ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TERM "PROPHETS" IN JEREMIAH IN THE MT

AND LXX: THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF FALSE PROPHECY

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BY

James Dong Sian Muan

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WE HEREBY APPROVE THE THESIS

SUBMITTED BY:

JAMES DONG SIAN MUAN

ENTITLED

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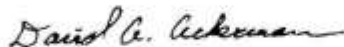
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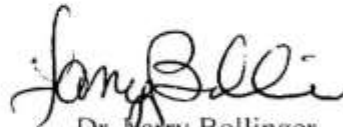
Dr. Mitchel Modine	4/24/2025	Dr. Philip Davis	4/24/2025
Thesis Adviser	Date	Program Director	Date
Dr. David Ackerman	4/23/2025	Dr. Fanang Lum Lahpai	4/24/2025
Academic Dean	Date	External Reader	Date
Dr. Larry Bollinger	4/24/2025		
APNTS President	Date		

ABSTRACT

The exploration of the prophetic tradition delves into the nuances of authentic prophecy versus the phenomena of false prophecy, particularly through the lens of the Book of Jeremiah. The analysis commences with a critical examination of the divine selection mechanism for prophets, showcasing the transformational dynamics inherent in God's interactions with human reluctance—exemplified by Jeremiah's calling. In contrast, false prophets actively disrupt the established paradigms of the divine-human relationship, leading to significant confusion and moral misdirection within their communities. This study posits that true prophets emerge as critical agents of social justice, actively challenging systemic injustices. Moreover, it underscores the imperative of unwavering fidelity to divine truth while advocating for a rigorous ethical evaluation in the exegesis of prophetic scriptures.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

James Dong Sian Muan _____   April 25, 2025 _____
(Researcher)   (Date)

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, U Hau Lian Thang and Daw Maw Yi, whose unwavering support and selfless sacrifices have been the foundation of my academic journey.

DISCLAIMER

This research acknowledges the use of Grammarly and Sci-Space for research-related search and editorial processes.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

Masoretic Text   MT

Septuagint Text   LXX

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND SETTING OF THE STUDY

This chapter outlines the underlying motivations and inspirations that push the researcher to undertake on this study.

Introduction

In the churches of Myanmar, the Five-fold ministry, a deeply ingrained and widely preached tradition, holds significant cultural and religious importance. The five-fold ministry consists of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—each equipping the church for unity and maturity. One of the key figures in this ministry is a prophet, whose role is to orally transcend knowledge, passing on biblical truths from one generation to the next. The prophetic ministry is vital because prophets speak God's truth, provide direction, and help guard the church from error This unique aspect of the Myanmar church tradition forms the backdrop for the researcher's exploration of the term' false-prophets' in the book of Jeremiah, seeking to understand the biblical teaching of what constitutes a true prophet and prophecy. This research focuses on the prophetic office, emphasizing that it must be handled with discernment and accountability, as false prophets and prophecies can mislead and harm the faith community. Proper discernment is essential to uphold true prophetic ministry and protect the church from deception.

In Myanmar, the scarcity of higher theological colleges and universities has resulted in a diminished quality of understanding and interpreting the Bible. This has led to issues of incorrect interpretation and the use of various translations that differ from the original text. This research aims to explore the significance of the original text and the

importance of biblical translation while examining the profound theological implications

and the impact of translators and scribes.

It is well known that the book of Jeremiah has two different versions[1], both of

which are accepted and read in the theological community. While some translations may

be attributed to scribal changes or errors, this study aims to explore the deliberately

intended reason for adding the prefix ψευδο to adjectives in relation to nouns.

The examination of false prophets in the Book of Jeremiah offers a crucial insight

into the intricate relationship between genuine prophetic voices and those who lead others

astray. Jeremiah, a prophet active during the turbulent period preceding the Babylonian

exile, encountered significant resistance from false prophets who delivered comforting

yet misleading messages to the people of Judah. These individuals claimed to convey

God's word, assuring the populace that their disobedience would not result in disaster,

thereby undermining Jeremiah's warnings of imminent judgment.

This thesis intends to explore the characteristics, messages, and societal impacts

of these false prophets as depicted in Jeremiah's writings. By analyzing key passages,

such as Jeremiah 23:9-40 and 28:1-17, this research will shed light on how these figures

contributed to Judah's spiritual and moral decline. Additionally, it will assess the

theological implications of their actions and the lasting significance of Jeremiah's

critiques in contemporary discussions regarding prophetic authority and integrity.

Through this investigation, the research aims to understand the historical context and the

lessons applicable to modern faith communities facing similar challenges of discernment

and truth.

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[1] Hermann-Josef Stipp, "Two Ancient Editions of the Book of Jeremiah," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jeremiah*, ed. Louis Stulman and Edward Silver (Oxford University Press, 2021), 0.

Background of the Study

The book of Jeremiah is one of the most important works concerning the relationship between true and false prophets. In modern times, promises from the book, such as Jeremiah 29:1-14, have had a global impact and are particularly significant for communities like the Myanmar diaspora, scattered due to war and other challenges. However, beyond these well-known verses of hope, this chapter also highlights the dangers posed by false prophets. For instance, Jeremiah names specific false prophets such as Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah (Jeremiah 29:21-23), who were condemned for prophesying lies in God's name and leading the people astray. Another false prophet, Shemaiah the Nehelamite (Jeremiah 29:24-32), actively opposed Jeremiah's message by encouraging rebellion against God's instructions. These examples provide critical insight into the prophetic context and challenges Jeremiah faced during his ministry, emphasizing the broader theme of discerning true prophecy from deception.

The five-fold ministry, which includes prophets as important characters, together with the book of Jeremiah and its emphasis on true and false prophecy, come together to form my interest.The usage of false prophets is very strange in the book of Jeremiah, where compared to the False prophets in the Old Testament, are individuals who claim to speak on behalf of God but deliver messages contrary to His will, often promoting idolatry or leading the people away from ethical monotheism. They often provide reassuring messages that align with the desires of their audience, as seen in Jeremiah 27-

28, where they oppose true prophets like Jeremiah by proclaiming peace and prosperity despite impending judgment..[2]

In the Bible, false prophets play a significant role as antagonists, leading to the destruction of God's people. Notable figures such as Hananiah (Jeremiah 28), Shemaiah (Jeremiah 29:24-32) and many others, serve as cautionary tales. Their presence throughout Biblical texts warns about the importance of discernment in spiritual matters. A careful reading of these stories reveals the consequences of leading others away from God's true message and highlights the need for vigilance against deception in faith practice.

The Masoretic Text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX) versions of Jeremiah show substantial differences, with the MT being significantly longer than the LXX. These variations are particularly notable in sections dealing with prophetic conflicts, including the oracles against false prophets in Jeremiah 23, where differences in length and arrangement help shape our understanding of true versus false prophecy. The Septuagint version of Jeremiah also includes additional material not found in the Masoretic Text, leading to variations in content and style between the two versions.[34]Comparing the Hebrew and Greek text forms of Jeremiah can provide insights into variations and differences in the text, shedding light on potential translation issues or changes in

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[2] Ikenna L. Umeanolue, "Prophetic Conflict in Jeremiah 27-28 and the Question of True and False Prophecy," *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities* 21, no. 2 (March 30, 2021): 87–107, https://doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v21i2.5.

[3] Armin Lange, ed., *Textual History of the Bible* (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2016).

[4] "A Comparison of the Rendering of the Septuagint of The Book of Malachi with the Masoretic Text in View of Making a Contribution to the English Bible - ProQuest," accessed February 3, 2025, https://www.proquest.com/openview/5bebc3924a2fdf230e24fcb2969f6874/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y.

meaning between the two versions. This comparison can help scholars and researchers understand the nuances and complexities of the text of Jeremiah.

Statement of the Problem

The textual differences between Jeremiah's MT and LXX highlight various interpretive issues, such as variations in wording and structure that can affect the overall meaning of the text.[5] For that purpose, this study of false prophets will demonstrate that

1) False prophets are individuals who claim to speak on behalf of Yahweh but deliver messages that contradict His will or misinterpret the historical context of the people.

2) Their prophecies often promote false security or rebellion against divine judgment.

3) They are characterized by their lack of genuine connection with Yahweh, leading to deception and the misguidance of the community, particularly during critical periods like the Babylonian exile.

4) The term "pseudoprophet" reflects the cultural and linguistic values of the Hellenistic context, where the author added the noun word with an adjective.

5) Understanding both the MT and LXX's intention to the audience brings an understanding and profound knowledge of the Bible's interpretation.

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[5] George Coulson Workman, *The Text of Jeremiah: Or, A Critical Investigation of the Greek and Hebrew, with the Variations in the LXX. Retranslated Into the Original and Explained. by George Coulson Workman* (T. & T. Clark, 1889).

Research Objectives

This exploration critically examines the authority of prophets, emphasizing integrity, accountability, and moral conduct among individuals purporting to speak on behalf of God.Analysing to identify variations in wording, structure, and meaning between the two texts, shedding light on how these differences affect the interpretation of false prophecy and false prophets. Comparing, how each version presents these characters and their messages, the study aims to uncover underlying theological and cultural assumptions that inform their depictions. Drawing parallels between ancient and modern times to contribute to ongoing conventions about authenticity and truth in religious leadership. Understanding how false prophets are portrayed in both texts will provide insights into the nature of divine revelation and the consequences of leading people away from true worship.

Research Questions

1. What was the reason for the LXX translators' criticism of these prophets and labelling them as "false prophets"?

2. What are the theological implications of these?

3. In what ways do the textual variants in the selected passages affect their theological interpretation, particularly regarding prophetic authority and divine judgment?

4. What are the theological consequences of the gaps in using the term 'prophets' in the Book of Jeremiah between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint Text, particularly regarding false prophets?

Scope and Delimitations

For primary texts, this study will exclusively utilize the LXX and MT versions of biblical texts, focusing on passages that discuss false prophets, particularly in the context of Jeremiah. This includes Jeremiah 6:13, Jeremiah 26:7,8,11,26, Jeremiah 27:9, Jeremiah 28:1, and Jeremiah 29:1, 8.

For the thematic focus, this research will focus on themes related to false prophets, including their characteristics of false prophets, their impact on society and the theological implications of their message. To investigate the history and cultural background, the research will be limited to the experience in ancient Israel during Jeremiah's time, examining how social conditions contributed to the rise of false prophets.

Comparative analysis from textual criticism between MT and LXX will be conducted to identify variations in language, interpretation, and emphasis on false prophets. The study will be conducted in English translations of the LXX and MT, without delving into original Hebrew or Greek texts for linguistic analysis. The analysis will not engage with modern interpretations or applications of false prophecy but will remain grounded in historical-critical methods focused on ancient texts. This research will not include other biblical texts outside of Jeremiah or other prophetic books that mention false prophets, such as Ezekiel or Zechariah. The research will focus specifically on the period leading up to and including the Babylonian exile (circa 597–586 BCE), limiting the historical scope to this critical timeframe.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE, STUDIES, AND WORKS

The Masoretic Text (MT)

The MT serves as the foundational textual tradition of the Hebrew Bible, systematically codified by Jewish scholars between the 6th and 10th centuries CE. As elucidated by Tov, this endeavor commenced within the Talmudic academies of Babylonia and Palestine, driven by the imperative to reproduce the original Hebrew text with meticulous fidelity. The Masoretes employed a comprehensive methodology, integrating vocalization marks and cantillation signs to preserve the pronunciation and oral tradition while also ensuring textual integrity through rigorous scholarship and a focus on variant readings.[6]

The Masoretes, active between the 6th and 10th centuries CE, established a sophisticated textual preservation system that revolutionized the transmission of the Hebrew Bible. Working in Talmudic academies in Babylonia and Palestine, they introduced diacritical marks for vowels, stress indicators, and comprehensive orthographic annotations to safeguard pronunciation and interpretative traditions. Their dedication to textual precision is exemplified by the consistent integrity maintained across Hebrew manuscripts, achieved through rigorous scholarly protocols rather than Temple-based oversight. The Masoretic tradition relied on institutionalized practices

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[6] E. Tov, "The Essence and History of the Masoretic Text," 2017, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Essence-and-History-of-the-Masoretic-Text-Tov/f8ef1663c63908a8fbda7dbb845e596c2d5a14d3.

within academic settings, where trained scribes and scholars systematically compared manuscripts, scrutinized variant readings, and developed the Masorah—a detailed apparatus of marginal annotations documenting textual peculiarities. This meticulous approach ensured high fidelity in reproduction, even centuries after the Second Temple's destruction in 70 CE.[7]

The MT transmission involved a nuanced and scholarly methodology transcending mere transcription. Tov emphasizes that these scribes conducted thorough examinations of texts, meticulously scrutinizing spelling variations, grammatical subtleties, and possible discrepancies to uphold textual integrity.

The Codex Leningrad B 19A (circa 1009 CE) and the Aleppo Codex (approximately 925 CE) represent the most authoritative Masoretic sources and serve as pivotal reference points in textual scholarship. Notably, the MT retained minor scribal nuances through the incorporation of "special dots" (*puncta extraordinaria*). Subsequently, the Masoretic tradition interpreted these as letters of uncertain status, illustrating a sophisticated approach to the transmission of the text.[8]

The scholarly implications of the MT far surpass its initial compilation. As Mihăilă observes, the text maintained an unparalleled dominance over a span of 600 years, with scholars consistently noting the remarkable fidelity observed between the earliest printed editions and the extant codices.

The text encompasses several intricate layers, including a consonantal structure, vocalization systems, para-textual features, accentuation, and the detailed Masorah

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[7] Amy Anderson, *Textual Criticism of the Bible: Revised Edition*, 1st ed, Lexham Methods Series (Bellingham: Faithlife Corporation, 2018).

[8] Alexandru Mihăilă, "The Septuagint and the Masoretic Text in the Orthodox Church (Es)," *Review of Ecumenical Studies Sibiu* 10, no. 1 (April 1, 2018): 30–60, https://doi.org/10.2478/ress-2018-0003.

apparatus. Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars were largely unaware that the MT had attained its present form by the final centuries BCE, which underscores its preservation significance. In contemporary biblical scholarship, the MT is regarded as the preeminent version of the Hebrew Bible. As noted by Wasserstein and Wasserstein, it is widely accepted as the authentic textual representation of Hebrew scripture.[9]

The transmission of the MT exemplifies the remarkable scholarly rigor of ancient Jewish scribes, showcasing their exceptional commitment to the meticulous preservation of sacred scriptures. The complexity of the MT, characterized by intricate annotations and a robust system of textual preservation, underscores that the process transcended mere mechanical transcription. Instead, it reflects a deep theological dedication to safeguarding the integrity of religious texts throughout successive generations. The layers of textual critique and interpretive tradition embedded within the MT serve as a testament to the scribes' engagement with both the content and the contextual nuances of the scriptures.

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[9] Abraham Wasserstein and David Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today*, digit. pr. vers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

The Septuagint Text (LXX)

The LXX constitutes a significant Greek rendition of the Hebrew Scriptures, produced in the Hellenistic era, specifically between the 3rd and 1st centuries BCE. As noted by Williams, the conventional narrative attributes its genesis to a group of seventy-two Jewish translators, who Ptolemy II Philadelphus commissioned in the context of the cultural and intellectual milieu of Alexandria, Egypt.[10]

The translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, known as the LXX, was primarily motivated by the necessity of making these texts accessible to Hellenistic Jewish communities amid a time of profound cultural change. Swete highlights that the origin of the LXX is intrinsically linked to the multicultural context of the Hellenistic period, during which Greek emerged as the *lingua franca* for commerce, governance, and intellectual exchange throughout the Mediterranean region.[11]

The translation of the LXX represents a multifaceted cultural negotiation, highlighting the intricate interplay between Hebrew religious traditions and Hellenistic intellectual contexts. The methodologies employed by the translators were distinguished by innovative interpretive strategies that transcended mere literal translation. As noted by Beck, the translators functioned as "storytellers," making both conscious and subconscious choices in transposing texts across linguistic boundaries.[12]

The scholars involved in the translation process were well-versed in Hebrew and Greek, enabling them to effectively reinterpret Hebrew concepts, idioms, and theological

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[10] William Peter J., *The Bible, the Septuagint, and the Apocrypha*, 2012.

[11] Henry Barclay Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Wipf and Stock, 2003).

[12] John A. Beck, *Translators as Storytellers: A Study in Septuagint Translation Technique*, 1st, New ed ed., Studies in Biblical Literature 25 (New York: Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2012), https://doi.org/10.3726/978-1-4539-1008-5.

intricacies into culturally and linguistically suitable Greek forms. A pertinent example is found in Jeremiah 1:11-13, where the translators nuanced the literal phrase "almond tree" into the more figurative "a vigilant watch," highlighting their dedication to rendering the text accessible and resonant for Greek-speaking audiences. As Tucker illustrates, these translators implemented advanced linguistic techniques, such as paraphrasing, elaborative expansion for enhanced clarity, and the adaptation of Hebrew semantic frameworks to align with Greek linguistic conventions, thereby ensuring a fidelity to the original message while facilitating comprehension.[13]

The manuscript tradition of the Septuagint presents a notably intricate landscape, characterized by a diverse array of textual witnesses that illuminate its extensive transmission history. According to Murphy delineates three principal categories of manuscripts: papyri, which represent some of the earliest textual forms; uncial codices, distinguished by their scripts; and minuscule or cursive manuscripts, which reflect later developments in script and codification practices.[14]

Notable uncial manuscripts of the Septuagint include the Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Alexandrinus (A), and Codex Marchalianus (Q). In contrast to the Masoretic Text, the LXX features additional material not present in the original Hebrew texts, encompassing expanded narrative segments, supplementary verses, and entire sections. This textual diversity renders the Septuagint an invaluable asset for biblical scholars, as it

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[13] Miika Tucker, *The Septuagint of Jeremiah: A Study in Translation Technique and Recensions*, 1st ed, De Septuaginta Investigationes, volume 15 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022), 311–33.

[14] Cara L. Murphy, "Examining the Septuagint: An Exploration of the Greek Old Testament's Unique Heritage and Lasting Impact on the New Testament," 2007, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Examining-the-Septuagint%3A-An-exploration-of-the-Old-Murphy/996b5567a59f4be5bd03abf2e4ba3c9cd77e8e2d.

illuminates ancient interpretative methodologies, theological evolutions, and the fluidity of scriptural transmission.[15]

The significance of the Septuagint transcends its initial historical milieu, wielding a profound influence on early Christian thought and biblical scholarship. As Jobes and Silva note[16]Numerous New Testament writers frequently referenced or alluded to the LXX when citing Old Testament passages, thereby giving the Septuagint a pivotal role in shaping Christian theological frameworks and scriptural exegesis. The translation has undergone extensive processes of revision, recension, and transmission, culminating in a complex tapestry of manuscript traditions and textual variants. [17]

Its intricate textual history continues to engage scholars and researchers, drawing attention to its linguistic characteristics, theological ramifications, and its role in contextualizing the multicultural religious landscape of ancient Judaism and early Christianity. The Septuagint stands as a testament to the rich intellectual and cultural exchanges that defined the Hellenistic era.

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[15] Funke Elizabeth Oyekan and Victor Umaru, "Text-Critical Issues Between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint Text of the Book of Jeremiah," *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 11 (August 10, 2024): 5709–20, https://doi.org/10.61707/xzet1v58.

[16] Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2005).

[17] Oyekan and Umaru, "Text-Critical Issues Between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint Text of the Book of Jeremiah," August 10, 2024.

The book of Jeremiah

God chose the prophets of the Old Testament to convey His messages to the people, accurately foretelling the future, providing moral guidance, and warning against sinful behaviour. Their words undoubtedly benefited the community with invaluable insights and direction.[18] In this research, Jeremiah is chosen by Yahweh in Jeremiah 1 to proclaim the prophecy of the judgement that will fall upon the city of Judah.

The book of Jeremiah is worthy of the attention in prophetic text in the Hebrew Bible and features one of the greatest prophets, Jeremiah, who served forty years during the uproaring final year of the kingdom of Judah. Jeremiah prophesies from approximately 627 BC until around 682 BC, during which he witnessed the decline and fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 586 BC. The book reflects on the judgement and hope for Judah when they turn back to God in Jeremiah 18 and the consequences of their actions.

The book of Jeremiah extensively explores the crucial matter of differentiating authentic prophets from deceptive ones. Umeanolue and Overholt both examine this matter, with Umeanolue emphasising the divine and spiritual origin of genuine prophets, while Overholt proposes that the religious legacy of the people might serve as a crucial factor in distinguishing the truth. Arena contests the conventional perspective on prophetic confrontations in Jeremiah, asserting that they were artistic fabrications designed to enhance Jeremiah's reputation. Hibbard contributes to this discourse by emphasising Jeremiah's focus on moral, social, and religious transformation rather than predictive accuracy as a standard for evaluating prophets.

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[18] Michael Graves, "The Prophets as Christian Scripture," *The Expository Times* 134, no. 10 (July 2023): 476–476, https://doi.org/10.1177/00145246231154736.

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, textual evidence consists of 17 scrolls discovered in Qumran Cave 4. These scrolls contain fragments of biblical texts, including the Book of Jeremiah and other apocryphal and pseudepigraphic texts. They are inscribed in Hebrew and date back to the Second Temple period. The brief Hebrew text authored by Jeremiah is reflected in the LXX. The 4QJer manuscripts refer to fragments of the Book of Jeremiah discovered in Qumran Cave 4, part of the Dead Sea Scrolls collection. Notably, there are several identified fragments: 4QJer a, 4QJer b, 4QJer d, and others, each representing different textual traditions and characteristics. The condensed version of Jeremiah is said to be drawn from a previous part of the book. The abbreviated version corresponds to the first version of the book. Jeremiah Edition II has several enhancements when compared to Edition I.[19]

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[19] Emanuel Toy, "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in Light of Its Textual History," 1999, https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:193199959.

Prophets and False Prophets in the Old Testament

The Old Testament provides several criteria to distinguish true prophets from false prophets, focusing on their alignment with God's word, the fulfillment of their prophecies, and their moral and spiritual integrity. These characteristics are crucial for believers to discern the authenticity of prophetic messages.

The Old Testament emphasizes that a true prophet's predictions must come to pass, as outlined in Deuteronomy 18:14-22, which serves as a litmus test for their legitimacy. True prophets are called by God and are compelled to deliver His message unaltered. This divine calling is a fundamental aspect of their identity, and they often authenticate their mission with signs. They are not part of the power structures that contribute to moral depravity, unlike false prophets who are often entangled with political powers and contribute to societal corruption

True prophets in the Old Testament are distinguished by their consistency with actual events, demonstrating fulfilment in reality. They receive confirmation from other trusted prophets, which validates their messages. Additionally, true prophecies align with God's Word and are not motivated by deceptive intentions or personal gain. In contrast, false prophets often deliver messages that please rulers or serve their own interests, lacking the authenticity and divine backing characteristic of true prophetic voices. These criteria are essential for discerning the validity of prophetic messages.

In the Old Testament, the presence of false prophets resulted in negative consequences, like the Babylonian exile. Misleading the people, false prophets were of great help in ending them. The prophet Jeremiah in 23:32 clearly states that these

prophets did not add value to the lives of individuals. Their wrong messages came after they failed to communicate with Yahweh, leading to Israel's fall accurately. As the text points out when a prophetic word is spoken, it should be of benefit to the people and also serve as their safeguard; however, fake prophets have failed in this respect, and because of this, exile has followed their deceitful predictions. True prophets were characterized by their unwavering faithfulness to God's message, moral guidance, and profoundly positive impact on the community.[20]

Furthermore, Wessels said, The Old Testament contains a lengthy history of prophecy, which is an important part of the rich literary and profound theological ellipses.. In Jeremiah's day, when conflicting prophetic voices created uncertainty, the question of authentic and false prophecy was a major worry. This topic is covered in the collection of oracles in the book of Jeremiah, which also emphasises how Judah's lack of effective leadership led to the exile to Babylon.[21]

One notable issue with the LXX is that it reveals the identity of some prophets as false prophets, a detail that is not explicitly acknowledged in the MT. Discussions of false prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, such as Jeremiah and Micah 3:5 and Deuteronomy 18:15-22, raise questions about the spirituality of prophets. Determining true and false prophecies is complex, involving whether the prophet speaks in the name of a different deity or if the prediction comes true. False prophets are not intentional enemies of God, as seen in the early centuries of the Christian Church. The Hermeneutic of Generosity in

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[20] Wilhelm J. Wessels, "So They Do Not Profit This People at All (Jr 23:32). A Critique of Prophecy," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32, no. 1 (March 4, 2011): 7 pages, https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v32i1.464.

[21] Wilhelm J. Wessels, "True and False Prophecy: Relating a Perspective from the Book of Jeremiah to the Pentecostal/Charismatic Tradition: Research Article," 2012, https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:171143570.

the Bible suggests that interpreting others generously does not mean accepting injustice or oppression. As applied to biblical interpretation, the hermeneutic of generosity advocates for a charitable engagement with textual and theological ambiguities while maintaining fidelity to ethical and doctrinal principles. This approach emphasizes understanding historical, cultural, and textual contexts to avoid reductive or adversarial categorizations of figures such as false prophets or dissenting voices within faith traditions. It does not entail uncritical acceptance of harmful ideologies or practices but rather seeks to contextualize their emergence within the complex socio-religious dynamics of their time.

In the case of false prophets in Jeremiah, this hermeneutic invites scholars to examine their portrayal in the Masoretic Text (MT) and Septuagint (LXX) through a lens that acknowledges their embeddedness within Judah's religious landscape. For instance, while the LXX explicitly labels certain figures as false prophets (e.g., Shemaiah in Jeremiah 29:24–32 LXX), the MT often omits such direct identifiers, leaving room for interpretive generosity. This disparity suggests that later redactors or translators grappled with balancing doctrinal accountability and communal reconciliation. A generous hermeneutic recognizes that false prophets may have operated under genuine -albeit misguided-convictions shaped by political pressures, cultural syncretism, or flawed theological frameworks.

The principle also aligns with the ethical imperatives of Deuteronomy 18:15–22, which evaluates prophetic legitimacy based on doctrinal alignment and predictive accuracy. However, a hermeneutic of generosity tempers this criterion by considering the pastoral intent behind prophetic discourse. For example, Jeremiah's adversaries, such as

Hananiah (Jeremiah 28:1–17), likely saw themselves as bolstering national morale during crises, even as their messages contradicted divine judgment.

These hermeneutic challenges scholars to avoid dichotomizing "true" and "false" prophecy as static categories, instead analyzing them as fluid constructs shaped by redactional, translational, and communal priorities. It also underscores the necessity of integrating textual criticism with ethical reflection, ensuring that interpretations of contested figures foster both intellectual rigor and empathetic engagement. In conclusion, false prophets and heretics should not be seen as antagonistic towards their faith traditions. [22]

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[22] Mitchel Modine, "Were the 'False Prophets' Intentionality Deceptive and/or Spiritually Inferior?," in *A Plain Account of Christian Spirituality: In Honor of Floyd T. Cunningham*, ed. David A. Ackerman (Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2023).

Comparative Analysis in Biblical Studies

According to John Hill, Second Temple Period conflicts included prophets' and prophecy's function in the community. Scholars have mostly clarified the differences using Isaiah 56–66, Ezekiel 40–48, and Zechariah 9–14. Rarely noted are Jeremiah's passages. This suggests that Jeremiah's Masoretic Text recension (MTJer) represents late Persian or early Greek prophecy and prophet disputes. Until the early second temple period, MTJer reflected the redactors' ideas on prophets and prophecy. MTJer emphasises the prophet's figure. The book is about Jeremiah's message. The prophet's tale interests both the recensions of Jeremiah and MTJer more.[23]

It is noted that the differences in how the two texts are arranged haven't been explained in detail, such as MT's placement of the Oracles Against the Nations (OAN) at the end of the book (chapter 46-51) while LXX inserts OAN earlier (25:14 to Chapter 31) suggesting a gap in the exploration of how these compositional differences affect the overall interpretation and understanding of the Book of Jeremiah.

According to Francesco Arena's article, scholars have widely regarded the rivalry between Jeremiah and the other prophets in the book as a crucial aspect of his prophetic career and the biographical narratives about his life. This article argues that the conflicts between Jeremiah and other prophets in the book of Jeremiah were not historical events but literary inventions created by later editors. These conflicts were fabricated to enhance Jeremiah's reputation as a true prophet of Yhwh. The prophets involved in these manufactured conflicts include Passhur, Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah. None of these

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[23] John Hill, "The Book of Jeremiah MT and Early Second Temple Conflicts about Prophets and Prophecy," 2002, https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:160016931.

personalities was initially prophets or engaged in any prophetic endeavours. The

subsequent redactors transformed these individuals into false prophets, strengthening

Jeremiah's prophetic authority.[24]

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[24] Francesco Arena, "False Prophets in the Book of Jeremiah: Did They All Prophesy and Speak Falsehood?," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 34, no. 2 (July 2, 2020): 187–200, https://doi.org/10.1080/09018328.2020.1807104.

Gaps in Existing Literature

The literature review focusing on the comparative analysis of the term "prophets" in the Book of Jeremiah, as found in the Masoretic Text (MT) versus the Septuagint (LXX), uncovers several critical gaps that merit further scholarly exploration.

Firstly, while the MT and LXX are extensively described in terms of their textual history, transmission, and theological significance, there is a lack of focused analysis on how the term "prophets" itself is linguistically and theologically nuanced differently in these two textual traditions specifically within the book of Jeremiah. The review outlines the general differences in the MT and LXX versions of Jeremiah, including the condensed nature of the LXX text and its interpretive translation strategies, but does not delve deeply into how these differences affect the understanding of prophetic identity and function in the text. This gap is crucial because the term "prophets" carries complex theological implications that vary depending on textual tradition and translation choices.

Secondly, the review touches on the problem of distinguishing true prophets from false prophets in the Old Testament and notes that the LXX sometimes explicitly identifies certain prophets as false, a detail less apparent in the MT. However, it does not sufficiently explore how these differing portrayals impact theological interpretations of prophecy in Jeremiah. There is an opportunity to investigate how the divergent textual traditions shape the conceptualization of prophetic legitimacy, authority, and the consequences of false prophecy, especially in the socio-religious context of Judah's exile.

Thirdly, although the review mentions scholarly debates about the historicity of prophetic conflicts in Jeremiah and the role of redactors in shaping the text, it does not

address how these editorial processes influence the depiction of prophets and false prophets in the MT versus the LXX. Understanding these editorial layers could illuminate the theological agendas behind the textual variants and their implications for interpreting Jeremiah's prophetic message.

Finally, the review lacks a thorough engagement with the theological implications of these textual and interpretive differences for contemporary biblical scholarship and faith communities. The impact of these differences on doctrines of prophecy, divine communication, and scriptural authority remains underexplored.

In summary, the gap lies in the insufficient detailed comparative linguistic and theological analysis of the term "prophets" in Jeremiah across the MT and LXX, the implications of differing portrayals of false prophecy, the editorial shaping of prophetic identities, and the broader theological consequences of these textual variations. Addressing these gaps would significantly contribute to biblical studies by clarifying how textual traditions influence the understanding of prophecy and its role within the Judeo-Christian heritage.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study employs a qualitative research approach, primarily grounded in descriptive research and textual criticism, to analyze the use of "false prophet" terminology in the LXX compared to the MT. The core methodology involves a systematic description and comparative analysis of textual variants between these two significant witnesses to the Hebrew Bible. By cataloging differences in terminology, syntax, and theological emphases, this research aims to illuminate how the LXX translators rendered the concept of "false prophet" in Greek, contrasting it with its Hebrew counterparts in the MT.

This qualitative study interprets textual data within cultural, theological, and sociopolitical contexts, using non-numerical evidence such as manuscript variants and linguistic features. It engages with the historical and literary contexts that shaped these texts, providing insights into the theological implications of textual differences.

The historical-critical method involves various approaches, including source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, tradition criticism, and canonical criticism. The research will use textual criticism to analyze the word "prophet" in the book of Jeremiah, comparing the MT and LXX versions. German Scholar Gadamer[25] emphasizes understanding texts within their historical circumstances, highlighting the importance of historical context in interpretation.

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[25] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd Revised edition (New York: Continuum Intl Pub Group, 1989).

In this study, focusing on a detailed case study approach to selected passages from the Book of Jeremiah. This chapter examines key texts through a comparative analysis of the MT and the LXX, alongside insights from scholarly commentary. By exploring these textual traditions, the study aims to uncover significant variations, theological nuances, and editorial strategies that shape the understanding of Jeremiah's prophetic message. The analysis is organized into case studies of specific passages—Jeremiah 6:13, 26:7, 8, 11, 16, 27:9, 28:1, and 29:1,8—with each section structured to include a discussion of the MT, a comparison with the LXX, and an evaluation of relevant scholarly perspectives. These case studies provide a framework for investigating themes such as true and false prophecy, societal corruption, and divine judgment. By synthesizing the findings across these passages, this chapter highlights their broader implications for biblical understanding and contributes to ongoing discussions about the interplay between textual traditions and theological interpretation.

Textual Analysis

The study utilizes textual criticism as its primary methodology incorporating techniques such as comparative analysis, which identifies patterns in how LXX translators handled their Hebrew source texts compared to the MT. While this research does not involve empirical data collection or experimental design, it aligns with textual scholarship and comparative theology, focusing on tracing textual transmission and examining theological implications. The study's criteria for evaluating variants include prioritizing older manuscripts and contextual coherence, situating findings within the broader framework of Second Temple Jewish literary practices.

Textual analysis is a research methodology that examines written texts to understand their meaning, structure, and implications. Textual analysis of the Old Testament involves examining biblical texts' language, structure, and historical context to uncover their meanings and development over time. This analysis utilizes computational linguistics tools to identify patterns, grammatical phenomena, and linguistic changes, enhancing our understanding of the texts. It also considers the influence of external linguistic factors and manuscript traditions, allowing scholars to make informed text-critical judgments. Various databases and methodologies, including distributional analysis and semantic approaches, support this complex field of study.[26]

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[26] Willem Th. Van Peursen, "Computational Linguistic Analysis of the Biblical Text," in *Semitic Languages and Cultures*, ed. William A. Ross and Elizabeth Robar, 1st ed., vol. 20 (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023), 223–72, https://doi.org/10.11647/obp.0358.05.

Case Study on Jeremiah 6:13

Variants for Discussion Jeremiah 6:13

	M	G	My Translation of M
Verse	כִּי מִקְּטַנָּם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בּוֹצֵעַ בָּצַע וּמִנָּבִיא וְעַד־כֹּהֵן כֻּלּוֹ עֹשֶׂה שָּׁקֶר	ὅτι ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἕως μεγάλου πάντες συνετελέσαντο ἄνομα, ἀπὸ ἱερέως καὶ ἕως ψευδοπροφήτου πάντες ἐποίησαν ψευδῆ	From the youngest to eldest, all are greedy for gain; from prophets to priests are the same, all proclaim falsely.

Table 1.1

G presents an unusual translation choice, opting for a rendering that typically aligns with "prophets" yet introduces the term "false" to categorize these figures, thereby challenging the reader's expectations. This passage critiques Judah's moral and spiritual decline before the Babylonian exile, explicitly targeting the corruption and deception among religious leaders, including prophets and priests. G suggests that Jeremiah's oracles frequently emphasize the theme of divine judgment directed at leaders who misguide the populace, thereby designating them as false prophets. This critical stance reinforces the narrative of accountability among those in religious authority.

Comments on the Masoretic Text

The term נָבִיא (*navi*) encompasses three distinct meanings: spokesperson, speaker, and prophet. In Genesis 20:7, God refers to Abraham as His prophet, indicating a true prophetic role in this context. This usage is not isolated; it appears approximately 155 times throughout the biblical text. A related term, נְבִיאֶךָ (*nevi'ekha*), appears in Exodus 7:1, where God designates Aaron as a prophet for Moses.

The genuine prophet of God, נָבִיא (*navi*), is also historically referred to as רֹאֶה (*ro'eh*) in biblical literature, indicating a seer. This term, derived from the verb meaning "to see," emphasizes the prophetic ability to receive divine visions and messages. Notably, this designation is found in 1 Samuel 9:9, possibly due to its etymological roots. This framework applies to key figures such as Abraham in Genesis 20:7, Moses in Deuteronomy 34:10, and early prophets like Hosea (6:5) and (12:11).

In Judaic literature, figures such as Moses (Deut 18:15), Aaron (Exod. 7:1), and an unnamed prophet from Judges 6:8 are classified under the term נָבִיא (*navi*). During the period of Samuel, prophets are depicted as a collective or a band, as referenced in 1 Samuel 10:5 (הֶבֶל נביאים). In the time of Elijah, the term בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים (sons of the prophets) is used; some individuals, identified as offspring of נָבִיא, appear in passages like 1 Kings 20:35 and 2 Kings 2:3. Notably, among these Judaic prophets, Jeremiah is singularly designated as a genuine prophet in Jeremiah 1:5.

Comments on the Septuagint

Abraham Geiger, a prominent 19th-century scholar, observed that the term נָבִיא was translated only four times in its original contexts, while the remainder underwent redaction in the LXX translation. Furthermore, the LXX translation of 1 Kings 18:36 notably omits the word "prophet" from its rendering, indicating a significant interpretive choice in the translation process.

In Jeremiah 6:13, both the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint depict the corruption of leadership, specifically targeting the roles of "prophets" and "priests." The wording in both versions underscores their collective failure to adhere to and uphold truth. Notably, the Septuagint places greater emphasis on the prophet, incorporating the prefix ψευδο- to the term "prophet," (προφήτης) which suggests a nuance of falsehood in their representation compared to the priests.

Theological Investigation

The verse addresses the impending judgment that God will impose upon Judah, attributing this judgment to the systemic corruption prevalent within the land. Notably, this corruption spans all demographics, encompassing individuals from the youngest to the oldest, including priests and prophets. The collective ethos of the population is characterized by a pervasive greed for illicit profit, as highlighted in verse 13. Particularly concerning is the complicit behavior of the religious leadership, which demonstrates that they are not morally superior to the general populace; they too are embroiled in the propagation of falsehoods.[27] This moral decay reveals a profound lack of integrity that has permeated the covenant community from its leadership down to its lay members. The text underscores that the corruption implicates not only the prophets but extends equally to the priests.

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[27] Alex Varughese, *NBBC, Jeremiah 1-25: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2008), 106.

Case Study on Jeremiah 26:7, 8, 11, 16 (LXX 33:7, 8, 11, and 16)

Variants for Discussion

Verse	M	G	My Translation of M
7	וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַנְּבִאִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֶת־יִרְמְיָהוּ מְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּבֵית יְהוָה	⁷καὶ ἤκουσαν οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ ψευδοπροφῆται καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς τοῦ Ιερεμιου λαλοῦντος τοὺς λόγους τούτους ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου.	And the priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah speak these words in the house of the Lord.
8	וַיְהִי כְּכַלּוֹת יִרְמְיָהוּ לְדַבֵּר אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לְדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם וַיִּתְפְּשׂוּ אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַנְּבִאִים וְכָל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר מוֹת תָּמוּת	⁸καὶ ἐγένετο Ιερεμιου παυσαμένου λαλοῦντος πάντα, ἃ συνέταξεν αὐτῷ κύριος λαλῆσαι παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, καὶ συνελάβοσαν αὐτὸν οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ ψευδοπροφῆται καὶ	And when Jeremiah finished speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests and prophets and all the people arrested him,

		πᾶς ὁ λαὸς λέγων Θανάτῳ ἀποθανῇ.	saying, 'Death, death'
11	וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַנְּבִאִים אֶל־הַשָּׂרִים וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר מִשְׁפַּט־מָוֶת לָאִישׁ הַזֶּה כִּי נִבָּא אֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת כַּאֲשֶׁר שְׁמַעְתֶּם בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם	καὶ εἶπαν οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ οἱ ψευδοπροφῆται πρὸς τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Κρίσις θανάτου τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ, ὅτι ἐπροφήτευσεν κατὰ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης, καθὼς ἠκούσατε ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ὑμῶν.	The priests and prophets said to the officials and all the people, 'This man deserves the death penalty because he prophesied against this city, just as you have heard.'
16	וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַשָּׂרִים וְכָל־הָעָם אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים וְאֶל־הַנְּבִיאִים אֵין־לָאִישׁ הַזֶּה מִשְׁפַּט־מָוֶת כִּי בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ דִּבֶּר אֵלֵינוּ	καὶ εἶπαν οἱ ἄρχοντες καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς πρὸς τοὺς ἱερεῖς καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ψευδοπροφήτας Οὐκ ἔστιν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ κρίσις θανάτου, ὅτι ἐπὶ τῷ	Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, 'This man does not deserve the sentence of death, for he has spoken to

		ὀνόματι κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐλάλησεν πρὸς ἡμᾶς.	us in the name of the Lord our God.'

Table 1.2

G always added the prefix ψευδο in these verses of Jeremiah 26, emphasising that the leader of Israel's priests and prophets is hostile towards Jeremiah's prophetic message. This reflects a common theme in prophetic literature: true prophets face persecution. Compare text for 26 :16

Verse 16	MT	LXX
	וַיֹּאמְרוּ (And then)	καὶ εἶπαν οἱ ἄρχοντες (ruler, prince)
	הַשָּׂרִים (the official)	καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς (people)
	וְכָל־הָעָם (all the people)	τοὺς ἱερεῖς (priests)
	אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים (all the priests)	καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ψευδοπροφήτας (falseprophets)
	וְאֶל־הַנְּבִיאִים (all the prophets)	Οὐκ ἔστιν
	אֵין־לָאִישׁ הַזֶּה (this man)	τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ (the man)

	מִשְׁפַּט־מָוֶת (death penety)	τούτῳ κρίσις θανάτου (death punishment)
	כִּי	ὅτι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου (God)
	בְּשֵׁם (name)	τοῦ θεοῦ (God)
	יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (Our God)	ἡμῶν ἐλάλησεν (Speak)
	דִּבֶּר (speak)	πρὸς ἡμᾶς (to us)
	אֵלֵינוּ (like god)	

Table 1.3

Comments on the Masoretic Text

Verse 7 illustrates the multifaceted opposition Jeremiah faced from different strata of Judahite society, including priests, prophets, and laypeople. Their initial response to his prophetic message was one of indignation rather than contrition, creating a backdrop for the ensuing conflict between Jeremiah and his adversaries. This reaction underscores the entrenched position of religious authorities who vigorously resisted any critique or prophetic utterance that could potentially undermine their authority or challenge established traditions.

Moreover, for the text itself in the MT such as in this case אשר דנר במירו בבי"ת פחוה לד was correct into אשר דבר ירמיהו בבית יהוה as "that/which/ spoke/ Jeremiah/ in the house of / God" as translated that Jeremiah spoke in the house of God.

Shiloh's destruction serves as a historical precedent for what could happen if Jerusalem does not heed God's warnings (Jeremiah 26:4-6). This background informs why such strong emotions were stirred among those who heard Jeremiah speak about similar potential destruction for Jerusalem.[28] Jeremiah 26:7 marks a turning point where public opinion turns against Jeremiah due to his prophetic warning about impending judgment unless there is national repentance.

Jeremiah 26:8 is situated within a broader narrative context wherein Jeremiah conveys a prophetic warning from God to the people of Judah regarding impending divine judgment contingent upon their repentance. This verse captures the immediate aftermath of Jeremiah's delivery of this admonitory message. Following God's directive, Jeremiah concludes his oration, which likely echoes themes found in his earlier

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[28] "Jeremiah 26 - Dr. Constable's Expository Notes - Bible Commentaries," StudyLight.org, accessed February 7, 2025, https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/jeremiah-26.html.

proclamation in Jeremiah 7:1-15, emphasizing the judgment awaiting Jerusalem should its inhabitants persist in their unrepentant state.

The reaction of those present is telling; upon the conclusion of his address, "the priests and prophets and all the people" apprehend him (v. 8). This response underscores the severity of the offense taken by his audience, culminating in a collective declaration for his execution due to his pronouncement against Jerusalem and its temple (v. 8). The intensity of this reaction reflects not only the content of Jeremiah's message but also the socio-religious climate of the time, illustrating the inherent conflict between prophetic authority and institutional power.

In the analysis of MT, the phrase מות-תמות exhibits notable reduplication for emphasis, conveying not merely the concept of death, but rather an unequivocal and certain death. This construction mirrors the language in Genesis 2:17, where the warning to Adam about consuming from the forbidden tree is articulated as "dying you will die." In both instances, this linguistic device underscores the irreversible consequences of disobedience or divine commands' transgression. Further examples of this phenomenon can be observed, such as in the phrase "slave of slaves" (Gen 9:25) and the repetition in "ever more of ever mores" (Isa 34:10), both of which denote perpetuity. Additionally, the phrase "gladness my joy" (Ps 43:4) reflects similar emphatic structure, reinforcing the depth of sentiment expressed.[29]

The text highlights the notion that expressing dissent toward revered institutions, particularly in the absence of divine mandate, carries the risk of substantial repercussions.

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[29] "Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew," accessed February 7, 2025, https://www.paracleteforum.org/archive/email/bible/hebrew_emphasis/dialogue.html.

Yet, despite this formidable warning, prophets such as Jeremiah persisted in their prophetic duties, remaining resolute in the face of human resistance.

In Jeremiah 26:8, the verb כְּכַלּוֹת (kəḵallōwṯ) is derived from the root כלה (kālāh), which conveys the notion of completion or fulfillment. This term is pivotal as it marks the culmination of Jeremiah's discourse, serving as a narrative pivot. Its usage underscores the finality of his prophetic delivery, just prior to encountering opposition, thereby highlighting Jeremiah's adherence to divine directive and his fidelity to God's command.[30] The terminology employed emphasizes Jeremiah's adherence to his prophetic duties, showcasing his unwavering commitment despite facing imminent peril and resistance. The observation that Jeremiah concluded his discourse before encountering opposition underscores his message's integrity and completeness, indicating it remained unaffected by external influences or pressures.

From table 1.3, in the contrast between "officials" and "princes," the MT employs the term "officials," whereas the LXX translates it as "prince." This latter choice aligns thematically with instances in Numbers 21:18 and Judges 5:15, 10:18. The designation "officials" in its historical context refers to individuals serving under a monarch, often in roles such as commanders or counselors, as seen in Genesis 12:15, 30:4, and Numbers 22:8. This title denotes a specific class of officials who held the authority to make judicial decisions, including the power to enact capital punishment in their capacity as magistrates, exemplified in Exodus 2:14 and 18:21.

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[30] Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds., *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. Volume 2 (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 616–18.

Comments on the Septuagint

Jeremiah 26:7 is LXX 33:7 due to different chapter numbering. It describes a

pivotal moment where Jeremiah preaches a message at the temple, emphasizing

repentance and warning of severe consequences if Judah fails to obey God's laws.

The reaction from priests, prophets, and people is significant as they hear this message.

Given that there isn't a direct equivalent verse-by-verse translation for every part of MT

into LXX due to structural differences and omissions/additions. This can be seen as

below

Eng	MT	LXX
And They heard	וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ	Καὶ ἤκουσαν
The Preists	הַכֹּהֲנִים	οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ
And the prophets	וְהַנְּבִאִים	οἱ ψευδοπροφῆται
And all the people	וְכָל הָעָם	καὶ πᾶς
Jeremiah	יִרְמְיָהוּ	τοῦ Ιερεμιου
Speak	מְדַבֵּר	τοῦ Ιερεμιου
The words that	הַדְּבָרִים	ὁ λαὸς
In the house of the lord	הָאֵלֶּה בְּבֵית יְהֹוָה	ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου.
		τοὺς λόγους τούτους (adding words in LXX)

Table 1.4

The comparison highlights that transitional elements extend beyond mere

conjunctions, incorporating multiple words that emphasize the repetitiveness of certain

verbs. The LXX frequently utilizes verb repetition in its translations for various reasons. The LXX translators, aiming to preserve the integrity of the Hebrew source text, commonly employed Hebraisms in the Greek rendition.[31] This practice includes repetitive structures or verb forms that reflect Hebrew idiomatic expressions. For instance, the use of προστίθημι ("to add") preceding another verb exemplifies a prevalent Hebrew idiom that signifies repeated actions. Moreover, repetition serves to elucidate intricate meanings and underscore thematic elements. Translators likely intended to ensure the clear conveyance of pivotal concepts within the Greek context by reiterating verbs.Taylar notes, "Translated repetitions provide unique insight into the decision-making process of the translator because they show how the same text is handled in differing contexts".[32]

For example, in Genesis 3:16 (LXX), the repetition of "multiply" (πληθύνων / πληθυνῶ) is interpreted as a form of wordplay highlighting both labor pains and childbearing. The complexity of translation, highlighting how translators navigate linguistic and contextual challenges when rendering ancient texts. Translation variations, arguing that

"no single factor can sufficiently explain the differences among the translated repetitions and that a complex web of influences lies behind each difference".[33]

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[31] "The Septuagint," The Society for Old Testament Study, accessed February 7, 2025, https://www.sots.ac.uk/wiki/the-septuagint/.

[32] Rusty Taylor, "Translated Repetitions in Septuagint Proverbs" (M.A. Thesis, Deerfield, Illinois, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2015), https://www.academia.edu/14324433/Translated_Repetitions_in_Septuagint_Proverbs_M_A_Thesis_.

[33] Taylor, 16.

This sophisticated perspective demonstrates the multifaceted nature of translation, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and nuanced scholarly analysis.

In Jeremiah 26:8 of the Hebrew Bible, after Jeremiah finishes speaking his prophecy against Jerusalem and the temple, he is seized by priests, prophets, and people who declare that he must die for prophesying such doom. The passage describes how God instructs Jeremiah to speak against Jerusalem and its temple if they do not repent. After speaking as commanded by God, Jeremiah is seized by those who oppose his message. Both versions convey that Jeremiah faces opposition from religious leaders and others after finishing his prophecy. The MT explicitly states that priests, prophets, and all people took hold of him saying he must die because he prophesied against Jerusalem (Jeremiah 26:8). As seen in Emphasizes[34] legal penalty ("Death, death") due to perceived blasphemy or unauthorized prophecy. While LXX describe as to be "cut of his head" θάνατος be struck a deadly blow[35] (Re 13:3); πρὸς θ. leading to death (1 Jn 5:16f); ἐν θανάτοις near death, in danger of death (2 Cor 11:23).

Classical views on death portray it as both destructive and a potential source of liberation. While death imparts a shadow over life's meaning, it also signifies release from its uncertainties; thus, suicide may be perceived as a form of liberation. The pursuit of immortality through renown, especially in service to the pólis, adds a noble dimension. Although death is a natural phenomenon, it does not alleviate the fear of individual mortality. Plato emphasizes the importance of dying well, suggesting that death can fulfill life and inspire hope for the soul's continuation, while Aristotle posits that the noús

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[34] "Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew."

[35] Barclay M. Jr. Newman, *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (United Bible Societies, 1971), 82.

survives in an obscure way. For the Stoics, death is a natural phenomenon that should be accepted. It can become an ethical act, as both life and death are matters of individual decision. Since life is viewed pessimistically, responsible suicide can be justified. Death tests our ability to accept our destiny and turn away from external concerns. Those who focus solely on external things lack true life and may be considered already dead.[36]

The situation presented in Jeremiah 26:8 is distinct from the philosophical frameworks of Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle. Instead, it emphasizes divine retribution as reflected in the use of the name κύριος (Lord). The passage highlights a punitive response towards a genuine prophet, illustrating an inhumane act perpetrated by a faction of rebellious and disobedient religious authorities and laypersons. This context underscores the severity of the consequences faced by those who misappropriate the name of God, revealing a critical dynamic within the community's engagement with prophetic authority.

Death represents a profound existential transition in early Jewish thought, characterized by complex theological and philosophical interpretations. The Hebrew Bible whispers ambiguously about the afterlife, with terms like *Sheol* suggesting a subterranean realm where souls reside.[37] Archaeological evidence reveals intricate burial practices, demonstrating a belief in continued existence. Tombs contained provisions for the deceased's journey.[38]

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[36] Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 313.

[37] Adem Irmak, "Death and Its Beyond in Early Judaism and Medieval Jewish Philosophy" (Thesis, Denver, Colorado, University of Denver, 2011), 14–15.

[38] Irmak, 12.

To compare each word transition

Eng	MT	LXX
And when	וַיְהִי (and)	καὶ
	כְּכַלּוֹת (finish)	ἐγένετο (it come to pass)
Jeremiah	יִרְמְיָהוּ (Jeremiah)	Ιερεμιου (Jeremiah)
finished		Παυσαμένου (Finish)
speaking	לְדַבֵּר (speak)	λαλοῦντος (speaking)
all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people,	כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה (all that commanded)	
	יְהֹוָה לְדַבֵּר אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם (God speak all the people)	Πάντα ἃ συνέταξεν αὐτῷ κύριος λαλῆσαι παντὶ τῷ λαῷ(all things which God had commanded to the people)
	וַיִּתְפְּשׂוּ (seized)	καὶ συνελάβοσαν (arrest)
	אֹתוֹ	αὐτὸν
that the priests	הַכֹּהֲנִים (perists)	οἱ ἱερεῖς (perists)

and prophets	וְהַנְּבִיאֵי (and prophets)	καὶ οἱ ψευδοπροφῆται (and falseprophets)
and all the people	וְכָל־הָעָם (all the people)	καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς (and all the people)
arrested him, saying,	לֵאמֹר (say, speak, shout)	Λέγων(Say, Speak)
'Death, death'	מֹות (to die, kill)	θανάτῳ (face death)
	תָּמוּת	ἀποθνήσκω

Table 1.5

In the comparative analysis, the term וְהַנְּבִיאֵי is notable for its rendering in the LXX as ψευδοπροφῆται. The addition of the adjective prefix by the Septuagint translators appears to be a deliberate attempt to capture specific nuances inherent in the Hebrew text that may not be conveyed through simple noun forms. This choice reflects an effort to delineate prophets who are conveying divergent oracles. One intriguing aspect of this discussion is the absence of a parallel term for "false priests." For instance, in Amos 7:13, which predates the LXX, the term "false priests" is not employed, despite Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, prophesying falsehoods. This raises questions about why the LXX translators applied the prefix "pseudo" exclusively to prophets and prophecies, rather than to priests—suggesting a potential distinction in how these roles were perceived within the text.

Both translations leverage the doubling of the terms "death" or "die" and "kill," a technique that can be understood through the lens of literary fidelity[39] and stylistic consistency[40] in translation. This approach necessitates a careful preservation of the original text's stylistic elements, tone, and literary devices. The LXX translators, in their endeavor to maintain these features from the MT, aimed to convey both the content and the distinct stylistic nuances across diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes. By retaining such repetitions—such as the occurrence of "death"—the translators upheld literary fidelity, thereby honoring the inherent style of the original text.

The textual discrepancies between the MT and the LXX in 1 Kings 19 illustrate the editorial processes that have shaped biblical narratives over time. Hugo posits that the LXX likely preserves an earlier textual tradition, while the MT reveals intentional theological and narrative alterations. These modifications serve to underscore themes of divine sovereignty, reframe prophetic characterizations, and accentuate distinct theological viewpoints. This analysis highlights that the history of the text encompasses more than mere transmission errors; it represents a complex literary evolution shaped by theological interpretations, particularly evident in the portrayal of the Elijah narrative.[41]

Moreover, the translation of Hebrew to Greek illustrates significant textual divergences between the MT and the LXX, posing intricate challenges for scholars in determining whether these discrepancies arise from the translator's interpretative

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[39] "Fidelity In Translation - American Translators Association (ATA)," accessed February 9, 2025, https://www.atanet.org/translation/fidelity-in-translation/.

[40] "Stylistic Consistency - (English 11) - Vocab, Definition, Explanations | Fiveable," accessed February 9, 2025, https://library.fiveable.me/key-terms/english-11/stylistic-consistency.

[41] Philippe Hugo, "Text History as a Research Tool on Literary Development in the Books of Kings: The Case of 1 Kgs 19 MT and LXX" (SBL 2007 Annual Meeting, University of Fribourg/Switzerland: SBL San Diego, 2007), 15–16.

decisions or reflect variations in the underlying Hebrew text (Vorlage). Notable scholars such as Wevers and Peters adopt differing methodological stances; Wevers approaches the translation with the presumption that the source text bears considerable resemblance to the MT, whereas Peters is more inclined to attribute the observed variations to possible differences in the original Hebrew text.The variations present in the LXX encompass a spectrum of semantic modifications, contextual shifts, and possible theological implications, rendering its translation a multifaceted hermeneutical challenge.

In the MT, Jeremiah 26:11 reads: The priests and prophets said to the officials and to all the people, "This man deserves the death penalty, for he has prophesied against this city, as you yourselves have heard." [42]

The LXX version of this verse aligns closely with the MT, utilizing Greek equivalents in its translation. For instance, the term for "priests" is rendered as εἶπαν, while "prophets" is expressed as ψευδοπροφῆται, incorporating the prefix ψευδο- to denote false prophets. Early manuscripts such as Codex Cairensis (895 CE) representing the MT and Codex Vaticanus (B) for the LXX exhibit fidelity to their respective textual traditions.[43] Notably, there are no significant textual variants in this verse that impact interpretation across the major manuscript traditions, including MT and LXX. The contextual framework remains coherent in both versions; Jeremiah encounters resistance primarily due to his prophetic declarations concerning the impending destruction of Jerusalem.

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[42] "Sefaria: A Living Library of Jewish Texts Online," accessed February 9, 2025, https://www.sefaria.org/texts.

[43] "Book of Jeremiah: Bible Textual Variants Analysed," accessed February 9, 2025, https://www.bible.ca/manuscripts/Book-of-Jeremiah-Bible-Manuscript-Textual-Variants-Old-Testament-Tanakh-Septuagint-LXX-Masoretic-Text-MT-scribal-gloss-copying-error.htm.

The LXX incorporates the term "false," thereby establishing a distinction between authentic and deceptive prophecy. Additionally, the LXX reorganizes certain phrases to enhance clarity and emphasis. In Jeremiah 26, we see Jeremiah delivering a prophetic message against Jerusalem, which prompts some leaders to consider his execution. However, intervention arises from other leaders who reference Micah's earlier prophecy during the reign of Hezekiah (verses 17–19). This narrative unfolds early in Jehoiakim's reign, as Jeremiah's pronouncements provoke backlash from certain religious authorities, yet garner support from those who recall the precedent set by Micah. The explicit reference to "false prophets" in the LXX may imply a deeper critique of the religious leadership that opposes Jeremiah's authentic message. Thus, the mention of "false prophets" serves as an additional layer of critique aimed at those resisting genuine prophetic voices.
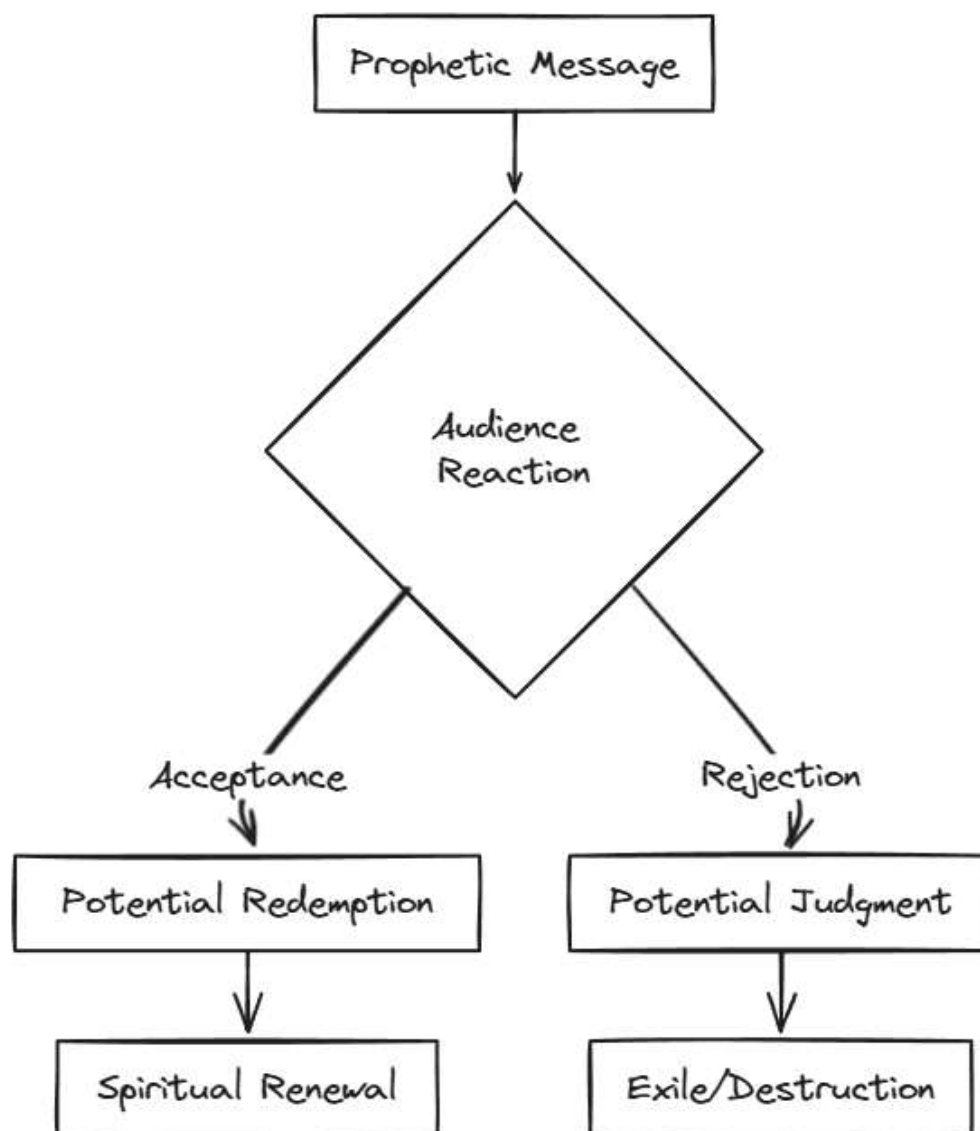
Theological Investigation

Image 1.1

The theological significance of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry offers deep insights into the dynamics of divine communication and the concept of spiritual accountability. His prophetic messages critically confronted the prevailing religious and political structures, underscoring the primacy of divine truth over human comfort and the

maintenance of institutional integrity.[44] The narrative illustrates that the authenticity of prophetic voices is not contingent upon institutional validation but rather on the congruence of their messages with the stipulations of God's covenant. The experiences of Jeremiah, particularly during his trial, and Uriah's execution underscore the ongoing discord between divine revelation and human opposition, reflecting the significant spiritual decline prevalent within the religious leadership of Judah. The prophetic lineage, epitomized by figures such as Jeremiah, Micah, and Uriah, asserts that true divine guidance transcends political considerations and necessitates a profound commitment to the directives outlined in the Torah.[45] The text emphasizes a significant theological principle: the dismissal of prophetic warnings is tantamount to rejecting divine guidance, which poses a risk of testing and potentially fracturing the covenantal relationship between God and His people. This narrative functions as a profound theological commentary on the ramifications of spiritual complacency and illustrates the steadfast nature of divine communication, even when confronted with systemic opposition.

Jeremiah 26:11 depicts a pivotal confrontation between religious authorities and a prophet sparked by the prophet's unsettling proclamations regarding the forthcoming judgment on Jerusalem. Both the MT and the LXX effectively capture this tension, revealing no substantial theological discrepancies in their portrayals of divine judgment in response to disobedience nor in the human aversion to unwelcome prophetic messages.

In Jeremiah 26:18, the context provided in Jeremiah 26:17-19 highlights the involvement of experienced individuals in legal matters, specifically referencing

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[44] Claude F. Mariottini, "The Trial of Jeremiah and the Killing of Uriah the Prophet," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (2014): 35.
[45] F. Mariottini, 28–35.

Deuteronomy 21:2. These individuals are characterized as the elders of the land (v. 17), possessing a deep understanding of both historical and legal precedents. Their expertise is significant in adjudicating matters within the community, reflecting a structured approach to governance and the application of law based on established norms.

The opening statement introduces Micah[46] of Moresheth as a prophet active during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah, along with a quotation of his pronouncement concerning Zion directed at the people of Judah (Mic 1:18). Micah's prophetic ministry is traditionally dated to the period of 742-687 BCE. Moresheth, referenced in Micah 1:1 and also known as Moresheth Gath (Mic 1:14), is identified as a village situated in the Shephelah region, approximately 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem.[47]

The elders introduced Micah's prophecy with the formula "Thus says Yahweh Sebaoth," subsequently referencing Micah 3:12. This citation of an earlier prophet is a distinctive occurrence within the Old Testament. The elders underscore that Jeremiah is not the first prophet to deliver scathing critiques against Zion/Jerusalem.[48]

The MT translators may have deliberately referred to the prophets as הַנְּבִיאִים, yet the LXX translators, aware of the narrative trajectory, preemptively disclose their identities, neglecting the contextual significance presented in Micah, particularly in verses 17 to 19. Additionally, the LXX translators frequently employed adjective prefixes to nouns sourced from the MT, enhancing clarity and offering a more nuanced interpretation of the text. This reflects their interpretive methodology, which sought to

[46] Kristin Weingart, "Wie Samaria so Auch Jerusalem," July 8, 2019, Abstract, https://doi.org/10.1163/15685330-12341369.
[47] Alex Varughese and Mitchel Modine, *Jeremiah 26-52: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2010), 51.
[48] Varughese and Modine, 52.

convey the literal meaning and the theological and contextual implications inherent in the original Hebrew. Through this approach, they engaged in a deeper level of interpretation, addressing critical content and reference issues pertinent to their audience and the overarching message.[49]

The narrative of Jeremiah 26 presents a complex theological discourse on prophetic authenticity and divine communication, challenging simplistic notions of prophetic legitimacy. Within this text, the confrontation between Jeremiah and his accusers reveals the intricate dynamics of theological interpretation and prophetic authority. The potential condemnation of Jeremiah as a false prophet highlights the precarious nature of prophetic discourse, where the line between divine revelation and perceived sedition becomes critically blurred. Sharp argues that such narratives reflect deeper ideological tensions within the Judahite religious community, where competing interpretive frameworks struggle to define legitimate prophetic speech. [50]

The theological implications extend beyond mere historical narrative, suggesting a profound hermeneutical challenge to understanding divine communication. Bentall emphasizes that the temple sermon's conditional message aims to provoke repentance rather than serve as an absolute prediction, thereby complicating traditional understandings of prophetic judgment.[51] The text's portrayal of potential false prophecy underscores the complex relationship between divine revelation, human interpretation,

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[49] Hee Sung Lee, "The Comparative Study between MT and LXX-Isaiah 60:1-12: An Example of the Translation Techniques of LXX-Isaiah" 25 (2009): 193–208, https://doi.org/10.28977/JBTR.2009.10.25.193.

[50] Carolyn J. Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah: Struggles for Authority in Deutero-Jeremianic Prose*, 1. publ, Old Testament Studies (London: T & T Clark, 2003).

[51] Jonathan Bentall, "Jeremiah's Temple Sermon and the Hermeneutics of Tradition: A Theological Reading of Jeremiah 7:1–15 and 26:1–24" (Doctoral, Durham University, 2017), https://etheses.dur.ac.uk/12293/.

and the ongoing negotiation of theological meaning. As such biblical passages demonstrate the dynamic and dialogical nature of theological traditions, where prophetic authority is continuously contested and reconstructed within evolving religious contexts.[52]

The theological discourse surrounding false prophets in Jeremiah 26 reveals complex dynamics of prophetic authority and divine communication. Within the broader context of prophetic critique, the text demonstrates how theological traditions wrestle with the tension between competing interpretive claims and the legitimacy of prophetic speech. The narrative exposes the intricate relationship between human agency and divine revelation, suggesting that prophetic authenticity is not merely determined by institutional affiliation but by the alignment of message with theological truth and ethical conduct.[53]

Moreover, Bentall suggested that the false prophet controversy in Jeremiah 26 illuminates the hermeneutical challenges of discerning divine will within a tradition of competing theological perspectives. The text suggests that prophetic authority is conditionally linked to faithfulness and moral integrity, challenging simplistic notions of divine communication. By presenting a nuanced portrayal of prophetic conflict, the passage invites theological reflection on the dynamic nature of revelation, where divine presence is not guaranteed by institutional status but requires ongoing ethical and spiritual responsiveness.[54]

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[52] Bentall, "Jeremiah's Temple Sermon and the Hermeneutics of Tradition."
[53] Bentall, 116.
[54] Bentall, 120.

The narrative of Jeremiah 26 presents a complex theological exploration of prophetic legitimacy and divine communication, challenging simplistic notions of false prophecy. The chapter reveals that prophetic authenticity is not merely determined by the immediate fulfillment of predictions, but by the prophet's alignment with divine commission and the message's potential for communal transformation .[55] The text demonstrates that prophetic speech operates within a conditional framework, where the purpose is not absolute prediction but an invitation to repentance and covenant renewal. The interactions between Jeremiah, religious leaders, and political authorities highlight the intricate dynamics of discerning prophetic authority, suggesting that true prophecy is fundamentally about calling a community to ethical and spiritual accountability .[56]

Furthermore, Jeremiah 26 problematizes the binary of true versus false prophecy by presenting multiple interpretative perspectives on prophetic speech. The chapter's nuanced portrayal suggests that prophetic legitimacy is determined not by immediate outcomes but by the prophet's commitment to divine revelation and the community's responsive obedience.[57] The precedents of Micah and Uriah illustrate that prophetic messages can be conditionally understood, emphasizing that divine judgment is not predetermined but contingent upon communal response. This theological approach undermines rigid doctrinal frameworks and instead presents prophecy as a dynamic, dialogical process of divine-human interaction, where the potential for transformation remains paramount.[58]

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[55] Bentall, 156.
[56] Bentall, 158.
[57] Bentall, 172.
[58] Bentall, 174.

Case Study on Jeremiah 27:9

Variants for Discussion

Verse	M	G	My Translation of M
9	אַתֶּם אַל־תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־נְבִיאֵיכֶם וְאֶל־קֹסְמֵיכֶם וְאֶל חֲלֹמֹתֵיכֶם וְאֶל־עֹנְנֵיכֶם וְאֶל־כַּשָּׁפֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־הֵם אֹמְרִים אֲלֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעַבְדוּ אֶת־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל	καὶ ὑμεῖς μὴ ἀκούετε τῶν ψευδοπροφητῶν ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν μαντευομένων ὑμῖν καὶ τῶν ἐνυπνιαζομένων ὑμῖν καὶ τῶν οἰωνισμάτων ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν φαρμάκων ὑμῶν τῶν λεγόντων Οὐ μὴ ἐργάσησθε τῷ βασιλεῖ Βαβυλῶνος.	And you, do not listen to your prophets, diviners, interpreters of dreams, soothsayers, and sorcerers, who are saying this to you, 'You should not serve the king of Babylon.'

Table 1.6

In the LXX, Jeremiah 27 is partially found in what corresponds to Jeremiah 34.

Comments on Masoretic Text

The MT translators utilize the term תִּשְׁמְעוּ, derived from the root שָׁמַע. This root appears in its Qal form 1,052 times, notably in Jeremiah 12:7, where it states, "But if they do not listen, I will uproot that nation, uproot it and destroy it—declares the LORD." This usage occurs in five additional instances throughout the Book of Jeremiah. In this context, Jeremiah employs שָׁמַע to convey the notion of non-listening as a warning to the people, emphasizing the dire consequences of ignoring divine instruction.

In his text, Jeremiah references the term קֹסְמֵיכֶם, which is a direct quotation from Micah 3:6, predating him. This narrative is particularly noteworthy considering that, in Jeremiah 26:17-19, the elders invoke this story to assess the prophet Jeremiah's legitimacy. Furthermore, in Jeremiah 27:9, Jeremiah reiterates this reference to further question his credibility. The prophetic message from Micah is cited twice within Jeremiah's context, underscoring the accusations against him and highlighting the intertextual relationship between their prophetic declarations.   Micah's reappearance in the Book of Jeremiah is significant as it highlights the continuity and reception of prophetic traditions within the Hebrew Bible. By referencing Micah[59], Jeremiah not only acknowledges the historical and theological context of Micah's prophecies but also reinforces the themes of judgment and hope that are central to both books. This intertextual connection serves to validate Jeremiah's message by aligning it with the established prophetic tradition of Micah, who warned of impending doom due to moral corruption but also offered hope for future restoration.

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[59] Wilhelm Wessels, "YHWH, the God of New Beginnings: Micah's Testimony," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 69, no. 1 (August 2, 2013): 1, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.1960.

Moreover the use of the inclusion of diviners in the Old Testament narrative is influenced by a complex interplay of historical and theological factors. Historically, divination[60] was a widespread practice in ancient Israel and the broader Near Eastern environment, where it was often intertwined with political and religious activities.[61] Theologically, the Old Testament reflects a nuanced view of divination, sometimes portraying it as legitimate and other times as foreign or false. This duality is evident in the varied depictions of diviners, including both male and female figures, who kings and other leaders often consulted for divine insight.

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[60] Esther J. Hamori, "The Prophet and the Necromancer: Women's Divination for Kings," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 4 (2013): Abstract.

[61] Daniel E. Carver, "Biblical Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context: A New Interpretation of Jeremiah 30–33," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 142, no. 2 (June 15, 2023): 267, https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1422.2023.5.

Comments on Septuagint

The Septuagint employs terms such as ψευδοπροφήτας (pseudoprophētas) to denote false prophets and μαντεύουσι (manteuousi) for diviners, highlighting the imperative to reject those who assert divine authority while leading the faithful astray. The context of submission to Babylonian hegemony is framed as a pragmatic survival tactic, with resistance foreseen as a pathway to exile and ruin. The claims made by these figures—purporting imminent divine intervention to liberate Judah from Babylonian oppression—are thus characterized as deceptive propaganda.

The LXX abbreviates the list, likely to avoid redundancy for a Greek-speaking audience unfamiliar with nuanced Hebrew terms. Retains the core triad (prophets, diviners, dreamers) as representative of broader deceptive practices. Reflects Hellenistic Jewish priorities: Focus on practices relevant to diaspora communities (e.g., dream interpretation) over obsolete local rituals (e.g., cloud-divination). The LXX's streamlined version (Jeremiah 34) aligns with its tendency to omit repetitive phrases, prioritizing narrative flow for liturgical or pedagogical use. Focuses on the danger of false prophecy as a primary threat, resonating with early Jewish and Christian communities combating internal dissent (2 Peter 2:1).

Theological Investigation

Jeremiah 27 delineates the friction between authentic and spurious prophecy, particularly illustrated by the opposition between Jeremiah and Hananiah. This episode underscores the complexities involved in differentiating between divine truth and misleading assertions, as both figures asserted they were divinely commissioned. The text indicates that genuine prophecy is marked by its consonance with divine will and empirical historical fulfillment, whereas false prophecy frequently arises from subjective motivations or political agendas.[62]

Bentall posits that Jeremiah 27 conveys a message of imminent judgment, aimed at eliciting repentance from the populace. This theme aligns with the overarching theological framework within the Book of Jeremiah, which highlights the sovereignty of YHWH and underscores the conditionality of divine covenants based on the people's receptiveness and actions.[63]

Bryan[64] and Hill.[65] propose that the Second Temple period encapsulated a significant era of contemplation regarding the themes of exile and restoration. The fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning a seventy-year captivity was recognized with the exilic return initiated by Cyrus, yet this era was also characterized by persistent socio-political struggles and a pervasive sense of incomplete restoration. Such a backdrop profoundly shaped the hermeneutical approach to Jeremiah's texts, which were

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[62] Thomas W. Overholt, "Jeremiah 27-29: The Question of False Prophecy," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 35, no. 3 (1967): 241–49.

[63] Bentall, "Jeremiah's Temple Sermon and the Hermeneutics of Tradition."

[64] Steven M. Bryan, "The Reception of Jeremiah's Prediction of a Seventy-Year Exile," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137, no. 1 (2018): Abstract.

[65] John Hill, "The Book of Jeremiah MT and Its Early Second Temple Background" (Melbourne, Australia, Yarra Theological Union, 2007).

interpreted not only in their historical context but also in their eschatological

implications, ultimately indicating a future hope for complete restoration.

Case Study on Jeremiah 28:1

Variants for Discussion

Verse	M	G	My Translation of M
1	וַיְהִי בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִיא בְּרֵאשִׁית מַמְלֶכֶת צִדְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה *בִּשְׁנַת [בַּשָּׁנָה] הָרְבִעִית בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי אָמַר אֵלַי חֲנַנְיָה בֶן־עַזּוּר הַנָּבִיא אֲשֶׁר מִגִּבְעוֹן בְּבֵית יְהֹוָה לְעֵינֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים וְכָל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר	[1]Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ τετάρτῳ ἔτει Σεδεκια βασιλέως Ιουδα ἐν μηνὶ τῷ πέμπτῳ εἶπέν μοι Ανανιας υἱὸς Αζωρ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης ὁ ἀπὸ Γαβαων ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου κατ᾽ ὀφθαλμοὺς τῶν ἱερέων καὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ λέγων	And it was in the fourth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, in the fifth month, that Hananiah son of Azur, the prophet from Gibeon, spoke to me in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying:

Table 1.7

Comments on Masoretic Text

Jeremiah 28 highlights a pivotal encounter between Jeremiah and Hananiah, contrasting their roles in the landscape of prophetic discourse. Hananiah asserts a prophetic message that God will dismantle Babylon's yoke over Judah within a two-year timeframe and promises the restoration of temple vessels previously seized by Nebuchadnezzar. This scenario encapsulates a significant dichotomy in biblical prophecy, with Jeremiah representing a true prophetic voice characterized by apocalyptic warnings and calls for repentance, while Hananiah embodies the archetype of a false prophet, proffering messages of peace and restoration that cater to the prevailing desires of the populace and political leaders.

This conflict is instrumental in articulate theological and hermeneutical discussions surrounding the differentiation between authentic and inauthentic prophetic utterances. It underscores the epistemological challenges believers face in discerning divine revelation amidst the allure of messages that may serve personal interests or socio-political agendas. The narrative invites critical examination of the underlying ethical frameworks that guide prophetic interpretation and highlights the importance of fidelity to divine truth in the face of competing narratives.[66]

MT represents a later, expanded edition with doctrinal clarifications (e.g., naming Nebuchadnezzar explicitly). The MT's expansions may reflect post-exilic Jewish identity struggles, emphasizing obedience to foreign rulers as divine punishment. Prioritizes

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[66] Aska Aprilano Pattinaja, Sifera Sampe Liling, and Firdaus Rinto Harahap, "Kontradiksi Nubuatan Yeremia Dan Hananya Sebagai Syarat Menguji Nubuatan Berdasarkan Yeremia 28:1-17," *Jurnal Lentera Nusantara* 3, no. 2 (June 19, 2024): Abstract, https://doi.org/10.59177/jls.v3i2.290.

precise covenantal language (e.g., "LORD of Hosts," יהוה) and national repentance

themes.

Comments on Septuagint

The LXX places this material differently; what is found in Jeremiah 28 MT appears as part of Jeremiah 35 LXX. For example, instead of "in Gibeon," some versions might emphasize Hananiah's prophetic role without specifying his location.

In the LXX, Jeremiah 28 (MT) appears as chapter 35, part of a broader reorganization affecting ~30 sections. The LXX version is shorter by ~2,700 words (1/8 of MT's length), omitting repetitive phrases (e.g., "thus says the Lord") and entire passages like Jeremiah 27:19–22 and 33:14–26.In Jeremiah 28:5 Refers to God's dominion over "all these lands," emphasizing geopolitical control. The LXX uses "the earth" (τὴν γῆν), suggesting a cosmic scope.[67]

Both texts condemn Hananiah's deception (שֶׁקֶר, *sheker*), but MT's expanded narrative heightens the stakes by specifying Nebuchadnezzar as God's "servant" (25:9 MT vs. LXX). Overholt argues that false prophecy is fundamentally about misinterpreting historical and theological contexts, revealing a deeper spiritual malaise. These prophets are characterized by their inability to read the nuanced divine narrative, often applying old theological messages inappropriately to new and challenging situations. In the LXX, false prophets are portrayed as spiritual leaders who fundamentally misunderstand the covenant relationship between God and His people. They tend to provide misleading hope during times of crisis, particularly during the Babylonian exile, by promising quick resolutions and ignoring the deeper transformative purpose of suffering. Their prophecies reflect a shallow understanding of divine

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[67] Arie van der Kooij, "Jeremiah 27:5-15: How Do MT and LXX Relate to Each Other?," accessed March 16, 2025, https://www.academia.edu/126385957/Jeremiah_27_5_15_How_do_MT_and_LXX_relate_to_each_other.

punishment and redemption, prioritizing immediate comfort over spiritual growth and genuine theological reflection.[68]

The legitimacy of a prophet, according to the text, is not merely determined by the accuracy of predictions, but by their alignment with historical context, moral integrity, and profound understanding of God's covenant. Prophets like Hananiah are critiqued for spreading unrealistic expectations and failing to comprehend the complex theological implications of Israel's exile experience. Their messages represent a dangerous spiritual myopia that threatens the community's deeper understanding of divine purpose and transformation.[69]

Ultimately, the LXX's treatment of false prophecy serves as a powerful theological commentary on spiritual leadership, highlighting the critical importance of discernment, historical understanding, and genuine spiritual insight. MT includes later expansions, such as the "iron yoke" metaphor (Jeremiah 28:14), absent in the LXX. These additions likely served to reinforce Judah's subjugation to Babylon during post-exilic editing.[70]

The LXX's brevity aligns with its use in early Christian communities, which prioritized messianic prophecies over historical details. Streamlines narratives for broader theological applicability, as seen in its cosmic framing of God's sovereignty.

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[68] Doniwen Pietersen, "YHWH's Mouthpiece to the Exiles: A Jeremianic Turn of Hope," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 7, no. 1 (2021): 1–23.

[69] Pietersen, 1–12.

[70] Pedro Lopez Mombiela, "A Study of the MT and LXX Pluses in Jer 26-29 (33-36): From Textual to Redactional Implications" (Wilmore, KY, USA, Asbury Theologycal Seminary, 1994).

Theological Investigation

In the intricate realm of prophetic literature in ancient Israel, the confrontation between Jeremiah and Hananiah in chapters 27-28 serves as a crucial case study in the discernment of authentic prophecy versus fraudulent declarations. This conflict highlights the theological and sociopolitical implications of prophetic authority and the competing visions for Israel's future during a tumultuous period.[71]

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[71] Ikenna L. Umeanolue, "Prophetic Conflict in Jeremiah 27-28 and the Question of True and False Prophecy," *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities* 21, no. 2 (March 30, 2021): 87, https://doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v21i2.5.
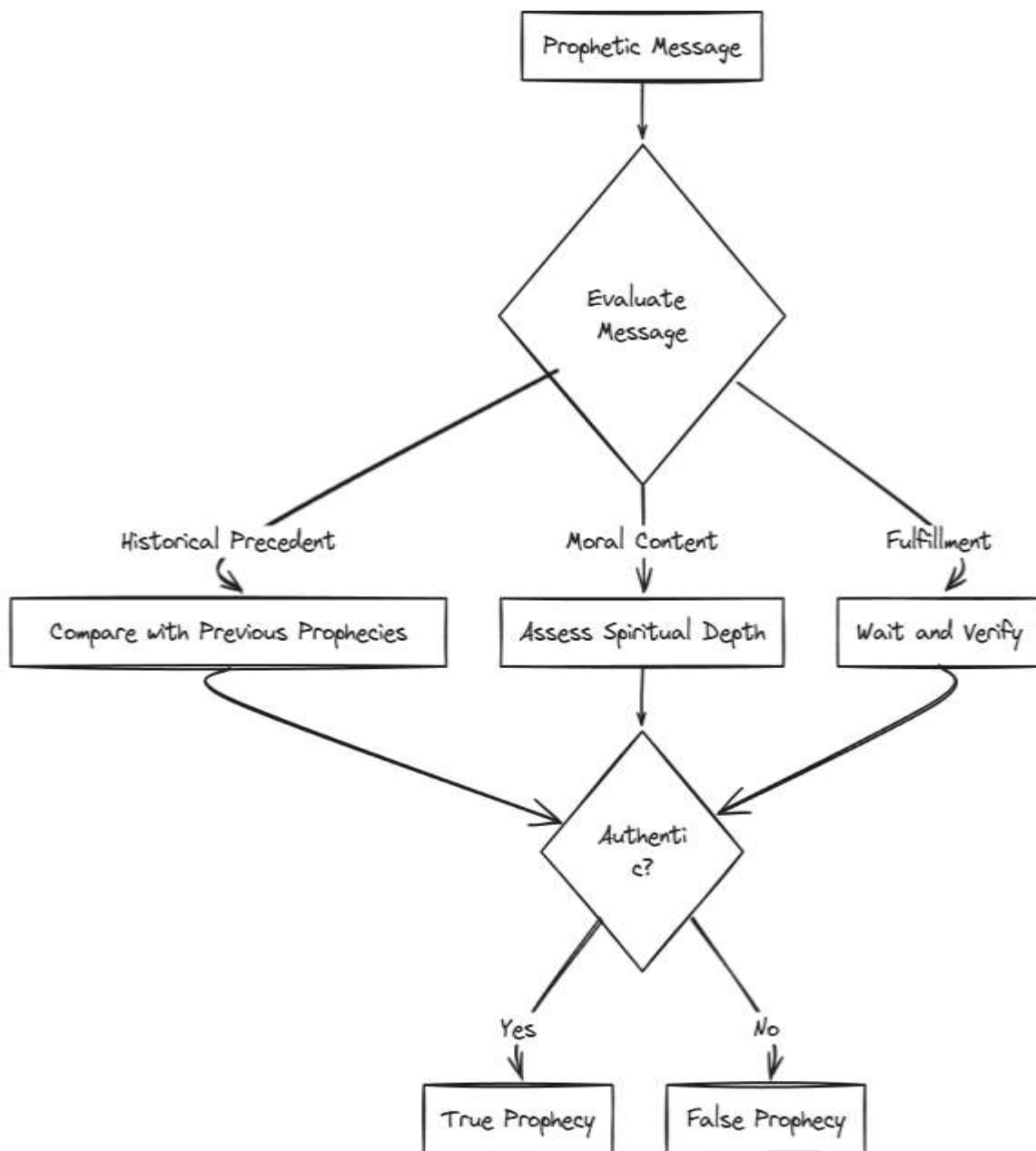
Image 1.2

The narrative delineates that authentic prophecy extends beyond mere forecasting; it fundamentally embodies a divine mandate for moral accountability and spiritual renewal. Jeremiah epitomizes the model of the true prophet, advocating for repentance and issuing stark warnings of forthcoming judgment. In contrast, Hananiah exemplifies

the "prophetic lie," offering a message that delivers deceptive solace and sidesteps the requisite confrontation of entrenched spiritual decay.[72]

This text illustrates how false prophets frequently manipulate divine messages to cater to popular opinion, providing reassurance rather than challenging individuals towards substantive spiritual rejuvenation. Crucially, the passage posits that the integrity of genuine prophetic discourse is not gauged by its immediate appeal or comfort, but rather by its adherence to moral truth, spiritual authenticity, and an unwavering commitment to divine intentions—even when such proclamations prove uncomfortable or politically contentious.

The comparative analysis of the Book of Jeremiah reveals significant textual variations between the MT and the LXX, particularly in terms of textual additions and redactional processes. Scholars like Janzen and Tov have extensively investigated these differences, noting that the MT demonstrates a consistent tendency to expand and elaborate textual content, while the LXX often presents a more concise representation.[73] These textual additions can be categorized into several types, including title pluses, emphatic pluses, and interpretative pluses. The MT's editorial approach frequently involves filling out names, adding theological emphases, and providing contextual elaborations that are absent in the LXX.[74] For instance, the MT consistently adds divine names, underscores key prophetic messages, and introduces stylistic devices that enhance narrative continuity. These additions are not merely scribal errors but reflect deliberate

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[72] Umeanolue, 102–4.

[73] Mombiela, "A Study of the MT and LXX Pluses in Jer 26-29 (33-36): From Textual to Redactional Implications," 14.

[74] Mombiela, 79–80.

editorial choices that aim to clarify, emphasize, or theologically interpret the original text. The complexity of these textual variations suggests that both traditions underwent independent redactional processes, making the reconstruction of the original text a challenging scholarly endeavor.[75]

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[75] Mombiela, 82–83.

Case Study on Jeremiah 29:1, 8

Variants for Discussion

Verse	M	G	My translation of M
1	וְאֵ֙לֶּה֙ דִּבְרֵ֣י הַסֵּ֔פֶר אֲשֶׁ֥ר שָׁלַ֛ח יִרְמְיָ֥ה הַנָּבִ֖יא מִירוּשָׁלָ֑͏ִם אֶל־יֶ֙תֶר֙ זִקְנֵ֣י הַגּוֹלָ֔ה וְאֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִ֥ים וְאֶל־הַנְּבִיאִ֖ים וְאֶל־כָּל־הָעָ֑ם אֲשֶׁ֨ר הֶגְלָ֧ה נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּ֛ר מִירוּשָׁלַ֖͏ִם בָּבֶֽלָה	Καὶ οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι τῆς βίβλου, οὓς ἀπέστειλεν Ιερεμιας ἐξ Ιερουσαλημ πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἀποικίας καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἱερεῖς καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ψευδοπροφήτας ἐπιστολὴν εἰς Βαβυλῶνα τῇ ἀποικίᾳ καὶ πρὸς ἅπαντα τὸν λαὸν.	And these are the words of the book that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders of the exile, priests, prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon.
8	כִּי כֹ֣ה אָמַ֞ר יְהוָ֤ה צְבָאוֹת֙ אֱלֹהֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל אַל־יַשִּׁ֧יאוּ לָכֶ֛ם נְבִיאֵיכֶ֥ם אֲשֶׁר־בְּקִרְבְּכֶ֖ם וְקֹֽסְמֵיכֶ֑ם וְאַל־	ὅτι οὕτως εἶπεν κύριος Μὴ ἀναπειθέτωσαν ὑμᾶς οἱ ψευδοπροφῆται οἱ	"Because of this, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, say this: 'Do not listen to

	תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־חֲלֹמֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם מַחְלְמִים	ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ μὴ ἀναπειθέτωσαν ὑμᾶς οἱ μάντεις ὑμῶν, καὶ μὴ ἀκούετε εἰς τὰ ἐνύπνια ὑμῶν, ἃ ὑμεῖς ἐνυπνιάζεσθε.	your prophets among you, nor to your diviners, nor your dreamers. Do not obey your dreams that you dream.".

Table 1.8

Comments on Masoretic Text

Jeremiah 29:1 and 8 in the MT offer significant insights into the theological and historical context of Jeremiah's communication to the Babylonian exiles. Notably, in Jeremiah 29:1 and 8, the MT refers to "prophets" (נְבִיאִים) without the usual qualifier of "false," which creates an ambiguity regarding their legitimacy. The passage states: "This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the priests, the prophets, the rest of the elders of the exile community, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon" (Jeremiah 29:1).

The phrase "the surviving elders" (זִקְנֵי הַגּוֹלָה) underscores the fact that these individuals were among those who survived Nebuchadnezzar's deportations. This inclusion of "prophets" without further qualification contrasts sharply with other sections of Jeremiah, where false prophets are openly denounced. Furthermore, the letter is presented as originating from Jeremiah in Jerusalem, directed at a comprehensive audience that includes elders, priests, prophets, and the broader community of exiles.

In the textual analysis, the MT contains specific references to Zedekiah's delegation to Babylon (v. 3), a detail notably absent from the LXX. This inclusion situates the letter within a distinct political framework. The broader context reveals tensions between Jeremiah and other contemporary prophets—specifically Hananiah in chapter 28—thereby establishing a polemic against the illusions of false hope. The MT emphasizes Jeremiah's function as Yahweh's appointed messenger. The text illustrates his efforts to consolidate the exilic community under divine purpose by addressing multiple audiences, including elders, priests, and prophets. The term "prophets" remains somewhat

neutral, allowing for interpretative flexibility until subsequent verses elucidate their falsehood.

For Jeremiah 29:8 The phrase "your prophets" (נְבִיאֵיכֶם) personalizes these figures as belonging to the exiles but does not yet label them explicitly as false. The term "diviners" (קֹסְמִים) refers to practitioners associated with pagan or unauthorized spiritual practices. The clause "your dreams that you cause to be dreamed" (חֲלֹמֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם מַחְלְמִים) suggests active human involvement in fostering these dreams. This could imply wishful thinking or encouraging prophets to fabricate messages aligned with their desires. For textual analysis the MT links deception not only to external figures (prophets and diviners) but also to internal dynamics within the exilic community. The phrase "you cause to be dreamed" emphasizes human complicity in creating false hope. This contrasts with simpler phrasing in the LXX ("dreams which you dream"), which lacks this emphasis on human agency. The warning against deception highlights a key theme in Jeremiah: discerning true prophecy from falsehood. By addressing both external deceivers (prophets/diviners) and internal sources (dreams), Jeremiah calls for accountability among the exiles.This verse reinforces God's sovereignty over time and events, countering false claims of an imminent return with God's declaration of a seventy-year exile (v. 10).

Comparisons of this two verse in the context of MT can provide a better visual of the intended message in the book of Jeremiah.

Aspect	Jeremiah 29:1	Jeremiah 29:8
Prophets' Identity	Neutral term "prophets"	"Your prophets," implying personal association
Dreams' Origin	Not mentioned	"Dreams that you cause to be dreamed," implicating human agency
Focus on Deception	Neutral introduction	Explicit warning against deception by prophets/diviners/dreams

Table 1.9

In the MT of Jeremiah, the term "prophets" encompasses both lexical precision and profound theological implications, particularly evident in the nuances between Jeremiah 29:1 and Jeremiah 29:8. In Jeremiah 29:1, the use of a neutral designation for "prophets" underscores their general institutional role within the prophetic tradition of ancient Israel, avoiding any undue emphasis on individual characteristics or actions. This neutral terminology positions the prophets as recognized mediators of divine communication, while simultaneously dampening any perceived closeness to the populace or highlighting subjective dynamics between the prophets and their audience. In contrast, the context in Jeremiah 29:8 may invoke a different interpretative lens, suggesting a more complex relational framework that warrants further scholarly exploration.

In contrast, Jeremiah 29:8 modifies the existing paradigm through the phrase "Your prophets," explicitly linking these figures to the community and suggesting a heightened sense of personal accountability towards the recipients of the prophecy. This tailored address indicates a communal expectation in which prophets are perceived not merely as distant authority figures but as responsible, almost familial advisors within the social matrix. Furthermore, while the preceding verse does not elucidate the origins of dreams, the subsequent verse introduces the notion of "dreams that you cause to be dreamed," implying a conscious human agency in the interpretation or generation of prophetic visions. This addition functions as a substantial caution against deception, highlighting the potential for the misuse of prophetic authority. By explicitly warning the community against false prophets, diviners, and misleading dreams, the text advocates for a critical evaluative approach toward those who might manipulate the prophetic tradition for personal gain or mislead others.

The MT's sophisticated portrayal of prophets in these sections demonstrates a multifaceted comprehension of their function—striking a balance between institutional reverence and individual responsibility. This approach underscores the critical need for discernment in both the delivery and interpretation of prophetic messages within the community context.

Comments on the Septuagint

Jeremiah 29:1 and 8 in the LXX present notable theological and textual distinctions when compared to the MT. For instance, the LXX explicitly characterizes certain prophets as "false" (ψευδοπροφήταις), a designation not found in the MT. This choice reflects the LXX's interpretive strategy aimed at delegitimizing rival prophetic claims during the period of the Babylonian exile. Additionally, the LXX omits the MT's mention of Zedekiah sending envoys to Babylon (Jeremiah 29:3), thereby streamlining the narrative to emphasize divine authority over royal intermediaries. The labeling of these prophets as "false" further reinforces Jeremiah's prophetic legitimacy and aligns with the chapter's overarching theme of rejecting misleading counsel (Jeremiah 29:8-9).

In Jeremiah 29:8, the MT employs the phrase חֲלֹמֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם מַחְלְמִים, translating to "your dreams which you cause to be dreamed." In contrast, the LXX renders this as ἐνύπνια ὑμῶν, ἃ ὑμεῖς ἐνυπνιάζεσθε, meaning "dreams which you dream." The wording in the MT, particularly the term מַחְלְמִים (to cause to be dreamed), indicates an active role taken by the populace in generating false visions, either through self-induced dreams or by spurring prophets to fabricate messages of optimism. The LXX, however, adopts a more streamlined approach, concentrating on the dreams themselves rather than their origins or the agency behind them.

In exegetical analysis, the condemnation of false prophets is a recurring theme, particularly regarding those who prophesy without divine mandate, as illustrated in Jeremiah 29:9. The omission of Zedekiah's role in the LXX (v. 3) accentuates the contrast between Jeremiah's legitimate authority and the fabrications of the false prophets. The mention of dreams underscores the populace's vulnerability to such delusions, reflecting

their desperation for a rapid resolution to their exilic condition. In contrast, Jeremiah

advocates for a trust in God's predetermined timeline of 70 years for their return, as stated

in Jeremiah 29:10. A comparative study of the LXX and MT reveals significant

divergences in the portrayal of these dynamics.

Aspect	LXX Emphasis	MT Emphasis
Prophets Identity	Explicitly (ψευδοπροφήταις)	Neutral term (prophets)
Dreams' Origin	Passive reception (you dream)	Active causation (you cause to be dreamed)
Divine Authority	Directly contrasts false messages	Highlights human complicity in deception

Table 1.10

The LXX and the MT offer contrasting perspectives on prophetic identity in

Jeremiah 29, highlighting significant theological and rhetorical divergences. In the LXX,

the term "ψευδοπροφήταις" (pseudoprophētais) is used to explicitly categorize certain

figures as "false prophets." This clear labeling delineates a distinct boundary between

authentic and fraudulent prophetic voices, thereby eliminating any interpretive ambiguity

for the audience. Such explicit categorization serves to safeguard the community by

identifying religious imposters whose messages warrant rejection.

Conversely, the MT adopts a more neutral approach, referring simply to

"prophets" without immediate qualifying language. This neutrality engenders a more

complex rhetorical landscape where the audience is compelled to engage in discernment,

rather than relying on standardized labels for evaluation. The MT's methodology suggests

a heightened recognition of prophetic authority that acknowledges the institutional role of

prophets while emphasizing the necessity for the community to assess prophetic messages based on their content rather than on preconceived categorizations.

This contrast likely reflects differing cultural contexts: the LXX, shaped by Greek influence, may have necessitated clearer distinctions between genuine and false religious authorities, whereas the MT, rooted in a Hebrew milieu, might have assumed a more established framework for evaluating prophetic legitimacy.

The exploration of the origins of prophetic dreams highlights a significant divergence between the LXX and the MT. The LXX presents dreams as phenomena that are passively received, articulating the notion with the phrase "you dream." These framing positions dreamer as passive vessels, which minimizes human accountability in the emergence of false prophecy. Consequently, the implication is that the origins of prophetic messages may be more closely linked to external spiritual influences—whether divine or demonic—rather than human initiation.

In contrast, the MT employs the phrase "dreams that you cause to be dreamed," which introduces an element of human agency and intentionality that is notably absent in the LXX. This formulation suggests that the phenomenon of false prophecy is not merely a passive reception but rather an active construction that involves human participation. Thus, it implicates the community in the processes that create and perpetuate misleading messages. The MT's emphasis on causality fosters a more intricate moral framework, where prophetic deception demands a collaborative human effort rather than the straightforward reception of external inputs. This distinction underscores differing perspectives on prophetic psychology and the dynamics of human will in relation to divine communication.

The texts exhibit a significant divergence in their treatment of divine authority and human accountability concerning prophetic messages. The LXX articulates a stark dichotomy between falsehood and divine truth, framing the content of the messages as the crux of the issue. This binary opposition facilitates a more lucid epistemological framework, allowing for a clear demarcation between truth and falsehood, with a predominant focus on identifying messages that conflict with divine revelation.

Conversely, the MT adopts a more nuanced perspective, emphasizing human complicity in the propagation of deception. This approach foregrounds the moral agency of individuals who either contribute to or disseminate false prophecies, suggesting a multifaceted understanding of how deception intertwines with religious communities. Deception is not merely perceived as an external threat; rather, it is portrayed as a collaborative human process that disrupts divine authority. Consequently, the MT offers a socially embedded interpretation of prophetic deception, indicating that false prophecy arises from community dynamics instead of existing solely as an external phenomenon to be recognized and renounced.

Theological Investigation

Chapters leading up to Jeremiah 29 reveal ongoing disputes between Jeremiah and other prophetic voices (e.g., Hananiah in chapter 28). These conflicts center on whether God has decreed a long exile or a swift return. In this context: Jeremiah's letter rebukes false prophets who claim divine authority but lack Yahweh's commission. The MT frames this as a theological struggle between truth and wishful thinking. The MT uniquely emphasizes human agency in fostering deception through dreams ("you cause to be dreamed"). This reflects: A critique of communal complicity in embracing comforting but false messages.A call for spiritual discernment grounded in God's revealed word through Jeremiah.By including Zedekiah's delegation (v. 3), the MT situates this letter within a concrete historical framework, emphasizing its authenticity and relevance for its original audience.

In the Masoretic Text, Jeremiah 29:1 introduces a letter sent by Jeremiah to unify exiles under God's plan while implicitly challenging rival prophetic voices. Verse 8 warns against deception by external figures (prophets/diviners) and internal sources (dreams), emphasizing human complicity in fostering false hope. These verses reflect core themes of accountability, discernment, and trust in God's long-term plans rather than immediate gratification. Compared with other traditions like the LXX, the MT preserves more historical detail and emphasizes human responsibility in navigating prophetic conflict.

The theological landscape of Jeremiah 29:1–32 reveals a profound narrative of divine hope and restoration amidst exile, challenging contemporary perceptions of God's relationship with His people. Pietersen argues that this passage represents a critical

theological turn, where exile is not merely a punishment but a transformative spiritual experience. The text demonstrates an unconditional divine promise of restoration, emphasizing God's sovereignty and grace. As Pietersen notes, the promise is "sourced in God" and not dependent on human conditions, highlighting a radical theological perspective that transcends traditional understanding of covenant relationships.[76]

Central to the theological interpretation is the concept of spiritual transformation through suffering. The passage portrays exile as a metaphorical "theological death" from which new life emerges. Pietersen emphasizes that the exiles' spiritual condition—characterized by stubborn and rebellious hearts—necessitates a radical internal change. The divine promise includes not just physical restoration but a profound heart transformation, where God promises to give His people "a heart to know me". This theological motif suggests that spiritual renewal occurs through challenging experiences, challenging simplistic notions of divine intervention.[77]

The theological analysis also critically examines prophetic legitimacy and divine communication. Pietersen highlights the contrast between true and false prophecy, arguing that prophetic authenticity is determined by historical context and alignment with God's covenant obligations.[78] The text demonstrates that false prophets misinterpret historical situations and provide misleading messages, while Jeremiah's prophecy offers a nuanced understanding of divine judgment and hope. The theological significance lies in recognizing that divine communication is contextual, requiring discernment and a deep

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[76] Doniwen Pietersen, "YHWH's Mouthpiece to the Exiles: A Jeremianic Turn of Hope," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 7, no. 1 (2021): 14–16, https://doi.org/10.17570/stj.2021.v7n1.a06.
[77] Pietersen, 16.
[78] Pietersen, 20.

understanding of God's ongoing narrative of redemption. Ultimately, Jeremiah 29

presents a theological framework that emphasizes hope, transformation, and the persistent

grace of YHWH even in the most challenging circumstances.[79]

The narrative of Jeremiah underscores significant theological tensions regarding

the authenticity of prophecy. False prophets do not merely represent misguided

individuals; rather, they embody a fundamental threat to divine communication and the

community's capacity for spiritual discernment. In light of Judah's historical context

marked by trauma, these figures propagate false hope, effectively undermining the

authentic divine message centered on restoration and the necessity of patient endurance.

Their misleading narratives stand in stark contrast to Jeremiah's genuine prophetic

declarations, which call for theological humility, communal resilience, and an

unwavering trust in God's overarching redemptive scheme, even in periods that may

appear as divine abandonment.[80]

For contextual understanding of prophetic discourse, in the scholarly analysis of

Jeremiah 29:1 and 8, the term "false prophets" emerges as a critical theological construct

within the complex narrative of divine communication and human interpretation.

Drawing from the text-critical study by Oyekan and Umaru, the usage of this term

reflects a nuanced theological tension between authentic prophetic revelation and

misleading spiritual narratives. The MT and the LXX provide varying linguistic and

interpretive approaches to understanding these prophetic warnings, suggesting that the

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[79] Pietersen, 21.

[80] "Before the Scrolls: A Material Approach to Israel's Prophetic Library," Ancient Jew Review, April 17, 2024, https://www.ancientjewreview.com/read/2024/4/17/before-the-scrolls-a-material-approach-to-israels-prophetic-library.

designation of "false prophets" is not merely a binary categorization but a sophisticated theological commentary on spiritual authenticity.[81]

The theological implications of labeling certain prophets as "false" extend beyond simple doctrinal demarcation. According to the text-critical analysis, these designations reveal deeper hermeneutical challenges in interpreting divine communication. The variations between the MT and LXX translations of Jeremiah demonstrate how theological perspectives shape textual transmission. For instance, the authors note that translators often engaged in "interpretive renderings" that expanded or clarified metaphorical language, suggesting that the concept of false prophecy was itself a dynamic theological construct.[82] This approach highlights the complex interplay between divine revelation, human interpretation, and the socio-religious contexts that inform prophetic discourse.

The scholarly examination of false prophets in Jeremiah reveals a rich tapestry of theological interpretation. Tov's research emphasizes that textual variants are not mere scribal errors but reflect intentional theological emphases and editorial interventions. The designation of false prophets becomes a lens through which we can understand the evolving theological perspectives within ancient Jewish textual traditions. These variants demonstrate how different communities interpreted prophetic authenticity, showing that the concept of false prophecy was a critical mechanism for maintaining theological integrity and challenging potentially misleading spiritual narratives.[83]

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[81] Funke Elizabeth Oyekan and Victor Umaru, "Text-Critical Issues Between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint Text of the Book of Jeremiah," *International Journal of Religion* 5, no. 11 (August 10, 2024): 5709–10, https://doi.org/10.61707/xzet1v58.
[82] Oyekan and Umaru, 5712–13.
[83] Oyekan and Umaru, 5718–19.

Phetsanghane presents a nuanced perspective on the textual differences between the LXX and MT in the Book of Jeremiah, emphasizing that despite significant variations, the theological essence remains uncompromised. As noted in the text, "none of the differences in Jeremiah affect biblical doctrine"[84]. The fundamental theological premise is that the Holy Spirit inspired the book of Jeremiah, regardless of the textual version. This foundational understanding suggests that the variations between LXX and MT do not undermine the divine inspiration or the core theological message of the prophetic text.

The scholarly discourse surrounding the LXX and MT variations in Jeremiah reveals complex interpretive options. Phetsanghane highlights three primary perspectives: the LXX as the original text with MT being an expanded version, MT as the original with LXX being an abridged rendition, or both versions being original and authentic. The text suggests that "both LXX and MT originated with Jeremiah" and potentially represent "different ministry phases". This view challenges simplistic evolutionary models of textual transmission and acknowledges the intricate nature of biblical text preservation. The variations might include "full name expansions, added titles and epithets, explicit pronoun objects, and interpolations from parallel passages", which do not necessarily compromise the theological integrity of the text.[85]

Phetsanghane cautions against oversimplified interpretations of textual variations, emphasizing the need for a nuanced approach to textual criticism. As stated in the

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[84] Souksamay Phetsanghane, "The Text of the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah: Exploring the Relationship between the LXX and MT Version of Jeremiah," 2, accessed March 16, 2025, https://www.academia.edu/11768627/The_Text_of_the_Book_of_the_Prophet_Jeremiah_Exploring_the_Relationship_between_the_LXX_and_MT_Version_of_Jeremiah.

[85] Phetsanghane, 2.

document, scholars warn against "avoiding oversimplified evolutionary models" and recognize "the complexity of textual transmission". The theological implication is profound: the meaning and spiritual significance of the text transcend literal word-for-word correspondence. The New Testament quotations of Jeremiah further support this perspective, demonstrating that biblical authors were "more concerned with meaning than verbatim quotation". Ultimately, Phetsanghane concludes that both LXX and MT versions are likely inspired and authentic, with the theological message preserved across these textual traditions.[86]

The divergences between MT and LXX in Jeremiah 29 reveal subtle yet significant hermeneutical implications regarding false prophetic voices. While both textual traditions condemn false prophecy, the LXX's rendering potentially emphasizes divine sovereignty more explicitly. The MT's treatment suggests a more nuanced narrative approach, whereas the LXX appears to foreground theological judgment. These textual variations demonstrate the complex interpretative landscape of prophetic literature, challenging simplistic readings of scriptural authority.[87]

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[86] Phetsanghane, 1–2.

[87] Benjamin D. Giffone, "Can Theological Interpretation Soften the Protestant Problem of Old Testament Textual Plurality?: Jeremiah as a Test Case," *European Journal of Theology* 29, no. 2 (September 1, 2020): 18–19, https://doi.org/10.5117/EJT2020.2.004.GIFF.

Implications for Biblical Understanding

The textual variations between the MT and the LXX in Jeremiah present a profound hermeneutical challenge that extends far beyond mere linguistic differences. As Giffone notes on pages 18-19, the book of Jeremiah represents one of the most textually complex books in the Jewish Scriptures, with the LXX version approximately one-eighth shorter than the MT and featuring significant structural variations. These differences are not merely academic curiosities but fundamental interpretative challenges that force scholars and theologians to reconsider the nature of prophetic revelation and textual authority. The divergences in the narrative of false prophets reveal the intricate ways in which biblical texts communicate theological truths, suggesting that the divine message transcends the constraints of a single textual tradition.[88]

The implications of these textual variations are particularly acute when examining the discourse of false prophets. In the MT, the condemnation of false prophets appears more contextually embedded within the specific historical narrative of Judean exile, while the LXX potentially offers a more universalized theological interpretation. Giffone's analysis highlights how different textual traditions can fundamentally alter the rhetorical and theological impact of prophetic warnings. The variations in text suggest that the concept of false prophecy is not a monolithic construct but a dynamic theological concept that adapts to different interpretative communities. This textual plurality challenges the notion of a singular, unchanging divine message, instead presenting prophecy as a complex dialogue between divine revelation and human interpretation. The

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[88] Giffone, 18–19.

nuanced differences between MT and LXX invite readers to engage with biblical texts as living, evolving documents that speak to multiple contexts and understanding.[89]

The scholarly approach to these textual variations demands a sophisticated hermeneutical method that Giffone terms "theological interpretation". This approach recognizes that the authority of scriptural texts is not diminished by textual complexity but is instead enriched by it. In the context of false prophets, this means understanding prophecy not as a rigid, predetermined message, but as a dynamic interaction between divine intention and human reception. The differences between MT and LXX in Jeremiah suggest that false prophecy is not simply about incorrect prediction, but about a fundamental misalignment with divine purpose. The textual variations reveal different theological emphases: some focusing on immediate historical context, others on broader spiritual principles. This multiplicity of interpretation does not weaken scriptural authority but demonstrates the profound depth and adaptability of biblical revelation.[90]

Ultimately, the study of textual variations in Jeremiah's treatment of false prophets offers a critical lens for understanding biblical hermeneutics. Giffone argues that these differences challenge Protestant conceptions of scriptural precision, suggesting that biblical authority is more complex than a simplistic notion of textual inerrancy. The variations between MT and LXX invite a more nuanced understanding of inspiration, one that recognizes the role of community, interpretation, and ongoing theological reflection. False prophets, in this context, become more than historical figures—they represent a theological principle about the challenges of discerning divine truth. The textual plurality

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[89] Giffone, 12–13.
[90] Giffone, 8–9.

becomes a metaphor for the ongoing dialogue between human understanding and divine revelation, reminding readers that scriptural interpretation is a dynamic, collaborative process that transcends any single textual tradition. [91]

William L. Kelly, in his work *How Prophecy Works: A Study of the Semantic Field of נביא and a Close Reading of Jeremiah 1:4–19, 23:9–40, and 27:1–28:17*, provides a comprehensive analysis of the term נביא (*nābîʾ*, "prophet") and its function in the Book of Jeremiah. Kelly's semantic study investigates the term's morphology and syntagmatic relationships, revealing its central role in conveying divine communication. He demonstrates that נביא is frequently associated with speech-related verbs such as "to proclaim" or "to declare," emphasizing its communicative nature.[92] Additionally, paradigmatic comparisons with related terms like "seer" and "diviner" underscore the unique authority attributed to prophets in Jeremiah, positioning them as divinely sanctioned mediators tasked with delivering God's message.[93]

In his close reading of Jeremiah 1:4–19, Kelly highlights the prophet's divine commissioning and mission. This passage emphasizes themes of predestination ("Before I formed you in the womb I knew you") and divine empowerment ("I have put my words in your mouth"), which establish the prophet as a chosen figure equipped to confront opposition with God's support.[94] In contrast, Jeremiah 23:9–40 critiques false prophets who mislead the people by claiming divine authority without legitimate revelation. Kelly

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[91] Giffone, 29–30.

[92] William L. Kelly, *How Prophecy Works: A Study of the Semantic Field of נביא and a Close Reading of Jeremiah 1:4–19, 23:9–40 and 27:1–28:17*, 1st ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 67–74, https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666540738.

[93] Kelly, 75–77.

[94] Kelly, 78–85.

contrasts these false prophets—who rely on deceitful visions or dreams—with true prophets like Jeremiah, who participate in YHWH's council and convey His authentic message.[95] Kelly examines Jeremiah 27:1–28:17, which depicts the confrontation between Jeremiah and Hananiah over Judah's fate under Babylonian rule. This narrative underscores discernment as a critical aspect of prophecy, illustrating how true prophecy aligns with divine will and historical reality.[96]

Benedetta Rossi presents a groundbreaking perspective on biblical translation that challenges traditional assumptions about textual fidelity. In examining the LXX and MT of Jeremiah, Rossi argues that translation is far more than a mechanical, word-for-word process. Instead, translators are active meaning creators who strategically modify texts to achieve specific communicative and ideological goals. This pragmatic lens reveals that the interpretation of complex passages, such as those involving false prophets, is not simply about linguistic accuracy but about deeper communicative intentions. By subordinating morphological and syntactic fidelity to pragmatic choices, translators negotiate intricate linguistic and cultural nuances, transforming translation from a passive conduit of text to an interpretative act that reflects broader theological and contextual considerations.[97]

The dynamics of linguistic usage in the LXX and MT reveal profound theological interpretative nuances, particularly in prophetic literature like Jeremiah. The textual representation demonstrates how symbolic transformations occur through careful word

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[95] Kelly, 86–93.
[96] Kelly, 94–108.
[97] Benedetta Rossi, "Lost in Translation: LXX-Jeremiah through the Lens of Pragmatics," in *New Avenues in Biblical Exegesis in Light of the Septuagint*, vol. 1, The Septuagint in Its Ancient Context 1 (Brepols Publishers, 2022), Abstract, https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SEPT-EB.5.127716.

selection, creating complex networks of meaning. Stulman emphasizes that these texts

are not merely historical documents but intricate literary constructions where words serve

as powerful mechanisms for social and theological negotiation. The strategic deployment

of insider-outsider terminology allows for a sophisticated exploration of divine election,

communal identity, and theological boundaries.[98]

Moreover, the linguistic choices in LXX and MT reflect deeper hermeneutical

strategies of meaning-making. As Stulman notes in the text, these texts represent "an

amalgam of voices, meanings and codes" that go beyond simple historical reporting. The

deliberate use of code words for danger, stigmatization of certain groups, and privileging

of others demonstrates how linguistic dynamics become a theological interpretative tool.

These textual strategies reveal the complex process of reconstructing social and religious

boundaries during periods of cultural transformation, where words become instruments of

theological reflection and communal understanding.[99]

The author, S. Jonathan Murphy, highlights the significant challenges posed by

the textual differences between the Hebrew MT and the Greek LXX in understanding

Jeremiah's theological structure. These variations are not merely linguistic nuances but

represent profound interpretative challenges. The LXX is approximately 15% shorter

than the MT, containing about three thousand fewer words, and includes around one

hundred words not found in the Masoretic text. Such substantial differences suggest that

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[98] Louis Stulman, "Insiders and Outsiders in the Book of Jeremiah: Shifts in Symbolic Arrangements," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 20, no. 66 (June 1, 1995): Abstract, https://doi.org/10.1177/030908929502006604.

[99] Stulman, 1.

the textual transmission and editorial processes were complex, potentially reflecting different theological emphases and community needs during the text's compilation.[100]

The structural differences between MT and LXX fundamentally impact how scholars approach the theological interpretation of Jeremiah. Murphy notes that the placement of oracles against foreign nations differs significantly: in the MT, these oracles are located in chapters 46-51, while in the LXX, they appear earlier, following 25:13 as chapters 26-31. This variation isn't merely a chronological rearrangement but potentially represents different theological perspectives on the role of judgment and prophecy. The diverse textual traditions suggest that the book's theological message was understood and interpreted dynamically, reflecting the evolving theological understanding of different Jewish communities.[101]

Murphy proposes a canonical-critical approach that prioritizes the text's final form over historical reconstruction. This methodology suggests that the textual variations between MT and LXX should be viewed as intentional theological expressions rather than problematic inconsistencies. By respecting the text in its final form and interpreting it through a theological lens, scholars can uncover the deeper message of hope, judgment, and restoration that transcends the specific textual version. The variations become an opportunity to understand the rich, multifaceted theological interpretations of Jeremiah across different historical and cultural contexts.[102]

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[100] S. Jonathan Murphy, "The Quest for the Structure of the Book of Jeremiah," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166, no. 663 (2009): 309–10.

[101] Murphy, 310.

[102] Murphy, 311–12.

The textual variations between the MT and the LXX in the Book of Jeremiah reveal significant theological nuances that profoundly impact interpretative frameworks. These differences are not merely translational but represent substantive theological shifts. The MT is approximately one-sixth longer than the LXX , which is not a trivial variation. This expansion suggests a deliberate theological recension. As Shead argues, the longer Hebrew version in MT is likely "the result of conscious editing", implying intentional theological refinement.[103]

A crucial theological distinction emerges in how the texts represent the prophet's relationship with divine revelation. The MT "strengthens the link between the prophet and the divine word", suggesting a more pronounced theological understanding of prophetic mediation. The LXX, conversely, appears to present a more minimally revised text, potentially indicating a less elaborate theological conception of prophetic communication.[104] The theological interpretation of Babylon differs significantly between MT and LXX. In the MT, Babylon evolves from a historical entity to a universal symbol of oppressive empire. Ulrike Sals notes that the LXX portrays "Babylon" as "less evil and therefore less important" compared to the Masoretic version.[105]

The MT's treatment of Babylon's fate carries deeper theological implications. While the LXX presents Babylon as one among several nations, the MT positions Babylon in a climactic, final position, emphasizing its role as the ultimate recipient of

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[103] Marius D. Terblanche, "Jeremiah 50-51 (MT) as Catalyst in the Development of Babylon as a Symbol of Oppressive Empire," *Old Testament Essays* 37, no. 1 (2024): 3–4, https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2024/v37n1a6.
[104] Terblanche, 4.
[105] Terblanche, 2.

divine judgment.[106] Scholars like Tov suggest that the MT's expansion incorporated new theological ideas[107], indicating an evolving theological understanding within the textual tradition. These variations demonstrate that textual differences are not merely linguistic but represent sophisticated theological interpretations, reflecting complex hermeneutical approaches to understanding divine revelation and historical narrative.

In examining the theological interpretation principles of the MT and LXX in the Book of Jeremiah, three critical distinctions emerge. The MT portrays Babylon as a transcendent, archetypal enemy that symbolizes oppression and disintegration, extending far beyond historical specificity, whereas the LXX maintains a more historically confined perspective. And, the MT elevates Jeremiah as a prominent prophet, frequently using the title "Jeremiah the prophet" and giving him a more central role, in contrast to the LXX's emphasis on Baruch the scribe, reflecting the evolving attitudes toward prophetic traditions. The MT's unique passage in Jeremiah 33.14-26 presents a distinctive vision of the future, completely absent in the LXX, which includes a promise of a Davidic ruler, the central role of levitical priests, and the restoration of worship. These nuanced differences illuminate the dynamic nature of theological interpretation in early second temple Judaism, demonstrating how textual perspectives and religious understanding transformed over time. [108]

The intricate landscape of biblical textual traditions reveals profound theological implications through the comparative analysis of the LXX and MT, demonstrating how linguistic and interpretive variations fundamentally shape religious understanding. The

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[106] Terblanche, 10.

[107] Terblanche, 4.

[108] Hill, "The Book of Jeremiah MT and Its Early Second Temple Background," 6–8.

LXX, developed in Alexandria during the 3rd-2nd centuries BC, emerged as a transformative Greek translation designed to make Hebrew Scriptures accessible to Hellenistic Jews, while simultaneously establishing a critical hermeneutical framework that would significantly influence early Christian theology.[109]

Notably, key textual divergences illuminate the complex interplay between translation, interpretation, and theological construction, with seminal examples such as Isaiah 7:14 presenting remarkable hermeneutical nuances. In this passage, the LXX's translation of *'almah as parthenos'* ("virgin") directly supports Christian doctrinal interpretations of the virgin birth, whereas the MT's broader terminology suggests a more contextually grounded rendering. [110]

Similarly, Psalm 22:16 exemplifies how textual variations can profoundly impact theological narratives, with the LXX emphasizing crucifixion imagery that aligns closely with New Testament christological perspectives, in contrast to the MT's more metaphorical interpretation.[111] The quantitative insights are equally compelling: of the 418 Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, approximately 340 (~81%) align more closely with the LXX, while merely 33 (~8%) correspond with the MT, underscoring the LXX's pivotal role in early Christian scriptural understanding.[112]

These divergences are not merely linguistic curiosities but represent sophisticated theological negotiations, reflecting distinct interpretive priorities within Jewish and

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[109] D. Gene Williams Jr, "Septuagint and Masoretic Text: A Comparative Study of Textual Divergences and Their Theological Implications," 3–4, accessed March 16, 2025, https://www.academia.edu/126752295/Septuagint_and_Masoretic_Text_A_Comparative_Study_of_Textual_Divergences_and_Their_Theological_Implications.

[110] Williams Jr, 12–13.

[111] Williams Jr, 9–10.

[112] Williams Jr, 5.

Christian traditions. The Dead Sea Scrolls further complicate this textual landscape, often aligning more closely with the LXX than the MT, suggesting a more dynamic and fluid textual transmission during the Second Temple period.[113] Origen's monumental Hexapla, a comprehensive comparative text with six parallel columns, represents an early scholarly attempt to reconcile these textual variations, highlighting the ongoing scholarly engagement with these complex hermeneutical challenges.[114]

Ultimately, these textual divergences demonstrate that scriptural transmission is a dynamic process deeply embedded in cultural, historical, and theological contexts, challenging simplistic notions of textual uniformity and inviting a more nuanced understanding of biblical interpretation. The comparative study of the LXX and MT reveals that these texts are not competing narratives but complementary traditions that enrich our comprehension of scriptural meaning, theological development, and interfaith dialogue.[115]

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[113] Williams Jr, 5–6.
[114] Williams Jr, 26.
[115] Williams Jr, 16.

Chapter 4

IMPLICATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

In the book of Jeremiah, the delineation between true and false prophecy has been a significant subject of scholarly interpretation across the ages. Origen's reflections on the nature of prophets and the act of prophecy have profoundly impacted subsequent exegesis of Jeremiah's texts. Notably, the early Church and pre-modern theological frameworks frequently aligned Jeremiah's prophecies with the cautionary directives articulated in Deuteronomy 13 and 18, thereby contextualizing his messages within a broader biblical framework of prophetic validation and legitimacy.[116]

According to Tarrer, False prophets significantly distort Jeremiah's message by fostering confusion and misguiding the populace with their misleading prophecies. Over the centuries, interpretations of true versus false prophecy within the Book of Jeremiah have varied widely, with numerous theologians and scholars contributing diverse perspectives on this complex issue. Origen's remarks on the nature of prophecy underscore the persistent debate and inherent ambiguities that characterize this discourse.

In Jeremiah's narrative, false prophets occupy a multifaceted role that subverts the conventional god-prophet/bad-king dichotomy prevalent in prophetic literature. The text intricately delineates the complexities of both Zedekiah and Jeremiah, eliciting a nuanced blend of sympathy and critique regarding their respective actions. Jeremiah emerges as a beleaguered prophet of Yahweh, yet his portrayal occasionally veers into realms of deception and manipulation. Conversely, Zedekiah is depicted as someone who is not

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[116] Seth B. Tarrer, *Reading with the Faithful: Interpretation of True and False Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah from Ancient to Modern Times* (Penn State University Press, 2013), Summary.

entirely antagonistic towards Jeremiah's prophecies; rather, he is characterized as vacillating and indecisive, ultimately failing to act decisively in the face of impending doom for the city. This ambivalence in the characterization of both figures is further enriched through intertextual allusions to other Old Testament figures, contributing to a deeper understanding of their roles and implications within the narrative.[117] [118] [119]

Studying false prophets in religious texts, especially in the Old Testament, is important as it helps understand the conflicts and tensions that existed between different belief systems and cultures. False prophets were often difficult to distinguish from true prophets, as seen in the cases of Jeremiah and Micaiah ben Imlah. The message of true prophets focused on judgment, while false prophets emphasized comfort. This distinction is crucial in interpreting religious texts and traditions.

The examination of false prophets within religious texts, particularly in the Old Testament, is pivotal for comprehending the intricate conflicts and dynamics between varying belief systems and cultures. The differentiation between false and true prophets is often nuanced, as illustrated in the examples of Jeremiah and Micaiah ben Imlah. True prophets generally convey messages centering on divine judgment and accountability, whereas false prophets tend to promote messages of comfort and reassurance, frequently appealing to the desires of their audiences. Recognizing this critical distinction is essential for a nuanced interpretation of religious texts and the theological traditions they inform.[120]

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[117] Mark Roncace, *Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem: A Study of Prophetic Narrative* (Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2005), Abstract.
[118] Tarrer, *Reading with the Faithful*.
[119] Daniel Epp-Tiessen, *Concerning the Prophets: True and False Prophecy in Jeremiah 23:9--29:32* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012).
[120] Jamir M. Sashi, "Prophetic Conflict and Yahwistic Tradition: A Synthetic Study of True and False Prophecy (Jeremiah 26-29)" (Thesis, Kentucky, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2015), Abstract,

In the Old Testament, false prophets are defined by several key characteristics. They often proclaim peace and security at a time when divine judgment is imminent, thus misleading the populace. These individuals communicate messages that originate from their own imaginations, falsely attributing them to the Lord. Their deceptive practices not only misguide the faithful but also obstruct God's intended purposes, such as the rebuilding and maintenance of the temple. Ultimately, these false prophets lead people away from genuine worship of the true God and face condemnation for their actions.[121]

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https://www.proquest.com/openview/6ff3d1ed99d29adf26a5b1d41ada38bd/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750.

[121] Ivan Muramuzi, "The Concept of False Prophecy in the Old Testament with Special Reference to Ezekiel 13" (Thesis, Norway, School of Mission and Theology (Stavanger), 2009), 5–6.

Theological Implications

The theological transformation from divination to revelation in the Old Testament represents a profound hermeneutical innovation that fundamentally reshaped understanding of divine communication. In the Ancient Near Eastern context, divination initially encompassed two primary modes of accessing supernatural knowledge: direct privileged insights through dreams and ecstatic experiences, and interpreting signs as divine will. [122]

However, the post-exilic period witnessed a critical redefinition of prophecy, particularly exemplified in Deuteronomy 18:9-22, which systematically rejected polytheistic divinatory practices while establishing a more nuanced prophetic paradigm centered on Moses as the archetypal prophet . This theological shift marked a significant departure from earlier practices, where religious specialists like diviners and prophets sought divine insights through various methods such as hepatoscopy (liver examination), rhabdomancy (bird/arrow flight patterns), hydromancy (water/oil decoding), and necromancy (spirit consultation).[123]

The emerging understanding of revelation prioritized a direct, interpretative relationship with divine communication, emphasizing the Torah as the primary medium of understanding God's will. Notably, this transition was not merely a rejection of previous practices but a sophisticated theological reframing that preserved the essence of divine-human interaction while establishing more rigorous hermeneutical boundaries.[124]

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[122] Hendrik Bosman, "From 'Divination' to 'Revelation'? A Post Exilic Theological Perspective on the Relationship between Law and Prophets in the Old Testament," *Old Testament Essays* 27, no. 2 (2014): 380.
[123] Bosman, 383–85.
[124] Bosman, 390.

Bosman, suggests that the case of Balaam serves as a compelling illustration of this theological evolution, transitioning from a respected diviner to a condemned figure, reflecting the changing theological perspectives on prophecy and revelation.[125] Ultimately, this development signified a profound shift from a temple-centred religious practice to a text-centred approach, where certain literary works were increasingly recognized as divinely inspired scripture.[126] The dialectic between Torah and Prophets encapsulated this transformative theological perspective, maintaining the theological-ethical integrity of divine revelation while creating a more nuanced comprehension of spiritual communication.

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[125] Bosman, 383–85.
[126] Bosman, 391.

Relevance to Contemporary Contexts

The notion of false prophets in the Book of Jeremiah carries profound implications for contemporary religious leadership, especially in environments where the discernment between authentic and inauthentic prophecy is essential. In Jeremiah, figures like Hananiah serve as paradigmatic false prophets, directly challenging Jeremiah's proclamations by espousing messages of peace and imminent salvation that directly contravene the divine judgments he articulates. This adversarial dynamic underscores the enduring difficulty of discerning genuine prophetic utterances from spurious ones—an issue that remains salient in modern religious landscapes where leaders may leverage their authority for personal gain or to perpetuate established norms.[127]

The insights drawn from Jeremiah advocate for a model of religious leadership predicated on integrity, authenticity, and fidelity to divine directives, rather than yielding to societal pressures or personal ambitions. These themes are especially pertinent in historical contexts such as Nigeria, which has witnessed significant scrutiny regarding the integrity of its religious leaders, often highlighted by allegations of corruption and the manipulation of followers through misleading teachings. Such contexts necessitate a critical examination of the role of religious authority and the ethical obligations that accompany it.[128]

In the contemporary religious landscape, the prophetic critique of false prophets in Jeremiah remains profoundly relevant, particularly in contexts where spiritual

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[127] Umeanolue, "Prophetic Conflict in Jeremiah 27-28 and the Question of True and False Prophecy," March 30, 2021, Abstract.

[128] Peter O. Awojobi, "Yahweh's Indictment on Corrupt Shepherds in Jeremiah 23:1-4 and Its Reflections in Political and Religious Structures in Nigeria," 2020, Abstract, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Yahweh%E2%80%99s-Indictment-on-Corrupt-Shepherds-in-23%3A1-4-Awojobi/45b337c6bd6f0e3464e7d38501739aeda2aadfbc.

leadership has been compromised by self-interest and moral corruption. This can be vividly illustrated how modern Nigerian religious leaders mirror the corrupt shepherds condemned in Jeremiah 23, engaging in practices that fundamentally betray their divine mandate. These contemporary false prophets, much like their ancient counterparts, exploit religious authority for personal gain, selling "blessings," fabricating prophecies, and manipulating congregants through monetary and spiritual manipulation. The scholarly analysis reveals a disturbing parallel: just as Jeremiah denounced leaders who "sell prophecies" and divert spiritual resources for personal enrichment, today's religious landscape is plagued by similar systemic corruption that undermines the integrity of spiritual institutions.[129]

The phenomenon of false prophecy extends beyond mere financial exploitation, encompassing a broader crisis of spiritual leadership that threatens the moral fabric of religious communities. Drawing from the Ajiboye's insights on pages 270-271, contemporary false prophets engage in various unethical practices, including sexual misconduct, fraudulent activities, and the commercialization of spiritual gifts. Scholars like Oluwawunsi, Bongotons, and Ajiboye (2014) have documented how these leaders transform religious service into a transactional enterprise, selling miracles, prophecies, and spiritual titles while diverting church funds into personal accounts. This systemic corruption not only betrays the fundamental covenant between spiritual leaders and their communities but also perpetuates a culture of spiritual manipulation that erodes trust and undermines the transformative potential of religious institutions.

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[129] Awojobi, 270–330.

The prophetic tradition of Jeremiah offers a powerful hermeneutical lens for understanding and challenging contemporary spiritual leadership's ethical failures. By exposing the mechanisms of spiritual corruption, the text provides a critical framework for reimagining religious leadership as a sacred trust rather than an opportunity for personal aggrandizement. The scholarly analysis suggests that true spiritual leadership must be grounded in integrity, accountability, and a genuine commitment to community welfare, echoing Jeremiah's divine mandate to shepherd people with justice and compassion. As Awojobi mentions, the hope remains that transformative leadership can emerge, prioritizing the spiritual and material well-being of communities over individual interests, thereby restoring the fundamental covenant between spiritual leaders and their congregations.[130]

In Nigeria, the phenomenon of false prophets leveraging the populace's yearning for simplistic resolutions to complex life challenges presents a substantial concern. This situation is reminiscent of the prophetic landscape during the time of Jeremiah, where deceptive prophets offered comforting yet false proclamations of peace. The shortcomings of religious leaders in genuinely benefiting their communities, as articulated in Jeremiah 23:32, highlight the critical need for prophets to fulfill their ethical responsibilities to serve and uplift the people, rather than mislead them with false hopes.

The study critically examines the prophetic tensions between Jeremiah and Hananiah, emphasizing the significant role of false prophets who crafted messages to appease the monarchy or further their interests. The divergent prophecies of impending

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[130] Awojobi, "Yahweh's Indictment on Corrupt Shepherds in Jeremiah 23."

doom from Jeremiah and anticipated salvation from Hananiah serve as a case study for evaluating the criteria for discerning authentic prophecy.[131]

The theological perspectives espoused by the false prophets during Jeremiah's era, particularly their convictions regarding the inviolability of Jerusalem, illustrate a truncated comprehension of the divine covenant. This limited understanding can result in doctrinal distortions and misleading teachings. The contentious interactions between Jeremiah and these false prophets underscore contemporary religious leaders' critical importance in eschewing selective or self-serving exegesis of sacred texts, emphasizing the need for a holistic and accurate interpretive framework.

The analysis of false prophets in the Book of Jeremiah reveals significant contemporary relevance, particularly in cautioning against the pitfalls of partial theological narratives that selectively engage with divine revelation. Current religious dialogues often reflect a pattern akin to that of the false prophets, who proclaim only fragments of divine counsel, thereby engendering theological distortions that approximate truth without fully embodying it. These figures illustrate the notion that partial truths can inflict greater harm than outright falsehoods, underscoring the imperative for thorough and faithful communication of spiritual doctrines. The text urges both communicators and recipients to pursue a holistic understanding, asserting that theological integrity necessitates the comprehensive articulation of God's entire counsel, free from opportunistic editing or self-serving interpretations.[132]

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[131] Aska Aprilano Pattinaja, Sifera Sampe Liling, and Firdaus Rinto Harahap, "Kontradiksi Nubuatan Yeremia Dan Hananya Sebagai Syarat Menguji Nubuatan Berdasarkan Yeremia 28:1-17," *Jurnal Lentera Nusantara* 3, no. 2 (June 19, 2024): Abstract, https://doi.org/10.59177/jls.v3i2.290.

[132] Ronald E. Manahan, "A Theology of Pseudoprophets: A Study in Jeremiah," *Grace Theological Journal* 1, no. 1 (1980): 95–96.

In the contemporary religious and social discourse landscape, the ancient struggle with false prophecy remains remarkably pertinent. As Overholt argues in his scholarly analysis, the challenge of distinguishing authentic prophetic messages from misleading narratives transcends historical boundaries.[133] Modern societies continue to grapple with individuals and groups who claim divine authorization while potentially obscuring complex social realities. Just as Jeremiah confronted prophets like Hananiah, who offered simplistic theological perspectives that failed to engage critically with the historical moment, today's communities face similar challenges in discerning genuine calls to moral and social transformation from rhetoric that merely reinforces existing power structures.[134]

The methodological approach to evaluating prophetic messages outlined provides a nuanced framework for contemporary critical thinking. Overholt emphasizes that true prophecy is not determined by supernatural phenomena, religious office, or personal morality, but by its ability to interpret current social and political contexts accurately.[135] This principle resonates powerfully with modern critical approaches to social commentary, where the validity of a message is judged by its sensitivity to historical context, capacity to challenge existing assumptions, and potential to inspire genuine social transformation. The text suggests that authentic prophetic discourse demands continuous reinterpretation of religious and cultural heritage, a principle that remains crucial in navigating complex global narratives.[136]

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[133] Overholt, "Jeremiah 27-29," 248.
[134] Overholt, 245–46.
[135] Overholt, 243–44.
[136] Overholt, 248.

Moreover, the scholarly analysis highlights the individual's responsibility in discerning truth amidst competing narratives. As Overholt notes, each person must make decisions about their present commitments, resisting the uncritical adoption of past generations' solutions.[137] This call for individual moral discernment is particularly relevant in an era of information overload and polarized discourse. The text's exploration of false prophecy serves as a powerful reminder that meaningful social and spiritual engagement requires nuanced interpretation, historical sensitivity, and a willingness to challenge comfortable but potentially misleading narratives.[138] In essence, the ancient struggle with false prophecy offers a timeless lesson in critical thinking and moral responsibility.

The presence of false prophets within contemporary Myanmar Christianity, particularly in Baptist, Assembly of God, and Wesleyan churches, reveals a complex interplay of theological, social, and political factors. False prophets are individuals who assert that they speak on behalf of God while promoting misleading teachings, often for personal gain or to manipulate others. This issue in Myanmar is not an isolated occurrence; rather, it reflects a broader trend observed across various Christian denominations globally. The rise of false prophets in Myanmar can be attributed to several contributing factors, including socio-political turmoil, economic instability, and a widespread desire for spiritual reassurance among the populace.[139]

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[137] Overholt, 249.
[138] Overholt, 248–49.
[139] John F. MacArthur, *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship*, First Edition (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), Summary.

The theological ramifications of false prophets within the context of Myanmar Christianity are significantly impactful, influencing both individual adherents and the collective Christian community. These ramifications can be articulated as follows:

1. Erosion of Trust in Religious Leadership: The presence of false prophets fundamentally undermines the authority and legitimacy of authentic religious leaders. This crisis of credibility can engender widespread disillusionment among congregants, ultimately leading to a decline in engagement and participation in ecclesiastical activities.[140]

2. Distortion of Biblical Teachings: False prophets frequently manipulate scriptural interpretations to advance their own agendas, resulting in significant theological misapprehensions. Such distortions often culminate in a diluted gospel narrative that prioritizes material prosperity and self-advancement over the foundational tenets of spiritual maturity and holiness.[141]

3. Networking and Collaboration: Charismatic leaders often cultivate networks with like-minded individuals or organizations, thereby creating a robust support system that enhances their perceived legitimacy and broadens their influence. These networks facilitate resource mobilization and function as a protective framework against external scrutiny and dissent.[142]

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[140] Gaetano Spampinato, "The Representation of False Prophets in Polemical Discourses:," *ARYS. Antigüedad: Religiones y Sociedades*, no. 21 (October 10, 2023): 429–51, https://doi.org/10.20318/arys.2023.7424.

[141] Francis Benyah, "Commodification of the Gospel and the Socio-Economics of Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Ghana," *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 29, no. 2 (December 3, 2018): 140, https://doi.org/10.4314/ljh.v29i2.5.

[142] Spampinato, "The Representation of False Prophets in Polemical Discourses," 450.

4. Exploitation of Cultural and Religious Sentiments: These leaders strategically harness cultural and religious sentiments, positioning themselves as champions of faith and tradition. This approach enables them to secure deep-rooted support and loyalty, especially in environments where religious identity is closely linked to cultural identity, thus reinforcing their authority within these communities.[143]

This situation necessitates a critical examination of both the sociological and theological implications for the church in Myanmar, emphasizing the need for discernment and robust pastoral leadership.

Aspect	Theological Implications	Societal Impact
Erosion of Trust	Undermines credibility of genuine religious leaders, leading to disillusionment among believers	Decline in active participation in church activities, social fragmentation
Distortion of Biblical Teachings	Misinterpretation of scripture, emphasizing material prosperity over spiritual growth	Spread of a watered-down gospel, neglect of humility and sacrifice
Promotion of Prosperity Gospel	Neglect of biblical emphasis on humility, sacrifice, and service	Appeal to economically hardship contexts, exacerbating economic inequality

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[143] Ram Hlei Thang, "Secularism and Religious Nationalism: A Historical Study of Ethnic Conflict in Myanmar," *IKAT: The Indonesian Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 3, no. 1 (August 16, 2019): 25–40, https://doi.org/10.22146/ikat.v3i1.44955.

Aspect	Theological Implications	Societal Impact
Spiritual Manipulation	Use of emotional appeals and false prophecies to control followers	Spiritual abuse, coercion into complying with prophet's demands
Economic Exploitation	Financial exploitation of followers for supposed spiritual benefits	Exacerbation of economic inequality, particularly in impoverished communities
Social Division	Creation of divisions within communities, viewing followers as superior to others	Undermining of church and societal unity, potential for conflict
Political Influence	Alignment with political figures or movements for political gain	Manipulation of religious sentiments for political gain, complicating politics
Impact on Vulnerable Populations	Targeting of vulnerable populations, such as the poor and uneducated	Increased susceptibility to manipulative tactics due to limited education

Table 4.1

This in-depth analysis examines the complex nature of the challenges posed by false prophets within the context of contemporary Christianity in Myanmar. The emergence of these figures presents substantial theological and societal dilemmas. They exploit the vulnerabilities of their adherents, manipulate scriptural interpretations, and

foster social fragmentation and economic exploitation. To effectively address this phenomenon, a multifaceted strategy is essential, encompassing robust theological education, the establishment of accountability and transparency mechanisms, and the promotion of critical analytical skills among the faithful. Additionally, it is imperative to confront the socio-political and economic conditions that enable the proliferation of these false prophets. By implementing these measures, both the church and broader society can mitigate the adverse effects of such deceptive practices and cultivate a more authentic and transformative Christian expression in Myanmar.

Authenticity of True Prophets

The prophetic call, as vividly illustrated in the book of Jeremiah, represents a profound theological journey of divine selection and human transformation. Terence E. Fretheim's comprehensive commentary reveals the intricate dynamics of prophetic vocation as a deeply relational and transformative experience. At its core, the call begins with God's sovereign and intentional choice, powerfully articulated in Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations"[144]

This divine selection is immediately met with human hesitation and vulnerability. Jeremiah's initial response epitomizes the classic prophetic reluctance, as he exclaims, "*Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth*" (Jeremiah 1:6). This moment of human inadequacy becomes a critical juncture in the prophetic narrative, highlighting the tension between divine purpose and human limitation. God's response is swift and transformative, addressing Jeremiah's fears with a powerful reassurance: "*Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak*"[145]

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[144] Terence E. Fretheim, *Jeremiah*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary 15 (Macon, Ga: Smith & Helwys, 2002), 45.
[145] Fretheim, 48.

Characteristics of Prophecy

Prophecy in the ancient Near Eastern context was a complex system of divine communication fundamentally rooted in conditional understanding. As Carver explains, prophecies were not immutable predictions, but rather "shadows of things that may be only"[146] , designed to reveal divine decisions contingent upon human response. The primary function of prophecy was to provide "decisionmakers with the information that they needed in order to make their decisions"[147] , serving both a predictive and motivational purpose. These prophetic utterances were inherently flexible, capable of being canceled, modified, or replaced based on the audience's actions or divine will. Prophecies were not meant to be rigid forecasts, but dynamic communications intended to guide human behavior, warn of potential consequences, and motivate loyalty to divine expectations. The contingent nature of these prophecies meant that their fulfillment was never guaranteed, but instead represented potential future scenarios that could be altered through human response or divine reconsideration[148].

Divination in the Hebrew Bible is a nuanced concept, primarily distinguished by two key approaches: intuitive and technical methods. As Carver notes, explicitly condoned techniques focus on intuitive divination, specifically prophecy and nonsymbolic dreams[149]. The process of creating prophetic texts itself ventures into technical divination, with scribes functioning as diviners who reinterpret and reimagine oral prophecies. These written prophecies were not static documents, but living texts that

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[146] Carver, "Biblical Prophecy in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context," 273.
[147] Carver, 278.
[148] Carver, 271–72.
[149] Carver, 275.

gained "new divinatory significance" beyond their original context.[150] Fundamentally,

biblical divination assumed that future knowledge was accessible only through divine

communication, with causation attributed to divine will rather than natural laws[151]. The

ultimate purpose was to reveal divine decisions and motivate human behavior.

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[150] Carver, 286.
[151] Carver, 270.

Divine Judgement and Consequences

Modern scholars derive critical insights from Jeremiah's portrayal of divine judgment against false prophets, particularly in relation to the interplay of prophecy within both religious and political frameworks. Jeremiah's account illuminates the complexities associated with differentiating authentic prophecy from its inauthentic counterparts, a theme that resonates with current challenges faced by religious communities. The confrontations between Jeremiah and the false prophet Hananiah exemplify the inherent tensions between messages of divine judgment and those proclaiming peace, mirroring broader struggles for authority and legitimacy in both ecclesiastical and political realms. This dynamic is essential for comprehending how prophecy can be strategically manipulated for personal or political advantage and emphasizes that true prophecy is often marked by consistency and alignment with the divine will.

It is crucial to differentiate between true and false prophecy, as highlighted in Jeremiah 27–28, demonstrating the inherent challenges in identifying genuine prophets. Both true prophets, exemplified by Jeremiah, and false prophets, such as Hananiah, assert divine authority. True prophets prophesy under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, communicating messages aligned with God's will. In contrast, false prophets derive their messages from personal ambition or societal influences, often driven by motives of material gain. This distinction underscores the need for discernment in evaluating prophetic claims within the religious context.[152]

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[152] L. E. Ugwueye and I. L. Umeanolue, "True and False Prophecy in 'All Christian Practical Praying Band (ACPPB)', Ufuma, in the Light of Jeremiah 27-28," *UNIZIK Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 7, no. 2 (2015): 54–65.

In the biblical narrative of Jeremiah 27–28, divine judgement emerges as a profound mechanism for addressing false prophecy, revealing the severe spiritual consequences for those who misrepresent divine will. According to the text, false prophets who manipulate spiritual messages face direct divine intervention. As noted, "The type of judgment that came upon the false prophets in Judah during the time of Jeremiah awaits them if they fail to repent".[153] The case of Hananiah exemplifies this principle: when he falsely prophesied and broke Jeremiah's symbolic wooden yoke, he was swiftly punished. The document explicitly states that "Hananiah died in the seventh month of that year, i.e., two months after his controversy with Jeremiah"[154] demonstrating prophetic dishonesty's immediate and tangible consequences.

The ramifications of false prophecy extend beyond individual accountability, significantly impacting communal dynamics and spiritual ecosystems. The text posits that prophetic deceptions can "result in mass fatality, precipitate conflicts among communities and nations, incite fanaticism, and lead individuals into a prolonged state of delusion." In contrast, genuine prophecy is inherently linked to a call for repentance and spiritual rejuvenation. It emphasizes that false prophets often "prophesy for financial gain," driven by motives that lack spiritual integrity, whereas authentic prophets exhibit an unwavering dedication to divine truth. This distinction is pivotal, as the text argues that the core of true prophecy lies in fostering spiritual transformation, rather than offering palatable or convenient narratives that disregard authentic spiritual dilemmas.[155]

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[153] Ugwueye and Umeanolue, 62.
[154] Ugwueye and Umeanolue, 64.
[155] Ugwueye and Umeanolue, 62.

The semantic analysis of the term nāvî' (prophet) in the book of Jeremiah underscores the critical themes of legitimacy and authority. It highlights that authentic prophecy is inherent to a divine vocation, distinguishing it from self-appointed roles.[156] In the prophetic tradition of Jeremiah, divine judgement emerges as a profound mechanism of spiritual accountability, particularly manifested through the critique of false prophets. The text reveals that prophetic legitimacy is intrinsically linked to divine commission, with illegitimate prophets facing severe consequences for misleading the people. As the scholarly analysis notes, these false prophets who "prophesy lying dreams" are not merely delivering inauthentic messages, but are actively undermining the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people.[157] Their fabricated revelations create a false sense of security, ultimately contributing to the catastrophic Babylonian exile, which is interpreted as a direct result of spiritual deception.

The ramifications of prophetic malpractice extend beyond individual failings to encompass a broader spiritual erosion within the community. Jeremiah's critique underscores that these prophets "do not profit this people at all,"[158] indicating that their actions fundamentally undermine the spiritual integrity of the collective. Divine judgment, in this context, transcends mere retribution; it functions as a corrective measure that reveals the perilous consequences of religious leadership that lacks genuine divine authorization. The text proposes a clear corollary: the legitimacy of prophecy is intrinsically linked to societal direction. When this legitimacy is compromised, it results

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[156] Kelly, *How Prophecy Works*, Summary.

[157] Wilhelm J. Wessels, "So They Do Not Profit This People at All(Jr 23:32). A Critique of Prophecy," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32, no. 1 (March 4, 2011): 6, https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v32i1.464.

[158] Wessels, 6.

in disorientation, eventually provoking divine intervention and consequent communal distress.[159]

In Jeremiah 23:9–40, the theme of divine judgment is intricately linked to the theological constructs of covenant fidelity and ethical accountability. The text delineates that Yahweh's judgment arises not from capriciousness but as a deliberate reaction to pervasive moral deterioration, especially within ecclesiastical leadership. The portrayal of false prophets in Jerusalem underscores their role as significant agents of societal decay; they are depicted as those who "strengthened the hands of evildoers" and misrepresented the prevailing circumstances by proclaiming peace amidst impending destruction. This ethical dereliction and misuse of religious authority precipitated divine retribution, culminating in the foretold Babylonian exile—an exhaustive punitive measure encompassing both the leadership and the populace.[160]

The implications of divine judgment are complex and transformative, transcending immediate retribution to facilitate a long-term spiritual reorientation.[161] Yahweh's response is characterized as a "hurricane" of righteous indignation, intended to unearth and dismantle the false ideological frameworks that underpin unethical societal constructs.[162] The prophetic tradition underscores that no institutional entity—whether political or religious—is beyond the reach of divine evaluation. The experience of exile is not solely punitive but serves as a significant catalyst for spiritual renewal, urging the

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[159] Wessels, 5–7.
[160] Wilhelm J. Wessels, "Prophet versus Prophet in the Book of Jeremiah : In Search of the True Prophets," *Old Testament Essays* 22, no. 3 (January 2009): 741–48, https://doi.org/10.10520/EJC86007.
[161] Wessels, 745–46.
[162] Wessels, 743.

community to confront their covenant breaches and potentially realign with divine mandates.[163]

In the book of Jeremiah, prophets are depicted as integral components of the socio-political landscape, often aligning with prevailing political interests, which complicates their roles as authentic messengers of the divine. This association raises significant questions regarding the integrity of their proclamations, suggesting that the pursuit of political favor can lead to compromised messages. Central to this discourse is the concept of divine judgment, which transcends mere punitive action and serves as a profound mechanism for spiritual accountability. Within prophetic traditions, divine judgment is intrinsically connected to themes of social justice and ethical conduct, positioning prophets as vital intermediaries conveying divine expectations.[164]

The biblical narrative illustrates that prophets did not function as mere passive observers; rather, they were dynamic agents actively confronting societal injustices. Figures such as Jeremiah, Elijah, and John the Baptist exemplify this role as they boldly challenged political and social immorality, thereby fulfilling the prophetic mandate to rebuke unethical leadership and advocate for marginalized populations.[165] This active engagement underscores the prophetic mission as not only a spiritual endeavor but also a critical social commentary that seeks to uphold justice and equity within their communities.

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[163] Wessels, 749.

[164] Kelebogile T. Resane, "Prophet and Politician Dining around the Same Table: God's Message in Conflict?," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 44, no. 1 (November 15, 2023): 2, https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v44i1.2835.

[165] Resane, "Prophet and Politician Dining around the Same Table."

The implications of divine judgment are deeply intertwined with the dynamics of human agency and spiritual accountability. Prophetic critique functions as a catalyst for societal reflection, as evidenced by the historical role of prophets in advocating for repentance and establishing ethical demarcations that separate the spiritual realm from political influence.[166] The theological framework suggests that divine judgment transcends mere retribution; it encompasses a redemptive quality that provides avenues for both individual and collective moral realignment. This understanding highlights the fundamental mission of the prophetic tradition: to interrogate prevailing power frameworks, champion social justice initiatives, and uphold the purity of spiritual discourse against the backdrop of potential co-optation.

True prophets are tasked with communicating divine messages that benefit the people, while false prophets are criticized for their inability to align with Yahweh's will, ultimately failing to enrich the community. The ideological struggles presented in Jeremiah illustrate broader societal and political tensions, as various groups compete for theological authority and exploit prophecy for political gain. Jeremiah's portrayal of divine judgment against false prophets not only sheds light on the complexities of prophecy but also prompts a critical evaluation of prophetic claims within contemporary religious communities, urging them to consider the wider implications of prophecy in both spiritual and political arenas.[167]

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[166] Resane, 7.
[167] Sharp, *Prophecy and Ideology in Jeremiah*, Summary.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

This study examines the divergent portrayals of prophetic legitimacy between the LXX and MT versions of Jeremiah, focusing on cases where the LXX introduces explicit "false prophet" terminology absent in the Hebrew text. Through rigorous application of textual criticism methodologies, comparative analysis of primary witnesses, and theological exegesis, this research demonstrates how translational choices in the LXX reflect evolving community concerns about prophetic authority during the Second Temple period. The investigation reveals systematic theological reworking in the Greek translation that intensifies polemics against disfavored prophets while maintaining essential continuity with MT's semantic range for רֶקֶשׁ (deception). Utilizing a qualitative methodology rooted in a hermeneutical analysis of prophetic literature—particularly within the frameworks of doom and salvation prophecies—this research provided critical insights for believers seeking to navigate the complexities of prophetic discernment.

Summary of Findings

The case study on Jeremiah 6:13 critically examines the variations in translations, particularly between the MT and the LXX, and their implications for theological understanding. The passage addresses the moral and spiritual decay present in Judah prior to the Babylonian exile, underscoring the corruption and deceit proliferating among religious leaders, including prophets and priests. The MT employs the term 'נָבִיא' (nabi) to denote prophets, which highlights their historical and religious roles. In contrast, the LXX uses a prefix 'ψευδο-' (pseudo-), suggesting a strong connotation of falseness and emphasizing the prevalence of false prophets and the collective failure of leadership to uphold truth, culminating in divine judgment. This analysis posits that the pervasive corruption spanning from leaders to laypeople reflects a profound ethical decline within the covenant community.

The examination of Jeremiah 26:7, 8, 11, 16 offers a comparative analysis of the MT and LXX translations. Here, Jeremiah communicates a prophetic warning regarding Jerusalem's imminent destruction due to widespread unrepentance. The MT details how Jeremiah is apprehended by priests, prophets, and the populace who demand his execution, illustrating the formidable opposition faced by prophets within institutional frameworks. The LXX's incorporation of 'pseudo' in reference to prophets serves to emphasize the resistance against Jeremiah's message further. Analysis of these texts reveals recurring motifs like 'Death, death' to accentuate the gravity of the responses to prophecy. The LXX aims to preserve Hebrew idiomatic expressions and key thematic elements throughout the translation. Variations between MT and LXX reveal textual developments and translation complexities, shaped by interpretative decisions or

differences in underlying manuscript traditions, thus underscoring the intricate

relationship between prophetic authority and institutional resistance.

In the case study of Jeremiah 27:9, various textual variants are examined to

elucidate the prophet's discourse concerning divine admonitions and responses to false

prophecies. The MT warns against heeding prophets and diviners who advocate against

serving the Babylonian king, emphasizing the peril of dismissing divine directives. By

referencing Micah to illustrate the interconnected themes of judgment and hope, the study

also reveals the continuity and reception of prophetic traditions in the Hebrew Bible. The

LXX's use of terms like 'pseudoprophets' amplifies its rejection of those purporting divine

authority yet leading the people astray. The narrative frames resistance against

Babylonian control as strategically unwise, promoting submission as a viable tactic for

survival.

The theological discourse within Jeremiah 27 delineates the distinction between

true and false prophecies, highlighting the conflict between Jeremiah and Hananiah, both

claiming divine commission. The analysis asserts that authentic prophecy is aligned with

divine will and historical fulfillment, whereas false prophecies often emerge from

subjective or political motivations. Scholars such as Bentall, Bryan, and Hill reflect on

the implications within the Second Temple period, emphasizing themes of judgment,

exile, and restoration. They contend that Jeremiah's prophecies, especially regarding the

seventy-year captivity, are pivotal for both historical and eschatological interpretations,

offering an ultimate hope for comprehensive restoration.

The investigation into Jeremiah 28:1 contrasts the true prophetic figure, Jeremiah,

with the false prophet, Hananiah. Hananiah asserts that God will liberate Judah from

Babylonian dominion within two years and restore the temple vessels. This narrative underscores the dichotomy prevalent in biblical prophecy, with Jeremiah embodying genuine prophecy characterized by calls for repentance and admonitions, while Hananiah represents deceptive prophecy that offers palatable messages. The case study examines the epistemological challenges associated with discerning divine truth, emphasizing that true prophecy necessitates moral integrity and allegiance to divine intentions, despite its potential unpopularity. Additionally, the differences in material placement between MT and LXX point to the complexities inherent in textual traditions. Ultimately, this analysis underscores the necessity of fidelity to divine truth and the scrutiny of ethical frameworks in the interpretation of prophetic texts.

The case study on Jeremiah 29:1, 8 delves into the textual and theological distinctions between the MT and LXX. In Jeremiah 29:1, the MT applies a neutral term "prophets" for those addressed by Jeremiah, whereas the LXX explicitly categorizes certain prophets as "false," reflecting an interpretive methodology aimed at differentiating between authentic and spurious prophetic voices. This complex interplay between translation, context, and theological implications emphasizes the nuanced dynamics of prophetic authority and communal adherence to divine communication.

The book of Jeremiah delves deeply into the dichotomy of true versus false prophecy, accentuating the distortion of divine messages by false prophets, which fosters confusion and misguidance within the community. Over time, theological interpretations of this text have evolved, particularly regarding the role of false prophets who subvert traditional god-prophet relationships. These figures often present messages of comfort that starkly contrast with the divine judgments emphasized by true prophets. The Old

Testament's understanding of prophecy has undergone significant shifts, moving away

from divination practices toward a more text-centered interpretation, as illustrated by

critical analyses of figures such as Balaam and the contributions of scholars like Bosman.

In contemporary contexts, particularly in Nigeria, the issue of false prophecy

remains pertinent, highlighting the complexities of discerning authentic prophetic voices

amid corrupt spiritual leadership. False prophets frequently exploit their authority for

personal gain, mirroring systemic corruption condemned in Jeremiah's critiques. This

phenomenon is also evident in global Christianity, including regions such as Myanmar,

where socio-political factors facilitate the emergence of such leaders, resulting in

theological misunderstandings and societal fragmentation.

This discourse necessitates a focus on integrity, accountability, and fidelity to

divine mandates within religious leadership, while cautioning against the perils of

selective theological narratives. The modern religious landscape demands strategies

grounded in critical analysis, theological education, and accountability frameworks to

mitigate the detrimental effects of false prophecy, thereby fostering a more genuine and

transformative spiritual practice.

The prophetic tradition is scrutinized, with particular emphasis on the authenticity

and implications of true versus false prophecy as articulated in Jeremiah. The text begins

by examining the divine selection process of prophets, illustrating the transformative

dynamics within God's relationship with human reluctance as epitomized by Jeremiah's

call. Prophetic communication in ancient contexts is characterized as dynamic and

contingent upon human responsiveness, offering guidance rather than predetermined forecasts.

Jeremiah's narrative underscores the exigencies of differentiating true prophets, who align with divine intent, from false prophets motivated by self-interest. This distinction carries significant theological weight, as false prophets incur severe divine repercussions for misleading the community and inciting spiritual consequences, including the Babylonian exile.

Furthermore, the text accentuates the interconnection between prophecy, social justice, and ethical behavior, positing true prophets as active agents confronting societal injustices. Divine judgment transcends mere retribution; it serves as an impetus for spiritual realignment and accountability. Jeremiah's message calls for discernment in evaluating prophetic claims, elucidating the profound impact of prophecy on both religious and political landscapes.

Limitations of the Study

This study grapples with the methodological challenges of applying traditional textual criticism to the issue of false prophets in the Book of Jeremiah. However, the research could not cover, First, stemmatics, which involves reconstructing manuscript lineages to pinpoint archetypal texts, faces significant obstacles due to the fragmented and divergent textual traditions of Jeremiah. The LXX and the MT both originate from distinct Hebrew editions, as illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls fragments (e.g., 4QJer^a and 4QJer^b), which showcase competing recensions rather than a linear textual transmission. This fragmentation complicates the establishment of a unified stemma, especially in the context of polemical terminology like "false prophet," which is unevenly distributed across traditions—evidenced by the LXX's systematic usage in Jeremiah 28 compared to a solitary instance in the MT 28:1.

Second, eclecticism, which assesses textual variants on the basis of criteria such as manuscript age and internal coherence, contends with subjectivity stemming from the speculative nature of the LXX's Hebrew Vorlage. For example, while the LXX's brevity in instances like Jeremiah 27:9 might suggest an earlier textual form, distinguishing its intentional omissions or adaptations from translational choices remains an unresolved challenge.

Given these limitations, the research leans toward thematic and literary analysis rather than textual reconstruction. It foregrounds the final form of the MT as a theological artifact, with particular emphasis on motifs that connect false prophets to covenantal disobedience (cf. Jeremiah 23:17, 27:9–10) and their condemnation within the Deuteronomistic framework. Nonetheless, this approach cannot fully address the

ambiguities introduced by redactional layers, such as the MT's expanded catalog of occult

practices (Jeremiah 27:9) or the LXX's more streamlined polemics. The inability to

definitively ascertain whether textual variants arise from scribal errors, theological

motivations, or cultural adaptations constrains the accuracy of historical-critical

assessments.

Future investigations could alleviate these constraints by incorporating

interdisciplinary methodologies. For instance, redaction criticism might elucidate the

editorial priorities that shaped divergent textual traditions, while computational tools like

text-reuse algorithms could quantitatively map thematic shifts between the LXX and MT.

Such innovative approaches would enhance traditional textual criticism, providing new

avenues for addressing the ambiguities intrinsic to the complex transmission history of

Jeremiah.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could develop practical frameworks for distinguishing authentic prophetic voices in contemporary contexts. This might include creating educational resources for religious communities struggling with discernment challenges. Additionally, examining how prophetic discernment manifests across different cultural contexts would add valuable cross-cultural dimensions to a Jeremiah-centered analysis. The global increase of prophetic claims makes this research direction particularly relevant for communities seeking reliable evaluation methods.

While this thesis focused primarily on Jeremiah, investigating how his prophetic discourse was received, reinterpreted, and applied by subsequent prophets could reveal important evolutionary patterns in prophetic tradition. Research could examine how prophetic consciousness transformed from pre-exilic to post-exilic periods, with particular attention to how later prophets deliberately recontextualized Jeremiah's prophetic model for new circumstances. This intertextual approach would illuminate the dynamic nature of prophetic tradition.

The research positioning of true prophets as social justice agents warrants deeper exploration through comparative analysis of different prophetic justice models. Examining how Jeremiah's approach to injustice compares with other prophetic voices like Amos could yield insights into varied prophetic responses to social challenges. Research could also investigate how Jeremiah's prophetic framework might inform contemporary religious responses to systemic injustice, including case studies of communities applying prophetic principles to modern social issues.

Building on this research examination of true versus false prophecy, future research could develop more comprehensive frameworks for evaluating prophetic authenticity. This might include systematically analyzing historical criteria against Jeremiah's ministry, such as the nature of prophetic calls, moral consistency, and relationship to established religious traditions. Additionally, exploring the psychological dimensions of prophetic calling experiences would complement the theological analysis of divine selection mechanisms.

Furthermore, research could systematically delineate the ethical principles inherent in Jeremiah's prophetic ministry, while also assessing how these principles align or contrast with those of subsequent prophetic figures, including the stance of Jesus. Additionally, studies might investigate the role of Jeremiah's prophetic utterances in shaping the moral consciousness and ethical behavior of the community, thereby extending the focus on fidelity to divine truth by analyzing its embodiment in tangible ethical practices.

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