

JAMES' USE OF AMOS AT THE JERUSALEM
COUNCIL: STEPS TOWARD A POSSIBLE
SOLUTION OF THE TEXTUAL AND
THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

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There are few events recorded in the book of Acts of greater historical significance than the convening of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. Commentators are quick to acknowledge the importance of this event which occurred in the formative years of the Christian Church. Its importance stands quite apart from the continuing debates over chronology, or the precise nature of the issues involved, or the identity of the various groups who took part in the tense encounter at Jerusalem. Modern NT scholarship, if divided regarding such matters, nonetheless recognizes as significant that assembly of apostles and elders whose ultimate decisions were voiced by James, using the strength of Amos 9:11-12 to convince and unite the various parties present. Acts 15:6-29 is a crucial passage in the development of the NT Church, and Amos 9:11-12 played a most strategic part within the Acts passage. This being the case, one can only join the dismay of W. C. Kaiser, who laments, "It is truly amazing how little hard exegetical and contextual work has been done on these key passages. Even the journal literature on these texts . . . is extremely rare."¹

Among the inhibiting factors that contribute to the paucity of "exegetical and contextual work" in Acts 15 and Amos 9 are the glaring textual discrepancies between the MT and the Acts citation. Going further, one is hard pressed to determine exactly how the passage cited by James convinced the contending parties. What exactly was the doctrinal affirmation that commended the Amos passage to those present? Was it the mere mention of "Gentiles called by my name"? A host of other OT passages might come more readily to mind for this.² Did James employ Amos 9 to demonstrate that Gentiles were included in the Davidic promise of an everlasting kingdom? Again we are faced with the fact that any number of passages teach this with at least equal forthrightness.³ It is possible that James' choice of Amos 9 was a rather arbitrary one taken from among many such "proof texts," but perhaps James chose a passage that delineated with exquisite precision the fact that the restored kingdom will admit both Jew (the righteous remnant) and Gentile (elect from every nation.)

Both the textual and the doctrinal questions of Acts 15 need scholarly

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¹See *supra*, p. 100.

²E.g., Gen 12:3; Ps 68:31; Isa 18:1-7; 19:19-25; Jer 48:47; 49:39; *et al.*

³For a full discussion see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Blessing of David: The Charter for Humanity," in *The Law and the Prophets* (ed. J. H. Skilton; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974).

attention equal to that given to the matters of historical concern if this passage is to have its proper appreciation among students of Scripture.

I. THE TEXTUAL PROBLEMS

Most commentators view the context of the Amos passage in question to be Amos 9:11-15.⁴ But the linguistic structure of Amos 9 could suggest another perspective. For several reasons, Amos 9:9-12 seems to be set apart as a single pericope within the final chapter. Amos 9:8 ends with the oracular formula "says the LORD"; v 12 ends with the same formula, helping to present vv 9-12 as a unit. Amos 9:9 is introduced with *kî-hinnēh*; v 13 is introduced by *hinnēh* as well, again setting vv 9-12 apart. A certain logic also commends isolating Amos 9:9-12 from those verses surrounding it. Since chapter 7 the prophet has been pronouncing a relentless series of judgments on the nation, offering the only hint of deliverance in the curious phrase stated in 7:3 and repeated, with slight variations, in 7:6: "The LORD repented concerning this. 'It shall not be,' said the LORD." This series of judgments ends in a promise in 9:8: "I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob," says the LORD." Amos 9:9-12 stands, then, as a prophetic declaration of the way God will judge the nation and yet preserve it. He will severely try his people; nonetheless a remnant will be spared.

A number of textual problems arise within Amos 9:9-12. To begin with, the MT confronts the reader with a perplexing and unnatural reading in v 11. There is an unusual collection of pronominal suffixes which seem to disagree in number and gender with their antecedents. The MT reads: "In that day I will cause to stand the booth of David, the fallen one, and I will wall up *their* (f. pl.) breaches, and *his* (m. s.) ruins I will cause to stand. And I will build *her* (f. s.) as the days of old." The LXX reads all three third-person pronouns as feminine singulars. BH³ and BH⁴, following the LXX, suggest a similar emendation. It would seem best, however, to retain the differing pronouns on the basis of the more difficult readings. This is aided by the fact that *Tg. Jonathan*, before lapsing into an obscure explanatory gloss, gives evidence that it too retained the difficult pronoun. It reads: "In that day I will raise up the kingdom of the house of David, which is fallen, and build *their* (f. pl.) fortifications."

Perhaps the difficulty could be resolved by a slight alteration of the antecedent *sukkat . . . hannôpelet* ("the fallen tent"). If this phrase were read as a shortened feminine plural, *sukkôt . . . hannôp^elôt* ("the fallen tents"), then *pirsêhen* ("their [f.] ruins") would have an identifiable antecedent and an attractive parallelism could be observed. It would thus read: "I will erect the fallen tents of David, and I will enclose their breaches; even his ruins I will erect, and I will build it as of old." The "fallen tents" would refer to the Davidic kingdom, which was rent after Solomon's death; thus "*their* breaches" is more readily understood. The "even" of the third clause is epexegetic; "his" is easily paralleled

⁴Among them Fosbroke, Keil, Laetsch, Motyer and Yates.

with "of David." To strengthen this parallelism, one should note that the same verb ("I will erect") is used in the first and third clauses. The final pronoun ("it") refers obviously to the reunited kingdom promised by God. Such emendations in no way alter the consonantal text. When compared with the divergent texts of the LXX and Acts 15:16-17, the internal inconsistencies of the MT seem to be a relatively minor problem.

The LXX of Amos 9:11-12 reads:⁵ "In that day I will raise up (*anastēsō*) the tent of David which has fallen, and I shall rebuild its ruins, and its remains I will raise up (*anastēsō*). And I shall rebuild it even as the days of old, so that the remnant of men shall seek,⁶ and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who shall do these things."

Acts 15:16-17 reads: "After these things (*meta tauta*) I will turn (*anastrepsō*)⁷ and rebuild the tent of David which has fallen, and its remains I shall rebuild, and I shall restore it so that the remnant of men shall seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who has made known these things from of old."

It is remarkable that Haenchen, in the light of this, can make the untroubled assertion that "the text here agrees entirely in meaning, and for the most part in wording, with LXX."⁸ While the LXX and Acts are in closer agreement with each other than they are with the MT, there is still considerable discrepancy between the text of Amos in Acts and the text of Amos in the LXX.

The Acts text begins with an entirely different temporal adjunct than the LXX. It is difficult to accept de Waard's suggestion that *meta tauta* is possibly a "translation variant" for *en tē hēmera*, even when the plural appears in one MS.⁹ Perhaps a complete quote of Amos does not begin until the phrase *kai anoikodomēsō* ("and I shall rebuild"). This verb, which interestingly enough is a *hapax legomenon* in the

⁵This translation was made from the text edited by J. Ziegler, "Duodecim prophetae," in *Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Gottingensis Editum*, vol. xiii (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967).

⁶Several MSS. supply objects for this verb. Obviously the passage presented a problem to many of its Greek translators.

⁷See below, p. 7, and the suggestion found in n.15.

⁸E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 448 (so also Conzelmann, Munck, *et al.*). It appears to be favored as Septuagintal to remove it from the mouth of James and make it part of a later reconstruction. ("This indicates that the words of James have been thoroughly reworked." J. Munck, *The Acts* [AB; N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967] 140.) On Zahn's attempt to suggest an Aramaic text more original than the MT, Haenchen makes the uncharitable observation that "it is a sorry business when a viewpoint has to be defended with such arguments" (p. 448 n. 4). Since 4QFlor i 12 cites Amos 9:11 in a manner remarkably similar to Acts, de Waard's rebuke of Haenchen (though stated somewhat enthusiastically) is certainly in order. "Apart from the historical questions, 4Q gives a Hebrew text which corresponds exactly to Acts! And it would be preferable if a modern commentator, even of Haenchen's stature, would take note of this fact." J. de Waard, *A Comparative Study of the OT Text in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1965) 26 n.2.

⁹de Waard, *Study*, p. 26 n. 1.

NT, renders the Hebrew *'āqîm* ("I will erect") more faithfully, according to Rabin, than the LXX's use of *anastēsō*. "A common textual tradition" between Acts and the MT as over against the LXX "strongly suggests itself" at this point, in Rabin's judgment.¹⁰ Could James be quoting from an unknown collection of testimonia familiar to his hearers and assembled along the theme of restoration following judgment from God? ¹¹ De Waard's contention that "there does not seem to be any other explanation" appears to be substantially correct.¹² James' quote from this particular collection may have begun with the words *kathōs gegraptai*. As de Waard points out, the testimonia of 4QFlor when citing Amos 9:11 uses the identical wording.¹³ Another agreement with 4QFlor may be suggested if the copulative *kai* of Acts 15:16 is a faithful rendering of *whqymwty*, a converted perfect form which stands in 4Q and CD in marked contrast to the imperfect form of the MT.¹⁴ The thesis is further enhanced by the possibility that *meta tauta anastrepsō* in Acts 15:16 is not part of the *Vorlage* at all. Perhaps it serves as an interpretive adjunct explaining when and how God would fulfill his promise in Amos 7:3.¹⁵

When compared with the MT, the LXX of Amos 9 has been said by some scholars to be "hopelessly confused." It is not too extreme to argue, however, that behind it lies a Hebrew text of Amos 9:11-12 that challenges the MT. This would be a *Vorlage* common to the LXX, 4QFlor, and the testimonia of Acts 15:16-17. Such a *Vorlage* would contradict the MT at a crucial point. The point in question is the MT reading, "They shall possess the remnant of Edom," and the variant of Acts and the LXX, "The remnant of men shall seek the Lord."

Tg. Jonathan shows that there was considerable theological difficulty with Amos 9:11-12 in the Jewish community. It reads: "So that they shall possess the remnant of Edom and of all the peoples, even the house of Israel, upon whom my name has been called." The flagrant gloss, "even the house of Israel," was certainly added to exclude the Gentiles from any hope of salvation. *Tg. Jonathan* reflects a rabbinic conviction that grew in the evolution of Jewish apocalyptic literature

¹⁰C. Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958) 29 n. 2.

¹¹So Conzelmann suggests. "Diese Kombination könnte in einer Testimoniensammlung gestanden haben." *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Tübingen: Siebeck, 1963) 84.

¹²de Waard, *Study*, p. 25.

¹³4Q reads *k'šr ktwb*. Text: J. M. Allegro, "Fragment of a Qumran Scroll of Eschatological Midrashim," *JBL* 77 (1958) 350-354. 4Q is in marked contrast to Amos 9:11 cited in CD, which is introduced with *k'šr 'mr*. Text: Rabin, *Documents*, p. 26.

¹⁴This suggestion, made by de Waard, *Study*, p. 26, is most intriguing.

¹⁵The word "repented" in Amos 7:3 is *nḥm*. It is often used in tandem with *šwb* (Joel 2:14; Jer 4:28; Isa 12:1). The LXX takes both as a hendiadys in Jonah 2:14. *Šwb* is rendered by several compounds of *strophō* in the LXX. Bertram believes that "*anastrepsō kai anoikodomēsō* is a double translation of *'āqîm*." Nevertheless, he states, "the most common original for the compound (*anastrepsō*) in the OT is *šûb*." This is the case even though, as Bertram cautions, *šwb* appears some 1040 times in the MT. Could *anastrepsō* in Acts 15:16 be understood as "repent"? One should note that only the ethical nature of *anastrepsō* is stressed in the Jewish Christian literature of the NT.

and Talmudic exegesis¹⁶ and could even possibly be an attempt to circumvent Christian teaching on the subject.¹⁷ Within the growing Jewish bias against Gentile salvation as evidenced in the apocalyptic literature and in the hostility to early Jewish Christian arguments seen in the targums, one can find probable causes for a corruption in the MT. This is all the more persuasive when several textual authorities challenge the MT reading of Amos 9.

It is the contention of this writer that the *Vorlage* to James' testimonia was a Hebrew text divergent from the MT and superior to it. Alford is irresistibly correct when he notes that James "would not himself (nor would the Pharisees present have allowed it) have quoted any rendering, especially where the stress of his argument lay in it, at variance with the original Hebrew."¹⁸ From the textual evidence, from the probable cause of corruption, and from the sheer logic of the situation, we have ample warrant to emend the MT—and such an emendation need not be too severe.

Commentators as early as Alford have demonstrated how the MT "they shall possess" (Amos 9:12) could be harmonized with "they shall seek" in the LXX and Acts. One minor consonantal change is all that is necessary. The verb *yvršw* ("they shall possess") is emended to read *ydršw* ("they shall seek"). In the history of the transmission of the OT there was a time when *d* and *y* were virtually indistinguishable.

As the LXX demonstrates, there was considerable difficulty in supplying an object for "seek." The difficulty could be overcome if what stands as the sign of the accusative in the MT (*'t*) be emended to *'l*, an ancient Semitic title for God. Dahood suggests that the Masoretes would at times confuse *'l* for *'t*, failing to recognize the older, shortened title for God.¹⁹

The only other alteration needed to conform the MT with Acts 15 would be to change *'ēdōm* ("Edom") to *'ādām* ("man"). In earlier MSS. the former word would have appeared without pointing, so that in the non-vocalized texts with which the Masoretes worked there would have been no difference between the words. There is no need to force *'ādām* into a plural form, because it stands as a collective noun. With these suggested emendations, the Hebrew text of Amos 9:12 would read *ydršw 'l š'ryt 'dm* ("the remnant of man will seek God") as opposed to the MT reading of *yvršw 't š'ryt 'dwm* ("they will possess the remnant of Edom"). It is suggested that this emended reading was the wording of the *Vorlage* to James' testimonia read before the Jerusalem council.

¹⁶The earliest Jewish apocryphal writings offer some hope to the Gentiles (cf. *Enoch* 90:30; *Baruch* 13:48), but, as R. H. Charles points out, "later Judaism almost universally denied this hope to the Gentile." *APOT* I. 255.

¹⁷"Christians tended to base their arguments against Judaism on verses of scripture and the Targum interpretation of those verses was often deliberately designed to exclude the Christian argument." J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature* (London: Cambridge Press, 1969) xi.

¹⁸H. Alford, *The Greek Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1968), 2.166-167.

¹⁹"The reverence of the Masoretes for the consonantal text outstripped their knowledge of archaic Hebrew poetry." M. Dahood, *Psalms* (AB; N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), I.xxii.

II. THE THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Apart from the textual questions, Acts 15:16-17 has been a battleground for covenantal and dispensational theologians for many years. Without rehearsing the various understandings of this text, several observations can be made. It should be noted that the key issue of the council was not whether Gentiles could be redeemed but whether Gentiles could be redeemed if they continued living as distinctly Gentile. "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved," was the "question" put before the council (Acts 15:1-2, 5). The essence of the testimonies borne before the council by Peter, Barnabas and Paul was that God confirmed the conversion of the Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit without any concession to a particular lifestyle. Salvation comes not by the "yoke" of traditions but by the "grace of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 15:10-11). It is to this question that James, a man deeply committed to the traditions of Judaism,²⁰ rises and speaks with the authority of Amos the prophet behind his words. Amos 9:11-12 was decisive at the council because it spoke of both Jews as *Jews* and Gentiles as *Gentiles* seeking the Lord.

It should be no surprise that the remarks of such a man as James are reflective of a good deal of early Jewish Christian theology. Amos 9 had long been regarded as messianic by the Jewish community. Hence in *Sanh.* 96b the Messiah is called *br nplym* ("the son of the fallen ones"). Edersheim notes that *Ber.* 88 saw Amos 9:9-12 foretelling of a future deliverance of Israel. In part it reads, "Who could have expected that the fallen tabernacle of David should be raised up by God, as it is written, and who should have expected that the whole world should become one bundle?"²¹ The most significant Jewish Christian theological concept mentioned here is that concerning the "remnant of men."

Far too little attention is paid to OT data in scholarly discussions of the remnant idea in the NT. Such discussions are rare enough, but when they do embrace the concept of a holy remnant it is primarily through the data of intertestamental literature. It seems strange that the models of the Pharisaic movement or the Essene movement are examined in detail with regard to NT practice while the systematic teaching of the prophets is given so little attention.²² Certainly Jewish Christian theology did not develop in a vacuum! But it is difficult to set forth the hypothesis that Jewish Christians rejected a contemporary remnant theology in favor of the more sophisticated and theologically

²⁰Hegesippus said of James that "he drank neither wine nor fermented liquors, and abstained from animal food. A razor never came upon his head, he never anointed with oil, and never used a bath. He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary. He never wore woolen but linen garments" (Eus. 2:23).

²¹A. Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 2. 734. It is interesting that the writer of this tractate saw a contextual link between Amos 9:9 and 9:11.

²²An attempt to remedy this is found in my work, "The Doctrine of the Remnant Prior to the NT" (unpublished Th. M. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1976).

sound remnant doctrine of the prophets when OT thinking is not even delineated.

As the word implies, "remnant" defines those remaining. It is an isolated body of people extracted in various ways from a larger group. One looks in vain if the vast Biblical data is surveyed in the hope of finding the word "remnant" describing any transcendent spiritual entity within the OT. "Remnant" in the OT has strict national connotations. Soteriologically, the word is restricted to those in Israel. When "remnant" is applied to the Gentile nations, it is done so in the harshest of judgmental terms (Isa 14:22; 15:9; 16:4). The comparison of Israel's remnant with the Gentile remnants is invited by Isaiah in Isa 27:7 when he asks, "Has he (the Lord) smitten them (Israel) as he smote those who smote them?" Obviously the answer is "No," for the Lord preserves Israel's remnant according to his sovereign grace, whereas he cuts off the heathen remnants. One must conclude that a remnant has no soteriological significance to Gentile nations. Though some commentators fancifully extend the remnant motif to the early chapters of Genesis, no Biblical writer extends his remnant remarks earlier than Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation.²³ Doctrinally, the word "remnant" applies strictly to Israel.

It is commonly granted that the early Jewish Christians saw themselves as the members of the remnant within unbelieving Israel. Stephen's remarks in Acts 7 demonstrate this. Possibly Heb 13:13-14 also suggests the same self-concept: "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him, outside the camp, bearing his reproach, for here we have no abiding city." Historical records outside the Bible support the assumption that the Jewish mission held to its self-concept as the remnant until Jerusalem ceased to be a Jewish city. Eusebius recounts a tradition that prior to the fall of Jerusalem to Titus in A. D. 70 the Jerusalem church, suffering greatly from social ostracism and various forms of persecution, retreated to Pella in Perea in order to escape the carnage that was to come.²⁴ Strong evidence points to the fact that even after that, under the stigma of traitor as well as heretic, many Jewish Christians returned to Jerusalem.²⁵ Certainly a strong sense of call was necessary to bring these Christians into a place of potential persecution. It appears that they were motivated by the self-image of a remnant, for the remnant only has meaning in the land and with the nation. Jerome recounts that in his journeys he discovered a Jewish Christian community, as late as the fourth century, living nomadically on the Palestinian border. They were forbidden by the Edict of Hadrian, as were all Jews, from entering their native land. Yet they endeavored to be

²³So Stephen begins with Abraham in Acts 7, as does Paul in Rom 9:7. Isaiah extends the remnant motif the farthest into history of any OT writer when, in Isa 1:9, he implies the contrast between Abraham and Lot (the remnant) with Sodom and Gomorrah.

²⁴R. N. Longenecker, "Early Jewish Christianity at Jerusalem" (mimeographed; Deerfield, 1969) 42.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 43-44. Among the evidence that Longenecker cites is the anti-Christian clauses of the twelfth Benediction (c. A. D. 85) in the Palestinian revision. He also cites G. F. Moore and G. F. Brandon for support.

as close as possible to the Holy City, awaiting the return of the Messiah. Again we see the idea of the remnant defined by cultural and national distinctives.²⁶

James' use of Amos 9:11-12 is clarified by the remnant concept in early Jewish Christianity. Apart from any discussion as to the time of fulfillment or the nature of the union, two distinct groups will seek the Lord, namely "the remnant of men" (believing Jews) and "all the Gentiles who are called by my name." Some suggest that the phrase in Acts 15:17, "and all the Gentiles," is exegetical. If so, this would equate the "remnant of men" with the Gentiles. Believing Jews would have to be considered as the "tabernacle of David" (if they, as a group, are to be found at all in Amos 9:11-12), and thus the Gentiles, so it is argued, are included in the remnant.²⁷

There are several serious flaws in this argument. It is true that *kai* could be functioning exegetically here; there is no grammatical reason against it. But if this is so, then the Gentiles are not included in the remnant—they *are* the remnant. The title "the rest" in this passage would not be given to Jews at all! Moreover, nowhere in the OT, or the NT for that matter, is the word "remnant" applied to Gentiles in any soteriological or eschatological sense. The remnant is distinguished from the "nations." If Amos 9 includes Gentiles in the remnant, it is a doctrinal *hapax* of considerable note. If the remnant is defined as the redeemed Gentiles, then amillennial equations of Old Testament Israel with the New Testament Church are vindicated. This is not the argument of Acts 15:16-17, however; in this passage the two groups, Jews and Gentiles, are held in tension.

A final observation should be made regarding the temporal setting of the Amos citation in Acts 15. Kaiser makes a careful analysis of the issues involved and concludes that "'after these things' probably

²⁶The writer is deeply indebted to R. Longenecker for the following information given in private correspondence (February, 1976) which substantiates Jerome's meeting with this group: "[These were] Syrian Jewish-Christians called Nazaraeans (or Nazarenes) living in the city of Beroea near Aleppo, of whom the historian Epiphanius speaks as having visited (esp. *De Viris Illustribus* 3.392-93; *Dialogue adv. Pelag.* 3.2). Some scholars insist that Jerome probably never visited the Nazarenes but is only repeating information about them gained from his reading of Epiphanius. At any rate, the Nazarenes are described as Jewish Christians who are thoroughly orthodox in a Pauline sense yet believe it their responsibility to remain within a Jewish lifestyle, and who read the Gospel of the Hebrews which is in the Chaldean and Syriac tongue but written in Hebrew letters."

²⁷So insists Kaiser; see *supra*, pp. 102-104. Kaiser insists on this equation in order to further cement his already well-established contention that the Gentiles are included in the promise to Adam, Abraham and David. This writer, while in complete agreement with Kaiser's major points, must refuse to allow for a Gentile constituency within the remnant. The Biblical data will not allow it. When considered collectively, it is better, along with Paul, to see both the Jewish remnant and the believing Gentiles as fused into "one new man," the people of God. When considered separately, however, the Christian Jew and the Christian Gentile exist within the Church in easy tension, troubled only when one group challenges the other's legitimate distinctives. The Jews were guilty of this in Acts 15. Today the Gentiles, who are in numerical ascendancy, are guilty of inverting the same error. Covenantalists and dispensationalists alike share this guilt. In a lamentable quote O. T. Allis decries "the exaltation of the Jew *per se*. In their glorification of the Jew dispensationalists vie with Zionists. The future belongs to the Jew!" *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1945) 219. Dispensationalists, on the other hand, will often argue that the Jew disappears in the "age of grace," totally absorbed into the Body of Christ without a trace. So argues A. Gaebelein. *Hath God Cast Away His People?* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, 1905) 24. Either view distorts the balance of the NT.

has reference to the Amos context.”²⁸ This writer heartily concurs with that judgment. Amos 9:11-12 follows the outpouring of the judgments listed in Amos 7:1-9:8. Considering the apocalyptic utterances of Jesus regarding the destruction of the temple and renewed persecution of the righteous, it is difficult to believe that James saw the judgments on Israel to be at an end prior to the convening of the council. If this be so, it is equally difficult to see the founding of the Church at Pentecost referred to in the phrase “I will rebuild the tabernacle of David,” though many amillennial interpreters insist it is. This writer would suggest that the “tabernacle of David,” for this and many other reasons, is the coming kingdom of the Messiah, the scion of Jesse. At the time of his coming, as Amos declares, both the righteous remnant and the elect among the Gentiles will seek him. Believing Gentiles who have been “grafted in” will share the riches of restored Israel. In the Church when Jews and Gentiles are considered together they are the “people of God,” an ontological union to which the NT gives ample witness. But when considered separately the believing Gentile was never compelled to live like a Jew, and the believing Jews alone have the distinction of being called a righteous remnant. James preserves Amos’ dichotomy even while he pleads for the inclusion of the Gentiles in the fellowship of the gospel.

²⁸See *supra*, p. 105.