# Kings and Prophets 16-06-02

This is Thursday, the 2nd of June, 2016. We continue our study in Kings and Prophets, looking at the prophet Jeremiah. We will resume our survey and overview and sampling of this great prophetic book tonight, looking again at the overall structure, the thematic elements that are most important as they are found in the setting of the closing years of the southern kingdom of Judah with its problems of apostasy, apathy, distraction, and indifference to the proper worship of God and to the covenant relationship that those people had with God.

And this is similar to the historic circumstance we find our own selves in, so it finds pertinence and looks very familiar to us from a contemporary point of view. Therefore, we should find it helpful as we see the encouragement, at the same time that there is a description and exhortation involved in this, there is also encouragement for the faithful people of God who find themselves sort of carried along in this historic apostate time. So it is of particular interest to us because what we like to find, I think, in the Word of God is, how do I do what God calls me to do? And these people are in situations much like ours, so what God gives them by way of guidance and support should be more pertinent than usual for us.

Sometimes you see some extreme ne'er-do-well and say, well, I'm not like him, so I'm just going to stand at a safe distance and watch the judgment of God fall. But this is especially relevant, I think, for us. So we'll continue our study once we have taken a moment to go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we are blessed, we are privileged, we are held in your righteous hands, your loving care, your watchful oversight, your fatherly guidance and correction. We're so grateful that these privileges and resources have been granted to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for him.

We thank you for his ever-present representation of us at your throne, assuring us that our humanity can be made acceptable in your sight through him, even as his is now. And we pray that as we look at this portion of your word tonight, that the Lord Jesus will be glorified, that he will be central in our thinking as we look at these Old Testament anticipations and adumbrations of covenant relationship with you, the benefits that it confers, the responsibilities that it entails, and that our study together will draw us closer to you and conform us more closely to the Lord Jesus' example. We pray these things in his name.

Amen. Well we were looking at the book of Jeremiah last time, and if I asked you in broad strokes what is the structure of the book of Jeremiah, what would you tell me? Does it have an introduction? Feel free to answer. Does the book of Jeremiah have an introduction? Yes, it does.

Where is it? Chapter one. Does it have an ending? Yes, it does. How many chapters in Jeremiah? Or I could ask you how many weeks in a year? Fifty-two.

Does it have a conclusion? Say yes. And what chapter would that be? Very good. Chapter one is

the introduction.

Chapter fifty-two is the conclusion. How many great big parts does it naturally divide into? Two. This does not mean two.

What, in sign? Well, you're of no help to me. Two great sections. Chapter two through twenty-four is the first section.

Chapter twenty-five through fifty-one is the second section. What were the two great parts? You didn't know you were going to get a quiz, did you? What were the two great parts of Jeremiah's commission in chapter one? What did God call him to do? Two things. He is going to prophesy to two audiences.

Wink, wink, nudge, nudge. Two audiences. What's one audience? Kingdom of Judah.

What's the other audience? The nations. Which part is talking about prophecy to Judah? First part, two through twenty-four. Where will we find, generally speaking, the prophecy to the nations? In the second part, twenty-five through fifty-one.

Especially some of that latter part. We're going to see Edom and Ammon and a whole bunch of others. So that's the book of Jeremiah.

Grab hold of that. Keep it in your mind. It will help you navigate the book.

There are some major pieces scattered through the book of Jeremiah that I mentioned last time called the Confessions of Jeremiah. Ring a bell. He has sort of these are really almost dialogues with God.

They are sort of one-on-one sessions between Jeremiah and God. And I gave you six of those last time. I'm not going to review them, but they are there called the Confessions of Jeremiah.

You can probably, there may be a list of those somewhere. Also, you're going to find that in the second half where you have the prophecies to the nations, this obviously is not going to be like sections of Ezekiel or Isaiah where you just have chapter after chapter after chapter addressed to nations. This is an emphasis.

This is a thematic element, but there's plenty of other things in there. So because it has to do with the nations, who is the interface? Who makes the decisions related to Judah and the nations in the southern kingdom? The southern kingdom. Who makes the decisions about it? It's the king, right? So you can expect in the second half that there's going to be more emphasis on Jeremiah's conflicts and communications with the king or kings in that second half because they are making bad choices with regard to foreign policy.

You remember our most recent king's bad foreign policy decision to go out, remember that? What's the catastrophically bad decision that was made by our most recent? Who's our most recent king? Josiah. What did he decide to do? I am, thanks to Huldah. I am nine feet tall and

bulletproof.

I will die in peace so I can attack anybody and not die. Au contraire, mon frere, he died in battle and messed up the prophecy because he violated the condition. He didn't go to the Lord.

So we're going to find in 26 through 52, 25 on, 25 through 51 really, there's going to be some prophecies from Jeremiah but it's going to have a lot to do with his interaction with the kings, the national leadership, with regard to their decisions. There's also, of course, because Jeremiah's ministry extends to, through and past the fall of the southern kingdom, we're going to have some accounts of that fall in the latter part of that second section. That's also a national, in an international context section.

So chapters 39 through 41 and chapter 52 are going to tell us about the fall of the southern kingdom and the final days of Judah before they are hauled off as captives to Babylon. Now, I mentioned to you last time that Jeremiah, in terms of its text, is one of the most vexed books in the Bible, mainly because we have the Septuagint version in existence. This, of course, was the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures done 200 to 300 years before Christ.

This was the Bible, generally speaking, that is quoted in the New Testament. When the New Testament quotes the Old, in the vast majority of cases, what they quote is the Septuagint version. Now, we're going to stop in our survey of Jeremiah and talk a little bit about its text.

Please do not fall asleep. Here's why. Let me, in good artillery instructor fashion, explain the problem so that you will know why we all need to pay attention to arrive at the solution.

Here's what we know already, especially about the book of Jeremiah, the Septuagint text is substantially different than the Masoretic text on which your translation is based. Now, there aren't terribly many Jeremiah quotes in the New Testament, but there are a lot of Old Testament quotes in the New Testament that do come from the Septuagint. So, it is a helpful question to ask.

If the Septuagint is different than the received Hebrew text, so to speak, that the Masoretes pointed and counted and preserved, and wasn't it a wonderful thing that the Isaiah scroll was so close after a thousand years difference? We know all of that, right? But if the Septuagint has some significant problems, I'll just give you one quick example. There's a quotation from the Psalms in Hebrews having to do with sacrifice and offering. You did not desire a body you have prepared for me.

I've come to do your will, O God. You remember that? Over in Hebrews, well, in the Septuagint, it says, sacrifice and offering you did not desire a body you have prepared for me. That's a quote from the Septuagint version of the Psalm.

That's not what the Masoretic text says. And if you go to Hebrews, look up that passage, find the note that says, here's where this came from in the Psalms, and go back and read it. It doesn't say, a body you have prepared for me.

And there have been sermons innumerable based on the Hebrews passage that says, a body you have prepared for me, talking about the Incarnation of Christ, the necessity that He bear our sins in His body on the tree, on and on and on and on and on. But if you go back and actually read the quote in the Old Testament, it doesn't say, a body you have prepared for me. It says, mine ears thou hast opened.

My ears you have opened. So, if the author of Hebrews says, a body you have prepared for me, quoting the Septuagint, but we don't use the Septuagint, we use the Masoretic text, and the Masoretic text says nothing about a body, it says, it talks about open ears. So, it would be helpful to have some grasp of what's going on, right? This is why you need to pay attention tonight as I talk about the Septuagint text of Jeremiah and its differences from your Biblical translation based on the Masoretic text.

Because there is no book that is more different than Jeremiah in these two versions. But when we talk about these differences tonight in Jeremiah, the principle will apply, it will be the same kind of thing, whether it is the Psalms, whether it is any other passage that is quoted in the New Testament from the Septuagint, and its wording differs from what is in the Hebrew behind your King James and all your other English translations. Is that much clear? We kind of need to know, you don't have to know, you've lived this long and probably didn't know, right? But, as advanced students of the Word of God, as those who are ready always to give an answer to every man who challenges the rationality, reasonability, veracity of your faith, if some naysaying, skeptic, Bible-waving person comes up and says, you don't even know that your New Testament quotes come from the Septuagint and they are not the same as your Old Testament, you will say, I had Jeremiah.

I do know all about that. My pastor told me. One of the favorite canards that atheists and skeptics like to launch at you is, there is so much about your Bible that you don't know.

Your pastor is afraid to tell you because you will lose your faith and tremble like a leaf in the wind and blow off and become a Buddhist or something. It's nonsense. The last thing that any Christian should be afraid of is the truth.

God is truth. His Word is truth. We are people of the truth.

We believe the truth. We are counting on the truth for our salvation. So, we have nothing to fear from the truth.

There are people who say, well, I don't really want to look into that because I might find out something I don't want to know. You want to know this. This is good stuff.

It's interesting. Now, when it comes to turning the corner into application, this isn't the easiest lesson to do that with. So, you can be helping me.

You can be figuring out now, how should I then live as I go through this. I'll offer you a few suggestions. But, honestly, there are times when, you know, we cover the golden rule and

there's application all over the place.

We cover the differences in two different kinds of texts. And it's a biblical issue because the Bible quotes the Septuagint, right? So, it's not like I'm just picking this out of the air and saying, well, there was a bunch of old Greeks that had a bad Bible. That bad Bible is in your Bible, so to speak.

So, this is a helpful thing to be aware of and to understand. And I will begin by telling you, there's nothing wrong with your Bible, nothing wrong with the Septuagint quotes of it. But, it's an interesting observation, actually an interesting set of observations as we look at this.

I've got an Old Testament that says one thing. My New Testament quotes a different Old Testament as saying something slightly different. And so, you get into questions of inerrancy and inspiration, right? Does the misquote or the mistranslation that is quoted in the New Testament become inspired because it's in the New Testament? Is it a correction and the original one was bad and so we should throw that out and put that New Testament quote back into the Old? Do you see what I'm saying? It's an interesting question.

Nothing to fear, it's going to be fun. Okay, so, first of all, what are the differences between the Septuagint version of Jeremiah and the version that has been translated into our Bibles here? Well, this is complex. As I mentioned last time, 12.5% shorter the Septuagint is.

Yet, it only actually leaves out two chunks that are relatively small. Most of this shortening comes in a different way. So, it would be helpful for us first to understand what exactly are the differences.

If there's going to be a difference, is it a significant difference? Now, let me lay a little bit of a foundation for this by asking you a question. Are there differences in the readings of verses between the King James Bible and the New King James Bible that we're working out of? Yes, there are. It doesn't read exactly the same, does it? Some words, you know, froward and cleave and some of the other less elegant and less socially acceptable things about identifying, separating men from women and one thing or another.

Those things have been updated and changed. Are there perhaps more significant differences between the King James and the New American Standard or the NIV? If you lay these side by side, how many of you all have used a parallel Bible or made one on your computer screen where you've got like three or four across? Here's the Amplified. I had one that had the King James, the Amplified, the New American Standard and the NIV side by side.

Big tome. And as I read across, wildly different phraseology, vocabulary choices and so on. Let me ask you something.

Is any one of those just a bad Bible because it doesn't match the others? Can you say, well, if it's not the King James, it's not inspired and I'm not going to use it. Thank the Lord people have updated the King James. It's beautiful.

I love the literary quality of it, but it is impractical to try to hang on to 17th century English, 16th century English in 400 years later. It's just very difficult to do. We want something that is meaningful and conveys the ideas, right? There are different translation philosophies.

Do I want a woodenly literal translation where there's one and only one English word that is used for each Hebrew and Greek word anytime you encounter it? Well, there's not that kind of equivalence between languages. Some of our words that have more than one meaning don't match a Greek or Hebrew word that has more than one meaning. And it can have more than one meaning that we have to use a different English word or it's just flat out wrong.

What am I saying? What exactly is the word of God? Is the word of God only what was written down in the original, which of course we don't have Hebrew text or the original Aramaic text or the original Greek text for the New Testament? Is that the word of God and everything else is not quite the word of God because it's not that text. What if I've got a text that's got a few differences? This one says Christ Jesus and this one says Jesus Christ in the same verse. Is the whole thing to be chucked because those words were reversed? What about the ones where instead of saying Christ, it just has a Chi with a line over it? What if instead of Yahweh, it just has the Tetragrammaton in a different script? You see what I'm saying? The word of God is not the words on the paper, even in the original.

Now hear me carefully. What God communicated through his apostles and prophets is his word. And when they wrote it down, it was his word.

When they spoke it in other words in front of congregations, you know, Paul wrote letters and expressed concepts and doctrines for the church and then he would stand up in front of churches and preach those same truths in different words. Jesus preached concepts, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount that you can also find that Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 through, remember that? Starts in Matthew 5 and just goes for chapter after chapter. That's the Sermon on the Mount.

Well, go over to Luke chapter 6 and you have the Sermon on the plain. Look carefully. It is a different location, it is a different time, and it is a different audience.

One audience was people from all around Galilee and Transjordan. The other audience mentions that there were people there from Tyre and Sidon, a whole different area, a whole different direction. They came from the northwest.

These other people came from the northeast and from the east and from the southeast. Different audience, different occasion. One is on the mountain, one is on the plain, and yet Jesus says some of the same things.

About a third, as I recall, of the Sermon on the Mount can be found in the Sermon on the plain, more or less. And then there are other sayings that are in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew scattered throughout the rest of the book of Luke in subsequent chapters, all the way through

chapter 15, 18, and all the way up to the arrest and trial. Little sections.

So what do you think? Did Jesus teach the same truth on more than one occasion? Did He use slightly different words? Is it still the Word of God because He changed the words? The truth is the concept. Hear me carefully. The Word of God is propositional truth.

It is ideas. They are clear ideas. They are defined ideas.

But they transcend the words that are used to communicate them. This is why you can have a Chinese Bible. This is why you can have a Japanese Bible.

This is why you can have a Tagalog Bible. You can have the Bible read to you as a deaf person in sign that is radically different in terms of the vehicles that are used to convey those ideas, those subjects, those verbs, those objects, those conditional phrases, can be wildly different in different languages. There are languages among primitive people where atonement and reconciliation and propitiation don't have an equivalent.

So they had to make something up to get the idea across that this is something that is done on your behalf, that you don't earn or deserve, but it satisfies a righteous standard. And if that standard had not been satisfied, judgment would come. So do you see what I'm saying? It is the content of ideas that constitutes the truth.

Now I'm not saying that the words are unimportant. The words are extremely important because without the words you don't get the ideas. But the ideas transcend the words.

There are practically no original words in our English Bibles. You've got Talitha Kumi and Eli Lama Sabachthani and Mene Tekel Ufarsan and a few other transliterated or transferred pieces of original text. But by and large, you've got swaths of your Bible that represents not one single word that Paul ever said or wrote, that Moses ever said or wrote, or any of the other authors of Scripture.

So how can that be a Bible? Because it conveys to us the ideas that constitute the Word of God. Now this is my foundation. This is what I am telling you in advance because here's the thing about the differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text.

It would take me a long time to make myself as smart as people like Gleason Archer. Gleason Archer, you may have heard his name before. He is a very well-known, well-respected scholar in things biblical.

And Gleason Archer spent three years, three solid years, on the text of Jeremiah looking at the differences between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint. I have always respected Gleason Archer's opinion on almost everything. By the way, I've told you before there is a book called the Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties.

The guy that wrote that, Gleason Archer. Anytime you've got a difficulty, may I suggest, that is a

good first stop. I agree with better than 95% of what he says in there.

This is an article published in the Trinity Journal back in 1991 by Gleason Archer. The name of the article is, The Relationship Between the Septuagint and Masoretic Text Versions of Jeremiah. So, thank you Dr. Archer.

Relationship Between the Septuagint Translation and the Masoretic Text in Jeremiah. Gleason L. Archer Jr. I can't give you this entire article. A lot of it is somewhat technical.

What I want to give you is what he spells out as the differences. Now, as you listen to these differences, ask yourself this question. I see that the words are different.

Do I see that the ideas, the content of the Word of God is somehow different? By the way, in our study, this almost would fit in our Sunday study, wouldn't it? Bible Difficulties. And the body that was prepared for me in My Ears You Have Opened, if you can be patient, we'll hit that along with some similar. We'll cover the ones that are not in Jeremiah in that study in the not-too-distant future.

Again, nothing to worry about. There's a very interesting... Well, I'll just tell you now, and it'll be a review when we get to it. It's a very simple solution.

If you look at the context in which these verses are quoted in the New Testament, why do you quote a verse? Why do you quote it? If you want to explain to somebody that salvation is a free gift of God and you can't do anything to earn it or deserve it, what verse would you quote out of your New Testament? Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Right? Now, what is the point I just said I wanted to make out of that passage? Salvation is a free gift of God that I cannot gain by works.

There are two parts of that verse that substantiate that claim. For by grace are you saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. Suppose hypothetically that in between grace and not of works, there was a part of that verse that was a mistranslation.

I am not relying on the mistranslated part to make my point, am I? I'm relying on by grace you are saved, it's not of works, nobody can boast. Right? The purpose for which I have quoted that verse doesn't require me to stop and say, now before I go any further, let me just tell you that in between the two things that I just quoted, there's a little part here that's not translated quite right, and I just want you to understand that what this really says is thus and so, and destroy the continuity of my whole point over something that is not pertinent. The quote is given for its pertinent and relevant content.

The author, by the way, do you think the Apostle Paul who quotes from the Septuagint frequently, do you think he didn't know the Hebrew original? Why would he quote the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew original, when he knows, he has memorized the Hebrew original. Why would he quote the Septuagint, the Greek version? Why would Paul quote it? Who

is he preaching to? Greeks. What Bible is available to the Greeks? The Septuagint.

So if he's going to substantiate a point, he's going to quote the Septuagint. Do you think that every time he quotes a verse that might have a glitch in it, in that Septuagint translation, he's going to stop and correct it? We do this all the time. We quote things out of the King James that aren't exactly right, and we know they're not exactly right, but the part that we're relying on, the part that we are alluding to and referencing is correct.

The Word of God that is contained in that verse is correct, even if there is a mishap in a word here or there. The truth of it, the central idea to which we are referring, is inspired Word of God, unchanged, unsullied by a human mistake, in some minor part of the verse. Now, if I was relying on a body Thou hast prepared for me, and mine ears Thou hast opened is, in fact, the part that needs, then we would have to straighten that out, wouldn't we? But you go look at the context in Hebrews and ask yourself, what is the point for which that verse is quoted by the author? And you can see that it doesn't matter which way you take those consonants that are in between.

The point is, sacrifice and offering aren't what you were looking for. You were looking for obedience. You were looking for someone who would come to do your will.

It is faith and obedience that secured our salvation on the cross. It is faith and obedience that appropriates salvation to us now. And ears and bodies don't affect that Word of God truth one iota, one yod or one tittle.

So that's the short answer to that. Back to Jeremiah. Dr. Archer tells us, here are the differences, that he spent three years compiling and analyzing.

And I have studied through his summary here, and it comports, I will tell you right now, he knows more about it than I do, than I would or could. But I know enough to fact check and to decide if I think somebody is on the right track or not. And everything I can see tells me that Dr. Archer is exactly right about this.

So let me share with you what he says. Again, this is Trinity Journal, 1991, talking about the differences between the Masoretic Text portions that are omitted in the Septuagint. I told you last time, Septuagint is one-eighth shorter, 12-something percent.

I just did it. The Greek is shorter by about 2700 words. And you would think, well, there's great swaths, there must be whole chapters missing, entire paragraphs missing.

Not so. What happens is, and this is a tendency, by the way, throughout the Septuagint, the Greeks were kind of like us in the sense that they were more technically minded and somewhat less poetically minded. Hebrew is a very poetic language.

So in books other than Jeremiah, and particularly in Jeremiah, as they were going through and translating, if they found sort of poetic repetitions or what they thought was sort of an excess

number of words, they would just shorten it. What Dr. Archer says is, a typical Hebrew word cluster might require several Greek or English words in translation, hence a considerable difference in the total would result in the word count when the Septuagint would abridge or shorten these word groups. For example, the Hebrew title series, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel.

How many times have you seen that in your Old Testament? The Masoretes faithfully copied each word every time it occurred. Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel. In the Greek, thus said Kurios.

Now, how many words did we lose there? And how many times does that phrase typically occur? You begin to account for a lot of your 2700 words in these shortenings. Similarly, when father's names are added to the names of actors on the stage of history, you have so-and-so, the son of so-and-so. The Greek will generally drop the patronymic out.

So, that is going to shorten it. Nebuchadnezzar often loses his title King of Babylon, as an example. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon is in the Masoretic text, just says Nebuchadnezzar in the Greek.

So, you lose several words there. The same is not infrequently the case with other important public figures, whether potentates or high priests. This same policy is found in the Septuagint translation of Isaiah and other Old Testament books dealing with historical events.

The Alexandrian translators, and you will remember perhaps, I haven't covered this yet, but Jeremiah, when the kingdom falls and they leave, you know that they go to Egypt. We've alluded to that a few times. Alexandria is in Egypt.

There is an Alexandrian text type that we recover from papyri and other things down in Egypt. And there is some thought that this shorter Septuagint version may have been based on a version of Jeremiah that is from Egypt. And that some of the Septuagint translators followed this Alexandrian ethos or philosophy of translation.

The Alexandrian translators tended to prune the impressive but somewhat ponderous style of the Hebrew document in order to make it flow more easily and smoothly in the ears of Greek-speaking audiences. This must be carefully observed when we try to draw conclusions about the Hebrew that might lie behind. What they like to say is, well, there was the Greek, so there must have been a Hebrew original that reflects this shorter, more pristine text, kind of like they do in Greek.

Well, it's really not the same. The Greek tended to do that regardless of what Hebrew was in front of them. That's just the way they translated into Greek in the same way that the New American Standard takes a very literalistic approach to translating into English, where the NIV is much more interested in dynamic equivalence.

I will use completely different words if I think it gets the idea of the Word of God across. See

what I mean? This accounts for a great deal of the difference. Many times in the Hebrew there is a parallel or a repetition.

There will be lines that say essentially the same thing. Remember the Proverbs and other synonymous disticts, as they like to say in Hebrew, like the running of water and like the falling of leaves is thus and so. Well, the Greeks would say, I only need one of those, and they would just drop the other one out.

They would say, look, I don't need all of this repetitive. It's the same thing. And so they would just slip it out.

So the Septuagint version, one of the main reasons it's so much shorter is it's just been Swiss cheesed. It's had a bunch of holes drilled in it and smashed. But not with any dire effect to the content.

Is Nebuchadnezzar the same as Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon? Yes. Thus says the Lord God, Lord of hosts. Thus says the Lord.

Is there a great deal of difference? Not to say that I don't think every word is important in the text, but the words are important as they convey the concepts. And sometimes the concepts are heavily dependent on the words. Other times the concepts are floating along and the words are not as critical.

So, the size and nature of Septuagint omissions. There are surprisingly few extended passages that fail to appear in the Septuagint. And they are less conspicuous than the ones in Daniel.

Daniel is the other greatly different book in the Septuagint than the Masoretic text. And there are big chunks of stuff in Daniel that aren't in our copy. And if you go to some of the other apocryphal books, you've got another section of Daniel and so on.

That's incorporated into the book in the Septuagint. Here are some bigger chunks that are missing. Chapter 10, verses 6 through 8 in the Masoretic text.

Jeremiah 10, 6 through 8. This is three verses that are in your Bible that are not in the Septuagint. What does it say? Inasmuch as there is none like you, O Lord, you are great, and your name is great in might. Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your rightful due.

For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like you. They are altogether dull-hearted and foolish. A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.

That got missed, skipped, left out in the Septuagint. Now, what do you think? Is it Scripture or is it not? There is none like you, O Lord. You are great, and your name is great in might.

Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? This is your rightful due. Because it's not in the Septuagint, do we think this doesn't belong in our Bible? I would say hardly. It's a central theme

of Scripture.

There is none like the Lord. He is worthy of praise. Respect and honor are His due.

In all the kingdoms, there is none like Him. They are dull-hearted and foolish. A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.

These things that people put in the place of God. Is this a doctrine taught elsewhere in Scripture? Yes, it is. Is it stated in Jeremiah? Yes, it is.

So, chapter 17, verses 1 through 4. This omits a section which is a severe rebuke to the southern kingdom of Judah. Remember the division now, chapter 2 through 24. Jeremiah prophesying to Judah.

Woe to you, sinful people, right? And in that section, 17, verses 1 through 4. He says, the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron. With the point of a diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart. On the horns of your altars, while their children remember their altars and their wooden images.

By the green trees on the high hills. O my mountain in the field, I will give as plunder your wealth, all your treasures. This is God's mountain, God's holy mountain in Jerusalem, Mount Zion.

I will give you as plunder, give away your wealth, all your treasures, your high places of sin within all your borders. An idolatrous and materialistic nation, Dr. Archer says, will have to face the prospect of a total loss of all its local shrines and cherished homes and landed possessions as the people are driven off to exile in a foreign land. It might be possible to see this omission as a matter of editorial choice with a view to avoiding any unnecessary worsening of the desperation that these exiles down in Egypt already feel.

They're feeling bad enough and somebody might have said, I'm going to make a version of the prophecies of Jeremiah that's just a little less harsh. You could see perhaps somebody saying, let me just slip that part out. There's a special case in chapter 23 where the Septuagint takes verses 7 and 8 This is Jeremiah 23, 7 and 8 Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord.

They shall no longer say, as the Lord lives, who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. But what they're going to say is, as the Lord lives, who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I have driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land. God's new reputation, God's long name is not going to be the Lord that brought you out of the land of Egypt.

It's going to be, this is the Lord that brought us back from captivity. That's the gist of these verses. Well, in the Septuagint, the text skips from verse 6 to verse 9 and leaves out those two verses and then sticks them on at the end.

Well, they're out of place and they don't flow at the end. It's almost as though somebody was copying along and realized they'd missed them and just jammed them on to the end. They fit better in context the way they are in the Masoretic text.

So it isn't lost, it's displaced, but that's a difference. And you say, well, there's two verses here that aren't in the Masoretic. Yeah, they are, but they're there in a different place.

Chapter 26 in the Septuagint lacks the 26th verse. 26 in the Septuagint is 46 in your Masoretic text. I told you there's a section that's been moved.

This is prophecies to the nations and it belongs in the second half. Remember 25-51 is prophecies to the nations. That's where all the prophecies to the nations kind of fit and belong and flow.

Well, the Septuagint takes some of those from the end and jams them up in chapter 26, makes them chapter 26. But even the version that is in chapter 46 of our Bible, verse 26, is missing. I shall give them into the hand of those who seek their life, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, into the hand of his servants, and afterward they shall live as in the days of old, declares the Lord.

There doesn't seem to be any editorial reason why this happened. It's just missing. What you begin to see, I'm just giving you these as a few examples, and I'm not going to belabor this point.

If you're interested, I can print this article out for you, and you can go through it all in gory detail. Here's the thing. They're all very similar.

There's no content of the Word of God that is missing in our copy. There is content of the Word of God, as I have defined it and explained it and elaborated on it earlier in this hour, missing in the Septuagint. There are chunks that are missing, and there are things that have been shortened and have been compressed.

The easiest way to describe it is the Septuagint version of Jeremiah is kind of like the Reader's Digest version of a book. You can follow the plot. You can get the essentials.

You're not missing an awful lot, but it is condensed. It is compressed. Don't know why.

Don't know how. There's been all kinds of speculation on there was the short one, and it got added to be expanded. My particular persuasion is based on, and if you read Archer's article, he goes on to talk about weird missing verses and weird missing ends of things and skipping from one place to another, and it isn't found anywhere else.

It almost sounds to me like somebody found a damaged copy of M.T. Jeremiah and said, well, what's left might be valuable. Let me copy down as much of this as I can read, and that was laying around. And when the Septuagint translator came along, and believe me, there is

abundant evidence that the Septuagint translator of, it seems clear that two guys translated Septuagint Jeremiah.

It changes radically in the two halves of the book. There are just signature things that a translator will do. In the same way, there are signature things that you do when you write or the people you know.

If you get letters from people that you know well, there's just certain things that they do. There's certain little turns of phrase, certain little equivalences, certain little habits. Well, it is clear to virtually everybody that there were two hands at work, two translators did Septuagint Jeremiah.

Neither one of them knew ancient Hebrew very well. It would be like me with my high school Spanish, taking a Spanish work and doing my best with the help of a Spanish dictionary and, you know, Babelfish or Google Translate or something, and making the best sense of it that I can. And I might do a reasonable job, but there would be places where I just absolutely missed the sense.

And the examples of this are so abundant, I can't even begin to tell you, where it's simple Hebrew mistakes. There's abundant cases where the pronoun has been misread, where in your Bible it says, I will deliver them, I will carry them, I will do this and that to them. And in the Septuagint, it says you or him.

They just misread the pronouns all the way through. And in a similar fashion, like one whole chapter, all of the thems seem to be changed to yous or he's or whatever. And it's just, I've done this.

You know, you get a test and they give you a chunk of Hebrew and say, okay, translate this and turn it in by the end of the hour. This is your midterm. Well, if I forget that a wow with a dot on the end means one thing, and I translate, I'm going to do that all the way through.

And that's what these people did. I say all of that to say this. The Septuagint appears to have been done by guys who weren't super fluent in Old Hebrew.

And so when they were rattling around in the available manuscripts, they picked the one that was based on the manuscript that was damaged. There was another better copy. The Masoretic text of the Hebrew of Jeremiah was available.

These guys couldn't really tell the difference. And apparently they picked and they picked wrong. Because there has been this other text all along.

And here's this somewhat damaged and lacuna-filled text, Swiss cheese text. That's the one they decided to use. So we can put to rest any concern about how different or whether we're missing anything in the Septuagint version.

In every case where you compare the two, the Masoretic text appears to be superior. There's no gold treasures hidden in the Septuagint. You say, oh, if I'd only had this verse, Jeremiah would have made so much more sense.

Or here's a wonderful new truth from the Old Testament buried in this. It is mostly stuff that's gone and missing and mistranslated and misunderstood. There are no doctrines.

There are no truths. There are no promises. There are no statements of any import in the Septuagint that aren't already in the Masoretic text that you have.

In most cases, better stated in a better context in a more fulsome expression, more poetic because it's from the Hebrew, not from the Greek. So this, by the way, is the pattern and is the case when you get to your Septuagint quotations in the New Testament. The New Testament authors used it because that was the Bible of the day.

And if you're talking to people, trying to persuade them from the Word of God that Jesus is the Christ, that God is in His heaven, that there's a way of salvation, there's forgiveness, there's eternal life on the line, you are smart not to diverge on a rabbit trail talking about textual differences. You take the Bible that they've got. When we have the privilege of sharing Christ with someone, will we say the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life? Of course.

Do you and I know that in the context of Romans, that is actually talking about a different set of people in a different circumstance? The principle is true. And countless people have been saved by the Roman road because the Roman road, Romans 3.23, 6.23, 5.12 and 10.21, all the rest of it, it's wonderful. But when you study the book of Romans and get those in context, it's such a deeper, more fulsome truth.

But I don't let that stop me if I'm going to make a point from the Word of God. Let me ask you something. Is the wages of sin death? Yes.

Is the gift of God eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord? Yes. Can that statement function in more than one context and apply to more than one group? Yes. It can still apply to believers.

If you persist in sin, if you willfully sin after you've received a knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins but a certain fearful expectation of judgment. John says there is a sin unto death. Don't pray for it.

Remember last time when I pointed out in chapter 7 of Jeremiah where God says, Don't pray for these people. You're wasting your time. The judgment is already certain.

The door of the ark has slammed shut. You are just waiting on the rain. There is a sin that represents having passed the point of no return and you're wasting your time praying for that.

The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ and eternal life can be fumbled away by believers, not in the sense of losing your salvation but in the sense of losing that life, what that

life is, relationship and communion with God. So just remember the word of God is not the words on these pages. The word of God is the truth of God.

It is specific. It is definite. It is inspired.

It is inerrant. It is infallible. But it does not depend on words that are put to paper by fallible human beings, translated by fallible human beings, interpreted and even applied by fallible human beings.

The word of God transcends the container in the way that your voice transcends your phone. It's what God is saying that counts, not the mechanism that transmits what He is saying. And the words are merely idea buckets.

And as long as the idea gets from God's lips to our ears, the shape and size of the bucket is not critical. What's critical is that the idea makes the trip. See what I'm saying? Don't die for the inspiration of the King James Bible.

Don't die for the inspiration of the Masoretic text or the Koine Greek text in all of its 6,000 representative witnesses, no two of which exactly match. Is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God? If you believe in Him, do you have life through His name? Has He given to those who receive Him the right to be called the sons of God? Can I change the order of the words in those verses and still say the same thing as I have just done? Absolutely, because those are the truths. When I tell you, when I represent these ideas, these facts from the Word of God, that is the Word of God, in whatever words, in whatever language it comes across.

That's the case. That's why the apostles didn't sweat quoting the Septuagint, because the parts they were quoting were buckets carrying the truth that they needed to convey under the ministry of God's Holy Spirit to those people and to everybody since. So, the great thing is, God has figured out this system.

It's kind of like DNA that sort of self-repairs when it gets an error in it. By the way God did the mixing and reproduction, errors get eliminated and repaired in substantial ways. And God has done the same thing with His Word.

He has made it possible for us to copy, print, quote, even misquote the Word of God, and yet the truth survives. God's Word is like Himself. It's eternal, it is transcendent, and God ensures that the person that is asking and seeking and knocking is going to get the ideas conveyed to them by whatever means.

And God doesn't have to stoop to the level we would think, well, He's got to make sure that every copy is exactly correct. God is going to stop anybody from making an error if they're copying a biblical manuscript. How impractical.

How much better to ensure that the content survives intact. The Word of God is alive and powerful, and that life and that power aren't limited by mere vocabulary, mere sentence

structure, mere language and translation. You get anywhere near it and God the Holy Spirit is going to take hold of that idea and implant it in the heart.

So that's an important thing to keep in mind. There are implications of that that we'll talk about in our Bible difficulty study in the not too distant future, but we'll close. That's all I'm going to say about the Septuagint of Jeremiah.

By the way, I think I said something last time about there's like a hundred verses in the Septuagint that aren't in the original. Well, someone had said that and I started chasing that down trying to find it. Gleason Archer lists every single difference between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text and he said nothing about a hundred verses in there that aren't in the other.

He listed every addition that the Septuagint has that the Masoretic Text lacks and there's like twelve. So I don't know where that came from. I apologize for quoting it.

There aren't a hundred verses in the Septuagint that aren't in ours. The Septuagint is, as I say, almost entirely. There may be twelve or thirteen additions and they are inconsequential.

They're not even ideas. They're more like words. So having said that, we're going to get back to surveying the content.

Now that we know that Jeremiah is reliable in what he says in our Bible, what is he saying? How is it going to be helpful to us? And we'll proceed with that next time. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the ministry of Your Holy Spirit, the transcendent nature of Your truth that survives and prevails.

There is nothing that we as human beings can do to suppress it, to destroy it, to distort or corrupt it for those who are truly seeking. You have promised that if we seek You, we will find You. When we search for You with all our hearts, we come before You as people who are seeking and searching with all of our hearts and we ask Your blessing on us as we seek Your truth so that we can live in its light, so that we can be empowered and enabled by its inspiration, that we can, through the ministry of Your Holy Spirit, produce that fruit that vindicates our lives, that pleases You and that glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.