Israel.

²³ Anthony Gelston, “Some Hebrew Misreadings in the Septuagint of Amos,” *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002): 498.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Ellis R. Brotzman, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 109.

whole unlikely.²⁶ Furthermore, the words and syntax of the MT are not inherently difficult or rare, thus indicating there may be different factors that provide clarity regarding the issue.

An important facet of this issue to consider is the tendency of certain translators to interpret theologically. F. F. Bruce noted the tendency of translators to freely interpret prophetic passages, "In turning the prophetic books from Hebrew into Greek, the Septuagint translators were quite ready to conform the wording to their own religious outlook or otherwise to adapt it to an interpretation which was accepted in the circles to which they belonged."²⁷ Although difficult to demonstrate conclusively, there appear to be times when intentional changes were made to texts, as is evidenced in the Qumran literature.²⁸ Is this perhaps true of the Amos translator?

There may indeed be evidence of such changes introduced by the translator of Amos.²⁹ Already it has been demonstrated that the translator elected to homogenize the pronominal suffixes in Amos 9:11 so that they all unquestionably referred to David's tent. However, there are other examples in the LXX of Amos which suggest an altered translation.

One such possible example is Amos 6:1, which reads, "Woe to those who despise Zion" (οὐαὶ τοῖς ἐξουθενοῦσιν Σιών). The reading is different than the MT, which reads, "Woe to those at ease in Zion" (וָאֵי לְיֹשְׁבֵי צִיּוֹן). Consequently, it has been suggested that the translator may have confused the two י for a ו, thus resulting in the verb וַאֲשׁ ("to despise").³⁰ Another possibility is that the translator did not understand the Hebrew word וַאֲשׁ (only used 10 times in the MT). However, perhaps the answer explaining the difference is that the translator inserted his own theology into the text at this point. Evidence for this notion is deduced from the Hebrew text of Psalm 123:4. The verse affirms that those who are at ease

²⁶ Glennly, *Meaning in the Text*, 225.

²⁷ F. F. Bruce, "Prophetic Interpretation in the Septuagint," *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 12 (Fall 1979): 17.

²⁸ Richard Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles (Acts 15:13 – 21)," in *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. Ben Witherington III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 161.

²⁹ In a very helpful study, Glennly argued that many of the differences between the Old Greek and Majority Text of Amos derive from a free rendering of a proto-Majority Text and not a different *Vorlage* or textual corruption. See W. Edward Glennly, "Hebrew Misreadings or Free Translation in the Septuagint of Amos," *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007): 524-47.

³⁰ Gelston, "Some Hebrew Misreadings," 495.

are conceived as Israel's enemies;³¹ they are depicted as those who have contempt. Therefore, those who are at ease (Israel's enemies) are those who have contempt (i.e. they despise Israel).

The understanding of those at ease may provide clarity on the manner in which Amos 6:1 is translated. In the MT, the context of Amos 6:1 is a woe upon Israel because of her iniquities. However, in the Greek, the woe is upon those who despise Zion (the enemies of Israel). In the context of the translator's day, this could be specifically targeting the Samaritans.³²

If correct, this would suggest that the translator was keen to introduce the idea of hostility to Zion into his rendering of Am. 6:1: that is, keen to depict those against whom the biblical woe is uttered in terms that would suggest the Samaritans of his own day. Ps. 123 [122 LXX]:4, in fact might naturally have sprung to mind in this connection, for that Psalm, like many of the Songs of Ascents, describes the hostility directed against post-exilic Zion by those round about, that is, a hostility analogous to that of the Samaritans.³³

One cannot discount these kinds of Old Testament influences upon the translator of Amos. Other influences may have been on his mind as well. For example, Edom is paralleled with all the nations in Obadiah 15-21 and Isaiah 34:1-8; 63:1-6. The translator may have been influenced by the parallelism of Edom and the nations in those texts. Perhaps he did not confuse the letters as much as he made a theological metonymy of Edom (i.e. one nation representing the many). Therefore, perhaps he harmonized Edom with all the nations in a non-literal, free theological rendering.³⁴

If that is the case, the translation of the LXX is constructed to emphasize the universal seeking of God by the nations. The emphasis upon the universal effects of David's restoration would be consistent with the translator's tendencies in other passages. The universal emphasis on the part of the translator appears elsewhere in Amos as well.³⁵ For example, this tendency appears in the last part of Amos 9:12, "says the Lord, the God

³¹ John Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 3:474.

³² Glennly, *Meaning in the Text*, 169.

³³ Philip E. Satterthwaite, "The Translator as Imperialist: And Other Aspects of the Septuagint Translation of the Book of the Twelve" (an expanded version of an unpublished paper presented at the Old Testament Seminar, Cambridge University, October 1997), quoted in Glennly, *Meaning in the Text*, 169.

³⁴ Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 195.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 188-89.

who does these things” (λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν τὰυτά). The phrase ὁ θεὸς ὁ is lacking in the MT. However, the phrase “κύριος + ὁ θεός + ὁ [substantive]” is common to the Amos translator (cf. 4:13; 5:8), and appears to be part of his universalizing strategy to expand the description of God to contain universal language. Another example of this is Amos 9:15 where “Yahweh your [Israel’s] God” (יהוה יהי אלהיכם) is changed to “Lord, the God of all” (κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ παντοκράτωρ) in the Greek to stress the universal relationship of God rather than the personal relationship with Israel.³⁶

The universal emphasis undoubtedly appears in Amos 9:11-12 in that the Greek translation focuses upon the universality of God’s relationship to the nations. “The perspective of the LXX concerning Gentiles would be much more attractive than the MT to Jews in the Diaspora who sought to fit into their culture and show the attractiveness of their religion to the Gentiles among whom they lived.”³⁷ Consequently, it appears that the translator of Amos made adjustments as he deemed appropriate to make certain that the applicability of the book extended past the Jews of Jerusalem.

The main point of the translator in Amos 9:12 is that the Gentiles will “seek” (ἐκζητήσωσιν). As a result of the context of the next phrase, there is likely an implied “me” (με) as the direct object.³⁸ The notion of seeking is emphasized earlier in Amos, and this verb use is possibly an allusion to the necessity of seeking the Lord in Amos 5:4, 6.³⁹

Amos 9 describes the people who will seek the Lord: “The nations upon whom my name is called” (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ’ οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς). The description is identical to what is written in the MT. In the Hebrew, similar expressions which include “name” (שם) and the Niphal of “be called” (קרא) are used in reference to God renaming the patriarchs as part of his gracious promises (Gen 17:5; 35:10), as well as covenantal contexts where Israel is called by Yahweh’s name (Deut 28:10; Isa 48:1-2; Jer 14:9).⁴⁰ Similar to Amos 9, Isaiah 43:6-7 envisions a time when there will be people from the nations who are called by God’s name. Based upon its usage, Finley observed that this phrase should be considered an

³⁶ Glenn, *Meaning in the Text*, 228.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid. 227. According to Göttingen’s critical apparatus of the Septuagint text, several Lucianic manuscripts add the missing direct object (με); and, Alexandrinus, being influenced by Acts 15:17, supplies τῶν κούρων.

³⁹ Glenn, *Meaning in the Text*, 226.

⁴⁰ Lessing, *Amos*, 578.

idiomatic expression of ownership or possession.⁴¹ Therefore, both the MT and LXX anticipate a future time that includes blessing for both the Gentiles as well as the Jews since they will all be God’s people.⁴²

Amos 9:11-12 (MT)	Amos 9:11-12 (LXX)	Differences
בְּיָמֵי הַיְהוּדָה	ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ	Standardization of MT. The pronominal suffixes are equalized in the LXX.
וְהָיָה כְּמִצְוֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהָיָה כְּמִצְוֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ	ἀνοιστήσω τὴν σαρῆν. Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπρωκυῶν	Ἀνοικοδομήσω is used for ἦγα as well as ἦγον in the following phrase.
וְהָיָה כְּמִצְוֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהָיָה כְּמִצְוֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ	καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπρωκότα ἀντὶς καὶ τὰ κατασκευασμένα ἀντὶς ἀνοιστήσω	
וְהָיָה כְּמִצְוֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהָיָה כְּמִצְוֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ	καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτὴν καθὼς αἰ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος,	
לְמַעַן יִרְאוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי וְיִתְבָּחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִתְבָּחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ	ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κενάλοισι τῶν ἀθρόπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ’ οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς,	Here the הן particle is dropped, and אֶת־יְהוָה becomes the subject. אֶת־יְהוָה is revocalized to אֶתְּ, which could assume a defective <i>holem</i> was used in אֶתְּ, in addition to a possible confusion of the verb יִתְבָּחוּ with יִתְבָּחוּ. ⁴³
וְהָיָה כְּמִצְוֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהָיָה כְּמִצְוֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ	λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός ὁ ποιῶν τὰυτά.	The LXX adds ὁ θεός ὁ to the MT.

⁴¹ Finley, *Joel, Amos, Obadiah*, 325.

⁴² Billy K. Smith and Franklin S. Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995) 167.

⁴³ Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, 138.

The preceding table (p. 117) helps summarize the textual issues in verses 11 and 12. (Changes to the text were underlined and explanations are in the right column.)

Both the MT and the LXX are apparent that in the future there will be people from Gentile nations who will belong to God. Although both MT and LXX agree on this point, it is important to consider that the LXX context has been changed from that of the MT. Glennly summarized how the MT and LXX contexts differ.

The purpose for the restoration of the "tent of David" in the LXX is fundamentally different than the purpose in the MT. In the MT the Davidic kingdom is restored so that other nations may be included in the kingdom by virtue of Israel's extension of its dominion and possession of its ancient conquests and "all the nations." This indicates an extension of authority and control far beyond the ancient Davidic kingdom. In the LXX the Davidic dynasty and kingdom are restored so that all the Gentiles upon whom the Lord's name is called may seek "[the Lord] . . . who accomplishes these things." In the LXX, as a result of the restoration of the Davidic kingdom, Gentiles will seek the God who remembers the Davidic covenant, the Lord God of Israel, and they, as Gentiles, will be his covenant people.⁴⁴

In summary, Amos 9:11-12 provides a prophecy concerning a future time ("in that day") which is equivalent to the "latter days" elsewhere in Scripture. In that future day, God promises to restore the house of David, which has become a broken tent because of disobedience. The restoration of the Davidic kingdom will lead to the possession of Edom and the remainder of the nations. The Greek translator changes the nuance of the passage and describes God's restoration of the Davidic kingdom as the impetus for the remnant of mankind seeking God. Consequently, there are significant contextual differences, and yet there are important similarities. Pertinent to the conclusion of this article, a notable similarity between the MT and the LXX is that both indicate there is a future in God's plan for Gentiles.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Glennly, *Meaning in the Text*, 228.

⁴⁵ Both the MT and LXX are in agreement referring to this future group of Gentiles as "upon whom my name is called" (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι μου ἐπὶ οὐρούς). As demonstrated previously, such language is often covenantal in the Old Testament and here provides assurance of future blessing.

THE USE OF AMOS 9:11-12 IN ACTS 15:15-18

Having examined the Greek and the Hebrew of Amos 9:11-12, it appears that the MT is the original text and the Greek translation is a theologically influenced deviation from the Hebrew from which the translator was working. If that is indeed the case, one must ask why James utilized the Greek text of Amos 9:11-12 prior to the Jerusalem council. Was James wrong to quote the Greek text, which did not completely reflect the meaning conveyed in the MT? The question can only be answered by a study of Acts 15:15-18.

Acts 15 begins by stating that certain men were teaching that Gentiles must be circumcised according to the custom of Moses (v. 1). The teaching ignited a great debate between these men and Paul and Barnabas (v. 2). Paul and Barnabas opposed the teaching, and eventually it was determined that they should venture to Jerusalem and receive insight concerning this issue. Once at Jerusalem, some from the sect of the Pharisees arose and proclaimed the necessity of circumcision (v. 5). The action prompted a thorough examination of the matter. The issue was what did Gentiles need to do to be accepted as God's people? Was it necessary to circumcise them?

After much debate on the issue, Peter arose and proclaimed that God had given the Spirit to the Gentiles just as He had given the Spirit to the Jews (vv. 7-8). There was no distinction, so why should the Jews expect the Gentiles to conform to a standard that in the past the Jews could not even conform properly (vv. 9-11). After the insight by Peter, James arose and affirmed Peter's assessment. God had been pleased to receive a people for his name from the Gentiles (v. 14). The description of Gentiles for God's name comes close to Amos 9:12 (in both the MT and LXX) which foretold this occurrence.

James continued his defense of Peter's assertion (v. 15): "And with this the words of the prophets agree" (καὶ τοῦτο συμφωνοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν καθὼς γέγραπται). The antecedent for "this" (τούτου) refers to the assertion made by Peter and confirmed by James — that God had saved Gentiles as they are and without distinction. James claimed that this was consistent with the "words of the prophets" (οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν). The emphasis upon the plural (prophets) is important, because (as will be shown) in referencing Amos 9:11-12, James worked with other prophecies in addition to Amos 9 to validate his argument.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) 503; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand

One should note that James did not say that Amos or the other prophecies are fulfilled; rather, he said "they agree" (συμφωνοῦσιν), from the root συμφωνέω (from which English derives "symphony," an harmony of sounds together).⁴⁷ Some argue that this is just another way of saying that Amos is fulfilled. However, in Acts the apostles use fulfillment (πληρόω) language intentionally.⁴⁸ Based upon the normal use of συμφωνέω, as well as the tendency in Acts (in addition to the remainder of Scripture) to be explicit concerning fulfillment, it is best to regard James as introducing agreement and not fulfillment here.

James then referenced the Greek Old Testament, much of which corresponds to Amos 9:11-12. However, not only are there some significant changes and additions, but also there is a significant portion of Amos that is omitted in James' quotation. In light of the noteworthy differences, as well as the fact that James referenced this quote by stating it was derived from the prophets (plural), it is probably best to understand this as a combination of prophecies that James correctly viewed to closely relate. More discussion will be given while proceeding to examine the differences.

The first notable difference is that James omitted "in that day" (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ) and added "after these things I will return" (μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω). Lessing has suggested that μετὰ ταῦτα is referring to Amos 9:1-4 which, to him, involves the destruction of the temple at Bethel. According to Lessing, James was making a parallel between the destruction of the temple in Amos 9 and the destruction of the real temple, that is, Jesus (John 2:18-22).⁴⁹ Others regard μετὰ ταῦτα as referring to the broad context of judgments described earlier in Amos.⁵⁰ Another option that some propose is that this phrase may have reference to the Greek of Jeremiah 12:15, "And it will be that after I cast them out I will return and have mercy upon them" (καὶ ἔσται μετὰ τὸ ἐκβαλεῖν με ἀντὸς ἐπιστρέψω καὶ

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 459; contra F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2nd ed. (1952; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 297. Bruce stated this refers to the Book of the Twelve.

⁴⁷ The word is only used in Matthew 18:19; 20:2, 13; Luke 5:36; Acts 5:9; 15:15. Each occurrence connotes the idea of agreement.

⁴⁸ For example, in Acts 1:16 and 3:18, Peter proclaimed the fulfillment of Scripture using forms of πληρόω. Acts 3:18 is instructive because there is also reference to a plurality of prophets.

⁴⁹ Lessing, *Amos*, 598.

⁵⁰ I. Howard Marshall, "Acts," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011) 591.

ἐλήσω ἀνθρώς).⁵¹ Although there may be conceptual allusions with Jeremiah, the passages utilize different verbs (ἀναστρέψω and ἐπιστρέψω). Therefore, a definite connection is likely not present.

Perhaps it is best to regard this phrase as James' chronological understanding of the Amos text.⁵² James knew the Greek reads "on that day" (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ). As previously demonstrated, this time period returns from exile and a restoration of the Davidic kingdom (Deut 4:30; Hos 3:5). The apostles understood that God's kingdom had not yet come (Acts 1:6; 3:19-21), and James modified the Greek of Amos 9:11 to reflect the theology which is inherent in the Old Testament understanding of the coming eschatological sequence. Therefore, James indicated that this prophecy would be accomplished when the Lord returns. In other words, he argued for a future fulfillment of the passage when Christ returns.

At the Lord's return, the tent of David will be rebuilt. James used ἀνοικοδομήσω instead of ἀναστήσω, which likely indicates he was not intent upon preserving exact replication of Amos 9 as much as he was intent upon securing the main point. One should find it interesting that James made a significant change in describing the restoration of the dynasty of the king by using ἀνορθώσω ("I will restore"), which is not used in Amos 9. Of note is the fact that ἀνορθώσω is used in 2 Samuel 7:13 and 1 Chronicles 17:12 in God's promise to establish David's throne forever. The word is not often used in the Greek Old Testament, but half of its uses are in reference to God establishing the Davidic Covenant.⁵³ James may have asserted an intentional allusion to those Davidic Covenant passages. In any case, the context of Amos 9:11 at least supports the idea that the Davidic kingdom was already on James' mind, and it would be natural for the Davidic Covenant passages to be occupying his thoughts and supplying the vocabulary for his beliefs.

⁵¹ John B. Polhill, *Acts* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995) 329; Marshall, "Acts," 591.

⁵² James E. Rosscup, "The Interpretation of Acts 15:13 - 18" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1966) 140. Rosscup ultimately did not affirm this view but provided a good summary of the arguments.

⁵³ The future singular form is only found in 2 Samuel 7:13 and 1 Chronicles 17:12; 22:10. Of a total of 13 uses in the Old Testament, 6 of 6 times in 1 Samuel and 1 Chronicles, it is used in reference to the Davidic Covenant. Word usage statistics provided by Logos Bible Software 5, which utilizes James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order*, elec. ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996).

In Acts 15:17, the only significant change is the addition of the direct object “the Lord” (τὸν κύριον). As already stated, the LXX version did not have a direct object, and a με was implied. By adding τὸν κύριον, the phrase now has a remarkable similarity to Zechariah 8:22, “And many peoples and many nations will come to seek the face of the Lord” (καὶ ἔξουσιν λαοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐκζητήσασιν τὸ πρόσωπον κυρίου).⁵⁴ Therefore, Acts 15:17 appears to be an intentional allusion to the prophecy of Zechariah 8, especially since the natural contextual reading of Amos 9 would have required a first person direct object (με). The context of Zechariah 8:22 also supports James’ point: that Gentiles will be a part of the Lord’s people in the future. Furthermore, here it is the direct allusion to seeking the Lord that makes it most likely that this is in James’ mind.

There is one more addition that James made at the very end of his quotation (v. 18). He stated, “[these things] known from of old” (γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος). The words are also foreign to the text of Amos, and are likely added by James as an allusion to Isaiah 45:21, “that they might know at once who made these things heard from the beginning” (ἵνα γνῶσιν ἕνα τίς ἀκουστὰ ἐποίησεν ταῦτα ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς).⁵⁵ Similar to Zechariah 8 previously, the context of Isaiah 45:21-23 expands the idea that people from many nations will come to God their Savior at a future time.⁵⁶

James’ quotation appears not to be connected to one prophecy but multiple. The relation is not surprising since he states in advance that the words of the prophets (plural) agree with Peter’s statement. James gave evidence of that by referring to Amos 9:11-12, Zechariah 8:22, and Isaiah 45:21. All three of these passages provide evidence for a future time when Gentiles will receive salvation from the Lord. The following chart (p. 123) summarizes the key differences between Acts 15:16-18 and Amos 9:11-12. (Changes to the text were underlined and explanations are in the right column.)

Amos 9:11-12 (LXX)	Acts 15:16-18 (NA27)	Differences
<p>ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ</p> <p>ἀναστήσω τὴν σικληνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν</p> <p>καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀναστήσω</p> <p>καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτὴν καθὼς αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος,</p> <p>ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ’ οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς,</p> <p>λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα.</p>	<p>μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω</p> <p>καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σικληνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν</p> <p>καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀνοικοδομήσω καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτήν,</p> <p>[omitted]</p> <p>ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν κύριον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ’ οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς,</p> <p>λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα <u>γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος.</u></p>	<p>Adds this phrase. Some understand a quote from Jeremiah 12:15.</p> <p>The New Testament uses a different verb here, possibly as a result of having omitted the section below.</p> <p>Textual issue: κ; (B; Eus), ψ, 33 326 pc have τὰ κατεστραμμένα, “things destroyed.” Uses ἀνορθώσω instead of ἀναστήσω or ἀνοικοδομήσω, likely due to Davidic Covenantal language.</p> <p>Adds ἂν. Adds a direct object (τὸν κύριον) which is not present in the LXX, thus reflecting Zechariah 8:22.</p> <p>Omits ὁ θεὸς ὁ. Adds γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος, likely a reference to Isaiah 45:21.</p>

As noted previously, James did not state that these passages are fulfilled; rather, he asserted that what the Gentiles were experiencing at that time was in agreement with those prophecies. James quoted these passages to answer the question regarding whether or not the Gentiles and Jews should be made into one people. James demonstrated that the Gentiles need not act like Jews, because in the end times Gentiles will still retain their Gentile identity. Therefore, why should the church compel

⁵⁴ Witherington, *Acts of the Apostles*, 459.

⁵⁵ David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 432; contra C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002) 232. Barrett understood these as simply an addition by James.

⁵⁶ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40—66* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009) 273.

Gentiles to adopt Jewish identity? James rightfully indicated that salvation transcended both groups in God's plan. Both Jews and Gentiles were able to keep their functional ethnic identities, unified in Christ through a common faith.⁵⁷

The colossal question which remains for this research is whether or not James' use of the LXX of Amos 9:11-12 is legitimate. In comparing the MT and the LXX, there are significant differences. The MT stresses the restoration of the Davidic king, through which Edom (likely a metonymy for all Israel's enemies) and the nations are subjugated to Israel. Admittedly, it is through this subjugation that the peoples are blessed, but the main focus remains the blessing of Israel and her king. In contrast, the LXX focuses upon the restoration of Israel's monarchy which is the catalyst for the nations seeking God. In the LXX, there is no explicit mention of the subjugation of the nations, though it may still be implied by the restoration of Israel's king. In the discussion on why the LXX differs from the MT, it was made known that it is likely the theology and preference of the translator that led to the changes in Amos 9:11-12.

Given this understanding, did James make a mistake by quoting the LXX? First, it is important to remember that the LXX was the Bible for the people of that day. Perhaps it is similar to the time of the English speaking church from eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The King James Version was the almost unanimous choice for English speakers; it definitely had imperfections, yet that was the common Bible of the day. Second, James referenced Amos 9:11-12 for a specific reason. Although the LXX does significantly change the context of the passage, James used the LXX to support the point that is specified in the MT. He quoted Amos 9:11-12 to emphasize the point that Gentiles are saved as Gentiles. In both the MT and the LXX, the Gentile inclusion is apparent. Therefore, James used the Greek text in a manner which legitimately supported his stance. The LXX accurately reflects the MT's original meaning as far as the proposition that James made: Gentiles will be saved as Gentiles in the future, thus the church should not force them to obey Jewish regulations in the present.

CONCLUSION

Amos 9:11-12 is an important passage theologically and textual critically. There are significant differences between the MT and the LXX which must be examined with consideration of the overall tendencies of the translator of Amos. The translator of Amos was prone to making stylistic changes, in

addition to broadening texts to a universal meaning rather than being Israel-centric. When examining Amos 9:11-12, these same tendencies are displayed. Despite changing the emphasis of Amos 9, the pertinent theological proposition of the passage remains intact and usable for the discussion at the Jerusalem council.

At the Jerusalem council, in Acts 15:15-18 James referred to, at least, three prophecies (Isa 45:21; Amos 9:11-12; Zech 8:22). In so doing, James reinforced Peter's proclamation that God has called a people for his name from the Gentiles. James did not argue that these prophecies are fulfilled in Acts 15; rather, his argument is that Gentiles will be saved in the future as Gentiles. Therefore, it is not a surprise that Gentiles are saved currently as Gentiles. Consequently, the church, which consists of both Jew and Gentile, should not mandate a universal adherence to the Jewish customs; rather, Jews may remain Jewish and Gentiles may remain Gentile.

⁵⁷ Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 432.

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