

Tested Through Fire: Paul, Jeremiah, and 1Th 2:4

+ Handout

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Introduction

Paul describes himself as an *apostle* of Christ;¹ but did he see or present himself as a *prophet*?² The question has been around since patristic commentators³ and has gained favor during the last half-century.⁴ Today I will look at the wording of 1Th 2:4—specifically θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, “to God who tests/approves our hearts,” and I will ask whether this indicates a “prophet-consciousness” on the part of Paul.

View 1: The “Many OT Texts”

Since the beginning of the 20th century, commentaries⁵ have often been inclined to see the phrase “God testing our hearts” as a reference to a widespread concept found in many OT texts. **NOTE 1** in the handout shows that quite a range of interpreters take this approach, including: **Frame, Holtz, Bruce, Wanamaker, Richard, Green, Beale, and Weima**. It is interesting to note that the texts listed usually vary among commentators, as well as the order in which they are given. Notice, for example, Richard (1995), who says the phrase “God who tests our hearts,” is “a stereotyped

¹ The term “apostle” occurs 34x in Pauline texts. For scholarship on the term, see Agnew 1976 and 1986; Mitchell 1992.

² The term “prophet” occurs 14x in Pauline texts, but he never calls himself a prophet in his writings.

³ See Malherbe 2002, 269, for a representative list of commentators since patristic times.

⁴ Holtz 1966; Myers 1966; Stendahl 1976; Gillespie 1978; Dinter 1984 and 1986; Sanders 1987.

⁵ Although I consulted a wide variety of commentaries, the following were not available to me: Moore 1969; Whitely 1969; Juel 1985; Krentz 1992 and 1993; Menken 1994; Martin 1995; Thurston 1995; Cousar 2001; Bridges 2008; Ascough 2014; Holtz 2014.

phrase which derives from OT usage"; or Green (2002) who universalizes it by saying "biblical literature is replete with the same thought."⁶

NOTE: 2 in the handout shows that Kelcy, Hendriksen and Kistemaker, Witherington, and Marshall merely list one or more texts without comment, also varying in which texts they list as examples, and in what order. And **NOTE: 3** shows that still others make no mention of OT texts at all, nor do they address the question of origins of this concept.⁷ The point of this fast and furious review is that a large number of commentators consider Paul's phrase "the God who tests our hearts" in 1Th 2:4 either as growing out of a concept found in many OT texts, or they simply don't address a question about origin or influence.

View 2: The "Allusion to Jer 11:20"

There is another important view, however, despite the apparent popularity of the "many OT texts" approach—namely, that Paul is drawing directly and intentionally from Jer 11:20. This view has been quietly thriving among some notable interpreters. **NOTE 4** in the handout offers some comments on these, including Rigaux, Koester, Sandnes, Evans, Haufe, Malherbe, Donfried, Furnish, Fee, Johnson, and Boring. It is quite interesting that the two views cannot be called a debate, because the two approaches simply ignore each other, stating their own positions as a matter of fact.

Two Observations

Now, having given the parameters and a few details of these two views, there are two points that stand out as noteworthy:

1. Relation of 1Th 2:4 to OT texts

First: if we bring together all the texts cited by the "many OT texts" view, at first glance it *does* appear that there's just a glob of texts. (See **NOTE 5**)

⁶ And Weima who calls it "common," then he later writes about 1Th 5:3 that Paul could not be "echoing" an OT text; in fact, this would be "an anomaly," since "nowhere else" in 1-2Thessalonians "does Paul explicitly cite the Sacred Scriptures."⁶ This at least *flirts* with begging the question: viz., deciding it can't happen, and then denying that it's possible when it appears.

⁷ On this group, I hasten to add that some of these are not critical commentaries and are necessarily selective in what they discuss, so I'm not faulting them. Instead,

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1Sam 16:7; 1Chr 28:9; 29:17; Ps 7:10; 16:3 (17:3); 25:2 (26:2); 138:23 (139:23); Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; Wis 1:6; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Rom 8:27; Rev 2:23⁸

Such bald lists are concise and useful, of course. However, (1) they don’t explain how they were arrived at; (2) they don’t help one evaluate relationships among them; and (3) it is not at all clear that all interpreters would agree with including each and every text. So it is helpful to make a fresh evaluation based on relevant verbal and contextual comparisons with 1Th 2:4. Doing so, we get a better picture and are able to see some patterns. The table in **NOTE 6** represents a thorough study of the key words in the phrase “testing the hearts and minds” throughout the LXX/NT.

BibleWorks search codes	.καρδια@* νεφρος@*	.δοκιμαζω@* καρδια@*	.δοκιμαζω@* νεφρος@*	.εταζω@* καρδια@*	.εταζω@* νεφρος@*	.נבח@* נל@*	.נבח@* נלי@*
Relevant MT/LXX Texts for God’s Testing	Ps 7:10 25:2 Wis 1:6	Ps 16:3 25:2 138:23 Prov 17:3	Ps 25:2	1Chr 28:9 29:17 Ps 7:10 138:23	Ps 7:10	Ps 7:10** 17:3 26:2 139:23 Prov 17:3	Ps 7:10** 26:2
	Jer 11:20 17:10 20:12	Jer 11:20 12:3 17:10 20:12	Jer 11:20 17:10 20:12	Jer 17:10	Jer 17:10	Jer 11:20 12:3 17:10 20:12	Jer 11:20 17:10 20:12
NT	Rev 2:23	1Th 2:4					
**The Hebrew נבח was translated by both δοκιμαζω and εταζω							

To summarize, we find that while it is obvious that the general concept of “the Lord testing the heart” appears in a variety of texts with various wording, it’s an overstatement to say that the OT is “replete with the same thought.” There is not an indiscriminate blob of texts that are equally comparable to 1Th 2:4; there are actually only two main groups, as Frame noted in 1912: (1) Psalm and/or wisdom texts, and (2) Jeremiah texts. And within those two groups, partly because of Hebrew parallelism, there is some variation in both Hebrew and Greek terminology that does not match Paul’s text.

Hence, we are able to find a “sweet spot” for the most relevant texts, regardless whether Paul is reading Hebrew or Greek, and they are narrowed down to these: (1) Psalm 7:10

⁸ It’s hard to know if some commentators would not accept some of these texts as relevant, since they merely list texts.

(only if Hebrew), Ps 16:3; 25:2; 138:23; Prov 17:3; and (2) all of the Jeremiah texts. Of the first group, Psalm 7:10 in Hebrew is the most specific and relevant of that group for both Jeremiah’s and Paul’s situation, while the other texts in that group are more general. In Greek, the most directly relevant (both in terminology and context) are the Jeremiah texts. This is not to say that other texts are irrelevant to the general concept; but it does narrow the field in terms of Paul’s specific terminology.

Certainly, this by itself does not establish that Paul is making an allusion to Jeremiah; but it very well does call into question an “amorphous blob” approach to the various texts. An important question now arises: Can either of these more refined groups be demonstrated as certainly or even likely related to what Paul is doing in 1Th 2:4?

2. The Forgotten/Ignored Text

This, now, brings me to the **second point**: namely, it is striking that of all of the studies named above in both groups, **only two commentators even mention Jer 20:12 as a related text—but even then, nobody discusses it.**⁹ Not one. Why is this striking? Because 20:12 is nearly identical to 11:20.

(See **NOTE 7.**)

Jer 11:20	Jer 20:12
<p>κύριε κρίνων δίκαια δοκιμάζων νεφρούς καὶ καρδίας ἴδοιμι τὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐκδίκησιν ἐξ αὐτῶν ὅτι πρὸς σὲ ἀπεκάλυψα τὸ δικαίωμά μου</p>	<p>κύριε δοκιμάζων δίκαια συνίων νεφρούς καὶ καρδίας ἴδοιμι τὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐκδίκησιν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὅτι πρὸς σὲ ἀπεκάλυψα τὰ ἀπολογήματά μου</p>
<p>O Lord, when you judge righteously, when you test kidneys and heart, may I see your avenging on them, because to you I have revealed my plea of right. (NETS)</p>	<p>O Lord, one who tests what is right, one who understands kidneys and hearts, may I see your avenging among them, because to you I have revealed my defensive pleas. (NETS)</p>

⁹ Fee 2009 and Johnson 2016 list it, but do not discuss it.

This dual presence in Jeremiah is like a trumpet signaling emphasis on the notion of God's testing. But that's not all. For even though there are 8 separate Psalms with δοκιμάζω / *test* in it, Jeremiah is the only source that has it 7x in a running context. It starts at 6:27 and runs through 20:12: these are a kind of inclusio—or bookends—for a running theme. (See **NOTE 8** in the handout.)

6:27; 9:6; 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; 20:12

No other prophet even *uses* the term δοκιμάζω / *test*, except Zechariah (3x), and those are irrelevant for this topic.

My proposal

So, now—and I will try to state this clearly—I am *suggesting (or at least exploring the possibility)* that **1Th 2:4 gives us a glimpse of Paul in a long-standing, deep-level conversation with Jeremiah in general, and with the complex of texts in chapters 6-20 in particular.**¹⁰

1. Vocabulary

It is, in general, noteworthy that all of the key Greek words in Jer 11:20 (and 20:12) occur in Paul's writings. (See **NOTE 9**).

2. Contexts

More importantly, the *contexts* of Jeremiah 11 and 20 reveal even more. Chapter 11 begins with the "word from the LORD" coming to Jeremiah: "You shall speak to the men of Judah" (v. 2). They are so disobedient, he is told not even to pray for them. He is told this three times: 7:16; 11:14; and 14:11. It is the second of these, 11:14, that leads directly to 11:20 "The Lord **tests** the innermost being and **heart**," because they were plotting to kill Jeremiah and were telling him, "Don't ever prophesy in the name of the Lord" (v. 21).

Chapter 20 is similar but even more specific. Jeremiah is now beaten for **speaking** the word of the Lord, and he is put in the stocks (v. 2). God will give Judah into the hand of Babylon (vv. 4ff). "I'm a laughingstock!" says the prophet (vv. 7ff); and he proclaims

¹⁰ This speaks to the question that even though Paul may be speaking the language of a Hellenistic philosopher-preacher in 1Th 2:4 (as pointed out by Koester), Paul, in his own spirit, has redefined that role: he is not a Greek philosopher or Cynic preacher, but a prophet of the Lord—in the same terms as Jeremiah.

that he is simply unable *not* to **speak** any more in his name because of the fire in his bones (v. 9). (I'll come back to this.) This leads directly to 20:12 "The Lord of hosts who **tests and proves** the righteous, who sees the **heart** and mind."

3. *Jeremiah 1-20*

Now, it would be profitable to walk through Jeremiah 1-20 in detail, from the prophetic call in 1:4, "before I formed you *in* the womb," to Jeremiah's lament in 20:18, "Why did I come forth *from* the womb!"; to wade neck-deep through concepts like "the word of God," "affliction/distress," and "the wrath of God"; to see the outrage, over and over again, against the "men of Judah," as Paul is outraged in our very text 1Th 2:4-16 against "the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus *and the prophets, and drove us out*, and displease God and oppose all men." And in the middle of it all, both Jeremiah and Paul proclaim the God who tests our hearts.

4. *Speaking*

But there is one more thing worth looking at: this idea of **speaking**. The word *speaking* (λαλέω) is a common word. However, not in Jeremiah. As **NOTE 10** in the handout shows, it occurs more in Jeremiah (84x) than in Psalms or in any other prophet¹¹. Even so, the real issue is not the number of times this word occurs, but the way it *functions*. In Jeremiah, **God speaks**, and he sends Jeremiah **to speak for him**.

"You shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall **speak** according to all I command you." (Jer. 1:7)

"You shall **speak** to the men of Iouda and to the inhabitants of Ierousalem."
(Jer. 11:2 NETS)

But none is more fitting than Jer 20:9, after the prophet was beaten for prophesying. The LXX reads:

"And I said, 'I will not name the name of the Lord
and will no longer **speak** in his name.'
And it became like a burning fire flaming in my bones,
and I became limp everywhere, and I cannot bear up."

¹¹ Only the book of Numbers surpasses it at 111x, and it is used very differently than in Jeremiah.

To *speak* in Jeremiah is to prophesy; to voice the word of the Lord in the face of certain opposition or persecution. It is not to say what everyone wants to hear or to please the local authorities.

Paul knows this. And in 1Th 2:4, he reveals it. For as **NOTE 11** in the handout shows, Paul unveils to us that the central issue for being tested/approved is *speaking* the word of the Lord (just like Jeremiah). Here, in a simple, beautiful, little chiasm, Paul gives us a hint that he sees himself as prophet—like Jeremiah.

Conclusion

There's no denying that Paul is likely quite familiar with the numerous texts about God's testing the heart, and he can certainly be interacting with other prophets as well. But isn't it an entirely credible suggestion that in 1Th 2:4 we get a glimpse

of Paul—who lives and breathes the air of a deep-level, ongoing conversation with¹² a complex of Jeremiah texts?

of Paul—who sees himself as speaking the word of the Lord in a similar hostile situation—as a prophet of God in the same sense as Jeremiah?

The vocabulary in 1Th 2:4 and Jeremiah texts makes it a good possibility; the contextual similarities make it, in my opinion, a fair conclusion.

The point here is not that Paul was trying to get his readers to figure this out or to go look up Jeremiah texts; the point is, rather, that this gives us, now, today, insight into where Paul is coming from. He saw himself as a prophet of God—in this case, like Jeremiah who just happened to have written this:

For the word of the LORD has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.⁹
If I say, "I will not mention him,
or **speak** any more in his name,"
there is in **my heart** as it were
a burning fire shut up in my bones,
and I am weary with holding it in,

¹² Although technically called "allusion" I agree with Porter 2008 that an allusion "invokes a specific person, place, or literary work" and is specifically intentional by the author. On the one hand, an allusion draws upon a common pool of shared texts or knowledge, and that the purpose of the allusion is to draw the earlier text into the current discussion as a means of addressing a current concern. On the other hand, an echo "does not have the specificity of an allusion," but is more thematic in nature. See also Allen/Smith 2020, 129-41.

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and I cannot. ^{10...11}

My persecutors will stumble,

they will not overcome me.

They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed.

Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. ¹²

O LORD of hosts, who **tests and approves** the righteous,

who searches the **heart and the mind**,

let me see your vengeance upon them,

for to you I have committed my cause. (RSV)

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NOTE 1: Many OT Texts (Chronological Order)

Frame 1912	"In Psalms and Jeremiah, . . . God's testing is frequent," (p.97)	5 texts "(cf. also Sap. 3:6), e.g., Jer 12:3; cf. also Ps. 16:3, and with the possessive omitted, Jer. 11:20 17:10."
Holtz 1966	"[the matter] can hardly be decided"; "belonged to the religious language of the time" ¹³	3 texts "Jer 11:20; 12:3; Ps 16 (17):3"
Bruce 1982	"is common in the OT" (p. 28)	8 texts "Pss 7:9; LXX138:23; Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; 1Chr 28:9; 29:7"
Wanamaker 1990	"well-known theme from the OT" (p. 95)	4 texts: "Pss 7:9; Jer 20:11; 12:3; 17:9"
Richard 1995	"a stereotyped phrase which derives from OT usage" (p. 80)	4 texts: "Jer 11:20; 12:3; Pss 16:3; 25:2"
Green 2002	"biblical literature is replete with the same thought" (p. 121)	12 OT/NT texts: "1Sam 16:7; 1Chr 28:9; Pss 7:9; Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Rom 8:27; Rev 2:23."
Beale 2003	"parallels in the OT" (p. 67)	6 texts: "Ps 17:3; 26:2; Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:10."
Weima 2014	"Paul uses this common OT concept" (p. 138)	9 OT texts: "1Chr 28:9; 29:17; Pss 7:9; 17:3; 139:23; Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:10."

NOTE 2: Many OT Texts: No Comments + OT Texts (Chronological Order)

Kelcy 1988, 42.	Jer 11:20; 17:10.
Hendriksen and Kistemaker 1996, 63.	Jer 17:10; 11:20; Pss 7:9; 139.
Witherington 2006, 79.	Pss 7:9; Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:10.
Marshall 1983	"(For the phraseology, see Jer 11:20; 12:3)"

NOTE 3: Many OT Texts: No Comments or OT Texts (Chronological Order)

Olshausen 1851	Lipscomb 1942, 26	Morris 1959/2009, 71, 73; 1984, 54	Gaventa 1998	Osborne 2018, 62
Alford 1871, 255	Neil 1950, 38	Weatherly 1996, 63	Boring 2015, 82	Farrow 2020

¹³ Holtz 1966, 327 "Ob auf I. Thess 2,4 . . . u. ö., wird sich kaum entscheiden lassen. Der Ausdruck wird der religiösen Sprache der Zeit angehört haben." Holtz 2014 was unavailable to me.

NOTE 4: Jeremiah and Paul as Prophet

Rigaux 1956	directly ties 1Th 2:4 to Jer 11:20 when he says, “the biblical reminiscence is clearly seen.” ¹⁴
Koester 1979	in a side-comment, concedes what he calls: “the <i>quotation</i> of Jer 11:20” in 1Th 2:4. ¹⁵
Sandnes 1991	monograph, <i>Paul—One of the Prophets? A Contribution to the Apostle’s Self Understanding</i> , suggests that Jer 11:20 is “quite possibly an allusion” and is one more indication that Paul sees himself as a prophet. ¹⁶
Evans 1993	declares matter-of-factly that Paul “echoes the words of Jeremiah (LXX Jer 11:20).” ¹⁷
Haufe 1999	holds that this is “perhaps a phrase already coined, based on Jer 11:20, with which Paul very consciously repeats the verb δοκιμάζειν from v. 4a.” ¹⁸
Malherbe 2000	asserts that 1Th 2:4 makes “an allusion to Jer 11:20 (cf., 12:3).” ¹⁹ Like others, Malherbe does not take the time to specifically support or defend his assertion; however, more than others, he grounds this in his oft-stated ²⁰ argument that Paul views himself as a prophet and identifies with the fate of a prophet. ²¹
Donfried 2000	calls 1Th 2:4 “a possible echo of Jeremiah 11:20”
Furnish 2004	although non-committal and sounding a bit like Rigaux, calls it “a biblical idiom” while citing only the Jeremiah texts: “11:20; 12:3; and 17:10.”
Fee (2009)	says Paul is “now using language from Jeremiah 11:20”; ²²
Johnson 2016	clearly associates 1Th 2:4 with Jeremiah. ²³
Boring, 2015	in the New Testament Library. By far the best treatment of “Paul as a prophet” in a commentary. However—and this is quite interesting—in his section on 1Th 2:4, <i>Boring never mentions Jeremiah at all, or any other OT text</i> . His only mention of Jeremiah at this place is in 2:3 when he brings up the following comment: “In the framework of Paul’s own symbolic universe, he is not representing himself as a legitimate philosopher-teacher over against frauds, but as standing in the line of the biblical prophets, especially Jeremiah.” His primary comment on “Paul as prophet” occurs later at 5:27 and is well worth reading. But here I note only that he does not mention 1Th 2:4 in that regard. ²⁴

¹⁴ Rigaux 1956, 411. “La réminiscence biblique est clairement perçue: Jer., xi, 20 . . . cf. Jer., xii, 3 . . . cf. aussi xvii, 10.”

¹⁵ Koester 1979, 41 (my emphasis, gdc). He is not arguing for a technical “quotation,” he was merely acknowledging Jeremiah’s importance for Paul in addition to numerous similarities with the Cynic preacher. Koester actually misnumbers as 11:12, while Malherbe 2000, 141, misnumbers as 11:30, which does not exist, and which is also what Rigaux (1956), 411, has.

¹⁶ Sandnes 1991, 223. This is an important study, and it makes sense that most everyone after Sandnes who takes this position at least refers to him. He considers whether Paul actually presented himself as a prophet in various locations, including Thessalonica. He considers charges of false prophesy as a possible implication of his self-presentation. Looking at 1Th 2:3-8 he considers that three things point in this direction: **First**, the combination of *paraklēsīs* and *euangelion* at 2:3, 4, and 8 derived from the comfort message of Deutero-Isaiah. **Second**, the possible allusion at 2:4 to Jer 11:20 LXX, in which Jeremiah is accused of being a false prophet. And finally, the way the gospel is described by the antithesis “human/divine” seems to involve this message being presented as based on revelation. See also Sandnes 2015 as an article update which aims specifically against the “radical new perspective on Paul,” especially as seen in Eisenbaum 2009 who develops Stendahl’s focus on Paul as a prophet like Jeremiah into a view that Paul was never converted and so not a Christian. (I.e., Stendahl 1976, but based on lectures given at two seminaries in 1963 and 1964.)

¹⁷ Evans 1993, 763. The full quote is: “Paul’s prophetic self-understanding originated with his apostolic calling. His expression of sincerity (1 Thess 2:4: “even as we have been tested by God . . . to please God who tests our hearts”) echoes the words of Jeremiah (LXX Jer 11:20 . . .). Both Paul and Jeremiah uttered these words in the face of opposition (cf. 1 Thess 2:2 with Jer 11:19).”

¹⁸ Haufe 1999, 36: “. . . is vielleicht eine schon geprägte, in Anlehnung an Jer 11:20 gebildete Wendung, mit der Paulus sehr bewußt das verbum δοκιμάζειν aus V. 4a wiederholt.”

¹⁹ Malherbe 2000, 141.

²⁰ Pages 141, 159, 174, 194, 268-70, 284, 309.

²¹ Especially 174 and 268ff. He notes Sandnes only one time (268), and then only in passing.

²² Fee 2009, ___ [in commentary at 2:4]. In a footnote he adds, “cf. 20:12.”

²³ Johnson 2016, ___ [in commentary at 2:4]. “Only here in the NT does [the verb δοκιμάζω] refer directly to God’s testing/approval of human beings. The theme of God’s testing his people, or the hearts of his people, is prominent in Jeremiah (Jer 9:7; 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; 20:12). . . . Paul . . . understands his vocation as prophetic.” He then adds “cf., Ps 138:23 LXX.”

²⁴ Boring 2015, 82.

NOTE 5: Glob of Texts?

1Sam 16:7; 1Chr 28:9; 29:17; Ps 7:10; 16:3 (17:3); 25:2 (26:2); 138:23 (139:23); Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; Wis 1:6; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Rom 8:27; Rev 2:23²⁵

NOTE 6: Vocabulary in LXX/MT search based on 1Th 2:4

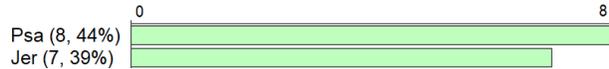
BibleWorks search codes	.καρδια@* νεφρος@*	.δοκιμαζω@* καρδια@*	.δοκιμαζω@* νεφρος@*	.εταζω@* καρδια@*	.εταζω@* νεφρος@*	.נבב@* בל@*	.נבב@* ה'בל@*
Relevant MT/LXX Texts for God's Testing	Ps 7:10 25:2 Wis 1:6	Ps 16:3 25:2 138:23 Prov 17:3	Ps 25:2	1Chr 28:9 29:17 Ps 7:10 138:23	Ps 7:10	Ps 7:10** 17:3 26:2 139:23 Prov 17:3	Ps 7:10** 26:2
	Jer 11:20 17:10 20:12	Jer 11:20 12:3 17:10 20:12	Jer 11:20 17:10 20:12	Jer 17:10	Jer 17:10	Jer 11:20 12:3 17:10 20:12	Jer 11:20 17:10 20:12
NT	Rev 2:23	1Th 2:4					
**The Hebrew נבב was translated by both δοκιμαζω and εταζω							

NOTE 7: Jeremiah 20:12

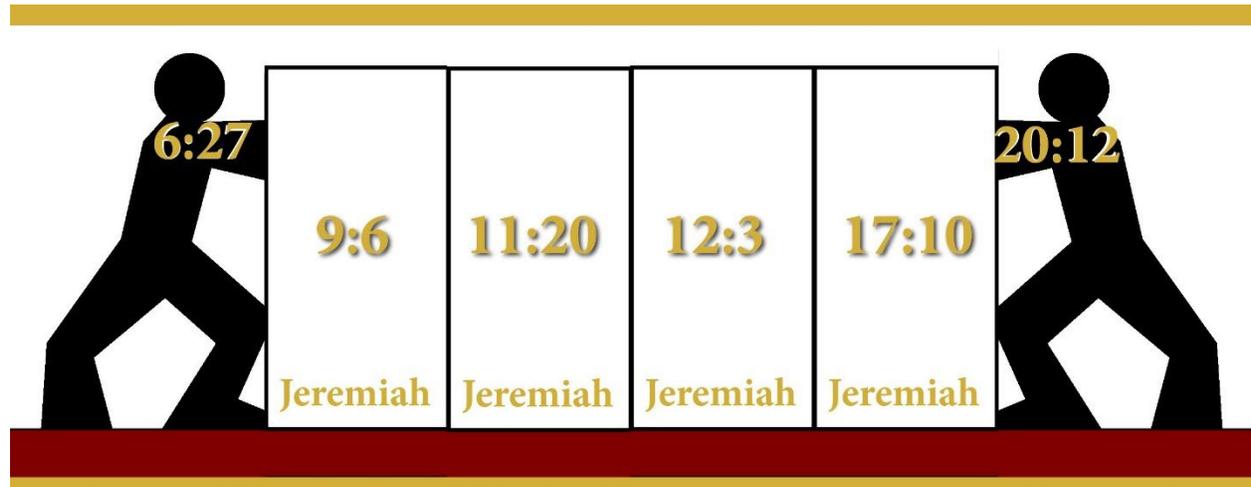
Jer 11:20	Jer 20:12
<p>κύριε κρίνων δίκαια δοκιμάζων νεφρούς και καρδιάς ἴδοιμι τὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐκδίκησιν ἐξ αὐτῶν ὅτι πρὸς σὲ ἀπεκάλυψα τὸ δικαίωμα μου</p>	<p>κύριε δοκιμάζων δίκαια συνίων νεφρούς και καρδιάς ἴδοιμι τὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐκδίκησιν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὅτι πρὸς σὲ ἀπεκάλυψα τὰ ἀπολογήματά μου</p>
<p>O Lord, when you judge righteously, when you test kidneys and heart, may I see your avenging on them, because to you I have revealed my plea of right. (NETS)</p>	<p>O Lord, one who tests what is right, one who understands kidneys and hearts, may I see your avenging among them, because to you I have revealed my defensive pleas. (NETS)</p>

²⁵ It's hard to know if some commentators would not accept some of these texts as relevant, since they merely list texts.

NOTE 8: Bookends: δοκιμάζω in Jeremiah



It’s true that the term occurs in 8 different Psalms; but Jeremiah has it 7x in a running context from 6:27 to 12:20 (like Bookends). No other prophet even uses the term, except Zech (3x), and those are irrelevant for this topic.

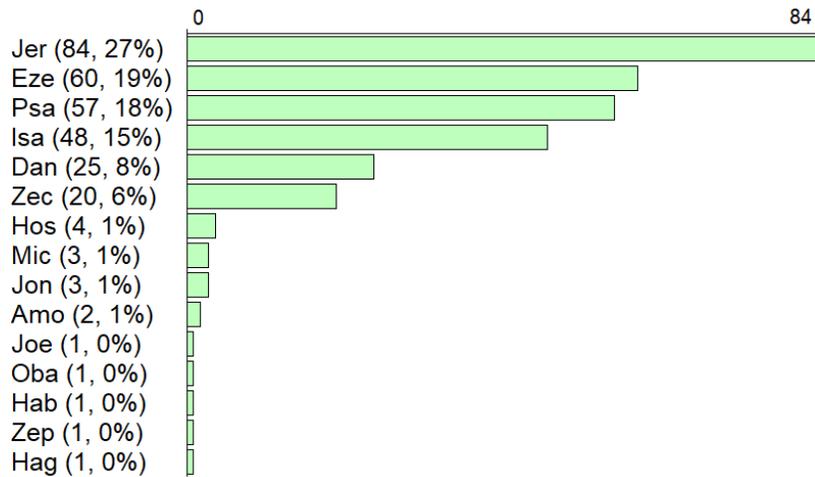


NOTE 9: The key Greek words in Jer 11:20 (and 20:12) occur in Paul’s writings.

κύριε²⁶ κρίνων²⁷ δίκαια²⁸ δοκιμάζων²⁹ (συνίων)³⁰ νεφρούς και καρδιάς³¹
 ἴδοιμι τὴν παρὰ σοῦ ἐκδίκησιν³² ἐξ αὐτῶν ὅτι πρὸς σὲ ἀπεκάλυψα³³ τὸ
 δικαίωμα³⁴ (ἀπολογήματά)³⁵ μου

²⁶ κύριος occurs 274x in Paul’s writings.
²⁷ Occurs in Paul: Rom 2:1, 3, 12, 16, 27; 3:4, 6, 7; 14:3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 22; 1Cor 2:2; 4:5; 5:3, 12, 13; 6:1, 2, 3, 6; 7:37; 10:15, 29; 11:13, 31, 32; 2Cor 2:1; 5:14; Col 2:16; 2Th 2:12; 2Tim 4:1; Tit 3:12.
²⁸ Occurs in Paul: Rom 1:17; 2:13; 3:10, 26; 5:7, 19; 7:12; Gal 3:11; Eph 6:1; Phil 1:7; 4:8; Col 4:1; 2Th 1:5, 6; 1Tim 1:9; 2Tim 4:8; Tit 1:8
²⁹ Occurs in Paul: 1Th 2:4; 5:21; also Rom 1:28; 2:18; 12:2; 14:22; 1Cor 3:13; 11:28; 16:3; 2Cor 8:8, 22; 13:5; Gal 6:4; Eph 5:10; Phil 1:10; 1Tim 3:10.
³⁰ Occurs in Paul: Rom. 3:11; 15:21; 2 Cor. 10:12; Eph. 5:17.
³¹ νεφρός does not occur in the NT. καρδια occurs in Paul: Rom 1:21, 24; 2:5, 15, 29; 5:5; 6:17; 8:27; 9:2; 10:1, 6, 8, 9, 10; 16:18; 1Cor 2:9; 4:5; 7:37; 14:25; 2Cor 1:22; 2:4; 3:2, 3, 15; 4:6; 5:12; 6:11; 7:3; 8:16; 9:7; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:18; 3:17; 4:18; 5:19; 6:5, 22; Phil 1:7; 4:7; Col 2:2; 3:15, 16, 22; 4:8; 1Th 2:4, 17; 3:13; 2Th 2:17; 3:5; 1Tim 1:5; 2Tim 2:22 Re: the combination of these terms, Lundbom 1974 (*Jeremiah*, Anchor Yale Bible) 637f writes: “The ‘inner being’ (*kēlayōt*) is lit. the ‘kidneys,’ regarded by the ancient Hebrews as the organs of feeling (Job 19:27; Prov 23:16). . . The ‘heart’ also has associations with the emotions, but more importantly is the seat of the ‘mind’ (5:21) and the ‘will’ (A. R. Johnson 1964: 75–87). ‘Heart’ and ‘kidneys’ occur together in 12:2–3 and 17:10; cf. Ps 73:21; Prov 23:15–16. Holladay finds the terms in combination in the Ugaritic texts. They also occur together in Babylonian medical and magical texts, but used metaphorically they appear only separately. Metaphorical usage of ‘heart’ is common as well in Sumerian texts (Hogg 1911: 66–72). ‘Heart’ (*lēb*) occurs in Jeremiah a total of fifty-seven times (Briggs 1897: 101). Yahweh tests human thoughts and human feelings, where either can represent the total person (Hogg 1911: 55–56; Pedersen 1964 I–II: 173–74). On the ‘heart’ and ‘kidneys’ in ANE literature, see further Hogg 1911. Compare also Wis Sol 1:6 and, in the NT, Rev 2:23.”
³² Occurs in Paul: Rom 12:19, which is based on Dt 32:35; and 2Cor 7:11; 2Th 1:8.
³³ Occurs in Paul: Rom 1:17, 18; 8:18; 1Cor 2:10; 3:13; 14:30; Gal 1:16; 3:23; Eph 3:5; Phil 3:15; 2Th 2:3, 6, 8
³⁴ Occurs in Paul only in Rom 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18; 8:4.
³⁵ Occurs in Paul: Rom. 2:15; 2 Cor. 12:19.

NOTE 10: λαλέω in the prophets



NOTE 11: 1Thessalonians 2:4

<p>ἀλλὰ καθὼς</p> <p>δεδοκιμάσμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν.</p>	<p>But just as</p> <p>we have been tested/approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel, so we speak, not as ones who are pleasing to people but to God who tests/approves our hearts</p>
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