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), 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.1

1. 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.
Similar to Hosea 3:5, Amos 9:11 promiss 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" (ἄναστήσω τὴν σκηνήν Δαυὶ τῆν πεπτωκόταν καὶ ἀνωικοδομήσω τα πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς καὶ τα κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀναστήσω). God promises to "raise up" the fallen tent of David and its "fallen things." Abbot-Smith listed "tent" (σκηνή) as one of the normal translations of "booth" (παραλήμβανον). Although there are other possible Greek words that are sometimes used, 6 Some have conjectured a plural reading of παραλήμβανον, 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 παραλήμβανον (as reflected by the LXX σκηνή) 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" (יִשָּׂאוּ) 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 Δαυὶ) 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

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8 Lessing, Amos, 587.
12 Ibid.
understood the messianic nature of this passage. 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 (ὁ θάνατον), a 3rd person (masc. sg.) suffix to describe what is torn down (ὁ μεταβολή), and also a 3rd person (fem. sg.) suffix in verse 11c to describe the rebuilding process (ἡ αἰώνια). However, the Greek translator made all these suffixes parallel by using the feminine singular demonstrative pronoun (ἡ αὐτή) and (ἡ αὐτήν). Therefore, the translator ensured that the reader understands all these pronouns as referring to the tent (ἡ σκηνή). 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 versational 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>I will raise</th>
<th>I will wall up</th>
<th>I will raise</th>
<th>I will rebuild</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>רקך</td>
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<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>I will rebuild</th>
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<td>דֹּאִד</td>
<td>דֹּאִד</td>
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<td>תִּהְיֶה</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referent</th>
<th>Full Statement</th>
<th>Collective Statement</th>
<th>David</th>
<th>Booth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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 (יָאשֶׁנָה), in addition to the second and fourth verbs (יָאשֶׁנָה). The choice represents another adjustment of the text which is not present in the MT. Although possible to ascribe these factors to a different Vorlage, the

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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.


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

16 Glenney, 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.
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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 ἀνουκοδομήσω αὐτὴν καθός οἱ ἁμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος). The Greek phrase “days of old” (αἱ ἁμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος) is equivalent to the Hebrew יָמִי, 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 (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 [με]“ (ὅτες ἐξερχόμενοι οἱ κατελθοῦσι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐθνά, ἵπτομαι ἐπικάλεσμα τοῦ ὄνομά μου ἐκ αὐτῶν). The reading differs from the MT reading, “so that they might possess Edom and all the nations who are called by my name” (πᾶντα διὰ τοῦ τῆς ὀνομασίας ἐχθρῶν ἔχουσι).

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 ἐδοκίμασες for ἐπικάλεσις, confusing a θησ for a δαλθ.\(^{23}\) According to such a view, it is further suggested that Edom (.addEdge) 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 (man).\(^{24}\)

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 (man), 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

\(^{18}\) Glenny, Meaning in the Text, 218.
^{19}\) Nogalski, “Problematic Suffixes,” 414.
^{20}\) Ibid. 416.

\(^{22}\) 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.
^{24}\) Ibid.
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whole unlikely. 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." Although difficult to demonstrate conclusively, there appear to be times when intentional changes were made to texts, as is evidenced in the Qumran literature. Is this perhaps true of the Amos translator?

There may indeed be evidence of such changes introduced by the translator of Amos. 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" (οὐάν ὑμεῖς ἐπεδιώκεστε Ζών). The reading is different from the MT, which reads, "Woe to those at ease in Zion" (ὅτι ἐστε ἐν Ζών ὑπνότατοι). Consequently, it has been suggested that the translator may have confused the two 't' for a 'z', thus resulting in the verb ἐπεδιώκεστε ("to despise"). Another possibility is that the translator did not understand the Hebrew word עָשְׂרָן (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 are conceived as Israel's enemies; 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.

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.

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.

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. For example, this tendency appears in the last part of Amos 9:12, "says the Lord, the God

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26 Glenny, Meaning in the Text, 225.
29 In a very helpful study, Glenny 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 Glenny, "Hebrew Misreadings or Free Translation in the Septuagint of Amos," Vetus Testamentum 57 (2007): 524-47.
32 Glenny, Meaning in the Text, 169.
35 Ibid. 188-89.
who does these things” (λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν τὰῦτα). The phrase ὁ θεὸς ὁ is lacking in the MT. However, the phrase “κύριος + ὁ θεὸς + 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” (יְהֹוָה, יָאָרְכָּךָ) is changed to “Lord, the God of all” (κύριος ὁ θεὸς 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” (ἐρχόμενοι). 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 δήθεν, ἐρ’ ὁ θεὸς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐκ αὐτοῦς). The description is identical to what is written in the MT. In the Hebrew, similar expressions which include “name” (כְּנֵנִי) and the Niphal of “be called” (כְּנֵנִי) 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amos 9:11-12 (MT)</th>
<th>Amos 9:11-12 (LXX)</th>
<th>Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα.</td>
<td>ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἑκάστην</td>
<td>Standardization of MT. The pronoun suffixes are equalized in the LXX. Άνουκόδομησα is used for ἡ τιμὴ as well as ἡ τιμὴ in the following phrase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀναστήσεως τῆς σκόνης Δαυὶδ τῆς παισκοῦσαν</td>
<td>καὶ ἀναστήσεως τῆς σκόνης</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>καὶ ἀναστήσεως τοῦ παισκότα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ κατεσκεμένα αὐτῆς</td>
<td>καὶ ἀναστήσεως</td>
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<tr>
<td>καὶ ἀνουκόδομησα αὐτῆς καθὸς αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς αἰῶνος,</td>
<td>καὶ ἀνουκόδομησα αὐτῆς καθὸς αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς αἰῶνος,</td>
<td>Here the η particle is dropped, and καὶ ἀνουκόδομησα becomes the subject. Άνουκόδομησα is revocalized to ἡ τιμὴ, which could assume a defective hèleth was used in ἡ τιμὴ, in addition to a possible confusion of the verb ἡ τιμὴ with ἡ τιμὴ.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ὅπου ἐκκαθάρισαν οἱ καταλύοντοι τῶν ἄνθρωπων καὶ πάντα τὰ δήθεν, ἐρ’ ὁ θεὸς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐκ αὐτοῦς,</td>
<td>λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα.</td>
<td>The LXX adds ὁ θεὸς ὁ to the MT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39 Glenny, Meaning in the Text, 228.
37 Ibid.
36 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 κύριον.
38 Glenny, Meaning In The Text, 226.
39 Lessing, Amos, 578.
40 Finley, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, 325.
43 Abbott-Smith, Greek Lexicon, 138.
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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 τοῦτῳ συμφωνοῦντοι οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν καθὼς γέγραπται). The antecedent for “this” (τοῦτο) 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

44 Glenny, 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 τοὺς ἔθνες ἐπικάλησέν μοι ὅσον αὐτός). As demonstrated previously, such language is often covenantal in the Old Testament and here provides assurance of future blessing.

One should note that James did not say that Amos or the other prophecies are fulfilled; rather, he said “they agree” (συμφωνοῦν), from the root συμφωνέω (from which English derives “symphony,” an harmony of sounds together). Some argue that this is just another way of saying that Amos is fulfilled. However, in Acts the apostles use fulfillment (πληρώ) language intentionally. 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 τὰς ἐναποθέσεις). Lessing has suggested that μετὰ τὰς 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). Others regard μετὰ τὰς as referring to the broad context of judgments described earlier in Amos. 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 ἐστίν μετὰ τὸ ἐκβάλειν με αὐτοὺς ἐπιστρέψω καὶ ἐλεήσω αὐτούς). Although there may be conceptual allusions with Jeremiah, the passages utilize different verbs (ἐναποθήκησα and ἐπιστρέψα). Therefore, a definite connection is likely not present.

Perhaps it is best to regard this phrase as James’ chronological understanding of the Amos text. James knew the Greek reads “on that day” (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ). As previously demonstrated, this time period reflects the chronological understanding of the “last days” which includes a return 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 ἀνοικοδόμησα instead of ἐναποθήκησα, 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 ἀνοικοδόμω ("I will restore"), which is not used in Amos 9. Of note is the fact that ἀνοικοδόμω 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. 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.

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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).

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In Acts 15:17, the only significant change is the addition of the direct object “the Lord” (τὸν Κόσμον). As already stated, the LXX version did not have a direct object, and a με was implied. By adding τὸν Κόσμον, 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 ἐμπρόσωποι λαοί πολλοί καὶ ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐκκεντήσωσι τὸ πρόσωπον κόσμου).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 αὐτῷ ἄνω). 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” (ιδα γνῷσιν ἀμα τίς ἐκκοσμία ἐξῆλθεν τὸν θεόν ἐπὶ ἀρχήν).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.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>εν τη Ημερη Εκεινη</td>
<td>μετα τα ταυτα Αναστησεως</td>
<td>Adds this phrase. Some understand a quote from Jeremiah 12:15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>άναστησιν την σκηνην Δαιδο την τεστοκουιαν</td>
<td>και άναστησιν την σκηνην Δαιδο την τεστοκουιαν</td>
<td>The New Testament uses a different verb here, possibly as a result of having omitted the section below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>και άνοικοδομησοι τα τεστοκοτα αυτης και τα κατεσκαμμενε αυτης άναστησιος</td>
<td>και τα κατεσκαμμενε αυτης άνοικοδομησοι και άνορθοσοι αυτης, [omitted]</td>
<td>Textual issue: κ (B; Eus). Χ, 33 326 ρε have τα κατεσκαμμενα, “things destroyed.” Uses άνορθοσοι instead of άναστησιος or άνοικοδομησοι, likely due to Davidic Covenantal language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θυσις εκζητησοιν οι καταλοιποι των άνθρωπων και παντα τα εδεην υπ οι επικεκλεται το ονομα μου υπ αυτους,</td>
<td>οπως θην εκζητησοιν οι καταλοιποι των άνθρωπων των ιουδαιων και παντα τα εδεην υπ οι επικεκλεται το ονομα μου υπ αυτους,</td>
<td>Adds θυσις. Adds a direct object (των Κόσμων) which is not present in the LXX, thus reflecting Zechariah 8:22.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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.

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