

# *The Septuagint and Apostolic Hermeneutics: Amos 9 in Acts 15*

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*The decision of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 clarified the identity and mission of the church. James's speech in Acts 15:13–21 is the most crucial and controversial part of the discussion at the Council, because he gives the scriptural basis for the decision of the Council. According to Acts 15, James resolves the controversy at the Council by appealing to an adapted and conflated text of the Septuagint of Amos 9:11–12. This essay addresses some of the issues concerning the meaning, exegetical basis, and historical credibility of James's scriptural argument, as reported in Acts 15. In making its decision, the Council employed Jewish hermeneutical methodology, the Septuagint and MT texts, and testimony concerning God's recent work among the Gentiles. This essay argues that the scriptural basis in Amos 9:11–12 for the inclusion of Gentiles, as Gentiles, in the end-time people of God is the restoration of the "tent of David," which is the reign of the Davidic dynasty in the person of Jesus Christ. This Messianic reign is not as it would have been envisioned in the time of Amos, it is the reign of Messiah Jesus as universal Lord at God's right hand, and it involves the administration of new covenant blessings.*

*Key Words* Acts 15, Amos 9, apostolic decree, Davidic covenant, Jerusalem Council, Jewish hermeneutics, Leviticus 17–18, LXX, Septuagint

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most important turning points in the spread of the gospel and the book of Acts is the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. The church was facing a crisis: Could Gentiles be saved as Gentiles without circumcision and the Law of Moses? At issue was the interpretation of the Law of Moses ("custom of Moses," 15:1) concerning the place of Gentiles in the eschatological people of God.<sup>1</sup> This had become such a problem in the church at Antioch

1 Marshall suggests there was a developing interpretation of the Mosaic Law in Judaism that was very important because "the law determined the characteristic manner of life" (I. Howard Marshall, "Acts," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* [ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 588–89). Crucial to the early Jewish Christians was the question of how the law applied to them and their Gentile converts.

that they sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders (15:1–5). The problem was resolved, according to Acts 15, by a quotation from Amos 9 LXX, which differs markedly from the MT and seems out of place in a council at Jerusalem. The focus of this study is that quotation and the textual, hermeneutical, and theological issues related to it.

Acts 15 records four different stages in the discussion of Gentiles at the Jerusalem Council. Peter addresses the Council (15:6–11), then Paul and Barnabas report on their ministry (15:12), then James speaks and cites Scripture that determines the Council's stance toward the Gentile mission, and finally the Council issues an Apostolic Decree containing requirements for Gentile converts (15:19–35).

Peter's speech (15:6–11) recounts his experience beginning with the conversion of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10). He points out that on that occasion God gave the Spirit to uncircumcised Gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη, 15:7)<sup>2</sup> just as he had done previously to Jews.<sup>3</sup> This gift of the Spirit is evidence that God accepts Gentiles as Gentiles (15:8); he has purified their hearts by faith (τῆ πίστει καθάρσας τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν, 15:9),<sup>4</sup> just like he purified Jews. On the basis of these historical events, Peter argues that the leaders in Jerusalem ("you," 15:10) should not test God by putting on the Gentiles the burden of the Law, which the Jewish forefathers could not bear. Both Jews and Gentiles are being saved through "the grace of our Lord Jesus" (15:11). God is now sanctifying Gentiles, as Gentiles; thus, the only possible conclusion is that the administration of the Law has ended.

The second stage in the Council meeting, as recorded by Luke, is the testimony of Paul and Barnabas "about the miraculous signs and wonders

2 See Acts 10 44–47, 11 15–17. The Spirit signifies that the age of Messianic salvation and deliverance promised in the OT has arrived (Isa 11, 32, 42, 44, 61, Ezek 36–37, Joel 2). The Spirit is one of the blessings promised in the new covenant (Ezek 36 25–27).

3 This baptism with the Spirit that Cornelius and his house receive is clearly connected in Luke–Acts with the baptism that John the Baptist promised when the Messiah comes and with the baptism that the Jews received in Acts 2. In Luke 3 17–19, John prophesies concerning a twofold baptism (Spirit and fire) in the Messianic Age. Both Acts 1 5, concerning the baptism of the Spirit on Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2), and Acts 11 15–17, concerning the pouring out of the Spirit on Cornelius's household (Acts 10), refer back to John's prophecy of Messianic Spirit baptism. Peter connects Acts 2 and Acts 10 in Acts 11 17, he concludes that, because God gave them (Gentiles) the same gift he gave us (Jews), how could I oppose God in resisting what he was doing? It is noteworthy that the purging with fire prophesied in Luke 3 is dropped in the language of Acts, and it was not a part of the experience of the disciples. It is apparently still to come (Acts 3 19–21).

4 In Luke, this phrase is probably about forgiveness of sins (Acts 2 38, 13 38) and the inward renewal that accompanies forgiveness (C. K. Barrett, *Acts: A Shorter Commentary* [London: T & T Clark, 2002], 229), but the juxtaposition of the verb καθαρῶ with κοινῶ in 10 15 and 11 9 (verses that also contain the only other two appearances of καθαρῶ in Acts and describe the conversion of Cornelius's household) suggests that the purification of hearts also had implications concerning ceremonial cleanness/uncleanness. "God, who knows the heart" has born witness to their cleanness by giving them the Spirit (15 8), which signifies new-covenant participation and all that entails (Jer 31 34, forgiveness of sins, Ezek 36 25–27, 33, cleansing from all your uncleanness), see Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (trans. J. Limburg, A. T. Kraebel, and D. H. Juel, Hermeneia, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 118.

that God had done among the Gentiles through them" (15:12; cf. esp. 14:3 but also 13:46–48; 14:21 and 27; and 15:3–4). This evidence confirms Peter's testimony that the Gentiles were receiving the Spirit and supports further the legitimacy of what began with Cornelius.

James's speech (15:13–21) is the crucial and deciding element in Luke's account of the Council, because it is based on Scripture. Bauckham notes, "the matter under discussion is one of *halakhah* (15:5), which could only be decided from Scripture."<sup>5</sup> James's speech is also the most controversial part of the report of the Council in Acts 15. There are questions about its meaning, the exegetical method employed in interpreting the OT, and its historical credibility.<sup>6</sup>

It appears that the focal text James utilized to support his scriptural argument for the inclusion of Gentiles as Gentiles in the eschatological people of God is Amos 9:11–12 LXX, and it is important that we take a look at this passage. However, Marshall notes that much more important than the differences between Amos LXX and Acts 15 are the differences between Amos 9:11–12 MT and LXX.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, we will begin our analysis of the text with a quick review of Amos 9:11–12 in the MT.

#### AMOS 9:11–12

##### *Amos 9:11–12 in the MT*

The epilogue of Amos (9:11–15) is the only positive message in the book.<sup>8</sup> It assumes that the judgment prophesied earlier in the chapter has already taken place, and it promises blessing, rebuilding, and restoration "in that day," after Israel (9:14) returns from exile and the nation is reestablished in the land. The prophecy that is employed in Acts 15, found in Amos 9:11–12, describes the restoration of the "booth of David" and the possession of the "remnant of Edom." There are several views concerning the referent of the "booth of David," but the simplest and most likely is that it refers to the fallen and weakened Davidic dynasty and kingdom,<sup>9</sup> which Yahweh

5 Richard Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles (Acts 15 13–21)" in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts* (ed Ben Witherington, Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1996), 154 See also idem, "James and the Jerusalem Church," in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, vol 4 *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting* (ed Richard Bauckham, Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 1995), 415–80, esp pp 452–67, which summarizes the argument in "James and the Gentiles (Acts 15 13–21)"

6 Because the main OT quotation in James's speech is from the LXX, and the argument James makes depends precisely on the differences between the LXX and the MT in that quotation, a common question is whether it originated with James or the Jerusalem church. It is often suggested that either Luke composed the speech or Luke depends on "Hellenistic Christian exegetical tradition" in his formulation of the speech (Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles," 155)

7 Marshall, "Acts," 589–90

8 For a discussion of the authenticity of this section, see Gary V Smith, *Amos* (rev ed, Mentor Ross-Shure, 1998), 374–78

9 See my *Finding Meaning in the Text Translation Technique and Theology in the Septuagint of Amos* (VTSup 126, Leiden Brill, 2009), 218–20, where I have attempted to defend this interpretation

promises to rebuild “as in the days of old” (9:11). To “possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations called by my name” (9:12) involves Judah’s (or Israel’s, under Judah’s leadership) military conquest of the nations that in the past had invaded and conquered them.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the MT promises that in the days to come the Davidic dynasty will be restored as in previous times, and the nation of Israel will extend its dominion over Edom<sup>11</sup> and other nations.

#### *Amos 9:11–12 in the LXX*

The context of these verses,<sup>12</sup> as well as the content, differs substantially between the LXX and the MT. Some suggest the reason for the differences

10 This sort of political or military domination does not exclude the idea that the nations would embrace the religion and God of Israel. The words *קָרָא שְׁמִי* (“called by my name”) appear in this order 14x in the MT. Among other things, they refer to the Lord’s relationship to the Temple (Jer 7 10, 11, 14, 30, 32 34, 34 15), Jerusalem (Jer 25 29, Dan 9 18), and his people (Jer 15 16, 2 Chr 7 14), see also Isa 4 1, 63 19, and 2 Sam 12 28. Note the similar phrases in Deut 28 10, 2 Sam 6 2, Isa 43 7, 65 1, Jer 14 9. Bauckham (“James and the Gentiles,” 168–69) comments that this phrase in Amos 9 12 originally “no doubt referred to the subjection of Israel’s neighbors to Davidic rule.” But he continues, “Even the MT could easily have been understood by a Jewish Christian as predicting the extension of Israel’s covenant status and privilege to the Gentile nations.” The phrase “denotes ownership and the act of possession” (Shalom M. Paul, *A Commentary on the Book of Amos* [Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991], 292), which can be accomplished by war (2 Sam 12 28) or agreement to the requests of those desiring to be owned and possessed (Isa 4 1). It indicates legal right of possession, and the name of the new owner is called over property when it is transferred from one owner to another (L. Jonker, “קָרָא,” *NIDOTTE* 3 973, Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “קָרָא,” *HALOT* 1130). Often in the OT, to be called by God’s name involves a relationship with him that gives the people involved the right to call on him for help (Jer 14 9, 15 15–6) and the responsibility to be loyal to him (Deut 28 10). When the phrase is applied to Israel, as God’s people, it is based on their covenant relationship with him (Deut 28 10, 2 Chr 7 14). Gentiles, by contrast, have not been called by the name of the Lord (Isa 63 19). This sort of covenant relationship for Gentiles, as is experienced by Israel, is not explicit in Amos 9 12 MT.

11 For a helpful survey of Edom and Edomites in the OT, see Kenneth G. Hoglund, “Edomites,” in *Peoples of the Old Testament World* (ed. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 335–47. Edom was called Israel’s “brother,” and Edomites could possibly become part of the “assembly of the LORD” (Num 20 14, Deut 23 8–10), in contrast to Ammonites and Moabites. However, because of their gloating over the demise of Judah (Obad 11–14) and their later occupation of the southern portions of Judah (Ezek 35 10–12), the Jews came to look on them with great bitterness (Ps 137 7, Obadiah). In keeping with Amos, Obadiah looked forward to a day when the Edomite occupation of Judea would be reversed (Obad 19). Hoglund (“Edomites,” 342) notes that “Oracles against Edom became a standard part of the prophetic denunciation of Israel’s enemies (Jer 9 25–26 [MT 9 24–25], 25 17–26, 49 7–22 [LXX 29 7–22], Ezek 25 12–14, 32 29, 35, Joel 3 19 [MT 4 19]).” Malachi refers to the desolation of Edom (Mal 1 2–3). Smith (*Amos*, 380) gives a summary of the long history of hatred and conflict between Edom and the Davidic kingdom. Note the inclusion of Edom among the surrounding nations (enemies?) of the Northern Kingdom in Amos 1–2 (1 11–12). Smith suggests (*ibid.*) that “Edom may have functioned as a representative of the human race (*‘dm*) [in the MT] as the Old Greek and the New Testament translates it”, thus could be supported by Isa 34 1–15 and 63 1–6.

12 It is worth noting that 9 9b in the LXX is not a message of judgment as in the MT (where Israel will be “sifted” and none will escape). Instead, the last clause of 9 9 is “a confident

is that the LXX is based on a Vorlage that differs from the MT.<sup>13</sup> However, there is no evidence of this Vorlage in the Hebrew textual tradition. The only other early textual evidence containing this passage is 4Q174 (4QFlor), the context of which is discussed below, and the scroll of the Twelve from Wadi Murabba'at; these manuscripts only contain a few words from Amos 9:11–12, and both agree with the MT.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, to suggest that a difference in Vorlage is the reason for the differences between the MT and the LXX in Amos 9:11–12 is only conjecture, and other possible explanations must be considered.<sup>15</sup>

The translation of Amos 9:11 LXX is close to the MT; however, the LXX is much more polished.<sup>16</sup> The key term in the verse is the “tent” (τῆν

oracle of salvation” that destruction will never again fall on the land to afflict it and its inhabitants. After the time of exile and punishment, the Lord promises the true remnant of Israel a new era of freedom and peaceful occupation of the land, there will be no more destruction and punishment (Jennifer Mary Dines, *The Septuagint of Amos: A Study in Interpretation* [Ph D thesis, University of London, 1991], 289). I would render the last clause of Amos 9:9 LXX “Destruction shall never fall on the land” (Glenny, *Finding Meaning in the Text*, 215).

13 See the discussion in Marshall, “Acts,” 590.

14 The Scroll of the Twelve from Wadi Murabba'at “follows the MT” in 8:11–9:15, and 4Q174 has only four words in 9:11, all of which agree with the MT (David L. Washburn, *A Catalog of Biblical Passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002], 145, and Beate Ego et al., eds., *Biblia Qumranica*, vol. 3b *Minor Prophets* [Leiden: Brill, 2005], 67). The Greek manuscript 8HevXIIgr from the last half of the first century B.C. has nothing from this passage and in Amos only contains a few words from 1:5.

15 Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva (*Invitation to the Septuagint* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000], 195) agree that there is “little reason to posit a different Hebrew Vorlage here.” Conversely, Jostein Ådna argues that “the LXX reflects an interpretation already present in the Hebrew text tradition” (“James’s Position at the Summit Meeting of the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem [Acts 15],” in *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles* [ed. J. Ådna and H. Kvalbein, WUNT 127, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000], 131). However, the evidence presented by Ådna is conjecture, for example, foundational to the argument presented is the “possibility” that the variation between the MT’s reading “possess” and the LXX’s reading “seek” could be because “a variation already existed in a Hebrew text tradition” (130), i.e., the second *yod* in יִרְשׁוּ (“possess”) was misread as a *dalet* resulting in יִרְשׁוּ (“seek”). This is certainly possible, but I am aware of no evidence for it in the Hebrew textual tradition. Ådna (*ibid.*, following Nagele) suggests implicit midrash took place during the transmission of the Hebrew text.

16 The major difference is the translator’s harmonization of the Hebrew pronominal suffixes (“their breaches,” feminine plural, “his ruins,” masculine singular, and “her,” feminine singular) so they all refer to the “tent” (τῆν σακηνῆν), as a result, “collapsed parts of it” (τὰ πεπτωκота αὐτῆς) and “ruined parts of it” (τὰ κατεσκαμμενα αὐτῆς) are both parts of the “tent.” Also James A. Arieti (*A Study in the Septuagint of Amos* [Ph D thesis, Stanford University, 1972], 31) calls the rendering of “breaches” (פְּרָצִי) as “collapsed parts” (perfect passive participle from πτω) a paraphrase.

See Dines, “Amos,” 293–94, for a comparison with the less stylish MT. Not only have the pronouns been harmonized in the LXX, but also the first and third verbs are identical (ἀναστῆσω) as are the second and fourth (ἀνοικοδομησω). (In the MT, the first and third verbs are the same and the second and fourth are different.) The fourfold repetition of the prepositional prefix (ανα-) and the two perfect passive participles from πτω add to the assonance. As a chiasmic hub, the verse contains the central phrases “the collapsed parts of it and the ruined parts of it” (τὰ πεπτωκота αὐτῆς και τὰ κατεσκαμμενα αὐτῆς). Although Wolff and Stuart allow that many of these refinements were in the LXX’s Vorlage, the stylistic refinements just mentioned suggest they are more likely “logical and stylistic improvements” of the translator (Dines,

σκηνήν) of David that is to be restored and of which all the “collapsed” and “ruined” things in the verse are a part. In the LXX, this term (436x) describes a tent or hut, the tabernacle, or the feast of tabernacles. In Amos 5:26 LXX, it describes the portable sanctuary or tabernacle of Moloch, and in 9:11 it seems to be used metaphorically, as in the MT, to refer to the dynasty and kingdom of David.<sup>17</sup> This understanding of it is supported by the parallel use in Isa 16:5<sup>18</sup> and the context of Amos 9:11, which describes the divided and weakened state of Israel. Thus, the verse promises a future restoration of David’s dynasty and the kingdom over which it rules so that it will be like it was in former times.<sup>19</sup> The reference to “Israel” in 9:14 indicates that the restoration described in this passage has implications beyond Judah that include the whole nation.

The differences between the MT and the LXX in Amos 9:12 are better known than those in 9:11 because of their importance in the quotation in Acts 15. The LXX differs from the MT reading, “that they may possess the remnant of Edom” (לִמְעַן יִרְשׁוּ אֶת-שְׂאֵרֵי־אֶדְוֹם); instead the LXX text reads, “that the remnant of men may seek (me)” (ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων). Whereas in the MT the Lord was going to rebuild the dynasty of David so that they might possess the remnant of Edom, in the LXX the Lord will restore it so that (ὅπως plus the aorist subjunctive) the remnant of men may seek him.<sup>20</sup>

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“Amos,” 294, cf Hans Walter Wolff, *Joel and Amos* [Hermeneia, Philadelphia Fortress, 1977], 350 and Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* [WBC 31, Waco, TX Word, 1987], 396) This is especially true of the fourfold repetition of the prepositional prefix (αὐα-), which is more than stylistic and emphasizes rebuilding and restoration (E Richard, “The Creative Use of Amos by the Author of Acts” *NT* 24 [1982], 48)

17 I defend this interpretation of the “tent of David” in Amos 9 11 LXX in *Finding Meaning in the Text*, 220–24

18 This verse describes one who will sit on a throne in the “tent of David” (ἐν σκηνῇ Δαυὶδ) and judges in truth and righteousness

19 Amos 9 11 is also quoted (without 9 12) in CD 7 16 and in 4Q174 3 12 In the former, by the use of connection with allegorical interpretation of Amos 5 26–27, the “tent of David” in Amos 9 11 is taken to represent the books of the Law that will be reestablished and interpreted by someone who will be raised up to lead the nation, in the latter, the “booth of David” refers to the “shoot of David,” who will arise (along with the Interpreter of the Law) to fulfill the Davidic covenant and deliver Israel (4 Kgdms 7), the eschatological, messianic interpretation of 4Q174 3 12 is similar to the text’s meaning in Amos 9 The connections of “the booth of David” at Qumran with the Law or the Interpreter of the Law are in contrast to Acts 15, where the raising of the “booth of David” is used as evidence that Gentiles do not have to keep the Law It is possible that the LXX translator of Amos 9 11 understood the prophecy to refer to the restoration of Jerusalem by Nehemiah or the rebuilding of the Temple by Joshua and Zerubbabel, who was the last descendant of David in the OT Sur 49 12 praises these last two characters because “they built the house (ἠκοδομησαν οἶκον) and raised up a holy temple to the Lord” The next verse praises Nehemiah, who “raised our fallen walls” (τοῦ ἐγειραντος ἡμῖν τεῖχη πεπτοκῶτα) There is nothing in Amos 9 11 LXX to prove to whom the translator felt the passage referred, and readers of it could have applied the concepts in it to several different situations It does appear that Amos 9 11 was an important “prophecy” for several communities Dines discusses the possibility that Dan 11 14 LXX is dependent on Amos 9 11 (Dines, “Amos,” 296–300, see also P D M Turner, “Ἀνοικοδομεῖν and Intra-Septuagintal Borrowing” *VT* [1977] 472–73)

20 The verb “may seek” does not have an object However, it picks up again the theme of “seeking the Lord” (from Amos 5 4, 6), and that earlier theme plus the immediate context

Gelston suggests that the differences between the MT and the LXX in Amos 9:12 were caused by the translator's misreading of an unclear Hebrew Vorlage. He contends that the differences in this verse are the result of the translator's confusion of one letter; the translator confused the second *yod* in יִרְשׁוּ ("possess") for a *dalet* and read יִרְשׁוּ ("seek"). He adds that the other main change, reading "Edom" as "men," is "essentially a matter of vocalization, and it may very well be the case that the vocalic *waw* [in אֲדוֹם] was not yet present in the Vorlage of the LXX."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, he proposes that the difference in the syntax of the clause in the Septuagint, changing the "remnant" from the direct object as it is in the MT to the subject, may be because the particle אַת, marking the direct object in the MT, "was a secondary refinement not yet present in the Vorlage of the LXX," or it was ignored by the translator, who could not make sense of it in light of the way he read the verb.<sup>22</sup> Thus, according to Gelston, the translator misread the verb, and as a result of that misreading he took advantage of other exegetical possibilities in the text to make sense of the rest of the verse.<sup>23</sup> Most would agree with some of Gelston's suggestions; it is possible that there was no vocalic *waw* in אֲדוֹם or particle marking the direct object in the translator's Vorlage. However, his explanation for the difference in the LXX from the MT in Amos 9:12 is part of a larger thesis he develops attempting to explain twenty-three differences between the MT and the LXX in Amos by obscurities in the LXX translator's Vorlage. His argument is not convincing, and I have addressed it in some detail elsewhere.<sup>24</sup> In Amos 9:12 Gelston seems to base too much on the misreading of one letter.

Jobs and Silva comment on this passage in some detail, and they suggest something more than a mistake is behind the LXX rendering in this case. They write,

Since the Hebrew preserved in the MT is not particularly difficult, we may consider the possibility that the LXX translator—whether or not he made a mistake in reading the Hebrew characters—was primarily motivated by hermeneutical concerns. Elsewhere in the Minor Prophets (Hos. 9:6; Amos 2:10; Ob. 17, 19, 20; Mic. 1:15; Hab. 1:6; Zech. 9:4) the Hebrew word יִרְשׁוּ is represented with κληρονομέω ("to inherit") or

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suggest that the reader is to supply "me" (με), as several Lucianic manuscripts and versions do Alexandrinus, influenced by Acts 15 17, supplies "the Lord" for the object of "seek"

21 Anthony Gelston, "Some Hebrew Misreadings in the Septuagint of Amos" *VT* 52 (2002) 498

22 *Ibid*

23 The only other option Gelston considers for explaining the changes in this verse is the possibility that the Septuagint represents the original text of the passage, which he rejects, favoring the idea that "the LXX rendering arose initially through the accidental misreading of a single Hebrew letter" (Gelston, "Hebrew Misreadings," 499) See also Gleason L. Archer and G. C. Churchignone, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 155, who suggest emending the MT to a text reflecting the LXX

24 See my more complete response to Gelston's suggestion (in "Hebrew Misreadings") concerning twenty-three differences between MT and LXX in Amos in W. Edward Glenny, "Hebrew Misreadings or Free Translation in the Septuagint of Amos?" *VT* 57 (2007) 524–47

one of its cognates, but such a rendering may have appeared to the translator less appropriate here.<sup>25</sup>

Dines also posits the possibility of a theological rendering here. She suggests that the translator may have been influenced by other texts, especially Zech 14:2, 9, and 16, which contain phrases similar to Amos 9:12 (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη and καταλειφθῶσιν ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν).<sup>26</sup> Zech 8:22 is another text from a context similar to Amos 9 that also could have influenced the translator of Amos; it reads, "and many peoples and many nations will come to seek the face of the Lord Almighty in Jerusalem" (καὶ ἤξουσιν λαοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐκζητῆσαι τὸ πρόσωπον κυρίου παντοκράτορος ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ).<sup>27</sup> The reference in this text to the "nations" that "seek" the Lord may be behind the translator's change from "possess" to "seek" discussed above.<sup>28</sup> By employing a Jewish method of interpretation called *gezerah shavah*, the interpreter could link two texts that shared a common word or phrase, such as "Gentiles," so that one text could be explained or expanded in light of the other.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Jobs and Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 195

<sup>26</sup> Dines, "Amos," 302, the context in Zech 14 describes the defeat of the "nations" and also their later recognition of God. The MT emphasizes the former and the LXX emphasizes the latter. Dines also suggests other texts such as Isa 19:16–25 may have influenced the translator. James Karol Palmer, ("Not Made with Tracing Paper" *Studies in the Septuagint of Zechariah* [Ph D thesis, Cambridge University, 2004], 134–35) argues that Isa 19:16–25 influenced the translator of Zechariah from the way he renders 8:21. McLay also lists three possible explanations for the differences between the MT and LXX in Amos 9:12, and each of McLay's possibilities involves some degree of "theological rendering" or "scribal emendation." He suggests (1) the translator may have read it the way he did "to create a theological rendering", (2) he may have "misread the verb and *Edom* and rendered the text in a way that made sense to him", or (3) a mediating position is that he did not completely understand the text, and he "assumed that the scribe who had copied the Hebrew text had made an error," and therefore he introduced change to make sense of the passage (see R. Timothy McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 21).

<sup>27</sup> See Palmer, "Zechariah," 135–36, for a discussion of a possible connection between Amos 9:7 and Zech 8:20–23. The title "Lord Almighty" is important in both of these contexts (see Amos 9:15 LXX and Zech 8:22–23), emphasizing God's sovereignty over all the nations.

<sup>28</sup> In my study of translation technique in Amos LXX, I found evidence of an interest in and openness to Gentiles, or "nations," on the part of the LXX translator of Amos. Amos 9:11–12 is one example of that, and another is 9:15, where the MT's "the Lord your God" becomes "the Lord, the God, the Almighty One," describing God as a universal God rather than the God of Israel found in the MT text (Glenny, *Finding Meaning in the Text*, 228).

<sup>29</sup> The material on the hermeneutics employed within Judaism of the Second Temple Period is voluminous. I am basing my descriptions on David Instone-Brewer, "Theology of Hermeneutics," in *Encyclopaedia of Midrash* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck, 2 vols., Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1:294. Some of the theological presuppositions that underlie this methodology (*gezerah shavah*) are the beliefs that there is a single author of Scripture and that it is written with an exactitude that does not allow for any contradiction or ambiguity. See also idem, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (TSAJ 30, Tübingen, 1992), and Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (2nd ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 20. F. F. Bruce uses Amos 9:12 as an example of prophetic interpretation in the Septuagint. He writes, "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

Another possible example of Jewish hermeneutics in the rendering of Amos 9:12 LXX is the change from “the remnant of Edom” (MT) to “the remnant of men” (LXX). This appears to be an example of the logical hermeneutical method, *qal wahomer*, or the argument from major to minor.<sup>30</sup> The change may have been made because if the people of Edom, Israel’s perpetual enemy, are able to seek the Lord as Edomites, then all the Gentiles are surely able to seek the Lord, as Gentiles.<sup>31</sup>

Bauckham emphasizes that it is important to understand “the way in which Jewish exegesis of this period treated the biblical text, as the Dead Sea Scrolls in particular have now made clear to us.”<sup>32</sup> He continues to explain that a Jewish reader would have understood that the type of reading found in Amos 9:12 LXX was “either a variant text or a deliberate alternative reading of the text.”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, it was hardly possible to tell the difference between variants in the text that had arisen accidentally in the transmission of the text and variants that were the result of reading the text differently by means of small changes.<sup>34</sup> He concludes, “The ‘misreading’ of the Hebrew text presupposed by the LXX of Amos 9.12 is quite comparable with many examples of deliberate ‘alternative readings’ (*al tqrê*) in the Qumran pesharim.”<sup>35</sup>

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belonged” He claims that Amos 9 11–12 is one of the best-known examples of this (see F F Bruce, “Prophetic Interpretation in the Septuagint,” *BIOSCS* 12 [1979] 17) Bruce allows for revoicalization and misreading, as Gelston suggests, but he argues, “the total effect is more than the sum of these textual variants”

30 Longenecker (*Biblical Exegesis*, 20) calls it an argument from “lesser to greater”, i.e., “what applies in a less important case will certainly apply in a more important case” Instone-Brewer defines it as “major to minor,” but either way the logic is the same

31 Jobs and Silva (*Invitation to the Septuagint*, 195) suggest, “Possibly inspired by the parallel concept of ‘all the nations,’ he [the translator] in effect harmonized ‘Edom’ to the context, an instance of the part for the whole, that is, one pagan nation representing all nations In line with the spiritual thrust of the rest of the verse (‘upon whom my name is called’), the translator then expressed the concept of possessing Edom in terms of human response to God” The parallelism of Edom and the nations here and in other verses (like Isa 63 1–6, 34 1–15, and Obad 15–21) suggests also that Edom could have functioned in the OT as a representative of all the nations See p 4 n 11

32 Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 160

33 Ibid, 160–61

34 Ibid, 161 In later rabbinic terminology, these deliberate “alternative readings” were called *al tqrê*, see the example from the LXX in Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, 178 See also George J Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* (JSOTSup 29, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1985), 29–36 and 281, 284, 288–89, and 327 for examples in the Targumim and Qumran literature Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 161, n 20 has a fuller bibliography on the topic Instone-Brewer (“Theology of Hermeneutics,” 297) concludes that *al tqrê* readings are not found in rabbinic traditions before A D 70, but they are sometimes employed in sectarian Judaism during that period He describes the method as a word play that emended the text to introduce a meaning not otherwise found in the text In my study of translation technique in the LXX, I found many examples of such a method, especially where the source text is difficult or ambiguous (Glenny, *Finding Meaning in the Text*)

35 Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 161 Bauckham is speaking primarily of the exegetical practices and thinking connected with using Amos 9 12 LXX in Acts 15, but the same principles apply to the translation technique of the LXX translators G K Beale, (*The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* [NSBT 17, Grand Rapids

In summary, it appears that several factors may have influenced the LXX translator in this passage, and the changes likely reflect the theology of the translator, which was influenced by other portions of Scripture, especially the Prophets. The perspective of the LXX concerning Gentiles in Amos 9:11–12 would be much more attractive than that of 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.<sup>36</sup> It was also the perfect text for the argument that the apostles made at the Jerusalem Council, which is the next object of our consideration.

#### JAMES'S USE OF AMOS 9:11–12 IN ACTS 15

The thesis of James's short speech that is recorded in Acts 15:13–21 is that the present ingathering of Gentiles, as Gentiles, which was reported by Peter, Barnabas, and Paul in the earlier context (15:7–12), is consistent with prophetic expectation.<sup>37</sup> He began the speech with reference to Simon's description of the salvation of the house of Cornelius: "first God visited [or concerned himself]<sup>38</sup> to take out of the nations a people for his name."<sup>39</sup> Thus, he continued the argument Peter began that God is now taking Gentiles to be his people, and he places the beginning ("first") of this with the salvation of Cornelius's house, to which Peter referred in 15:7. James then built his argument from Scripture on Peter's testimony, stating that the words of the "prophets" agree with "this," and he quoted a text similar to Amos 9:11–12 LXX in support ("as it is written"). James's appeal to divine authority with the formula "it is written" indicates that he feels the OT Scriptures speak directly to the issue that the Council is debating.<sup>40</sup>

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Baker, 2004], 242–43) concludes concerning Amos 9 12 that the most likely explanation for its text is that the "Greek Old Testament and Acts is an interpretation of the Hebrew"

36 The desire for Jews in the Diaspora to be accepted and to demonstrate to the Gentile world that their religion was credible and even desirable for Gentiles is seen in works like *Aristeas*. See also Glenn, *Finding Meaning in the Text*, 216–28

37 This agrees with James's decision (with Cephas and John) in Gal 2 6–9, which was likely at an earlier visit of Paul to Jerusalem (see Acts 11 29–30, 12 25)

38 BDAG 378 suggests the meaning "concern himself about" here. The verb (ἐπισκεπτομαι) is used throughout Scripture (LXX) to describe God's saving acts on behalf of Israel, his people (Gen 50 24–25, Exod 3 16, 4 31, 13 19, Ruth 1 6, 1 Sam 2 21, Ps 79 15 [Heb 80 14], 105 4 [Heb 106 4], Jer 36 10 [Heb 29 10]). See its similar use in Luke 1 68, 78–79, 7 16, note also the same theme in Luke 19 41–44

39 See the discussion above in the OT contexts on the theological significance of this language "People" (λαος) is especially important in the LXX (and also in Luke–Acts) as a description of God's elect, covenant people, in contrast to the Gentiles (ἔθνη). In the OT, God chose Israel out from among the nations to be his people, and now he is calling individuals out of the nations to be his people. "For his name" in 15 14 anticipates "called by my name" in the OT quotation in 15 17

40 The reference to God taking a people for his name from among the nations in the introduction to the quotation ("God visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name," 15 14), which alludes to the language in the quotation (15 17), supports further that the reason James was citing Amos was because this passage speaks directly to the matter before the Council. If the Scripture quoted does not speak directly to the matter before the Council, it takes the authority out of James's appeal to Scripture

*The Text Form of the Quotation in Acts 15:16–18*

The text quoted in Acts 15 evidences dependence on the LXX, but it also evidences significant, and apparently deliberate, divergence from the LXX. Bauckham is correct: “James’s quotation is far from simply a quotation of the LXX text of Amos 9:11–12 ‘with small variations.’”<sup>41</sup> It appears to be a conflation of several different texts (that is, “the words of the prophets,” v. 15). The opening words of the quotation, “after this I will return” (Μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω) and the last words, “that have been known for ages” (γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος), are not from Amos 9:11–12. Also, “the Lord” (τὸν κύριον), which is the object of the verb “seek,” and the particle ἄν are added in Acts 15:17. In addition, two phrases in Amos 9:11 LXX are omitted in Acts 15: “and I will build up the fallen parts of it” (καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς) and “as the days of old” (καθὼς αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος).<sup>42</sup> Other changes from the LXX in the Acts quotation are also important: two times in Acts the verb ἀνοικοδομήσω, “I will build up,” replaces occurrences in the LXX of ἀναστήσω, “I will raise up” (translating  $\text{D}^{\text{P}}\text{X}$ ), and one occurrence of ἀνοικοδομήσω in the LXX (καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτήν, Amos 9:11) is rendered ἀνορθώσω, “I will restore” (καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτήν) in Acts 15:16.<sup>43</sup>

*Sources Used in the Quotation in Acts 15:16–18*

Because in Acts 15:15 James introduces his OT quotation by stating that the “the prophets” (plural) agree with the testimony of Peter, Barnabas, and Paul, we should not be surprised if James’s reference to the Scripture reflects several different contexts.<sup>44</sup> That certainly seems to be the case.<sup>45</sup>

41 Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 156–57. He is quoting K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury (*The Beginnings of Christianity*, part 1/4 *The Acts of the Apostles* [ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, London, 1933], 176), who believe it is quoted “with small variations.” Bauckham has a very helpful discussion of the text of Acts 15:16–18 (esp. on pp. 156–70). *Adna* (“James’s Position,” 132) agrees with Bauckham; she says, “we cannot jump to the conclusion that Acts 15:16–18 is simply a direct LXX quotation, with only minor deviations from this source.”

42 See Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 160, for his suggestions of why these were omitted; his suggestions are in keeping with his interpretation of the “tent of David” as the “Temple in the messianic age.” The first of the two omissions (καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς) may have been considered repetitive, or in Acts it may have been conflated with the preceding clause from the LXX (ἀναστήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν), the NT uses the verb originally found in this omitted clause (ἀνοικοδομήσω) in the preceding clause (thus, ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν) instead of ἀναστήσω, which was found in the LXX. The omission of “as the days of old” in Acts may have been because what was being done, as reflected in the conflated quotation in Acts 15:16–18a, was not “as the days of old.”

43 If the citation in Acts was meant to refer to the resurrection of Christ, it is hard to imagine any reason why the author (or speaker) would have twice substituted ἀνοικοδομήσω for ἀναστήσω, a reading excellently suited for such a purpose.

44 I have suggested above that the LXX translator already was influenced by Zech 8:22–23, and it seems James (or Luke) was aware of that with his reference to “the prophets.” Some of the additions that are made to the quotation in the NT, as developed below, are then simply a further clarification of what the LXX text was already saying.

45 Robertson suggests James “was quoting Amos as a single source which represented a message which could be found in many other prophets” (O. Palmer Robertson, “Hermeneutics

The first words of the citation, "After this" (μετὰ ταῦτα), are a change from "in that day" in Amos 9:11.<sup>46</sup> It is generally understood that these words reflect Hos 3:5. In Hos 3:4, the prophet predicts that Israel will live many days without a ruler ("king or ruler"), worship ("sacrifice or altar" in the LXX), or even idols; this is apparently a reference to their captivity. However "after this" (μετὰ ταῦτα) they will return and be reconciled to "the LORD their God and David their king"; these times are called "the last days" at the end of v. 5.<sup>47</sup> "After this" in Acts 15:16 reflects the eschatological connotations of Amos's "in that day." In Amos, the rebuilding of "the tent of David" takes place after the exile and judgment described in the preceding context. Hosea 3 looks to a day when Israel will seek the Lord and David their king, implying that a Davidic king will again rule over Israel and explicitly connecting Israel's worship of ("seek") the Lord with their "seeking" David.<sup>48</sup> This is parallel with the idea of the building of the tent of David and the nations seeking the Lord in Acts 15:17. Thus, the adjustment of the text in Acts, changing "in that day" to "after this," does not change the meaning in Amos, but it does connect the text with an interesting Davidic parallel in Hosea 3.

The source of the Lord's promise that "I will return" in Acts 15:16 (ἀναστρέψω) could be Zech 8:3 (τάδε λέγει κύριος καὶ ἐπιστρέψω ἐπὶ Σιών)<sup>49</sup> or, even more likely, Jer 12:15 (καὶ ἔσται μετὰ τὸ ἐκβαλεῖν με αὐτοῦς ἐπιστρέψω).<sup>50</sup> In Jer 12, the context before v. 15 describes God's abandonment of the temple (12:7) and the judgment of his people. Jer 12:14–17 then explains what happens to Israel's "pagan neighbors" (a neighbor that rebels against the Lord is called τὸ ἔθνος ἐκεῖνο in v. 17) "after" (καὶ ἔσται μετὰ) the judgment of Israel and those nations. "After" casting Israel's pagan neighbors out of their land, the Lord returns and has mercy on them (that is, Israel), reestablishing them in their own lands and establishing in the midst of his

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of Continuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity* [ed. John S. Feinberg, Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988], 345 n. 7) I wonder if James would have considered the quotation to be "a single source", it seems from the introduction he is using Amos is pointing to what the prophets in general say

46 So Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles," 163, and Ådna, "James's Position," 133. Note the change in the Joel quotation in Acts 2:17 from Joel's "after these things" (μετὰ ταῦτα) to "in the last days" (ἐν ταῖς ἔσχαταις ἡμέραις).

47 See Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles," 163, for other connections between Hos 3:4–5 and Acts 15:16. The verbs "they will return" and "they will seek" in Hos 3:5 (ἐπιστρεψουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐζητήσουσιν) are similar to verbs in Acts 15:16 and 17.

48 The connection between David and the Lord is common in the OT (Isa 9:6–7, Ezek 34). The relationship between David and the Lord is the basis of Jesus' question for the Pharisees in Mark 12:35–37 (par. Matt 22:41–46 and Luke 20:41–44). See also Ps 110:1 and 2 Sam 7:16.

49 In the context of Zech 8:1–8, God returns to his people and dwells among them, and they are his people and he is their God. See the discussion above concerning the possible influence of Zech 8:22–23 on the LXX translation of Amos 9:12, the possible influence of Zech 8:22–23 on the quotation in Acts 15:16–17. It is discussed below. Zechariah 1:16 LXX is another important passage that could have influenced the conflation in Acts 15. At this point, it reads ἐπιστρέψω ἐπὶ ἱερουσαλήμ ἐν οἰκτιρῶν καὶ ὁ οἶκος μου ἀνοικοδομηθήσεται ἐν αὐτῇ λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ. See Palmer, "Zechariah," 109–11 on the LXX change to the future tense in Zech 1:16.

50 See also the connections in Zech 1:16.

people Israel (καὶ οἰκοδομηθήσονται ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ λαοῦ μου) those pagan neighbors who learn the ways of the Lord.<sup>51</sup> It should be noted that the verb “return” in Zech 8:3 LXX and Jer 12:15 LXX is ἐπιστρέφω, whereas Acts 15 employs ἀναστρέφω. It is possible that the verb was adapted in the quotation in Acts, so it is parallel with the other finite verbs in Acts 15:16, all having the same prefix (ανα-); the polished nature of the LXX rendering of Amos 9:11 might have influenced this sort of adaptation.<sup>52</sup> Also, Luke never uses ἀνορθώσω (18× in Luke–Acts) for God returning to his people.

It was noted above when discussing the LXX rendering of Amos 9:11–12 that already at that point Zech 8:22–23 apparently influenced the translator. That text tells of a time when “many peoples and many nations will come to seek earnestly the face of the Lord Almighty in Jerusalem.”<sup>53</sup> While the idea of the nations seeking the Lord may have influenced the translator of Amos LXX (καὶ ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐκζητήσῃ), it is not until the NT that “the Lord” is explicitly stated to be the object of the seeking, perhaps drawing further on Zech 8:22–23 (ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐκζητήσῃ τὸ πρόσωπον κυρίου) and thus clarifying what the LXX translator was already implying.<sup>54</sup>

Another passage that “agrees” with the testimony of Peter and has several verbal connections with Amos 9:11–12 LXX is Zech 2:14–17[2:10–13]. In vv. 14–15, the prophet commands Zion to rejoice because the Lord is coming to live (ἐγὼ ἔρχομαι) among them (v. 14), and in that day (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ) many nations (ἔθνη πολλά) will flee to the Lord for refuge and become his people (καὶ ἔσονται αὐτῷ εἰς λαόν) and they will dwell in the midst of you [Israel],<sup>55</sup> and when this happens you will know that the “Lord Almighty” has sent “me” [the Lord]. The main verbal connector with Amos is the “nations,” who become the people of God, but there are also several conceptual connections. One of the most important is the concept of the Gentiles’ being God’s “people” (λαόν), something James referred to in

51 There is a textual variant in the LXX, B and S have “it will be built,” and most others have “they will be built”

52 Richard, “The Creative Use of Amos by the Author of Acts,” 48 It is also possible that the citation in Acts 15 is not influenced by another passage from the LXX in its addition of ἀναστρέφω. But other parallels between Amos 9:11–12 and Jer 12:14–17 suggest Jer 12 was influential in the quotation in Acts 15 (see Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 163–64). Luke also employs ἀναστρέφω one other time (Acts 5:22) in another construction where there is assonance between the two parallel verbs. As mentioned above, the related verb ἐπιστρέφω is much more common in Luke–Acts (18×), although it is never used of God returning to his people, it is much more commonly used for people repenting or being converted (Luke 1:16, Acts 15:19, 28:20).

53 The LXX reads, καὶ ἤξουσιν λαοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐκζητήσῃ τοῦ προσώπου κυρίου παντοκράτορος ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ τοῦ ἐξίλασκεισθαι τὸ πρόσωπον κυρίου

54 Alexandrinus does add “the Lord” as the object of “seek” in Amos 9:12, which was apparently influenced by the quotation in Acts, and several Lucianic manuscripts add “me.” Neither reading is thought to be original. From my study of the LXX translators, I would suggest that the translator did not add the object of the “seeking,” because there was no warrant for the addition in his Vorlage (Hebrew text of Amos) on which he could base such an addition. The LXX translators often adjusted the text, but normally all their renderings had a basis in their Vorlage. Therefore, the object of the seeking was only implied in the LXX.

55 MT has “I will dwell in the midst of you.”

Acts 15:14 before he quoted Amos 9. Of course, the idea of being “called by God’s name” in the Amos quotation (Acts 15:17) is another way to describe what it means to be God’s people.<sup>56</sup> Another important aspect of many of the verses discussed above that are connected with Amos 9:11–15 in Acts 15:16–18 is that after God revisits his people Israel “many nations” will flee to the Lord in Israel and dwell there.<sup>57</sup>

It was noted above that the last words of the OT citation in Acts 15:18, “that have been known from eternity” (γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος), are also an addition to the Amos passage. Thus the LXX Amos text “the God who is doing these things” (ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα) becomes in Acts 15:18 “making these things known from eternity” (ποιῶν ταῦτα γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος),<sup>58</sup> conflating Amos 9:12 and Isa 45:21, “who made these things heard from the beginning” (τίς ἀκουστὰ ἐποίησεν ταῦτα ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς).<sup>59</sup> The context of the Isa 45 passage is especially appropriate to be connected with Amos 9:11–12; it describes those who “are saved out of the nations” (οἱ σωζόμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν ἔθνῶν) and “those from the end of the earth” (οἱ ἀπ’ ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς), who will be saved (45:20, 22). They come and draw near to the only true God, the Lord (45:20–21). The conflation of the phrase from Isa 45:21 in the citation in Acts 15:18 emphasizes that the entrance of Gentiles into the people of God, as Gentiles, is part of the plan and purpose of God from eternity past.<sup>60</sup>

The survey of the sources conflated in the citation in Acts 15:16–18 indicates how extensive the foundation of the argument at the Council really was. James was referring to what the “prophets” said about the Gentiles, and Acts probably only gives a summary of his speech. He connected several contexts in order to bring out their meaning in light of the Christ events and the inauguration of the new covenant, and in all cases it is possible to show how he linked the texts by means of a shared word or phrase, a methodology called *gezerah shavah*.<sup>61</sup> As mentioned above concerning the LXX translation, this sort of link between two or more verses “enabled the interpreter to explain or expand one text in light of another.”<sup>62</sup> It appears

56 Another passage that has many conceptual parallels with Amos 9 11–12 and the other passages we have been considering is Isa 19 16–25 Palmer (“Zechariah,” 135) demonstrates the connection of Zech 8 22–23 with Isa 19 in the LXX

57 See the discussion of Zech 2 14–17[2 10–13], 8 3, 22–23, and Jer 12 15 It seems that the Council understood the Apostles and the Jews who had turned to Christ to be the beginning of the fulfillment of OT promises of God’s return to Israel and the restoration of the nation

58 Acts drops ὁ θεὸς ὁ before ποιῶν ταῦτα

59 In Isa 45 21 the MT has מי השמיע זאת מקדם מאז הגידה (“who caused this to be heard [proclaimed this] from ancient times?”) It is likely that the NT rendering is a translation from the MT text, there would be no reason for the one using this phrase in the quotation in Acts 15 to change the LXX if they were quoting directly from it

60 This context in Isaiah was important for early Christian exegesis (Phil 2 10, see also Rom 14 11)

61 Bauckham (“James and the Gentiles,” 156) states, “[T]he peculiar text-form of the conflated quotation in Acts 15 16–18 requires to be studied and understood as a product of skilled exegetical work” Often in this article Bauckham refers to the “exegete,” who is responsible for the conflated quotation in Acts 15 16–18

62 Instone-Brewer, “Theology of Hermeneutics,” 294

that the interpretation of Amos 9 by other related Scriptures began in the LXX translation of the text, but the citation in Acts goes farther with the expansion and explanation.<sup>63</sup> In Acts 15, Luke introduces this quotation from LXX Amos by stating that the “words of the prophets agree” with Peter’s testimony. Not only does he tell us he is referring to “prophets” (plural), but the verb “agree” (συμφωνοῦσιν) in v. 15 is appropriate to show that what follows is a conflation of several passages from the OT Scriptures, which “are in harmony” with Peter’s testimony (and thus with each other) concerning this topic.<sup>64</sup> The introductory formula, “as it is written” (καθὼς γέγραπται), connects the quotation with the Scriptures.<sup>65</sup> According to James, what Peter, Paul, and Barnabas have seen happening among the Gentiles is consistent with the message of the “prophets.”

However, it is important for modern interpreters to remember that the meaning of the “prophets,” as they were understood at the Council, would not have been obvious before the coming of Christ and the events that followed from it. James is saying that the message of the prophets is consistent, but he is also saying that their consistent message is in harmony with recent events. The decision made at the Council was based on Scripture interpreted by other Scripture, but it was also based on Scripture as it was interpreted in light of recent events, especially the conversion of Cornelius’s household and their subsequent reception of the Spirit (Acts 10–11, 15:6–15). Before God gave the Holy Spirit to Gentiles through the ministries of Peter and Paul, it is unlikely that many, other than perhaps Paul and those influenced by him, would have understood Amos 9:11–12 and the rest of the prophetic writings in the way James interprets them at the Council.<sup>66</sup> James’s interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures in Acts 15:13–18 builds on the testimonies of Peter, Paul, and Barnabas in Acts 15:7–12 concerning the outpouring of the Spirit on the Gentiles through their ministries. God gave further insight into the meaning of the Scriptures through those events. Thus, there is a sense in which the interpretation that took place at the Council was also “revelatory exegesis,”<sup>67</sup> interpreting the prophetic

63 See pp 4–10 above on the LXX text of Amos 9 11–12

64 BDAG, 960–61 Celsas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (ed and trans James D Ernest , 3 vols , Peabody, MA Hendrickson, 1994), 3 324–8, has a very helpful discussion of this word See esp p 325 n 6 He notes that Josephus uses the word to describe religious teaching that “conforms to the law” (*Ag Ap* 2 181) For critiques of the idea that this word only signifies something like “agree in principle,” see Walter C Kaiser Jr “The Davidic Promise and the Inclusion of the Gentiles (Amos 9 9–15 and Acts 15 13–18) A Test Passage for Theological Systems” *JETS* 20 (1977) 97–111, esp p 107, and Mark L Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke–Acts The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology* (JSNTSup 110, Sheffield Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 186

65 Willard M Aldrich (“The Interpretation of Acts 15 13–18” *BSac* 111 [1954] 317–23) cites a dozen different introductory formulae for OT quotations in Acts

66 The same thing takes place in Acts 2 with Peter’s interpretation of Scripture on the Day of Pentecost He interprets the Scripture in light of Christ’s resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit they had just experienced

67 This phrase is adapted from D A Carson’s “(revelatory) exegesis,” in “Mystery and Fulfillment Towards a More Comprehensive Paradigm of Paul’s Understanding of the Old

Scriptures not only in light of each other but also in light of God's acts in history. By means of the coming of Christ and the events following from it, God revealed new truth, some of which was hidden in the prophetic writings and is revealed through them.<sup>68</sup> James's reading of "the prophets" is in agreement with and influenced by what Simon has experienced and reported about God visiting the Gentiles "to take from them a people for his name" (15:14).

### *David's Fallen Tent*

The most controversial issue in the Amos quotation in Acts 15:16–18 is the referent intended by the "tent of David" in Acts 15. Strauss gives five interpretations of this "tent of David." I will summarize those five interpretations and support the fifth.

First, the "tent of David" could refer to "restored Israel made up of Jews who have accepted Jesus as their messiah."<sup>69</sup> For this view, championed by Jacob Jervell, the salvation of Gentiles (Acts 15:17) follows the salvation of Jews (Acts 15:16), which is what the restoration of the fallen tent of David refers to. One distinctive of this view is that its proponents insist "that restored Israel remains a group distinct from the Gentiles within the church, the people of God."<sup>70</sup> This understanding of the "tent of David"

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and the New;" in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol 2 *The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed D A Carson, Peter T O'Brien, and Mark Seifrid, Grand Rapids Baker Academic, 2004), 426, see his discussion on pp 422–25

68 Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment," explains the relationship between the Old and New Testaments in Paul's writings in terms of two polarities. Although Acts does not use the same terminology (that is, mystery) that Paul uses, the polarities Carson observes in Paul are not limited to the Pauline writings (Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment," 424–25 and 1 Pet 1 10–12). Carson's insights ("Mystery and Fulfillment," 397–98) apply well to Acts also, he writes

To put the matter succinctly. On the one hand, Paul holds that the old covenant Scriptures anticipate Christ, bear witness to him, prophesy of his coming and of his death and resurrection, and all that flows from it, including the existence of the church as the Jew-and-Gentile people of God who are the true children of Abraham. In other words, Christ (and all that flows from him) is properly thought of as fulfillment of antecedent revelation. Thus the first pair of polarities might be thought of as promise (however construed) and fulfillment. On the other hand, Paul holds that several elements in the gospel, and even the gospel itself, were hidden in the past, and have only been revealed with the coming of Christ. They constitute a *μυστήριον*, something that neither Jews nor Greeks had foreseen, and if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor 2). The second pair of polarities, then, is hiddenness and revelation. So the problem is this: how can the very things that are said, on the one hand, to be predicted in the past and now fulfilled, be said, on the other, to be hidden in the past and only now, in the fullness of time, revealed? On the surface, at least, the former polarity envisages certain kinds of continuity, the latter presupposes discontinuity.

Thanks to Nick Nowalk for his influence on my thinking concerning this topic.

69 Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 187. This is the view of Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), esp pp 51–54, 92–93, 143, and 147, who calls Gentile Christians an "associate people" of God, who are joined to the Jews, the people of God.

70 Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 188.

has several problems. It builds a distinction between Jews and Gentiles that is foreign to the context of Acts 15 and the rest of the NT (Eph 2). Furthermore, it does not do justice to the phrase “tent of David,” which does not naturally refer to Jewish converts to Christianity. Finally, in what sense can it be said that Jews were becoming Christians “so that” Gentiles would seek the Lord?<sup>71</sup>

A second view, held by the majority of commentators, understands the rebuilt tent of David to refer to “the restoration of true Israel.” This “true Israel” is now the “church as a whole” made up of both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>72</sup> This is similar to Bauckham’s understanding of the phrase. He argues that the “exegete” reflected in Acts 15 understood the “tent of David” to refer to “the Temple of the messianic age,” which is the Christian community.<sup>73</sup> This view also has some problems, because grammar requires that the rebuilt tent of David in Acts 15:16 be differentiated from the Gentiles’ seeking the Lord, as Gentiles, described in 15:17. The purpose or end in mind for rebuilding the tent (15:16) is “so that” (note ὅπως ἄν with an aorist subjunctive at the beginning of 15:17) the Gentiles may seek the Lord and be the people of God (15:17). The Gentiles seeking after the Lord is something beyond and fulfilling the purpose of the rebuilding of the “tent”; it does not seem to be a natural understanding of the grammar that the Gentiles’ seeking the Lord could be one aspect of the rebuilding of the “tent,” as required by this view.<sup>74</sup> The intended result of the rebuilding of the tent of David is that Gentiles seek the Lord (15:17). The same basic argument

71 See the helpful discussion in *ibid* , 189–90

72 *Ibid* , 188

73 Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 158–59, 181 Bauckham’s arguments are primarily theological and based on cross-references, in my opinion, he does not consider sufficiently the meaning of the texts reflected in Acts 15 16–18 in their OT contexts (esp Amos 9), the context in Acts, or the theology of Luke–Acts Bauckham acknowledges, “The idea of the Christian community as the eschatological Temple is never explicit in Luke’s writings, even if it is sometimes implicit” (*ibid* , 181–82) If the “exegete” who formulated the argument in Acts 15 had wanted to refer to the “temple” as “the Christian community,” as Bauckham argues, it seems he would have quoted Zech 1 16, or used it more explicitly in his argument See also Tob 13 11 (texts of B and A) where the “tent” (ἡ σκηνή) is the tent of the Lord (ἵνα παλιν ἡ σκηνὴ αὐτοῦ οἰκοδομηθῇ σοι μετὰ χαρᾶς) or in S “your tent”, the tent here is likely the temple but also could be Jerusalem (see 13 17) Tobit 14 5 speaks of the rebuilding of the temple, as described in “the prophets,” but the temple is called ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ Therefore, these last two texts do not offer strong support for his view either Beale (*The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 232–44, esp pp 235 and 238) connects the “tent of David in Acts 15 with the “resurrection of Christ” and the “eschatological temple”

74 Purpose clauses focus on the intention or goal of the action of the main verb, which could be accomplished or not accomplished (Result focuses on accomplishment) Purpose clauses look ahead to an intended or anticipated result, and sometimes one cannot make a clear distinction between purpose and result, especially when declaring the intention of the divine will In Acts 15 17, the purpose clause communicates God’s intentions, but it is also clear that he will accomplish his intentions, in fact, the argument in Acts 15 is based on the presupposition that it is already being accomplished and the anticipated results are being realized On the grammar of purpose clauses and phrases, see BDF 186–88 (§369), BDAG 378, and Daniel B Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids Zondervan, 1996), 472–74, 590

could be used against a related understanding of the "tent," held by F. F. Bruce. Proponents of this third view understand the "tent of David" to refer to "the whole plan of God accomplished through Jesus' resurrection-exaltation *and* the establishment of the church."<sup>75</sup> But as with the last view, if the rebuilt tent is the whole plan of God including the church, it already includes the Gentiles coming to God, so how can Gentile inclusion be the intended result of the rebuilding of the tent?

Haenchen, representing a fourth understanding of the "tent of David," demands a strict Christological reading, and for him the rebuilding and restoration of the "tent of David" refers to the resurrection of Jesus, in which the Davidic covenant is fulfilled.<sup>76</sup> This interpretation is attractive theologically, but it is unlikely, because in Acts the "exegete" has twice replaced the verb ἀνίστημι in the LXX Amos text with ἀνοικοδομέω; this adaptation of the text is very strange if he is referring to the resurrection of Jesus, because the verb ἀνίστημι would be preferred to describe the resurrection.

A fifth view is related to the fourth and adopted by Strauss. According to this view, the "tent of David" refers to "the restoration of the Davidic dynasty accomplished through the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus."<sup>77</sup> The "tent" is not the church or Israel but rather the "kingly reign" (of Jesus), which is the fulfillment of the promises made to David.<sup>78</sup> It was noted earlier that this is the understanding of Amos 9:12 in 4Q Flor, and it is also the interpretation of it in the Targum rendering.<sup>79</sup> I have argued above that this is the best understanding of Amos 9 in the MT and in the LXX.<sup>80</sup> This interpretation is also consistent with the theology of Luke. Perhaps the clearest example of this theological emphasis elsewhere in Luke's writings is in Acts 2.<sup>81</sup> In that chapter, Peter's sermon on Pentecost includes several references to Davidic fulfillment (Ps 132:11, 16:10, 110:1) to prove that Jesus is Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:32). And it is as Lord and Messiah, enthroned at God's right hand in fulfillment of Davidic promises, that Jesus administers salvation in this age to "whoever" calls on his name (2:21) and "pours out God's Spirit on all flesh" (2:33).<sup>82</sup>

75 Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 188 See F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (NICNT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 310

76 E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (trans. B. Nobel, G. Shunn, and R. M. Wilson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 448, Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 188

77 *Ibid.*, 190

78 *Ibid.*

79 Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 191 The Targum of Amos 9:12 reads, "At that time, I will set up again the kingdom of the house of David that has fallen"

80 Furthermore, "house (tent) of David" seems to be an unusual description of the temple. David was not allowed to build the first temple, and what would be the reason to call the eschatological temple his house?

81 See Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, for development of the theology of Luke. The fact that Davidic promise is fulfilled in the resurrection/ascension/exaltation of Jesus is also clear in Acts 13:32-37 (see also 13:22-23). Note also Luke 1:32-33 and 68-69

82 The argument of Heb 5, connecting 2 Sam 7 and Ps 2, makes it clear that the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek could not be established until Jesus was exalted and

*The Verbs in the Amos Quotation in Acts 15*

The verbs employed in the Amos quotation in Acts 15:16–18 strengthen the argument for understanding the “tent of David” as the Davidic dynasty or rule. And here I would like to interact briefly with Bauckham’s strong argument that the “tent” in Acts 15:16 refers to the “Temple of the messianic age,” which is the Christian community. Foundational to Bauckham’s interpretation of the Amos quotation in Acts 15 is the fact that the “exegete” responsible for the Acts 15 quotation twice replaces the verb “raise up” (ἀνίστημι) in the LXX text with “rebuild” (ἀνοικοδομέω). Bauckham considers it a given that the use of ἀνοικοδομέω in the Amos quotation in Acts 15 instead of ἀνίστημι indicates James is referring to “the restoration of a building.”<sup>83</sup> He reasons further that “an interpretation of the text, as referring to the restoration of the Davidic family to the throne (in the messianic rule of Jesus) [would not] easily account for our exegete’s insistence that it is a building that is to be built.”<sup>84</sup> He proceeds from that foundation to developing his argument that the “tent” in the Acts quotation must be the “the Temple of the messianic age,” that is, “the Christian community.”<sup>85</sup> The remainder of his argument for this interpretation is developed on the basis of the connection of related texts by the use of Jewish hermeneutical methods. However, he seems to overlook the possibility that the reason the “exegete” used the verbs “rebuild” (ἀνοικοδομέω) and “restore” (ἀνορθώω) as he did in Acts 15 may have been because he was making connections with other verses in his employment of those verbs, and the use of those verbs also reflects Jewish hermeneutical methodology.<sup>86</sup> I propose that the use of those verbs was not to emphasize the rebuilding of the temple, but it was rather to connect the quotation with the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles through references to it in the Latter Prophets, especially in Amos 9. Forms of the two finite verbs employed in the Amos quotation in Acts 15:16 that refer to the rebuilding and restoration of “the fallen tent of David” are repeated often in the original contexts of the Davidic covenant passages to describe the “building” of the Davidic dynasty (οικοδομέω in 2 Sam 7:11, 13, 27; 1 Chr 17:4, 6, 10, 12; Ps 88:5; and ἀνορθώω in 2 Sam 7:13, 16; 1 Chr 17:12, 14, 24; 22:10). The simple form of the verb οικοδομέω is used in the Davidic covenant passages, because the reference is to the original establishment of the dynasty and kingdom. The compound

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enthroned at God’s right hand. The fulfillment of the Davidic covenant promises of an eternal dynasty and reign are connected often in Scripture with the exaltation of the Messiah (Heb 1:4–5, Acts 2:16–36, 13:32–37). It is also likely that the emphasis on “the ends of the earth” in Acts (1:8 and 13:47, citing Isa 49:6) is related to the fact that the Davidic king of Israel is to rule to the “ends of the earth” (Ps 72[71]:8, Mic 5:4, Zech 9:10), once he is established on his throne, the movement to establish the rightful extent of his reign begins.

<sup>83</sup> Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 157, emphasis in original.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 158–59, 181.

<sup>86</sup> The two appearances of ἀνοικοδομέω in Acts 15:16 are the only two times it is used in the NT.

form (ἀνοικοδομέω) is employed in Amos and Acts, because the reference is to the rebuilding of that house. The other verb used at the end of Acts 15:16 to describe the restoration of the Davidic dynasty (ἀνορθώω) does not occur in Amos 9, and one might question why it is employed in Acts 15. The answer is found in the Davidic covenant narratives. It is found several times in those narratives and promises, and the “exegete” in Acts 15 leaves no doubt about his reference to those contexts by his use of it along with ἀνοικοδομέω.<sup>87</sup>

It is also important to remember that “prophets” in Acts 15:15 (“the words of the prophets”) could include material from Samuel and Chronicles. Luke 24:44 refers to the threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures, “Law, Prophets, and Writings,” and, of course, Samuel and Chronicles are included among the Former Prophets; furthermore, in Acts 3:24 the “prophets” are described as beginning with Samuel.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, the exegetical methods that were employed elsewhere in the composite quotation in Acts 15:16–18 were also employed in the exegete’s choice of finite verbs. Those verbs connect the scriptural reference with the Davidic covenant. Strauss’s conclusion concerning the “tent of David” in Acts 15 is worth quoting: “The restoration of the Davidic reign predicted in Amos 9:11–12 and accomplished in the resurrection-ascension of Jesus is presented by James as scriptural justification for the Gentile mission and as the means by which ‘the rest of mankind’ may seek the Lord.”<sup>89</sup>

#### THE APOSTOLIC DECREE

James’s citation from Amos 9 in Acts 15:16–18 is the scriptural basis for not imposing the Law on Gentile converts at the Jerusalem Council. But the Apostolic Decree that follows that citation in Acts 15:19–29, imposing four stipulations from the Law on the Gentile converts, also follows from James’s Amos citation (“therefore” in 15:19). It is generally recognized that the four prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree are from Lev 17:1–18:30.<sup>90</sup> But

87 The preposition ἀνα- is employed with each finite verb in Acts 15:16. This is stylistic, as mentioned above, and it explains the use of ἀναστρέφω where we would have expected ἐπιστρέφω from the parallel passages that the author draws on.

88 See also Luke 24:27, Acts 26:22–23, and 28:23, all of which describe the Hebrew Scriptures as the “Law and the Prophets.” David is called a “prophet” in Acts 2:29–30.

89 Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 192. Strauss concludes this without the verbal links we have made with the Davidic covenant promises in the Former Prophets. Our connections strengthen his conclusion. The fulfillment of Davidic covenant promises is connected in Acts with Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and his eternal reign (2:24–36, 13:30–39). Jesus Christ, the Davidic who fulfills the Davidic covenant promises, is also now reigning as Lord (Ps 110:1, Acts 2:36), and therefore he now mediates the Spirit and salvific benefits to all peoples (Acts 2:17, 21, 39, 10:44–45).

90 So also Beale, *The Temple*, 239–41, who believes these four prohibitions were chosen because they all involve commands to keep away from things “associated with idol worship” (p. 239). Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (2 vols., Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 2:1017, criticizes this understanding of why the four prohibitions were chosen for the

what is less clear in Acts is why these four prohibitions were chosen and how they could be related to the quotation from Amos.

Leviticus 17–18 MT contains five appearances of the phrase “the alien living among them [you]” (17:8, 10, 12, 13; 18:26).<sup>91</sup> The appearances of this phrase are connected to four different prohibitions in these chapters for Gentiles living in Israel; two are connected to the same prohibition (17:10 and 12). As a result, there are four things that are prohibited of “the alien living among you” in Leviticus, and they correspond in the same order to the four prohibitions in the Apostolic Decree:<sup>92</sup> (1) “Food sacrificed to idols” (εἰδωλοθύτων) in Acts 15:29 corresponds to Lev 17:8–9, which forbids offering a sacrifice whose meat could be eaten and not bringing it to the temple. Lev 17:7 connects this with idolatry. (2) “Blood” (αἷματος) in Acts 15:29 corresponds to Lev 17:10 and 12. (3) “Meat of strangled animals” (πνικτῶν) in Acts 15:29 corresponds to Lev 17:13, which is actually a positive prescription to drain the blood from animals. (4) “Sexual immorality” (πορνείας) in Acts 15:29 corresponds to Lev 18:26, which refers back to all the forms of illicit sexual activity in the preceding context (18:6–23). The reason these specific four prohibitions are chosen for Gentile Christians is not because there are no other commands addressed to resident aliens in the OT (cf. Exod 20:10, Deut 5:14).<sup>93</sup> The application of these four specific commands to Gentile Christians is based on “Jewish Christian exegesis of Scripture.”<sup>94</sup> Each of the four passages we have discussed in Leviticus has similar vocabulary for “the alien living among you”: it is הגר הנגר בתוכם.

Two of the passages that contributed to the conflated quotation of Amos 9 in Acts 15:16–18 are important here: Jer 12:16 and Zech 2:15[10–11]. Jer 12:16 refers to the “evil neighbors” (“Gentiles,” v. 17), who will come to know God and be built up “in the midst of my people” (בתוך עמי). In Zech 2:15 LXX, the nations who become God’s people will dwell in the midst of Zion (κατασκηνώσουσιν ἐν μέσῳ σου). The MT has the Lord dwelling in the midst of his people (ושכנתו בתוכם). The Jewish Christian exegetes at the Jerusalem Council apparently used the principle of *gezerah shavaah* to connect these Gentiles (who will dwell among Israel as described in Jer 12:16 and Zech 2:14–15) with the four prohibitions in Lev 17–18. These

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Apostolic Decree Schnabel argues that understanding the decree to direct the Gentiles to give up their pagan practices “could have been formulated more clearly and more easily,” and if that was the purpose of the decree “it would not have said anything new,” because this was already part of the message of the missionaries to the Gentiles

91 The LXX adds a sixth in 17 3

92 The order of the four stipulations in the decree as it is given in Acts 15 29 agrees with the order in Leviticus The order of the stipulations in the decree as it is given in Acts 15 20 is different from in Leviticus, which suggests that 15 29 is the more original of the two, and 15 20 is Luke’s paraphrase of it (Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 180)

93 See Terrance Callan, “The Background of the Apostolic Decree (Acts 15 20, 29, 21 25)” *CBQ* 55 (1993) 284–97, for a convenient list of laws that apply both to Israel and the “alien” or “stranger” (גר)

94 See the development of this in Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles,” 175–78

verses are all joined by the verbal correspondence of the phrase "in the midst" (בְּתוֹךְ). This correspondence is in the MT (the LXX calls the resident aliens in Leviticus "proselytes"), showing that the Council was aware of and apparently was also using a Hebrew text.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, this verbal correspondence is the reason these four specific prohibitions were chosen and no others were required for the Gentile converts in Acts 15. Bauckham summarizes:

The provision in Acts 15.20 is not an arbitrary qualification of this decision [established in 15:16–18], but itself follows, with exegetical logic, from Acts 15.16–18. If Gentile Christians are the Gentiles to whom the prophecies conflated in Acts 15.16–18 refer, then they are also the Gentiles of Jer. 12.16; Zech. 2.11/15, and therefore the part of the Law of Moses which applies to them is Leviticus 17–18.

The Apostolic Decree is important for understanding the citation in 15:16–18. It is another evidence of Jewish Christian exegesis of the Scriptures at the Jerusalem Council. It also demonstrates that although Gentile Christians are not under the Law, the Jewish (OT) Scriptures still have authority. The decision that is made concerning Gentiles in Acts 15 is based finally on those Scriptures (15:21), which speak directly to the situation under consideration at the Council.<sup>96</sup> Thus, the Scriptures of Israel are the authority for the decisions made at the Council, and the Decree of the Council is the application of the Law of Moses to Gentiles who have become the people of God in the midst of Israel.<sup>97</sup>

95 The connection between the texts that is suggested here cannot be made in the LXX, and the LXX would not be appropriate for the argument based on Lev 17–18 because it refers to the Gentiles as "proselytes." If the Gentiles were "proselytes," they would be required to keep the whole Law, and thus the LXX would not be appropriate for James's argument in that regard also. See the discussion in *ibid.*, 177.

96 Bauckham (*ibid.*, 179) writes, "Prophecies of the conversion of the Gentiles to God in the messianic age show that, while these Gentiles are not obliged to become Jews and to observe the Law as a whole, the Law itself envisages them and legislates for them." Thus, he argues that the four commands imposed on the Gentiles uphold the authority of the Law, Gentile Christians are to "keep those laws which the Torah obliges them to keep" (*ibid.*, n. 66). These are the conditions for table fellowship "between Jews and Gentiles in the new situation of the eschatological people of God which includes both."

97 The logic of the argument at the Jerusalem Council proceeds as follows. First, everyone at the Jerusalem Council begins the discussion with some implicit assumptions: (1) Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and inaugurated the new covenant with Israel (Acts 2:16–32), (2) Jesus Christ rules at God's right hand (Acts 2:32–36), (3) the new covenant baptism (outpouring) of the Spirit on Jews who believe in Jesus (in Acts 2) confirms (1) and (2). Second, in 15:6–12 several witnesses give empirical evidence: Gentiles who believe in Jesus, the reigning Davidide, have also received the new covenant baptism (outpouring) of the Spirit. Third, according to James, the Scriptures corroborate (are in agreement with) these events: James's argument develops as follows: (1) 15:16a: God promised he would return and visit his people again in the last days to restore the nation and his covenant relationship with them, (2) 15:16b–d: God also promised to rebuild the fallen tent of David (reign of Davidic dynasty) in the last days, (3) 15:17: God's purpose for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty was so a "remnant of mankind"

## CONCLUSIONS

We can draw several conclusions from our study of Amos 9 in Acts 15. First, there is evidence that the detailed exegetical work reflected in the scriptural quotation in Acts 15:16–18 reflects the use of the Hebrew Bible, the text of which was important for the Apostolic Decree and the connection with Isa 45:20–21, as well as the LXX, which was the nucleus of the quotation and center around which most of the exegesis apparently took place. It is not surprising that a meeting involving Hellenistic believers from Antioch and Jewish believers from Jerusalem would include discussion of Scripture related to both of these textual traditions. Further, both traditions had authority in Jerusalem.

Second, it is interesting that much of the discussion of Scripture, from what we can discern, involved the relationship of different texts to each other and the implications of such relationships of texts for the meanings of those texts. This was probably all related to Jewish hermeneutical methods, which involved logic and connections between words and texts. Similar exegetical method is found throughout the NT, and it is interesting to consider how often the NT authors interpret one OT text by placing it alongside another related text, so the two texts shed light on each other. The exegetical discussion related to Amos 9:11–12 LXX has its basis in the work of the translator of LXX Amos, and what developed at the Council was apparently an extension of the work that the translator had already begun in his rendering of the LXX text from the Hebrew Vorlage. But the discussion in Acts goes beyond the LXX, combining the Davidic promise in Amos 9 with later new covenant promises from other passages, which are now read in light of their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The exegetical discussion related to the Apostolic Decree was based on the Hebrew Bible, and it may have reflected discussion that also predated the Council on Hebrew texts related to Lev 17–18. At the Council, the two discussions were apparently connected around Amos 9:11–12 LXX.<sup>98</sup>

Third, the decision made at the Council was based on Scripture interpreted by other Scripture, but it was also based on Scripture as it was interpreted in light of recent events, especially the conversion of Cornelius's household and other Gentiles and their subsequent reception of the Spirit (Acts 10–11; 15:6–15). God gave further insight into the meaning of

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may seek the Lord, including the elect Gentiles, (4) 15 18 the things taking place (see empirical evidence above in 15 6–12) are all part of God's eternal plan, (5) 15 19–35 in keeping with the scriptural basis of the decisions made at the Council, the only requirements for Gentiles, who are part of the people of God, are those the OT law placed on Gentiles who live in Israel. The conclusion It has always been God's plan that he would place a Davidite at his right hand, as universal Lord, to administer new covenant blessings to all peoples who come to God through him (esp Joel 2 17, 21) This plan and program, various parts of which were revealed in the OT Scriptures, is now fulfilled in Christ

<sup>98</sup> The verbal connectors with Lev 17–18 were found not in Amos 9 but rather in passages that were connected with Amos 9 11–12 LXX by other instances of *gezerah shavah*

the Scriptures through the outpouring of the Spirit on Gentiles. Thus, the exegesis at the Council was in a sense "revelatory exegesis," revealing truth hidden in the prophetic writings.

Fourth, as alluded to above, the report of the Council and James's speech in Acts 15 must be merely the kernel of a much longer discussion and exposition of Scripture that took place at the Council.<sup>99</sup> The discussion could have taken place at least partly, if not totally, in Greek, because it involved the whole Jerusalem church (Acts 15:12, 22), and there would have been Greek-speaking "Hellenists" in the church, as well as Hebrew/Aramaic-speaking "Hebrews." Also, the "brothers" from Antioch probably would have been most comfortable with Greek, and some may not have spoken Hebrew/Aramaic.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, the main source of the exegetical discussion was the LXX of Amos 9, and the conflated quotation based on that text that is cited in Acts 15 is based on exegetical work in the Greek text. Thus, there is good evidence that the argument of this speech could derive from the Jerusalem church and that it has historical credibility.<sup>101</sup>

Fifth, and finally, the reason given from Scripture as the basis for Gentile inclusion in the people of God, as Gentiles, is the restoration of the reign of the Davidic dynasty in fulfillment of the promises to David.<sup>102</sup> This reign is not as it would have been envisioned in the time of Amos; it is accomplished by the dynamic of the new covenant, a covenant not known to Amos, which has been inaugurated by the ultimate Davidite, Jesus Christ, the Spirit-anointed Son of David, instituted the new covenant in his blood, and God raised him from the dead and established him in his rightful place as universal Lord. From this place of authority, he administers the new covenant and dispenses its blessings to all, Jew or Gentile, who come to God by him.<sup>103</sup>

The citation from Amos 9 in Acts 15 has important ramifications for the methodologies, paradigms, and systems that the Church uses to inter-

99 Bauckham ("James and the Gentiles," 183) suggests that Luke's source for his version of the Jerusalem Council may have been an original, longer form of the report of the Council written for the Christians in the Diaspora

100 "Some of the others" from Antioch were appointed to accompany Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Acts 15 2)

101 See Bauckham, "James and the Gentiles," 155, 178–84, for strong support and further development of this thesis

102 This was the problem with the disciples' question in Acts 1 6 The kingdom was not being restored "to Israel," but instead the reign of David was being restored over a universal kingdom The Davidic king of Israel is to rule to the "ends of the earth" (Ps 72[71] 8, Mic 5 4, Zech 9 10), hence the command in 1 8

103 See also the helpful discussion in Roy E Ciampa, "The History of Redemption," in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology Mapping Unity in Diversity* (ed Scott J Hafemann and Paul R House, Grand Rapids Baker, 2007), esp pp 300–303, where he argues that the history of redemption involves two interrelated schemas or structures of redemption, and "The redemption of Israel from her plight is the prerequisite for and key to the redemption of humanity from its plight" (p 301)

pret Scripture. But the most important truth we should take away from this citation, if I understand it correctly, is that Jesus is Messiah and Lord, reigning at the right hand of God. He is the center of God's plan for the ages and the fulfillment of God's promises, and by the authority given to him as the exalted Lord and Christ it is now possible for Gentiles, as Gentiles, to be the people of God and to come directly to God through him.



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