

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHAPTER 37

HSIU-HSIUNG HSIEN

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# ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Name of Candidate ..... Hsiu-Hsiung Hsieh .....

Address .....

Degree ..... Ph. D. .... Date ..25 Aug.. 1976.....

Title of Thesis ..... THE MESSAGE OF HOPE IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE  
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The present thesis attempts to examine what is the message of hope which Ezekiel presents to the despairing people of Israel when the nation collapsed and the people were being exiled, and to demonstrate the basis of his message of hope, and its relation to earlier expressions of hope in the Old testament. To achieve this aim the thesis examines all of the hopeful prophecies of Ezekiel and then concentrates on chapter 37 as an outstanding expression of the prophet's hope.

In view of the task thus described, the thesis begins by defining the problem and the procedure of the study, presented in the introductory section. Then, in order to see how Ezekiel employs the earlier traditions the thesis gives a survey of messages of hope which appear in the works before Ezekiel. This section contains three parts: hope in the history works, hope in Psalms, and hope in the canonical prophetic works. Next, the study is devoted in investigating the messages of hope in the book of Ezekiel other than ch. 37. Then a thorough study of chapter 37 is offered. Finally, the thesis presents some concluding observations based on the study.

The examination of Ezekiel's message of hope discloses the following main elements: the renewal of the people and their restoration of the nation to their own land, and, moreover, the validity and perpetuity of the coming salvation. In his prophetic message of judgement before the fall of the nation, Ezekiel urges his people to repent and return to Yahweh. After the fall he predicts the renewal of the people and the restoration of national life. Yahweh will perform his saving acts for Israel before they repent and further, he will endow them with his spirit, so that they can repent and restore their political and cultic life in their land. The uniqueness of his presentation of his hope is that the salvation is purely of grace. Thus Yahweh will vindicate the honour of his name and create a new knowledge of his nature and of his acts toward his people. Ezekiel's hope for Israel's renewal is based on his concept of God which was revealed to him in the Exodus traditions, the Covenant tradition, the Zion-Temple traditions, and other revelations. God is the mighty saviour, the God of Israel, and the true king of his people.

The salvation can be conceived in two aspects, namely, the political and the spiritual salvation of the people. Yahweh will defeat the enemies and deliver his people from exile and return them to their land. Ezekiel employs the Exodus-Settlement traditions to describe how Yahweh creates a new Israel. At the same time, Yahweh will purify his people and give them a new heart and a new spirit and further accept them again to be his covenant people. Ezekiel uses the Covenant tradition and his creation faith to describe the inner salvation of the people. The image of the Good Shepherd and the creation of a new heart and a new spirit in the people are very significant. Ezekiel then goes further to portray the blessed state of the

*Use other side if necessary.*

blessed state of the new Israel and to confirm the validity and perpetuity of salvation. Yahweh will establish his people into one single nation which will no longer be separated into two kingdoms. He will transform the defiled land into a good land in which the people will enjoy peace and prosperity and the nearness of Yahweh. He will set up a Davidic prince to take care of the people and carry out justice and peace in the community. An everlasting covenant of peace will be established between Israel and Yahweh, which is also a unique expression of Ezekiel's hope. Finally, Yahweh will set his sanctuary in the restored community and promise his divine presence in the midst of the people. All of these acts of salvation will supply a new knowledge of Yahweh to the people of Israel as well as the other peoples. On the whole, Ezekiel's hope plays an important role in the earlier period of the exile; he is to move Israel from death to life, from despair to hope, from the scattered Diaspora to a new Israel.

## Preface

My gratitudes are due to all who helped me to produce this thesis. A special word of thanks is due to Professor G. W. Anderson, who was generous in his time and stimulating in his criticism and so patient in his supervision. Without his unfailing and scholarly supervision, the thesis would never have come to its present form. My thanks should also be expressed to those who provided the material resources for us to come over to Edinburgh from Taiwan, as well as those who supported the resources for us to stay here for three years. My wife, Sumi Loh, who looked after my baby-child when I was far away from home, gave me the constant encouragement when I was in special need of it, and helped to type the rough draft and the final version of this work, deserves particular mention. Finally, I dedicate this work to my dear mother, who introduced me the true faith.

H. H. H.

August, 1976.

## Abstract

The present thesis attempts to examine what is the message of hope which Ezekiel presents to the despairing people of Israel when the nation collapsed and the people were being exiled, and to demonstrate the basis of his message of hope, and its relation to earlier expressions of hope in the Old Testament. To achieve this aim the thesis examines all of the hopeful prophecies of Ezekiel and then concentrates on chapter 37 as an outstanding expression of the prophet's hope.

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a unique expression of Ezekiel's hope. Finally, Yahweh will set up his sanctuary in the restored community and promise his divine presence in the midst of the people. All of these acts of salvation will supply a new knowledge of Yahweh to the people of Israel as well as the other peoples. On the whole, Ezekiel's hope plays an important role in the earlier period of the exile; he is to move Israel from death to life, from despair to hope, from the scattered Diaspora to a new Israel.

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## Abbreviations

AAC	An American Commentary on the Old Testament.
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, 2nd, ed. by J. B. Pritchard, 1955.
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem.
EA	The Biblical Archaeologist.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
BBC	The Broadman Bible Commentary.
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament, Neukirchen.
BS	Bibliotheca Sacra.
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin, Rome.
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament.
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.
CBC	The Cambridge Bible Commentary.
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly.
CQR	Church Quarterly Review.
CTJ	Calvin Theological Quarterly.
EBT	Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology, ed. by J. B. Bauer, London, 1970.
ET	English Translation.
G	Greek Version (Septuagint).
G <sup>B</sup>	Greek Version Cod. Vaticanus.
Ges-K	Gesenius-Kautzsch Hebrew Grammar, 1910.
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament, Tübingen.
HTR	Harvard Theological Review.
IB	The Interpreter's Bible, New York and Nashville, Tenn., 1951-7.
ICC	International Critical Commentary.

IDB	The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, New York and Nashville, Tenn., 1962.
Interp.	Interpretation.
JBC	Jerome Bible Commentary.
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature, New York.
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies, Oxford.
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament.
L	Old Latin Version.
MT	Massoretic Text.
NBCR	New Bible Commentary Revised, London, 1970.
NCB	New Century Bible.
OTL	Old Testament Library, London, Philadelphia.
PC	Peake's Commentary on the Bible, completely revised and reset, 1962.
PP	Proclamation and Presence, Old Testament Essays in honour of G. H. Davies, London, 1970.
RE	Review and Expositor, A Baptist Theological Journal.
RGG	Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology, London.
SEAJT	South East Asia Journal of Theology.
SJTh	Scottish Journal of Theology.
SVT	Supplements of the Vetus Testamentum, Leiden.
Symm.	Symmachus (Greek Version).
Syr.	Syriac Version.
Targ.	Targum.
TBC	Torch Bible Commentary.
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. by G. Bromiley.
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trans. by J. T. Willis.

- TGUOS Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society.
- TOTC Tynedale Old Testament Commentaries, London.
- TSK Theologische Studien und Kritiken.
- TWAT Theologische Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren.
- TZ Theologische Zeitschrift, Basel.
- V Vulgate Version.
- UUÅ Uppsala Universites Årsskrift.
- ZAW Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

## I. Introduction

In discussing the nature and content of the biblical concept of hope one may, on the one hand, examine the terminology used and its development in usage, and on the other hand, consider the ways in which events affect the development of the concept. The concept of hope is present in many parts of the Old Testament even if there is no fixed equivalent for the English word 'hope' in biblical Hebrew. There are some Hebrew verbs and nouns such as the verbs  $\eta \rho$ ,  $\{ \eta \prime$ ,  $\eta \theta \eta$ , etc., and the nouns  $\eta \rho \eta$ ,  $\eta \{ \eta \prime \eta$ , which are translated by 'hope' or relevant to it.<sup>1</sup> It seems that only the nouns  $\eta \rho \eta$  and  $\eta \{ \eta \prime \eta$  are the nearest Hebrew equivalents to 'hope'. In the LXX these and some ten other Hebrew words are on occasion rendered by the Greek noun  $\epsilon \lambda \pi \acute{\iota} \varsigma$  and the verb  $\epsilon \lambda \pi \acute{\iota} \zeta \epsilon \iota \nu$ , but none of the Hebrew terms is exclusively translated thus. However, whereas the Hebrew verbs usually accent the human attitude of hoping, the nouns often express the ground or the object of hope. Since there is no clearly fixed Hebrew term for the idea of 'hope', the present thesis is not intended to discuss its philological aspect, but to concentrate on the events which express the idea of hope and to examine the ground, the content, and the function of the biblical hope in the context of salvation history.

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1. Cf. W. Zimmerli, Man and His Hope in the Old Testament, (1971),

pp. 1-11; P. S. Minear, 'Hope', IEB 2, p. 640.

It is generally held that in the context of salvation history hope is associated with Yahweh, his words and deeds; and hope is nothing other than the faithful expectation of that which Yahweh has promised to his people. The promise of Yahweh is a pledge that proclaims a reality which is not yet at hand, but it pledges a new future, and on the one hand creates a meaningful present for the people of Israel in their times of need and affliction, and on the other hand, carries on Yahweh's salvation for his people and the world. The faithful expectation of Israel is an expression of their needs and their wishes for life, especially in the times of affliction and crisis; for from this expectation they can obtain the strength and power of life. If Israel's faith is her fundamental attitude to Yahweh in terms of commitment, confidence, and loyalty, then when the biblical writers confess or witness that Yahweh is the creator and the Lord of history, in whom they can trust, rely on, and be able to respond, there is always a possibility of hope for the future. Therefore, hope and faith are in close relation, for hope is the certain strength of faith or the result of faith which is to assert the promise of Yahweh who is alone the creator and the Lord of history. This hope for the future is not only grounded firmly in all the things which Yahweh had done for his people but also based upon the certainty of the faith in the actual relationship to Yahweh in the present. As a matter of fact, hope is, to a degree, used interchangeably with faith. The loss of hope signifies not only the loss of God but also of a living faith; and the faithful believers never lose hope.

Now, the way of understanding the message of hope in the Old Testament is to see how the Israelites seek for their hopes in their history and how Yahweh, their God, promises them the hopes to meet their needs. There are many presentations of the message of hope in the Old Testament. For their different historical backgrounds and other factors these presentations must have their own characteristics. Yet, in spite of the possibility of recognizing some distinctive factors in their presentations, there may have been some elements which connected them with each other. This connection can be seen in the form of the text and the theme beneath the text. A study of theme and form would be able to reveal what is the origin of the theme, how the theme develops, and how different books use it in different ways and for different purposes. In other words, the best way to find out this connection is by examining the traditional materials and the themes which are common to all, and unique in each, in their presentations. What is involved in the examination is the task of finding out what are the similarities and differences between these presentations and how these similarities and differences are to be understood.

It is evident that the message of hope in the book of Ezekiel appears mostly in chapters 33-48. Nevertheless, the present study will focus on chapter 37 as an example of Ezekiel's presentation of a message of hope to his people. For this chapter is a) the most vivid and profound presentation of the message of hope by the prophet, and b) a fair sample of Ezekiel's prophecy—containing both a vision and a symbolic action. The purpose of the present thesis is to inquire into the content and the theological significance of the message of hope in the book of Ezekiel with special

reference to chapter 37. The main question is—what is the message of hope in this chapter ?

The question contains many sub-questions, such as what are the main themes of the hope(s), what are the historical and intellectual conditions which produced these hopes and which caused the prophet to be led to such thoughts and hopes, what are the origins of these hopes and their connections to the traditional materials, and in what way does the prophet express these hopes ?

So in consideration of all of this, the present thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter explains briefly the problem and the procedure of the thesis. The second chapter will give a general survey of the message of hope which appears in the works of Ezekiel's predecessors or the earlier traditionists. The purpose of this survey is to see on the one hand what are the hopes presented by the biblical writers before Ezekiel, and to serve on the other hand for some fundamental understanding of Ezekiel's employment of the earlier hopes. This chapter consists of three parts; the first part is concerned with hope in the historical works, the second deals with hope in the book of the Psalms, and the third deals with hope in the prophetic works. In this chapter one will see various themes of the ancient popular expectations, political hopes as well as naturalistic expectations. It is interesting that all of these hopes are national and religious.

The third chapter is concerned with the general message of hope in the book of Ezekiel. At first, a brief discussion of the literary problems of the book will be offered. In order to understand the message of Ezekiel one must try to understand Ezekiel the man and his time; and in order to understand his message of

hope one must not overlook his message of doom which is mainly proclaimed before the fall of Jerusalem. Therefore, part of this chapter will contain a discussion of Ezekiel, the man, the historical background, and his message of doom. Lastly, the rest of the chapter will concentrate on the entire message of hope of the book.

The fourth chapter will give a thorough study of chapter 37 in two sections. The first section will deal with the vision of dry bones in 37:1-14; the second will consider the symbolic action in 37:15-28. The text of chapter 37 will be carefully scrutinized and interpreted; and the themes of hope will be examined with a careful consideration of the theological content. The concluding chapter of the thesis will give a summary of the study and present a total picture of the new Israel which is portrayed by Ezekiel for his people.

Hope is a primary mode of existing or the most important constituent of human life. Man cannot live without hope, for hope is the source of the power and strength of life. It not only gives man strength and direction to arrange or work out the plan of life in the present, but also liberates man from the bondage of his past and the present failure or crisis. The fall of the nation is the most critical time of the entire history of Israel. There are many elements in that event: the loss of the Temple, the holy city, the land, and the monarchy. All these are to be understood as the visible guarantees of Yahweh's covenant relationship with Israel. These in turn raise profound questions about Israel's entire self-understanding as a people in covenant with Yahweh. In other words,

this is the crisis of Israel's existence as the people of God, Ezekiel is the first known prophet in the exile; and it is generally accepted that his prophecy underwent a great change at the time of the fall of Jerusalem. After the fall of the nation his mission is to reconstruct the new Israel. It is worth noting that here hope plays a significant role in the reconstruction of the new Israel. 'Although the message of restoration is by no means absent from the teaching of his predecessors, he presents it with a fullness of detail which is new. In this he heralds the post-exilic prophecies of restoration. He is also the morning star of apocalyptic, even if we hold that xxxviii and xxxix are from a later writer. His imagery, which is often artificial and bizarre, is more akin to the symbolism of apocalyptic than the simpler and more natural symbolism of earlier prophets. In his prophecies of restoration, he heightens the element of sheer miracle; and here, too, he is nearer to the apocalyptists than to the pre-exilic prophets. Again, much of his teaching about the future is presented in a form which points forward to the detailed legislation of post-exilic Judaism.'<sup>1</sup>

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1. G. W. Anderson, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, (1959), p. 139.

## II. General discussion of the message of Hope before Ezekiel

This chapter will give a general historical survey of what the Biblical writers before Ezekiel mean by hope. The chapter will be divided into three sections, the first section dealing with the historical narratives other than the Chronicler whose work has been left out of consideration because it belongs to a later period, the second with the book of Psalms, and the third with the prophets' main messages of hope.

### A. Hope in the historical works

#### 1. Hope in the primeval history

The Pentateuch is not the work of one author, nor even the later editing of one man. It is the result of oral tradition which lived on in the customs of the people and above all in their worship. Thus Israel's confession of faith in God as creator, and saviour from deadly peril, lay at the root of the whole transmission of the Pentateuch.<sup>1</sup> This confession has the character of a proclamation concerning the saving activity of God. In the process of Israel's becoming a nation through the saving work of God and his guidance, the oral traditions are crystallized into a confession of faith. A historical work depicting the history of Israel as the history of God's dealing with his people gradually grew up around this kernel. In a similar way the Torah came to be put into written form by a gradual and complicated process.

The so-called primeval history presented in Genesis 1-11 is

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1. Cf. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, (New York, 1962), pp. 105ff.; 'The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch', in The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, (1966), pp.1-79.

not written primarily to explain how the world came to be, rather it is intended to show why it is necessary for God to enter into history and why man needs salvation.<sup>1</sup> It is the result of the religious soul's pondering upon the ultimate meaning of life, and it is presented to us as 'the prologue to the story of Israel's encounter with God'.<sup>2</sup> From the literary standpoint, Genesis 1-11 is not originally a unity. It has been built up from two different sources, the Priestly source (P)<sup>3</sup> and an earlier Yahwist source (J). These two works have been skilfully put together and form a composite account of the origins. But J differs sharply from P, for J points out the limitations of God-created man in a series of narratives of crime and punishment, while P points to the corruption of the human race only at the beginning of the Flood narrative.

Although these eleven chapters were not originally a unity, Westermann has demonstrated that they should be seen as a unity, for the two strands are combined in close coherence. This can be seen in the structure of the genealogies (a chain of generations

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1. The purpose of the writers of the creation account is not the expression of their nostalgia for their past but an affirmation of their faith in God who is concerned with their present.
  2. Robert Davidson, The Old Testament, (London, 1964), p. 186; Cf. C. Westermann, Creation, (ET. 1971), pp. 8-15.
  3. Although the Priestly source is generally seen as later than Ezekiel, it is considered here in order to link it up with the material of Pentateuch and also to show that it has close affinity with the priestly interests of Ezekiel.

from Adam to Abraham); the correspondence of the blessing of the creation and of the flood (1:28; 9:1); the motifs of the human rebellion and of the divine punishment (alienation from God); and the relationship of chs. 3 and 4 expressed in the questions asked by God 'Where are you?' and 'Where is your brother?'<sup>1</sup> From what has been said it is clear that the two accounts of creation indicate different ways of presenting the 'Creation' at different times. But they are complementary and proclaim that God is the Creator, the Lord of all history and the source of all life, and that there is a close relationship between God and man.<sup>2</sup>

To begin with, the Creation account in Gen. 1:1-2:4a which originally belongs to the Priestly source depicts the creative activity of God within the time scale of seven days.<sup>3</sup> God is confessed as the Creator of the World, the one who brings order out of chaos. Man is the climax of God's creation and this puts man in special relationship to God. 'And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good'. It is significant that the Priestly writers developed logically the conclusions implicit in the altered concept of God: the creative word of Yahweh plays a crucial role and man is said to be created in

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1. Ibid., pp. 17-31, particularly pp. 27-28.

2. Cf. B. W. Anderson, 'Creation', IDB (1962), pp. 762ff.

3. There are many similarities between this account of creation and the Babylonian creation myth, 'Enuma Elish'; but there are some significant differences between them, such as the concept of God, the position of man, no sign of conflict, etc. Cf. Westermann op. cit., pp. 40ff.

the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). When the spirit of God<sup>1</sup> moves over the dark primeval chaos, God then creates<sup>2</sup> the world through his creative word. There is a peculiar literary style used to stress 'the lordly supremacy and power of the God of Hebrew faith'.<sup>3</sup> This is one of the characteristics of the Priestly Document, according to which every event is the result of the word of God (cf. Gen. 1:3; 9:9-16; 17:1-16; Num. 27:15-21; Ex. 25-29; 35-39). It makes men more alert to the active force of Yahweh's words of promise and command in the older Pentateuch traditions.<sup>4</sup>

That God creates man in his own image and gives man the privilege to rule over the rest of the creatures, puts man in a special place.<sup>5</sup> 'Image' and 'likeness' are here synonymous terms used together for emphasis.<sup>6</sup> The statement, which was used originally only of a king (although in ancient Egypt it is also found

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1. The spirit of God is here the expression of God's creative power. It is the source of all exceptional skill or strength in man and is the giver of all life. Cf. P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, (ET. 1954), pp. 172ff.
  2.  $\aleph \gamma \beth$  a special word to express God's creative activity.
  3. R. Davidson, (op. cit., pp. 191-192); the pattern: a) God said.. b) let there be.. c) it was so.. d) God saw that it was good.. e) it was evening.. one day (Cf. Pss. 33:8; 148:5).
  4. H. W. Wolff, The Old Testament: A guide to its writings, (ET. 1974), p. 34.
  5. Westermann, op. cit., p. 49.
  6. R. Davidson, op. cit., p. 193.

democratized and used of ordinary men), is here used as an identifying characteristic of man. The account is further elaborated in that man is entrusted with dominion over the rest of creation.<sup>1</sup> This statement finds its echo in Ps. 8 which in praising God also speaks of man with amazement at his exaltation in being given 'dominion over the works of thy hands' (Ps. 8:5-8). According to Zimmerli, it is in these verses that man envisages his future and achieves his authentic humanity.<sup>2</sup> 'Image and dominion belong together in man as he comes forth new from God's creative act'.<sup>3</sup> The command to subdue the rest of creation is accompanied by the blessing of God. 'The power of the blessing is effective not merely in that it maintains in existence; it is a forward-thrusting, ever pregnant power of becoming'.<sup>4</sup> And God is the source of this power and this was developed into the cultic blessing later in the course of the history of Israel.

The J account of creation (Gen. 2:4b-25) presupposes the existence of a dry desert into which water is introduced, and through which life is made possible. Yahweh creates man of dust from the ground, and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life; man becomes a living being (Gen. 2:7). He puts man into a garden with all kinds of trees and with four rivers. In order to find a companion for man Yahweh creates the woman as a being of man's own flesh and bone to stand beside him - a creature that the man

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1. W. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 60.

2. Ibid., p. 61.

3. G. H. Davies, 'Genesis', BBC 1 (1970), p. 132.

4. Westermann, op. cit., p. 55.

immediately and joyfully recognizes as belonging to him, and to which he gives his own name. 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman (אִשָּׁה), because who was taken out of man (אִשָּׁה) (Gen. 2:23). So at the very outset there is a description of the way in which God creates good for man'.<sup>1</sup> Even though there is no explicit word about hope and the future of man, the Yahwist declares Yahweh as the Creator, the giver of life, and the God who has laid a real possibility for man, which is latent in what God has done for man. It is important to treat this account of creation with the following account of man's rebellion against Yahweh in Gen. 3:1-24.<sup>2</sup> The presupposition of the Yahwist account is that Yahweh is the creator who is the giver of life and all good; man is his creature whose life is dependent on (his relationship with) Yahweh; and if man remains obedient, he can enjoy his life in the state of paradise. Such a life is full of hope. But the Yahwist's actual observance of human life is that of rebellion and tragedy. The result of man's attempt to be master over life and the future, and his desire to be as God, is shown in the fact that man feels shame and seeks to escape from the presence of Yahweh, and is cursed and expelled from the garden of Eden.

It is true that the narrative is to show man's expulsion from the garden.<sup>3</sup> Yet, this expulsion from the garden joins two verses

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1. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

2. Cf. U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, I, (ET. 1961), pp. 71ff.; G. von Rad, Genesis, OTL (ET. 1972)<sup>3</sup>, pp. 73ff.

3. Westermann, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

which give priority to life. Man gives his wife the name Eve ( חַוָּה ), and the name is explained as meaning 'mother of the living'. This sentence originally belonged in the context of the birth of the first child; it is inserted here to emphasize that despite man's disobedience and punishment, the blessing given with the act of creation remains intact. The woman receives the name 'life', a name which reflects the dignity of woman and the joy of motherhood. This joy is heard in the exultant shouts at the birth of the first child; 'I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord' (4:1). Man who is now far from God is still man blessed by God, and man's life remains open to the future just because of the power of God's blessing.<sup>1</sup>

As Westermann has demonstrated, there is an important relationship between chs. 3 and 4, which is shown in the almost identical questions of God: 'Where are you?' and 'Where is your brother?'<sup>2</sup> In the account of Cain and Abel, the Yahwist reports the story of fratricide by which Cain tries to secure honour by means of violence. Cain's crime against Abel becomes a sin against God. Cain's punishment is two fold: Expulsion from the land (he must wander about restlessly); and the fertility of the earth is withdrawn. 'But it is striking that at the conclusion of the narrative... there appears again something of the mysterious inconsistency of the divine mercy, which kills and yet does not kill'.<sup>3</sup> God puts a

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1. Ibid., p. 104.

2. Ibid., pp. 27-28; also pp. 95-98.

3. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

mark on the forehead of Cain in order to protect him from being killed.<sup>1</sup>

In the flood story in Gen. 6-9,<sup>2</sup> the author(s) report the increasing depravity of man and also affirm that the continued existence of the earth is only possible through God's continued protection. Because of the increasing corruption of man, God sends the flood to destroy man and the world. But God himself again rescues the threatened world from this fate, because he remembers Noah who is righteous in his sight.<sup>3</sup> There are two significant promises in the account of the Flood. One (J) mentions that Yahweh will not again curse the ground and destroy every living creature (Gen. 8:14-22; cf. 6:7). 'In the J flood story we move from tragedy through judgement to hope. This for the narrator is the continuing of man under God'.<sup>4</sup> The other (P) states that Yahweh will establish a covenant with Noah promising him that he will never again destroy men and the earth through a flood; he will

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1. G. H. Davies, marks, 'The idea of mark was not merely to afford him divine protection but to ensure that he would live to bear his punishment of homelessness and godlessness' (op. cit., p. 147).

2. There are two narratives interwoven here: J (6:5-8; 7:1-5, 7-10, 12, 16b, 17b, 22-23; 8:2b-3a, 6-12, 13b, 20-22), and P (6:9-22; 7:6, 11, 13-16a, 18-21, 24; 8:1, 3b-5, 13a, 14-19; 9:1-17).

3. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 62.

4. R. Davidson, Genesis 1-11, CBC (1973), p. 87.

set a rainbow in the sky as the token of a covenant which is unconditional and everlasting (cf. Gen. 9:8-17; 17:7, 13, 19; Ex. 31:16; Lev. 24:8; Num. 18:19; 25:13). There are some certain features in this covenant:—a) it is a covenant which is comprehensive not merely in the relationship between God and Noah, but also in the relationship between God and the descendants of Noah and all living creatures; b) it is an everlasting covenant which is permanent in its validity at every point in time across the entire history of Israel's experience; c) it is a covenant which is authenticated by a sign; d) it is an unconditional covenant in which Yahweh takes the initiative while Noah promises nothing and no demands are laid upon him. Thus in terms of covenant, P speaks of hope which is founded entirely upon God's dependability and God's initiative.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, the building of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9) once again discloses mankind's arrogance and rebellion against God, which bring with them the dispersion and the alienation of mankind. 'The action of God is both punishment and a preventive measure; it prevents men from going too far in their pride. The common history of all mankind has found its end. The usual positive element of the punishment of prehistoric man is missing here; instead of this, the story of the chosen people of God begins in Gen. 12 with the call of Abraham'.<sup>2</sup> In relating the primitive history, the Yahwist states that Yahweh is the creator, who provides all good things and is well disposed to men. Man should respond by faith and obedience. But men not only refuse to give

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1. Ibid., pp. 91f.

2. H. Ringgren, ' }  $\frac{2}{3} \frac{2}{1}$  ' in TDOT 1 (1974), p. 467.

honour to the creator but also want to be like 'God', who has power over the whole of life. Men try to secure honour by means of violence (Cain's story). They have sinned against their Creator and disobeyed his commands. The result of men's behaviour therefore is, not blessing, peace, honour, nor the presence of Yahweh; but curse, anxiety, sin, and expulsion from the presence of Yahweh. This story of the Fall indicates how man rebelled against God and became alienated from him. It is not only consistent with creation by God but also expounds the truth that the disobedience and revolt of man reaches a climax and therefore man needs salvation. But into this tragic theme there breaks again and again the note of hope. The expulsion of man from the paradise is followed a joyful shout of being blessed by the Lord (Gen. 4:1). Upon Cain the murderer is placed a protecting mark. After the destruction of the world by the flood there are Yahweh's promise and his gracious covenant. This note of hope is the echo of Israel's experience as a nation from the moment when, in the call of Abram, the pilgrim forefather, she believed herself to be the object of God's initiative and God's concern. Against this background there comes the story of Abraham.

## 2. Hope in the patriarchal history

In the foregoing investigation of hope in the primeval history, it is clear that the writers draw the right relationship between God and man and they also describe the actual state of the relationship in which man has sinned and disobeyed his creator. The result of man's behaviour is, therefore, not blessing, peace, honour, nor the presence of God; but curse, destruction, expulsion

from the presence of God, and dispersal over the earth. The stories in Gen. 1-11 indicate how man rebels against God and becomes alienated from him. Although man is 'subjected to death by his own guilt before God, characterized by hopelessness, and yet in the midst of this ruin still sustained by God'.<sup>1</sup> What is important is the fact that the writers indicate the tragic situation of man and at the same time declare the great promise of salvation in the story of Abraham. Here one can understand the relationship between the world-wide story of mankind and the history of Israel. Abraham is the beginning of the people of God. The people of God is the answer to divided humanity.<sup>2</sup>

If the nature and the attitude of man in the primeval history is compared with that of Abraham, insight is given into what the Yahwist is trying to say. It can be seen that their attitudes are sharply different. In the primeval history man is depicted as 1) living in the presence of God, which is described as the paradise of Eden; and 2) having a good relationship with his Creator. But man disobeys the will of God and tries to secure fame, power, knowledge and 'to be as God'. He has freedom to choose his future direction, but chooses to follow his own desire instead of the command of God. The result of his rebellion and sin is depicted as: Man being cursed and expelled from the presence of God, and the earth and the whole of life being destroyed by the flood. Man's life is full of anxiety and despair, and thus subjected to death by his own sin.

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1. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

2. Cf. G. von Rad, *Genesis*, OTL (ET, 1972), pp. 23f.

We turn now to the Abraham cycle. Abraham is called by God to leave Ur of the Chaldees. He obeys the command of God and decisively trusts in God and goes out into a new way of life. He gives up home, titles, tradition and all his privileges. As a result, he is blessed and receives the great promise from Yahweh. In the J history, 'Yahweh has given Abraham a threefold promise: that his descendants will become a nation; that they will possess the land of Canaan; and that they will become a blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:7-12, 17, 18abc). This oath is reaffirmed to the subsequent patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob (26:2-5; 28:13-15). The threefold promise has its centre in the divine covenant with Abraham (15:5, 7), and undoubtedly came from an earlier tradition of such a covenant with originally more local significance. The divine author of the covenant is now introduced. Clearly as Yahweh and the land which is promised to Abraham's descendants for a possession extends "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates" (15:18b)... J saw the fulfilment of the covenant in the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom with the Davidic monarch at the head as the source of its blessing (Gen. 12:3; cf. Ps. 72:17). Yahweh's covenant with Abraham was an anticipation and a promise of his later covenant with David (2 S. 7)<sup>1</sup>. In this story, Abraham trusts in the present and future guidance of God, walking with confidence and faith, and maintains himself in a land far from his homeland.

R. Rendtorff describes Abraham not only as father in the

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1. R. E. Clements,  $\begin{matrix} D & 1 & \gamma & \lambda \\ \tau & \tau & : & - \end{matrix}$ , TDOT 1 (1974), p. 56.

genealogical sense, the one with whom all began, but also as father in a much wider sense: he is the model and example who shows how Israel is to live before God and with God.<sup>1</sup> From the words of Yahweh in Gen. 12:1-3, it is clear that what is recorded is not only the beginning of the history of an individual, but also that with the journey of Abraham, there begins simultaneously that event which involves 'all the families of the earth' and which brings blessing into a world which until now has been tragically cursed. The Yahwist presents a turning point at which mankind is translated from the realm of curse into the realm of blessing. Here Yahweh gives man a new beginning.<sup>2</sup>

Abraham responds to the call of Yahweh and wanders into northern Palestine. Several times he is assured that he and his descendants will possess the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:7; 13:14ff.). In the report in Gen. 15 of a renewed encounter with God, Abraham, the man who until now has no heir, is now promised that he will have a direct heir who will maintain his inheritance, particularly that concerning the promise of the land.<sup>3</sup> Gen. 17:1-14 is the Priestly account of the Abrahamic covenant which shows several important developments compared with the account in Genesis 15.

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1. R. Rendtorff, Men of the Old Testament, (ET, 1968), p. 13.

2. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 50.

3. R. E. Clements, Abraham and David, (1967), pp. 15ff.; Clements sees that 15:1-6, originally concerned with the land in the form of an inheritance, is developed into a promise of descendants; whilst 15:7-21 is entirely concerned with the promise of the land (p. 22).

The theme is once again the divine promise, and its specific declarations centre upon three assurances, continuing the tradition of a triad of promises. These three promises, however, are not quite the same as those in the Yahwist's history, and they are now brought directly into the Abrahamic covenant itself. The first asserts that Abraham will become the father of a multitude of nations (vv. 5-6), the second that his descendants will obtain the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession (v. 8), and the third that  $\text{אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם}$ , who makes the covenant with Abraham, will be the God of his descendants (v. 8). Thus in the third of the three promises there is a significant departure from the basic promise of the Yahwist's history.<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that although there are some parallels between the J and P accounts of the Abrahamic covenant, there are also some differences between them. First of all, the divine name is different; while J uses the term Yahweh for God's name, P uses EL SHADDAI (cf. Ex. 6:1ff.). Secondly Abraham and Sarah also have new names. Abraham, who had been called by the name 'Abram', is now to identify himself as 'Father of a multitude of nations'. His wife Sarai will also have a new name 'Sarah' which means 'princess' (indicating many kings will come from Abraham's descendants). Thirdly, 'the most significant new feature in the priestly account is that God makes with Abraham an "everlasting covenant" ( $\text{בְּרִית עוֹלָמְדָבָר}$ ), asserting its permanent validity and its unconditional character'.<sup>2</sup> In

1. Ibid., p. 71.

2. Cf. Jer. 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26; Isa. 55:3; 61:8; 2 Sam. 23:5; Clements, (ibid), is of the opinion that the Abrahamic covenant in Gen. 17 has been influenced by the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:16; 23:5).

addition, the covenant essentially resides in the physical mark of circumcision (vv. 9-14).

There remain two other accounts about the promise in Abraham's story. According to Gen. 18:1ff. Abraham and his wife entertain three men without at first knowing who they are. During the entertainment, Yahweh promises the birth of a son to the old couple in the following year. The hopeful expectation is fulfilled in spite of Sarah's unbelieving laughter. This promise of a descendant is further developed in the story of Isaac's birth (Gen. 21:1-7) and the story of his marriage (Gen. 24). In Gen. 23 Abraham wants to buy a piece of land to bury his wife. The Hebronites offer Abraham the free use of any of their graves, but Abraham refuses to accept, for that is not what he requests. According to the Hittite law,<sup>1</sup> one who buys the entire property of another must render certain (unspecified) feudal services.<sup>2</sup> But what is important here is that the grave is the symbol of the promised land and the patriarchs and their wives are buried there (Gen. 24:9; 49:31; 50:12f.). Zimmerli states, 'The grave witnesses to the hope of the patriarchs. In this strangely objective form the priestly writer speaks of the liveliness of their hope'.<sup>3</sup>

In the story of Isaac, the promise of Yahweh to Abraham is renewed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3; 28:25), and the story of Isaac's wells 'illustrates how the promise of the land is working out in Isaac's

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1. Cf. ANET, § 46-47, p. 191.

2. Cf. M. R. Lehmann, 'Abraham's purchase of Machpelah and Hittite Law', BASOR 129 (1953), pp. 15-18.

3. Zimmerli, op. cit., p.64.

life'.<sup>1</sup> In Jacob's vision in Bethel, the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, now descend to Jacob. 'The Lord identifies himself as the God of his grandfather and father, and reiterates the terms of the divine promises, the gift of the land, the numerous progeny, and that Jacob and his descendants are to be the fount or standard of blessing for others. The promises are further buttressed by two particular promises - the pledge of the divine presence - here to be understood as good fortune; and also the undertaking that Jacob will return to the land and thus remain within the divine intention and promise'.<sup>2</sup> One thing which should be mentioned about Jacob's story is his wrestling with God near the Jabbok River (Gen. 32:22-32).<sup>3</sup> In his loneliness, Jacob meets a man ( $\psi'X$ ) who wrestles with him until dawn. Although Jacob is hurt during the wrestling, yet with magnificent courage he firmly grasps the man and seeks to extract a blessing from him. 'The stranger confers a blessing in the form of a new name - Israel - for Jacob'.<sup>4</sup> Here it is God in a strange disguise who fights like a demon and who is able to bless him and change his name. The heir of the promises must qualify in his own life if he is to be the inheritor of the promises and of the blessing in the land promised to his family.<sup>5</sup> The blessing

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1. Davies, op. cit., p. 212.

2. Ibid., p. 219.

3. Cf. J. L. McKenzie, 'Jacob at Peniel: Gen. 32:24-32', CBQ 25 (1936), pp. 71-6.

4. Dav es. op. cit., p. 235; L. Hicks, 'Jacob', IBB 2, p. 785—he says that in this story, which combines the etymologies of Israel and Peniel and an ancient cultic etiology (vv. 32), a major key for the interpretation of Jacob's life is given.

5. Davies, op. cit., p. 236.

which Jacob gets from God must be seen as characteristic, not only of Jacob the man, but also of Israel the nation.<sup>1</sup> This new name implies a change in his mission in the promised land, and his descendants will have a constant reminder of their own 'struggle with God' as well as of their mission as God's people in the total plan of salvation history.<sup>2</sup>

In all these patriarchal stories it is clear that the basis of hope and of the future, is in the promise of God, and real life for man lies in obedience to the commandments of God and in response with faith and confidence to the call of God. Many elements of the promise are revealed and they become the themes or elements of Israel's hope. They are, the possession of the land of Canaan, the blessing of the nations, the multitude of descendants, the establishment of the nation, and the promise of the divine presence. All of this is understood in the special relationship between God and his chosen ones. Meanwhile, there are some significant features attached to these promises. These are faith and obedience, mission and struggle, patience and trust. By the exercise of these qualities the patriarchs envisage their future, and thus march on toward their promised goals.

### 3. Hope in the narratives of Exodus

With the beginning of the book of Exodus a remarkable change of scene has taken place. The patriarchs have disappeared, and their descendants have become a great people in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> After

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1. Hick, *loc. cit.*

2. E. H. Maly, 'Genesis', *JBC* (1968), p. 34.

3. Several times in the first chapter it is reported that the people of Israel multiply or grow (vv. 7, 9, 12, 20); Cf. Gen. 15:5ff; 26:4; 28:14.

being subjected to slave labour and a shameful bondage, Yahweh sent Moses to deliver them from the bondage of slavery and to bring them into the promised land. It is striking to see that God's act of deliverance meets the need of the people in the time of trouble and helplessness, and that by this deliverance the nation of Israel is brought into being and the people of Israel become the people of God.

The narratives of Exodus contain some different sources of material, yet the main themes in the Exodus' stories are by and large to show the lordship of God over history, nature, and man. These stories are to show the redemption of God, the establishment of the covenant, and the presence of God with his people. Throughout the Old Testament God is confessed as the one who led his people out of Egypt, and the Exodus is seen as his redemptive act (cf. Josh. 24:16-18; Am. 2:10; 3:1; Mic. 6:4; 7:5; Hos. 2:15; 11:1; Isa. 11:16; Jer. 2:6; 11:4; 23:7; 32:21; Pss. 18; 44, 60, 78; et. al). Their hope of deliverance lies in God.

'God's mercy comes to men in their distress not in action but by word of mouth first of all. And the first word which caters for that situation of distress from another dimension is the word of encouragement'.<sup>1</sup> The history of deliverance begins with a message of salvation. Yahweh has seen the misery of the people and heard their cry; and he will send Moses to bring them out of Egypt and lead them into a good land (Ex. 3:7-10). With this message of salvation the people look forward to deliverance and entering into their inheritance in the promised land.

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1. C. Westermann, A Thousand Years and A Day, (1962), p. 72.

In the account of the vision of the Burning Bush (Ex. 3:1ff.),<sup>1</sup> God reveals to Moses his purpose to save his people and commits to him the task of leading Israel out of Egypt. A striking feature in the narrative is the revelation of Yahweh's name. The meaning of the expression יהוה יהוה is uncertain, scholars hold different interpretations.<sup>2</sup> Most of the critics seem to agree that the expression is not to stress his metaphysical being, but the potentiality and the activity of God. Yet, 'the being and activity of God are not played against each other, but included within the whole reality of the divine revelation. God's nature is neither static being, nor eternal presence, nor simply dynamic activity. Rather, the God of Israel makes known his being in specific historical moments and confirms in his works his ultimate being by redeeming a covenant people'.<sup>3</sup> This divine presence and the

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1. Cf. B. S. Childs, Exodus, (London, 1974), pp. 53ff.

2. Cf. W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, (London, 1957), pp. 15ff., who suggests that the expression is an original theophorous name which derives from the hiphil of the root HWY into HWH, and that the translation will be: 'He causes to be what comes into existence'; Childs, op. cit., pp. 60ff.; F. M. Cross, 'Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs', HTR 55 (1962), pp. 225-9; D. N. Freedman, 'The Name of God of Moses', JBL 79 (1960), pp. 151-6; J. P. Hyatt, Exodus, NCB (1971), pp. 75-81; G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, pp. 180-2; R. de Vaux, 'The Revelation of the Divine Name YHWH', in PP (1970), pp. 48ff.; Th. C. Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, (Oxford, 1970)<sup>R</sup>, pp. 342ff.; W. Zimmerli, Grundriss der alttestamentliche Theologie, (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 12ff.

3. Childs, op. cit., p. 88.

revelation of God by the coming salvation-events are specially reflected in the answer of Yahweh. The divine presence with Moses and Israel is affirmed by the sign of burning bush and the merciful statement of Yahweh in Ex. 3:7f.<sup>1</sup> The question 'who is Yahweh?' is not only answered by the divine presence with gracious promises but also by the divine deeds which are to be seen in the future.<sup>2</sup> This question is also answered by the fact that the writer of the passage identifies Yahweh as the God of the fathers.<sup>3</sup> From the

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1. G. H. Davies, (Exodus, TBC pp. 48ff.), strongly emphasizes that the divine presence is the most important theme of the book and the very heart of this presence theme is the solemn predication: 'I am the Lord', or 'I am Yahweh'. The predication is spoken in the personal relationship between God and Israel. This divine predication, (with the variants) is the original exemplar of the content, and form of Israel's theocentric understanding of prophecy and the art of worship. And it is in effect the kingship of the Lord in any given situation.
  2. Childs (op. cit.), holds that the question is not to obtain information, but an explanation of the significance of the name in order to know the intention of God and his new relation to them (p. 75). And God announces his intentions will be revealed in his future acts; God's intention for Moses is an expression of his being God and will be manifest according to his own plan (p. 76).
  3. Cf. A. Alt, 'The God of the Fathers', in Essays on the Old Testament History and Religion, (ET, 1966), pp. 1-66; J. P. Hyatt, 'Yahweh as "God of my Father"', VT 5 (1955), pp. 130-136.

passage the reader learns that the writer not only intends to introduce the new name of God to Israel but also intends to preserve the continuity of God's history of revelation. In addition, Moses confirms his prophetic office by announcing God's name to the people.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the element of hope is concerned, there are at least three promises in the passage, i.e, the deliverance from Egypt, the gift of the land, and the new relationship between Yahweh and his people (new name and new cultic life). These promises of Yahweh recall another account (P) of Yahweh's revelation to Moses in 6:1ff.

The narrative in Ex. 6:1ff. is originally 'a parallel account of Moses' call and not a sequel'.<sup>2</sup> It shows no recognition of the earlier call narrative in its content and it reveals some significant similarities with the call narrative in 3:1ff.. But there are some differences between them, which must not be overlooked. Childs holds that these two call narratives derive from a common oral tradition with a long period of independent development.<sup>3</sup>

The narrative of Ex. 6:1ff. begins with the divine statement: 'I am the Lord' - which indicates the authority of the speaker and also reflects the ancient, liturgical background in this traditional formula of self-revelation.<sup>4</sup> Then the passage identifies God as the God of the patriarchs to whom Yahweh made a covenant and

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1. Childs, op. cit., p. 69.

2. Childs, op. cit., p. 111.

3. Ibid., pp. 111-112.

4. Cf. W. Zimmerli, 'Ich bin Jahwe', GO (1969), pp. 11-40.

promised the land of Canaan. The passage also indicates the acknowledgement of Israel's misery in Egypt and Yahweh's obligation to the offspring of the patriarchs. So Yahweh promises deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and makes a covenant with them (v. 7) and leads them into the promised land. In all these acts of Yahweh the people will know that he is the Lord. It must be noted that the passage is not to emphasize 'the revelation of a new name of Yahweh. Rather, it emphasizes 'the revelation of the character of God in the name of Yahweh which affirms the promise made earlier to the Patriarchs'.<sup>1</sup> Of course, the revelation of the name of Yahweh is at the same time a revealing of his power and authority. But here the revelation of Yahweh's name is also to confirm the divine promise to the patriarchs in a covenant by which he will deliver the people out of bondage and lead them into the promised land. Thus the covenant (of Abraham) here becomes the basis of the deliverance from Egypt and the entrance into the promised land.<sup>2</sup>

'The message which Moses is commanded to announce to Israel both begins and ends with the proclamation of the name: I am Yahweh. The content of the message which is bracketed by this self-identification formula, is actually only an explication of the name itself and contains the essence of God's purpose with Israel. First, there is the promise to deliver: "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm." Secondly, there is their adoption into the covenant as the people of God: "I will take you for my people, and I will

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1. Childs, op. cit., p. 113.

2. Hyatt, Exodus, p. 94.

be your God." Thirdly, there is the gift of the land which had been promised to the Fathers: "I will give it to you for an inheritance". The name of Yahweh functions as a guarantee that the reality of God stands behind the promise and will execute its fulfillment.<sup>1</sup>

Some points remain to be mentioned. First of all, here P uses the verb  $\int \text{X} \lambda$  (v. 6) to indicate God's saving action in its legal sense (cf. Ex. 15:3; Lev. 25). Secondly, God's act will be punishment for Israel's enemies, but salvation for Israel; it will in the end create a condition of justice (cf. Ex. 7:4; 12:12; Num. 33:4; Ezek. 5:10, 15; 11:9; 16:41). Thirdly, the fundamental idea of covenant relationship is expressed here. Fourthly, the formula 'You shall know that I am Yahweh' is accompanied by the saving act. All these four points have an explicit parallel in the book of Ezekiel.<sup>2</sup>

The saving events of the Exodus are the historical basis of Israel's faith in Yahweh. It was at the time of the Exodus that Israel felt the experience of a God, sovereign in his grace and judgement, and one who was capable of calling forth a new creation out of the most miserable situation.<sup>3</sup> In the midst of misery and affliction, the people saw a dawn of freedom and hope in the divine revelation and intervention and thus looked forward to a future, which would be realized in the promised land. In these events of the Exodus the people look for liberation, a new life in a new land

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1. Childs, op. cit., p. 115.

2. Cf. Hyatt, loc. cit.

3. E. Jacob, The Theology of the O.T., p. 191.

and all of these are dependent on the promise of Yahweh and his active intervention. This divine intervention is carried out through the leadership of Moses or through Yahweh's miraculous acts (cf. Ex. 7-17).<sup>1</sup> It is clear that this divine intervention is the first stage of Yahweh's creation of the people of Israel.

Another historical event which occupies a very significant position in the life of Israel was the covenant at Sinai. There the delivered people enter into a covenant with Yahweh, and it is thus that the formal genuine relationship is established and the worship of Yahweh becomes the national religion of Israel. At the time of the vision of the burning bush, Yahweh simultaneously reveals to Moses his name and his promises to Israel. He wants to deliver them out of the bondage of Egypt and take them as his people and settle them in the land promised to their fathers (Ex. 3:1ff; 6:1ff.). The Exodus and the consequent events confirm that Yahweh is the Lord of history, of nature, and of man, and is capable of accomplishing everything according to his plan. The Sinai event is recorded in the so-called Sinai pericope in Ex. 19-24.<sup>2</sup>

When Israel arrives at Sinai and encamps at its foot (19:1-2). God's purpose is announced to Moses, namely, to establish a covenantal relationship between God and Israel. The invitation to a covenant is based on the proclamation of Yahweh's great acts in

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1. Particularly the song of the sea in Ex. 15:21 shows the redemptive power of Yahweh and the faith and the praise of Israel to God.

2. Cf. G. von Rad, The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, pp. 21ff.

the Exodus events (19:3-4). Then the conditions and the promises are revealed, namely, that if Israel will obey God's will by being faithful to his covenant, then a special relationship will be established.<sup>1</sup> After the preparation of the people for three days, Yahweh and the people of Israel enter into a covenant (the Decalogue 20:1-17)<sup>2</sup>; the book of the covenant (20:22-23:33)<sup>3</sup> is given and the people and their representatives pledge themselves to it (cf. Ex. 14:31). The establishment of the covenant is ratified with a blood rite and a covenant meal (Ex. 24:1-18). This Sinai event is a single unique event intended to establish a permanent relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel. Although there are some affinities in it with the treaty forms of the Ancient Near East,<sup>4</sup> yet, there is no real parallel between them. For no other case can be found outside the Old Testament in which a deity establishes a covenant with a people which has a similar content and form.<sup>5</sup>

From the conditions of the covenant in Ex. 19:3-8, the uniqueness of Israel as a special possession of God in distinction

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1. On the covenantal form see J. Muilenburg, 'The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations', VT 9 (1959), pp. 347ff.
  2. Cf. Childs, op. cit., pp. 385ff.; Hyatt, Exodus, pp. 207ff.; E. Nielsen, The Ten Commandments in New Perspective, (ET, 1968).
  3. Cf. Childs, op. cit., pp. 40ff.
  4. Cf. Childs, op. cit., pp. 347ff.; W. Beyerlin, Origin and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Tradition, (ET, 1965); D. J. McCarthy, Treaty and Covenant, (1973), pp. 152ff.; G. E. Mendenhall, 'The Covenant Form in Israelite Tradition,' BA 17 (1954), pp. 50ff.
  5. Cf. Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, pp. 80-1.

from all the other peoples is spelled out. Israel is a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. 'Israel is God's own people, set apart from the rest of the nations. Israel as a people is also dedicated to God's service among the nations as priests function within a society. Finally, the life of Israel will be commensurate with the holiness of the covenant God. The covenant responsibility encompasses her whole life, defining her relation to God and to her neighbors, and the quality of her existence.<sup>1</sup> Eichrodt brilliantly demonstrates the complexity and importance of the covenant in the ancient Israelite religion.<sup>2</sup> It embraces privilege and obligation, promise and mission. Yahweh is the God of Israel and Israel is Yahweh's people, thus two are brought together by the tie of the covenant. Yahweh, as the biblical writers bear witness, is absolutely exalted as the initiator of the covenant and through this covenantal relationship Israel is granted the knowledge of God, their own privilege and responsibility. This divine-human relationship gives Israel joyfulness to live in the present, and hope and orientation in the future. They know that the will of Yahweh will provide life with a goal, and history with a meaning; and from this covenant relationship they find both strength for a willing surrender to the will of God and joyful courage to grapple with the problem of life.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Childs, op. cit., p. 367.

2. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, (1961), *passim*; for his recent thought see now his article 'Darf man heute noch von einem Gottesbund mit Israel reden?' in TZ 30 (1974), 193-206.

3. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament I, p. 38.

Thus Israel will know that their God will continue to reveal himself to them as deliverer, leader, and protector; and they will serve God in following and obeying the commandments which God makes known to them. Just in this covenantal relation, devout Israelites find their hope in God with certainty and confidence throughout the whole of the Old Testament. 'Israel belongs to God, and can depend on Him, it has a future. The hope in this future, springing from the faith in Yahweh, again and again brings renewed strength, and becomes the chief instrument in the maintainance of the national existence ..... for that hope is the pulse of Israel's vital strength, the inspiration of its continual life.'<sup>1</sup>

Two other things need to be mentioned about the event of the Exodus, namely, the proclamation of the Law and the promise of the divine presence. First of all, Yahweh wants Moses to come up the mountain and to receive the tablets of law (Ex. 24:12-15). This delivering of the law to the people (cf. Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13) is to provide them with a means of obeying God and avoiding sin. His intention is not to crush his people with commands, but to enter into a covenant. His commandments are preceded by a prologue in which Yahweh introduces himself as Israel's redeemer from Egyptian bondage. The covenant law makes known the will of Yahweh which the people have agreed to accept. From the historical experience and the covenant stipulations the people understand the nature of Yahweh

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1. H. W. Robinson, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament,  
(1913), p. 136.

and the will of Yahweh which the covenant demands.<sup>1</sup> A deliberate profile of the 'holy nation' has been sketched with the ten words of the divine will, in which Yahweh lays claim upon his people and points them to a new life as the people of God.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, Yahweh gives Moses the instructions to build the tabernacle (cf. Ex. 25:8; 26:12). Yahweh wants to put his sanctuary among the people in order to signify his divine presence. After the tabernacle is built, the glory of God which once covered Mount Sinai falls upon the tabernacle. The cloud representing the presence of God now accompanies Israel above the tabernacle on her journey. The tabernacle serves as a portable sanctuary of the presence of God whose covenant was made known at Sinai. What happened at Sinai is continued in the tabernacle. Indeed, the tabernacle represents the fulfilment of the covenant promise -- Yahweh's dwelling with his people and accompanying them in their journey.<sup>3</sup> This promise recalls and fulfils Yahweh's promise to Moses in Ex. 6:6-8. Lev. 26:3 makes it clear that the tabernacle represents the presence of God and so fulfils the promise of 'you shall be my people', and therefore completes the revelation of God's name: 'I am Yahweh your God, who redeemed you from the land of Egypt' (Lev. 26:12-13).<sup>4</sup>

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1. Childs, op. cit., p. 371.

2. On the general discussion of Israelite Law, cf. Childs, ibid., pp. 388ff.

3. Cf. G. H. Davies, 'The Presence of God in Israel', in Studies in History and Religion, Festschrift H. W. Robinson (1942), pp. 11-29.

4. Childs, op. cit., p. 540.

In sum, the narratives of Exodus are by and large to show God's Lordship over history, nature, and man. Through the Exodus event God creates the people of Israel and gives them the promised land where they will possess and rest. Israel has experienced Yahweh's salvation, his gracious covenant, and his promise of divine presence in the Exodus event. This saving event is recited and remembered by the Israelites in their life and thus becomes the model of salvation. Further, it becomes the historical basis of Israel's faith in God. It was at the time of Exodus that Israel experienced a God, sovereign in his grace and judgement, and one who was capable of calling forth a new creation out of the miserable situation. The covenant is not only a revelation of Yahweh's Lordship but also the fundamental basis of Israel's hopes. It is in this covenant relationship Israel places her hope in God. Therefore, hope is based on Yahweh's being and his promise of salvation and protection. This promise of salvation and protection is evidenced by the divine presence in any given situation as well as the will of God revealed in the law.

#### 4. Hope in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic history

It is generally accepted that Deuteronomy has a special relationship to Josiah's reform (2 Kgs. 22); and the law book which was found in the temple can be identified with Deut. 12-26 which has been expanded and revised into the present book (c. 4th B.C.). The sermons in Deuteronomy in the form of the words of Moses are addressed to the people of Israel when they arrive in the land of Moab after their wandering in the desert. It is important to note

that although Deuteronomy sees that Israel of the later period of the monarchy in the guise of the Israel of the Mosaic period, it is far from being a freely chosen literary artifice but is rather a form in which Israel presents herself before God, in which Israel understands herself as the recipient of his plan of salvation and of his instructions. For the Israel addressed by Moses in Deuteronomy is situated in all respects at a time prior to the fulfilment of the promise. Accordingly it is recognized that before the divine fulfilment a great deal may still occur, especially in the time that all the actual happenings, problems and dangers are taken seriously.<sup>1</sup> On this promise, the people of Israel can still look forward to the future by obedience and by surrendering themselves to the will of God.

The chief concern of Deuteronomy is to appeal to Israel to be 'a people holy to the Lord your God' (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 16:18f.). 'All thought is concentrated on the worship of Yahweh as the one and only God, and on the forcefulness of the demand for faithfulness and obedience to Him. Gratitude and love is to be the response to the faithfulness and love of Yahweh for his people manifest in their history'.<sup>2</sup> All of this is to stress the uniqueness of Yahweh as the only God of Israel, to call for the response of love from Israel to her God and to her fellow-men, and to establish one pure worship in one place (Jerusalem). The positive, futuristic outlook of the book can be well illustrated by reference to the

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1. G. von Rad, ibid., pp. 28-9.

2. Weiser, Introduction to the Old Testament, (1961), p. 126.

two most frequently occurring phrases in Deuteronomy, namely, 'go in and possess', which is found 35 times, and 'the land which the Lord your God gives you', which occurs 34 times. In accordance with his promise to their ancestors God has provided a good land for the Israelites (1:25), that they might possess it for an inheritance (4:21). Promises of blessing are important features of Deuteronomy, and these (7:13) will be implemented when God gives his people respite from their enemies (3:20). Provided that the Israelites honour the covenant stipulations (5:1) they will enjoy prosperity (2:7; 4:40), will be blessed with a productive land (6:11; 12:15), and will lead long and fruitful lives (4:26).<sup>1</sup> So the attainment of the total salvation of the land is not only based on the promise of Yahweh but also on the response of the people to the will of God which is revealed in the covenant law.

The law defines Israel's response to grace, a response it owes in justice and gratitude, and at the same time it reveals the true relationship between God and Israel. It is not to be seen as a burden put upon the people but as something freely accepted (26:17) the means for maintaining a real relationship between God and his people. The service required by the covenant law is to love God with one's whole being (6:5) and at the same time to love one's fellow-men. The law contains the promise of divine presence, of rest and peace in the land, and of the true way of blessing and life for the people. Moses puts Israel at the cross-road of blessing and curse, or of life and death, and asks the people to decide their future. 'God's demand on the people does not stand

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1. R. K. Harrison, 'Deuteronomy', NBCR (1970), pp. 204-205.

there timeless, but is illuminated by the statement that a new future will be opened up for Israel. A people empowered with a great hope are here summoned to obedience to the commandments'.<sup>1</sup>

In his Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I of 1943, M. Noth has worked out the evidence for the fact that the narratives following Deuteronomy, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, constitute a single coherently shaped work.<sup>2</sup> The work, which deals with the history of Israel from the time of Moses' proclamation of the law of God in the plain of Moab, down to the time of exile, is quite similar to the book of Deuteronomy in style, terminology and ideas; it is also because the older materials of Deuteronomy have been placed at the beginning of this theological history, that the work has been called the Deuteronomic history.<sup>3</sup> The work is dated by Noth about 550 B. C.; and its main theological message is to show Israel that because of her disobedience Yahweh destroys the nation and the temple.<sup>4</sup> But the whole pattern of history is depicted in rebellion and forgiveness. The main purpose of the work is to exhort the people back to Yahweh, back to obedience, and to that maintenance of law and faithfulness which makes them in such a way the people of God that they may receive the promise and gift which he offers.

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1. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 74.

2. M. Noth, Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien I, (1943).

3. Ibid.; cf. E. W. Nicholson, Deuteronomy and Tradition, (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 107ff.

4. Noth, loc. cit.; W. Brueggemann, 'The Kerygma of the Deuteronomic Historian', Interp. 22 (1968), p. 387.

Zimmerli demonstrates that there are 'two elements which exemplify an effect characteristic of the Deuteronomist; at important points he makes the leading actors step forward with a speech in which they look back and interpret the history of past experience and then look forward to draw practical conclusions for Israel's conduct (cf. Josh. 1:23; 1 Sam. 12; 1 Kgs. 8:14ff.; Josh. 12; Jud. 2:11ff.; 2 Kgs. 17:7ff.)'.<sup>1</sup> The Deuteronomic writer divides the history of Israel into three periods, namely, the period of the monarchy. The principles of his judging history are the purity of the worship of Yahweh and the prophetic word.<sup>2</sup> Thereby he pronounces all the kings in the northern kingdom to be sinners, so that the fall of the northern kingdom is to take place of inner necessity. All the kings of Judah, except David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, are also criticized for their disobedience and sin.<sup>3</sup> As a result, Judah also ends up in exile because of the sin and disobedience of the kings.

M. Noth<sup>4</sup> holds that there is no message of hope in the

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1. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 78-79.

2. Cf. G. von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, pp. 74ff.

3. The criteria of the Deuteronomic presentation, cf. P. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, pp. 73ff.

4. Noth, (op. cit., p. 108), suggests that the Deuteronomic history expresses the author's pessimistic view of history down to the time of the national catastrophes of 722 and 587 B.C. Noth thinks that these tragedies have paralyzed all hope for the future, as seen in the prayer for the forgiveness of sins in 1 Kgs. 8:46-53. And he views 2 Kgs. 25:30 as a Messianic omen for the Deuteronomist.

Deuteronomic history, but the opposite view is held by G. von Rad,<sup>1</sup> J. Gray,<sup>2</sup> H. W. Wolff,<sup>3</sup> and W. Brueggemann.<sup>4</sup> G. von Rad argues that the Deuteronomist on the one hand explains how the saving history ended in the catastrophes of 722 and 587 (cf. Ps. 15:6); but he also sees the promise of Yahweh's salvation which runs through, and is still active in, the course of history.<sup>5</sup> Von Rad shows on the other hand how the prophetic prediction has been fulfilled in many cases in the history of Israel.<sup>6</sup> He emphasizes, (from the last paragraph in 2 Kgs. 25:27ff. the note about the favour shown to Jehoiachin), that Yahweh's promise of salvation in the prophecy of Nathan is still effectual and valid, so that Israel has an open future under this promise.<sup>7</sup> Also H. W. Wolff has shown that in spite of the gloomy portrait by the Deuteronomist of Israel's failure and rebellion, still an oft repeated message, namely, 'Return to Yahweh', bore testimony to Yahweh's righteousness, to the reliability of his word, and to the gleam of hope seen in Jehoia-

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1. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology vol. I, p. 343.
  2. J. Gray, I and II Kings, (1970), pp. 39ff.; but he questions von Rad's Messianic view on 2 Kgs. 25:27-30, pp. 39ff., 773.
  3. H. W. Wolff, 'Das Kerygma des Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks', ZAW 73 (1961), pp. 171ff.
  4. Brueggemann, op. cit., pp. 386ff.
  5. G. von Rad, loc. cit.
  6. G. von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, pp. 78ff.; he argues that the word of Yahweh plays a decisive role in the theology of Deuteromistic history (Cf. Josh. 21:45; 23:14f.; 1 Kgs. 8:56).
  7. G. von Rad, ibid., pp. 89ff.

chin's release at the end of history.<sup>1</sup>

The call to repentance has not merely the character of imperative demand but also presents the background of a consciousness of the approach of God.<sup>2</sup> W. Brueggemann, takes up the approach of Wolff and sets alongside the repentance motif a counter theme, i.e., the motif of good (  $\gamma\iota\theta$  ) which motivates Israel to repent and which offers promises and assurances to Israel when she repents.<sup>3</sup> 'It is this graciousness (i.e., good) that supports the call for repentance. It urges Israel to find meaning in the Exile, opens Israel toward a joyous future. Without this motif Dtr theology may be dismissed as legalistic, judgemental, retribution theology. Israel can then, in light of 587, only ponder her guilt and despair. But in light of this motif the kerygma of Dtr is that Yahweh stands by his promise, that he can be trusted, and therefore it is safe for Israel to repent, change, and invest in the future. The problem of kerygma in this tradition is balance between the graciousness of the "good" motif and the demand of the "repent" motif'.<sup>4</sup>

In the book of Joshua, the author follows the main ideas of Deuteronomy and illustrates, (by recounting Israel's conquest and

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1. H. W. Wolff, 'Das Kerygma des Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks', ZAW 73 (1961), pp. 171ff.; he emphasizes the motif of  $\gamma\iota\theta$  as a central theme of the Deuteronomist.
  2. Cf. H. W. Wolff, 'Das Thema "Ukehr" in der alttestamentlichen Prophetie', Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament, TB 22 (München, 1964), pp. 130-150.
  3. Brueggemann, op. cit., p. 388.
  4. Ibid., pp. 388-389.

settlement of Canaan), that God is revealed by his action in history, and if the people of Israel are obedient and faithful to God's covenant and law, they will enjoy the peaceful possession of the land, and if not, judgement and disaster will befall them. In the opening speech of Joshua, before crossing the Jordan River, Joshua reaffirms the promise of Yahweh and calls upon his people to move into the promised land to take possession of it and to enjoy the promised rest (Josh. 1:13; 12:6).<sup>1</sup> The conquest is depicted as a holy war and its success is viewed as the result of obedient Israel's dependence on the leadership and power of Yahweh. He is faithful to his promises to the patriarchs and therefore fulfils the promises by his mighty acts.<sup>2</sup>

In Joshua, salvation history reaches a culminating point. God's mighty acts of deliverance and guidance of Israel — in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan — and his gracious gifts of a homeland and plentiful posterity undergird his purpose. That purpose as announced to the fathers, was that through them and their descendants all families of the earth should be blessed (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18; 26:3f.; 28:13f.). The book ends with an assembly of the people at Shechem and with the establishment of the covenant. Once again Joshua recounts the past goodness of Yahweh to the people and reminds them of the promise of Yahweh, and then asks

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1. Cf. G. von Rad, 'The promised land and Yahweh's land in the Hexateuch' in The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, pp. 78ff.; 94ff.

2. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, pp. 296ff.

the people to make their decision toward life. There at Shechem the people renew again their covenant relationship with their God.

When Israel has already possessed the land of Canaan, she has not yet obtained rest from her enemies. The reason is shown by the Deuteronomist to lie in the fact that the people of Israel forsook Yahweh their God and followed after the idols (cf. Judg. 2:12). Therefore Yahweh's anger is kindled against them and he gives them over into the hands of their enemies. When they cry out again to Yahweh for help, he forgives them and answers them by sending a saviour to rescue them from the bondage of their enemies. This pattern - sin - humiliation - repentance - salvation - appears again and again throughout the book of Judges and in this the historian shows the amazing approach of Yahweh to the cry of need by his people. Herein is hope.

In the Deuteronomistic history two points remain to be mentioned, first, the prophecy of Nathan (in 2 Sam. 7); and second, the construction of Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem (1 Kgs. 5:10ff.). While the latter is to ensure Yahweh's presence among his people, and to serve as a place where the people can communicate with Yahweh, the former is not only to affirm the promise in which Yahweh pledges to David and his family the throne and the divine protection forever, but also to promise the people of Israel that they will have a Davidic dynasty that shall not pass away.<sup>1</sup> David is not simply described

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1. Cf. D. McCarthy, 'II Samuel 7 and the structure of Deuteronomic History', *JBL* 84 (1965), pp. 135ff. He is of the opinion that this chapter is the centre of this historical work. But possibly this oracle is much older.

as a great historical figure who brings peace and prosperity to the people but also as a founder of an enduring dynasty which shall be an enduring source of faith and hope for the people.<sup>1</sup>

David proposes to build a house for his God, but Yahweh reveals that he will build an enduring house (i.e., a dynasty) for David. The old patriarchal promise is taken up, recapitulated and projected into a future which envisages the immediate succession of Solomon but also events in the more distant future. After recounting how Yahweh has raised the humble David to be the ruler of Israel<sup>2</sup> and granted his kingdom peace and prosperity and made him a great name, Yahweh promises that he will make a house for David. The promise contains three elements, i.e., 'First, Israel would be granted peace to dwell securely in the land, free from foreign oppression. Second, when David died, he would be followed on the throne by an enduring line of his own descendants who would rule forever. Third, God promised to guide these future kings by sending adversity when they went astray'.<sup>3</sup> Thus Nathan's prophecy on the one hand provides the basis of the claim of the Davidic dynasty to rule Israel<sup>4</sup> and on the other hand lays a foundation for messianic expectation centred on a scion of the house of David (cf. Isa. 11:1; Jer. 33:14-26; Ezek. 34:24; 37:24-25).<sup>5</sup>

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1. Brueggemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-398.

2. The term  $\text{נָשִׂא}$ , prince, is used to express his nomination by Yahweh.

3. Ben. F. Phibeck, Jr., '1-2 Samuel', *BBC* 3 (1971), p. 102.

4. Clements, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

5. J. Mauchline, *1 and 2 Samuel*, NCB (1971), pp. 232-233; cf. S. Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, (ET, 1964), p. 255.

Brueggemann has pointed out that in 2 Sam. 7:14f. the pronouncement is governed by two conjunctions: 'when' and 'but'. 'The first affirms there will be punishment. The second affirms that Yahweh's promise will endure. Unmistakable the second clause governs the first. The punishment (correction) is for a moment. The promise of fidelity is forever. Applied to the situation of the Dtr theologian, the debacle of 587 and the exile is punishment for a moment; the possibility of faith in the present and hope for the future in the covenant are enduring. The theologian urges Israel to turn away from the punishment of the moment and embrace the hope which endures'.<sup>1</sup> He also emphasizes the frequent use of the word 'forever', which occurs not less than eight times in the chapter, to affirm the promise word of Yahweh, which endures and does not end in 587 or in any other failure. Even after that and in spite of it, God is still engaged on behalf of his chosen dynasty and his chosen people.<sup>2</sup> In this connection, von Rad is right to assert that the promise of Yahweh is still operating even in the Babylonian exile where, after 37 years in exile, the Davidic king, Jehoiachin is being set free (2 Kgs. 25:27-30).<sup>3</sup> This is in fact the dawn of new hope for the future.<sup>4</sup>

Alongside the promise of the enduring Davidic dynasty for the people of Israel it is affirmed that Yahweh will be with them and this is shown by the construction of the Jerusalem temple. Before

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1. Brueggemann, op. cit., p. 399.

2. Ibid., pp. 399-400.

3. Von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, pp. 85ff.

4. Carlson, David, The Chosen King, p. 263.

the settlement in Canaan, the people acknowledge Yahweh's presence through the evidence of the Ark, the Tent or Tabernacle in the midst. After the settlement in Canaan, to the people once again it is re-affirmed that Yahweh will reside among them and the temple is the striking sign of this divine presence. It is in the place of this divine presence that it receives the gift of life. 'It is not that the Temple as such is a guarantee, but that it is the outward sign of that manifestation of divine presence and power which is the essential for any kind of reorganization or establishment of life'.<sup>1</sup> The temple is the religious centre of the nation and is practically the centre of the life of Israel in many ways.<sup>2</sup> Hence the importance of the temple is not merely that it is God's dwelling place, but that it is the place where worshippers can obtain the joy of forgiveness, peace of soul, and new life. The uniqueness of the Jerusalem Temple then is not its physical structure, rather its uniqueness consists in its special connection with Yahweh.

The temple is not only a striking sign of the divine presence, but also is a sign of the election of Israel as the people of God. Therefore, this divine presence signifies that covenant relationship which assures the future of Israel. It also makes possible all those other blessings which Israel desired and sets Israel apart from all others.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ackroyd, op. cit., p. 248.

2. Cf. K. Baltzer, 'The Meaning of the Temple in the Lukan Writing', HTR 58 (1965), pp. 263f.

3. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, (ET, 1961), pp. 325ff.

Summing up what has been said regarding hope in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic history. First of all, the law which reveals the divine will is the fundamental test of Israel's obedience and at the same time the means of divine promise. The law is expounded as the pattern upon which life is to be lived when once Israel has come into the promised land. Although there are many warnings and threats, the stress is upon the appeal to choose the way of life and so to receive the divine blessing. The theme of exhortation is very characteristic in Deuteronomy and its school, and this can find parallel in the prophetic teaching. Secondly, the history of Israel shows her rebellion and the judgement of Yahweh, but throughout the whole work of the Deuteronomic history, the overtones of promise are present (cf. Deut. 4:30f.; 1 Kgs. 8:46-50). Israel's hope for the future lies in the assurance of the mercy and the sovereignty of God, which can be seen in Nathan's prophecy, the establishment of the sanctuary in the midst of the people, the report of the release of the exiled king Jehoiachin, and so forth. Even in Israel's seeming hopelessness, Yahweh is still engaged on behalf of his chosen people.

## B. Hope in the Psalms

The book of Psalms is a prayer book for use by the Israelites in worship. It is a response of men to God's deeds and words sometimes in the form of praise or in the form of lament, or in other forms. It contains and echoes many aspects of the lives of the Israelites living in many different areas, different times, and different circumstances. Individuals remember the past goodness, the promise, and the law of Yahweh and they present their thanksgivings, praises, hopes, and needs in various forms before God. What takes place there between God and man embraces man's whole existence in the world and God's activity throughout the world, throughout history, and throughout the cosmos. The most common categories of the psalms are the songs of praise, the songs of lament, royal psalms, wisdom psalms, and some minor types of psalms.<sup>1</sup> But as the primary interest of the thesis here lies in the expression of hope and expectation of the future in the Psalms, it is not necessary to deal in detail with the classification.

The song of praise may include hymns, individual and communal songs of thanksgiving. The chief aim of the songs of praise is to celebrate the goodness and the greatness of Yahweh which he has

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1. Cf. H. Gunkel, The Psalms, (ET, 1967); A. R. Johnson, 'The Psalms', in The Old Testament and Modern Study, ed. H. H. Rowley (1967)<sup>R</sup>, pp. 162ff.; A. A. Anderson, Psalms I, NCB (1972), pp. 23ff.; G. W. Anderson, 'Psalms', PC (1962), pp. 410ff.; A. Weiser, The Psalms, OTL (ET, 1962), pp. 23ff.; H. H. Guthrie, Jr., Israel's Sacred Songs, (1966), pp. 8-25; C. Westermann, The Praise of God in the Psalms, (ET, 1966), p. 153; J. Hempel, 'Book of Psalms' IDB 4, pp. 942-958.

manifested both in nature and in the history of Israel (cf. Pss. 100; 145-150). Among the hymnic psalms one may distinguish two sub-types: namely, psalms celebrating the kingship of Yahweh and psalms of Zion. In these psalms Yahweh is confessed as the Lord of nature and of history, who has a special bond with Israel and who has acted creatively and redemptively for his people. 'Yahweh twice intervened in Israel's history in a special way, to lay a basis of salvation for his people. The first was in the complex of acts which are gathered together in the avowal made by the canonical saving history (that is, from Abraham to Joshua), the other was in the confirmation of David and his throne for all time..... On these two saving data rested the whole of Israel's existence before Yahweh'.<sup>1</sup> History not only attests his power but even more his love for his people, the trustworthiness of his oath and of his promises, his forgiveness in the present time and in the future as well as in the past.<sup>2</sup>

The so-called the Enthronement psalms or psalms celebrating Yahweh's kingship (Pss. 47; 93; 96-99, etc.) have their common theme the kingship of Yahweh, his sovereign rule over all the forces of nature and history. Their recurring theme phrase is  $\text{יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  (Pss. 47:8; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1). One line of interpretation is that these psalms are eschatological and therefore express the conviction of Yahweh's ultimate victory at the end of

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1. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, p. 355.

2. Hempel, op. cit., p. 948.

the age.<sup>1</sup> The cultic interpretation as advanced by Mowinckel sees these psalms as expressions of the present experience of Yahweh's victory and kingly rule and his blessing on his people and the hope of the restoration of nature and society in the coming year.<sup>2</sup> A. R. Johnson, while following the general lines of Mowinckel's theory, differed from Mowinckel (1) in not accepting the idea of the enthronement of Yahweh, but rather thought of these psalms as expressing Yahweh's perennial rule, and also (2) in thinking of this festival as being concerned not simply with the annual renewal of nature and society, but also as looking to a new age.<sup>3</sup>

It seems sound to hold that the setting of life of these psalms is connected with the cult, in particular, with the great Israelite festivals. On the practice of the cult in the festivals the presence and power of Yahweh is realized.<sup>4</sup> It is in these cultic practices at the great festivals that many themes of the festivals are developed as the national or eschatological hopes of Israel. On the occasion of the New Year festival<sup>5</sup> the principal motifs associated with this festival are the kingship of Yahweh, the defeat of the primeval enemies, the creation of the world, the judgment of the nations. When Yahweh is proclaimed king in the cult, he will bring about, in all essentials, those items of the prophetic promises concerning the re-establishment of Israel. He will

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1. H. Gunkel-J. Begrich, Einleitung in die Psalmen, 2nd ed. (1966), pp. 329, 345.

2. S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship I, (ET, 1962), pp. 106-192.

3. A. R. Johnson, Sacral Kingship In Ancient Israel, 2nd ed. (1966), pp. 128-144.

4. Cf. G. W. Anderson, op. cit., 360b.

5. Cf. Mowinckel, loc. cit.

establish his kingdom and thus secure justice and a future for his people. He will subdue all hostile powers and renew his covenant with his people and its royal house, and grant them endless happiness and greatness. Thus Yahweh's great work of salvation and his re-establishment of his people becomes the expression of the expectation and faith of Israel. On the occasion of the covenant festival, the primary aim is to summon Israel to renew her covenant relationship with Yahweh her God. That relationship which was forged in the events and experience of the Mosaic age, is to be renewed and as a consequence the promises of the Sinai covenant will be met. In the cult practice of this festival, the congregation celebrate the theophany of Yahweh who reveals his divine name and promises his presence and reveals his plan of salvation; they enact the saving action of Yahweh by which his character has been revealed and Israel is created and sustained as a peculiar people; they hear Yahweh's covenant demand for righteousness and holiness; and they confess the sovereignty of Yahweh over the nation and the enemies.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the royal Zion festival, the election of David in Jerusalem plays an important role. The basic significance in the Jerusalem cult is the designation of the Davidic dynasty as a sign of Yahweh's presence among his people and the choice of Jerusalem as the sanctuary in which the divine presence is manifested.<sup>2</sup>

The songs of lament include individual and communal lament.

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1. Pss. 65; 67; 85; 126; etc.; cf. Weiser, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-52.

2. Pss. 48; 76; 84; etc.; cf. H. J. Kraus, Worship in Israel, (ET, 1966), pp. 172-222.



While praise is chiefly an echo of the experience of Yahweh's saving deeds, lamentation answers the judgment of God and expresses hope in God. Lament can also be seen as man's response to God, in a situation of need and affliction. The individual laments grew from contexts of spiritual, mental, physical, and material suffering.<sup>1</sup> They are often begun with a cry for hearing. Sometimes, their cry is coupled with certainty of a hearing. Their plea is deliverance from the cruelties of this life, which is specified as protection, vindication, justice, forgiveness, seeing God, and the return to his sanctuary.

The psalmists speak rarely of their love for God, are the more frequently do they refer to their longing for him, their waiting for his help, and their hope in him (cf. 42:1; 39:7; 63:1; 130:5f.; etc.). It is interesting to notice the words employed to express this attitude of longing and waiting.  $\text{ן } | \text{פ}$  (with its noun  $\text{ן } | \text{פ } \text{ט}$ )<sup>2</sup> which occurs not less than 15 times in the songs of lament, means 'to wait', from a root meaning originally 'to stretch': the soul stretches out to reach God. The other word  $\text{ן } | \text{פ}$  (with its noun  $\text{ט } | \text{ן } | \text{ט}$ )<sup>3</sup>, which occurs not less than 9 times, means 'to hope' or 'to wait'. All of these express the thought that in time of distress and anxiety the soul stretches out toward God, knowing that in him there is hope for help and deliverance.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Some description of the affliction of the worshipper is constantly present, but a distinction may be made between the penitential psalms and the unjustly accused psalms.
  2. Pss. 25:3, 5, 21; 27:14 (twice); 39:8; 40:2; 52:11; 62:6; 69:6, 2; 130:5 (twice), 71:5; 9:19.
  3. Pss. 69:4; 71:14; 130:5, 7; 42:6, 12; 43:5; 31:25; 38:16.
  4. H. Ringgren, The Faith of the Psalmists, (1963), p. 52.

Therefore, in the lament an element of praise to God for what he is about to do always appears.

For the psalmists know that the foundation of their hopes is God who is the Lord of history and who is their God, their shepherd, and their rock and fortress, so that they hope and wait for him with faith and trust. In some psalms (e.g., Pss. 4; 11; 23; 27; 131 ), the psalmists feel safe no matter what happens to them, knowing that they are under God's protection. The psalmists know that if they trust in God their anxiety will be removed and God will grant them salvation, i.e., deliverance, freedom, and a future with a rich and full life.<sup>1</sup>

In some penitential psalms (e.g., Pss. 6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 143), the worshippers or the individuals confess their sin and their guilt, and express their hope to be forgiven. The classic example is Ps. 51 where the psalmist not only prays for forgiveness but also for inner cleansing and spiritual renewal.<sup>2</sup> This hope of a new creation finds its parallels in Ezek. 11:19 and 36:26 where Ezekiel speaks about Yahweh's creation of a new heart and a new spirit for Israel.

Moreover, in some laments such as Pss. 16; 49; and 73; the psalmists speak of a hope in God which extends beyond death. Yahweh is the giver of their 'portion', he is able to conquer all the evil powers which try to work death and destruction on earth, and he is able to give life to those who are threatened by death;

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1. Ibid., p. 55.

2. Cf. E. R. Dalglish, Psalm Fifty-One, (1962); A. A. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 389ff.

consequently the life of the pious cannot be shaken by adversity or even death.<sup>1</sup> 'The Psalmists are content to know that God is stronger than death and Sheol. It may be that they have had in mind God's triumph in creation over powers of chaos and death or an actual deliverance from some specific illness or calamities (cf. 6:5; 88:10, 11). God does not leave the pious in death but is with him also beyond death'.<sup>2</sup>

The communal laments grew from some disaster such as defeat in war, epidemic, drought, etc., which affected the whole people, and made it appropriate to hold a day of fasting, penitence, and prayer. The plight of the community is described; God's past mercies are recalled; and he is implored to succour his people.<sup>3</sup> On the whole, in the songs of lament, one sees that the psalmists entrust everything to God and expect everything from him, as well as praise him as the real Lord of life and salvation.

The royal psalms are concerned with the relationship between God and the king.<sup>4</sup> Their setting in life is greatly varied and is far from certain. Yet most psalms belong to the pre-exilic period<sup>5</sup> and these psalms have more or less some relation to the rule of David and his dynasty in Jerusalem. In these psalms Yahweh has

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1. Cf. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 74; A. A. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 140ff.; 373ff.; G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, pp. 403ff.

2. Ringgren, op. cit., pp. 74f.

3. Cf. Pss. 44; 74; 79; 80.

4. Cf. Pss. 2; 18; 20; 21; 89; 132; etc.

5. Cf. Johnson, 'The Psalms', pp. 167f.

been confessed as the Lord of nature and of history, who has chosen his anointed one to rule over Israel and will raise his kingly vicegerent to extend his rule in the world. The king is given good oracles which describe his obedience, his righteousness, his power and victory, his peaceful ruling of the nation and his favour with God.<sup>1</sup> These psalms reflect primarily the circumstances of the time and special occasions such as the king's accession, the king's marriage, and campaigns against enemies. The inspired poets present their hopes in the present king and through the king Yahweh might fulfil his promises to the Davidic house. The promise and fulfilment expressed by monarchical Israel's joy in the Davidic dynasty are the source of the ultimate hope of Israel.

Finally, there are some minor types of psalms such as the pilgrimage songs, entrance liturgies, wisdom psalms, and other mixed psalms. Of these the wisdom psalms explicitly express the right way of life and confidence in the future because the psalmists depend on God, his word and deed. These psalms are characterized by a didactic style and a concentration on the good way in contrast to the ungodly or wicked way. The righteous man who avoids evil and lives by the word of God and walks in the way of the Lord has a prosperous and peaceful future. This kind of future comes solely from Yahweh and is not just a possibility that lies in man's disposal. On the other hand, the ungodly or wicked man who departs from God and loves evil has no promise or future. In these psalms the concept of God's word which includes pre-eminently the nature

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1. Cf. Johnson, Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel, (Cardiff, 1966), pp. 1-30; 136-144; J. L. McKenzie, A Theology of the Old Testament, (1974), pp. 244ff.

of God's commands, advice, and precepts, occupies the central position. It is this gracious word of God which guides man and leads him to walk in the way of God in the present, which also gives man promise and hope for the future. Therefore, the psalmists teach that good life comes from Yahweh and that one hopes and waits ( $\eta\iota\pi$ ,  $\int\eta'$ ) for God and his word will live peacefully in the land and have a hopeful future.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, all the psalms have a similar faith (presupposition), that is, God. So all serious hope in God in the Psalms is concentrated upon the one God of Israel who is invoked by the name of Yahweh. Meanwhile, there is a decisive certainty with which the psalmists speak of the help and the salvation that lie in Yahweh for the believers. According to Zimmerli, this certainty is based on the faith that 'God is my portion'.<sup>2</sup> In this special relationship with God the psalmists look forward to the future and wait confidently and patiently for salvation and forgiveness.

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1. Cf.  $\eta\iota\pi$  in Ps. 37:8f., 34;  $\int\eta'$  in Ps. 119:49, 74, 81, 114, 147; etc.

2. Zimmerli, Man and His Hope in the Old Testament, pp. 39.

## C. Hope in the pre-exilic prophetic works

### 1. Amos and Hosea

In the eighth century the prophetic movement is seen in the activities of Amos and Hosea in the northern kingdom, and Isaiah and Micah in the southern kingdom. Amos is the first of the so-called writing prophets (cf. Am. 8:9), and represents something new in the prophetic movement in Israel. The new elements are shown in his call, which is linked with a particular religious phenomenon, and in his severe message of judgement.<sup>1</sup> In Amos's time Israel seems to be enjoying peace and prosperity;<sup>2</sup> but the social order is terribly disrupted and disintegrated by distorted religion and social injustice.

The authentic revelation of Amos shows no traces of a positive hope for Israel, but there are gleams of light and exhortations to repentance (Am. 5:4, 6, 14; cf. 5:24).<sup>3</sup> Behind the judgement which is spoken in the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and Israel there is always a possibility of repentance and of renewal for Israel.<sup>4</sup> Amos believes that Yahweh is the Lord of the nations and

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1. Cf. J. F. Cragham, 'The Prophet Amos in Recent Literature', BTE 1-2 (1971-1972), pp. 249-250.

2. Cf. J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 237ff.; 251ff.

3. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, (1962), p. 363. Cf. H. W. Wolff, Amos, BKAT (1969), pp. 121ff.; J. L. Mays Amos, OTL (1969), pp. 6ff.; G. W. Anderson, 'Some Observations on the Old Testament Doctrine of Remnant', TGUOS 23 (1969-1970), pp. 5ff.

4. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, p. 137; R. L. Smith, 'Amos', BBC 7 (1973), pp. 86ff.; R. E. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, (London, 1965), p. 45; Vriezen, op. cit., p. 448.

that he particularly 'knows' (יָדָע) Israel (3:2). Even though this intimate relationship is the very reason for punishment, it is in fact because of this relationship that God sends his prophet to warn and exhort his people.<sup>1</sup> God's desire is not the death of the sinful nation; so Amos, like Ezekiel (Ezek. 18:23, 30-32), asks the people to seek for Yahweh and follow after good that they may have a future. In the face of apparently inexorable doom, he asserts that repentance may lead to renewal.

Three times in Amos 5 (vv. 4, 6, 14; cf. v. 24), the prophet urges his audience to seek (בָּרַךְ) the Lord and to love (אָהַב) good; for if the people decide to do this Yahweh will be gracious to them. To seek the Lord does not merely mean to go to the sanctuaries in order to secure the protection or the blessing of the Lord but it also means to seek the true knowledge of God which can direct their way to life.<sup>2</sup> To seek or love 'good' means to love or be concerned with social justice and social care. What Yahweh expects from Israel is justice and righteousness, which express the quintessence of his will. In other words, Amos emphasizes the true spirit of the law of God i.e., to love God and to love one's fellowmen.<sup>3</sup> These two aspects of the law should not be separated.

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1. Cf. H. J. Stoebe, 'Überlegungen zu den Geistlichen Voraussetzungen der Prophetie des Amos' in Wort-Gebot-Glaube, (Zürich, 1970), pp. 209-218.

2. E. Hammershaimb, The Book of Amos, (1970), pp. 77-78; Mays, op. cit., pp. 87f., says that when Yahweh is the object, 'seek' frequently means 'turn to Yahweh' (for help in a specific situation), and then by extension 'hold to Yahweh' (as a way of life).

3. Cf. Deut. 4:29; W. Rudolph, Amos, KAT (1971), pp. 190ff., particularly p. 192; R. S. Cripps, A Critical Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos 2, (London, 1955), pp. 180ff.

Here Amos employs the general terms of good and righteousness precisely to show that his interest in the court and its norms is essentially concerned about the good and righteous will of Yahweh<sup>1</sup>. According to G. W. Anderson, it is here in Amos 5:15, which has sometimes been understood a negative sense, that one can find the idea of remnant.<sup>2</sup> This idea of remnant is probably taken by Isaiah and is developed into a key idea of his message. Here hope is evidenced by the fact that even in the face God's judgement of God's people, through the penitent remnant Israel will have a future. So this is clearly a conditional hope for life.

It is said that the sentence 'Seek me that you may live' is a form of priestly law.<sup>3</sup> In the mouth of the officiating priests the exhortation was an instruction to turn to Yahweh as the source of life; to come to the sanctuary, where he was present, to receive the dispensation of the blessing that conferred security and prosperity.<sup>4</sup> In Amos 5:4, 6, 14, 'life' not only means, a peaceful and prosperous life because of the divine presence, but also survival in spite of the impending judgement which confronts the people. Amos notices that in his day, there is a popular hope prevailing among the people—the Day of Yahweh. It is held that on that day

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1. Mays, op. cit., p. 101.

2. G. W. Anderson, (op. cit., p. 3), defines the idea of remnant as: the destruction of the great part of Israel, the repentance of the remainder, and the continuation of Yahweh's blessing upon them.

3. J. Begrich, 'Die priesterliche Tora', Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament, (1964), pp. 123ff.

4. Mays, op. cit., p.87.

Yahweh will come in judgement upon his enemies and with blessings for his people, that it is a day of salvation, a day of light and joy for his people. Amos does not deny the tradition, but he does not agree with his hearers about who God's enemies are and who are his people. Therefore he reinterprets this theme into a warning of disaster.<sup>1</sup> What Yahweh's day here is becomes clear from the context, where the prophet continues to denounce the corrupt religious practice of the people. Yahweh's day is consequently the designation of a cultic festival for the worship of Yahweh, likely the New Year festival.<sup>2</sup> 'At a New Year festival, usually a feast of joy and exultation, judgement would come upon the people'.<sup>3</sup>

After his proclamation of the terrible judgement, Amos proclaims the restoration of the ruins of the Booth of David and a peaceful and prosperous life in the land (cf. Am. 9:11-15). Yahweh will free the nation from the enemies, working as he did once through the political instrumentality of Davidic rule. Salvation comes after the complete downfall of the house of David.<sup>4</sup> There is a strong suspicion that here a happier conclusion may have been added later to Amos' message of disaster. However, there are some scholars who either think that no compelling reason exists for denying the oracle (Am. 9:11-15) to Amos the prophet,<sup>5</sup> or think

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1. R. L. Smith, op. cit., p. 115.

2. Lindblom, op. cit., pp. 317f.

3. Ibid., p. 318; by contrast, Mays (op. cit., pp. 103f.) believes that the day of Yahweh is rooted in the traditions of Holy War in the ancient history.

4. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 448.

5. Cf. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, p. 112; J. D. Smart, 'Amos', IBB 1, p. 112; Smith, op. cit., p. 878; Hammershaimb, op. cit., pp. 140ff.

that Amos, as a Southerner, must be familiar with the Davidic tradition.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, it is true that 'perhaps' God in his mercy, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph and restore the Booth of David as it once was. But one thing is sure, although the nation as a whole will come to an end, yet the poor and the righteous remnant will have life in the day of judgement and still be the people of Yahweh.

As native of the Northern Kingdom, Hosea, some years later than Amos, begins his preaching toward the end of the reign of Jeroboam II. He fights for the purity of Yahwism and the fidelity of his people in a confused medley of a perverted Yahweh-worship and an idolatrous Baal-worship due to a misconception of the true character of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> The book of Hosea presents many textual and exegetical problems, the sayings have been collected with very little effort to find a principle of arrangement. Yet, it is clear that the entire prophetic message is dominated by the unhappy marriage of the prophet.<sup>3</sup> Hosea's personal experience of God as the ultimate basis of life gives rise on the one hand to his view of religion as a personal relationship to God and fellowship with him, on the other to his severe condemnation of sin and threat of

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1. G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 138.

2. H. McKeating, Amos, Hosea, Micah, CBC (1971), pp. 1-13;

J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 251-3.

3. Cf. H. H. Rowley, 'The Marriage of Hosea', in Men of God, (1963) pp. 90ff.; H. W. Wolff, Hosea, BKAT(1961), pp. 9f.; W. Rudolph, Hosea, KAT (1966), pp. 88ff.; J. F. Craghan, 'The Book of Hosea', in BFB 1-2 (1971-2), pp. 84ff.; G. W. Anderson, 'Hosea and Yahweh: God's Love Story', in RE 72 (1975), pp. 425ff.

judgement. He is nevertheless aware of a hope for salvation, whose content can be described best in terms of righteousness and justice, steadfast love and mercy (2:21).<sup>1</sup>

Hosea accuses his people of having no faithfulness and no knowledge of God. He denounces Israel for forgetting her God, her creator, and for having turned away from Yahweh; Israel has been defiled and has sunk into harlotry.<sup>2</sup> So the nation will be punished by natural catastrophes and military disasters. Furthermore, God will come personally to judge his people. But most impressive judgement is shown in the names of Gomer's Children ( } א צ ר ז', לא רחמה, לא עמי).<sup>3</sup> 'Jezreel' symbolizes that Yahweh will not bring about the fertility and prosperity of the land but will sow the destruction of the nation (cf. 2 Kgs. 15:8-12; 15:29; 17:4-6).<sup>4</sup> 'Lo-rahamah' means 'Not pities'; Yahweh will withdraw his compassionate affection which is inherent in the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel.<sup>5</sup> 'Lo-ammi' means 'Not my people'; Yahweh rejects his relationship with Israel.<sup>6</sup> These names not only indicate the withdrawal of Yahweh's blessings and his covenantal relationship but also predict Yahweh's punishment on Israel.

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1. Norman H. Snaith, Mercy and Sacrifice, (London, 1953), pp. 35ff.

2. Cf. H. W. Wolff, 'Guilt and Salvation', Interp. 15, (1961), pp. 281-282.

3. Ibid., p. 279; Anderson, op. cit., pp. 430-432; Craghan, op. cit., pp. 92ff.

4. Anderson, op. cit., p. 431, points out that Hosea reinterprets the event of Jehu's revolution shown in the name 'Jezreel'.

5. Ibid., p. 432.

6. Ibid.; Wolff, op. cit., p. 276, demonstrates that the expression 'You are not my people, and I am not your God' is the proclamation of the old covenant formula in a formula of divorce.

As a matter of fact, in Hosea, Yahweh's judgement remains essentially a striving for his people. It tries to discipline and to admonish the people of Israel to turn back to Yahweh. Yet the effect is in vain, for Israel is unable to return.<sup>1</sup> Therefore by his judgement Yahweh is forced to create the event of the return to him (cf. Hos. 2:7; 6:1; 14:2f.). But what is new in Hosea's message is the way that Yahweh has to struggle to bring himself to such harsh verdicts (cf. Hos. 6:4; 11:1-7). The obstinacy of dying Israel is answered by warm compassion (cf. 11:8f.; 14:6-9). Hosea sees a possibility of deliverance and return to Yahweh (Hos. 5:15-6:6) which will result in God's grace and mercy (10:12f.; 14:2-9). The term  $\text{שׁוּב}$  is both demand and promise; it means to enter once again into the original relation to Yahweh, properly speaking, it means repentance.<sup>2</sup>

In the process of conversion—redemption, punishment plays a significant role. It is not only a penalty inflicted for infidelity in the covenant relationship, but also a necessary phase for future restoration.<sup>3</sup> Yahweh will once again allure her and bring her in from the wilderness and speak tenderly to her (2:16f.). He also promises the renewal of the natural order and of the community (2:18-25). The wilderness is a place of deprivation and hardship, but it is also a place where the covenant bond was established. 'Discipline and deprivation will lead to a renewed relationship of

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1. Cf. 2:4, 7; 5:13; 7:10, 13; 13:2.

2. Cf. G. Fohrer, 'Umkehr und Erlösung beim Propheten Hosea', TZ 11 (1955), pp. 161-185.

3. Cf. J. M. Ward, Hosea, (New York, 1966), p. 30.

love and trust. Yahweh will speak wooing words to her and will restore the gifts which she has temporarily lost'.<sup>1</sup> Thus Israel will have a new beginning. 'By another expressive allusion to the ancient traditions, the reality of Israel's sin, of Yahweh's discipline, and of ultimate renewal is clearly proclaimed. Even when the covenant had been established and the wilderness wanderings were over, Israel nearly forfeited the promised land because of the sin of Achan (Josh. 7). The valley of Achor (interpreted to mean "Trouble"), reminiscent of that sin and its punishment, was at once a natural approach to the heart of the country and a point at which Israel's entry was in danger of being barred because of sin. The prophet uses it with the double association of sin and forgiveness. At the point where Israel has sinned she will encounter not only Yahweh's discipline but his forgiveness. The valley of Achor will again be a door of hope, and Israel will be enabled to respond in gratitude as she did when she was freed from Egyptian bondage'.<sup>2</sup> Thus by an interweaving of his own experience with the ancient traditions, Hosea presents poignantly the love and the righteousness of God who uses discipline as an instrument of grace to achieve restoration and renewal (cf. 11:4; 14:4).<sup>3</sup>

Not only will Yahweh woo Israel and take her again to the situation of the beginning of salvation history, but also he will betroth her once again to him with righteousness, justice, steadfast love, and mercy; and Yahweh will remove all the political and

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1. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 434.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*; Cf. W. Eichrodt, 'The Holy One in Your Midst', *Intern.* 15 (1961), p. 273.

cultic images of idolatry; and at last he will make a new covenant with her (2:18-25). The renewed covenant will bring a renewal of the natural order; peace and prosperity will be in the land. Yahweh will forgive his people (his wife) and call her 'You are my people', and Israel will have new knowledge of God and call her husband, 'You are my God'.<sup>1</sup> The names of the children are again to communicate the divine promises. Above all, although Hosea has used the covenant lawsuit and the Israelite divorce proceedings, yet he has presented the love of God to provide the solution of the case. This, in fact, is theologically akin to the new heart doctrine found in Jeremiah (Jer. 24:7; 31:33) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 11:19f.; 36:26ff.).<sup>2</sup> Besides, the covenantal fidelity and its inherent blessings embrace not only Yahweh and Israel, but also all creation, so that the harmony between God and Israel resounds among the natural world.

In sum, the themes of Hosea's hope are expressed in the salvation of a new exodus, the merciful forgiveness of Yahweh, the reestablishment of a new covenant, and the restoration of the nation. In all this, Hosea strongly declares the steadfast love of Yahweh which he experiences in his personal marriage and which is the foundation of all hopes for Israel.

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 270; on the knowledge of God cf. J. L. McKenzie, 'Knowledge of God in Hosea', *JBL* 74 (1955), pp. 22ff.; Craghan, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-158.
  2. Craghan, *ibid.*, p. 148.

## 2. Isaiah and Micah

Isaiah's message reflects the encroachment of the Assyrians upon the Syro-Ephraimitic political alliance during the eighth century and the defensive efforts of the states involved. He constantly reiterates the themes of God's action in the world and the relationship between faith and politics. Like the other pre-exilic prophets, he attacks the social injustice and religious corruption of his time; but his message has its own distinctive emphasis, which gives it both individuality and unity.<sup>1</sup> The persistent emphasis in his preaching is what is revealed to him in his inaugural vision--the idea of the holiness of Yahweh. A thorough-going judgement is to come upon Judah and upon Jerusalem as well (cf. Isa. 3:1; 4:1; 5:1-24; etc.); but through and beyond this judgement, which is sometimes portrayed as a purifying judgement, a remnant is saved and for this remnant a triumphant future breaks (Isa. 4:2ff.; 10:20ff.). His message of judgement centres in Israel's attempt to find security and refuge through political strategy rather than by sole trust in Yahweh. The ethical criticism is still present, but it is subsumed under the major category of unbelief.<sup>2</sup>

The response of Isaiah to the threats of foreign enemies is his recommendation of faith (Isa. 7:9) and trust in Yahweh with no political or military action, neither the soliciting of Assyrian aid in 735 B.C., nor an alliance with Egypt in 701 B.C. (Isa. 28:7-29; 30:1ff.; 31:1-3). His people do not listen to him and therefore they deserve the divine chastisement. However, Isaiah never clearly views Assyria as the power which will destroy Judah. Here

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1. Anderson, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, p.112.

2. Cf. B. S. Childs, Isaiah and Assyrian Crisis, (1967), pp. 27ff.

he is in sharp contrast with Amos and Hosea. No prophecy of the total fall of Judah can be found in his words. Isaiah sees that the probable continued existence of Israel only depends on humble trust in Yahweh, and by rejecting this avenue of hope, Israel calls down upon itself radical disaster. This message is one of the striking features in his prophecy.

One of the distinctive ideas of restoration in Isaiah's message is the idea of a remnant. Although the nation will be destroyed, a small minority will survive the catastrophe. These survivors will turn to Yahweh; they will become a holy people in whom the election will be fulfilled. The main references to the remnant are the symbolic names which Isaiah gives to his children. The name 'Shear Yashub' means either 'a remnant that returns' or 'only a remnant will return'. It may have both a hopeful or a threatening sense.<sup>1</sup> Although judgement is intended here, a remnant will be saved and will return,<sup>2</sup> yet it sheds some light of new possibility for the people of Israel. 'The boy's presence is at once an appeal to Ahaz to abandon his policy and turn to Yahweh in faith, and also a prediction that, even if the bulk of the nation rejected the word of Yahweh through the prophet, a remnant would turn to him'.<sup>3</sup> Further, Isaiah urges Ahaz to put his trust in Yahweh and if Ahaz has

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1. Cf. Von Rad, op. cit., p. 165; Lindblom, op. cit., p. 367; S. H. Blank, 'The current Misinterpretation of Isaiah's She'ar Yashub', JBL 67 (1948), pp. 211-215.

2. Cf. Th. C. Vriezen, 'Essentials of the Theology of Isaiah', in Israel's Prophetic Heritage, Festschrift J. Muilenburg, (1962), p. 138.

3. Anderson, 'Some Observations on the Old Testament Doctrine of the Remnant', TGUOS 23, p. 7.

faith, Yahweh is ready to guarantee the result by the sign of Immanuel.<sup>1</sup> The sign consists in the birth of a child who will be given the symbolic name of Immanuel, i.e., 'God with us', a name which ensures the divine presence and blessing. But this divine presence does not simply bring blessing to those who have faith, it is assurance, but to those like Ahaz who do not have faith it is the token of judgement at the hands of the Assyrians which will overtake the land. In short, Isaiah uses the symbolic sign Immanuel to prophesy weal for the believers and woe for the unbelievers.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is clear that a message of hope and promise is always attached to the message of invective threat and is even a part of the original proclamation of the prophet.

After Hezekiah has taken the throne, Judah joins a revolt against Assyria led by Ashdod and Philistia backed by Egypt. Isaiah strongly opposes the scheme and proclaims that Yahweh has founded Zion which has its sufficient defence (14:32). The same proclamation is made by the prophet when a general rebellion of the surrounding nations breaks out on the death of Sargon (705 B.C.). He opposes Judah's seeking aid from Egypt (cf. 28:16-22; 30:1-7; 31:1-3). In Isaiah 28:16ff. the prophet employs the ancient tradition of Zion to assert the stability

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1. Cf. J. J. Stamm, 'Die Immanuel-Weissagung', VT 4 (1954), pp. 20ff. N. K. Gottwald, 'Immanuel as the Prophet's Son', VT 8 (1958), pp. 36-47; O. Kaiser, Isaiah 1-12, OTL (1972), pp. 96ff.; J. Lindblom, A Study on the Immanuel Section in Isaiah, Is. vii. 1-ix. 6, (Lund, 1958).
  2. Cf. von Rad, op. cit., p. 174; Childs, op. cit., p. 64.

of Yahweh's foundation and to support the belief in the central, significant role of Zion in Yahweh's plan of redemption.<sup>1</sup> Yahweh has a plan of salvation, he is about to deliver Zion which will be a city of righteousness and faithfulness (1:21ff.), and for those who partake of its refuge, it will withstand all onslaughts. Yahweh the almighty and the holy one of Israel who has chosen Zion as his abode and promised his servant David the enduring throne, will remain faithful to Israel. This is the foundation and source of Israel's hope and future. Salvation and deliverance rest with Yahweh's action and with the trust of the people. The remnant is an object of faith, a future reality; and 'since faith is a central theme in Isaiah's teaching, it is not surprising that it should be emphasized in connexion with this "people within a people"'.<sup>2</sup> His idea of remnant prepares the way for a positive message of hope which is of great importance in later prophecy.

The Immanuel sign may connect with the other two promises: the promise of the royal child in Isa. 9:2-7 and the promise of an ideal king from 'the root of Jesse' in Isa. 11:1-9.<sup>3</sup> In the former, the message is that a bright light shines into the darkness and a victorious joy will prevail because Yahweh has broken the yoke and rod of the oppressor, and that a new king ( $\gamma\psi$ , his rule is termed  $\eta\gamma\psi\delta$ ), the subordinate of the true king Yahweh, will be enthroned. His throne names signify his nature and office and he will bring peace, blessing, and justice to his people.<sup>4</sup> Isaiah expresses

1. Cf. Vriezen, op. cit., pp. 131ff.

2. Anderson, op. cit., p. 8.

3. Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, pp. 318f.

4. J. Bright, 'Isaiah', EC, 429f; von Rad, op. cit., pp. 171f.; Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, pp. 249, 368f.

all the hopes which he associates with the royal child. In this passage there appear some elements of old coronation ritual such as is found in Egypt, the bestowal of new royal names, and the statement about the power and righteousness of the King.<sup>1</sup> In the latter (11:1-9),<sup>2</sup> the message is this: there comes out a future ideal king, a new David,<sup>3</sup> from the root of Jesse; he will be equipped with several charismata. This second David will be equipped by the spirit of the Lord, which provides his wisdom and understanding, power and determination, the knowledge of God and the fear of Yahweh. He will be a wholly devout and righteous king who will act completely in accord with the will of his Lord Yahweh. He will rule his people with righteousness, and be concerned for the poor and the weak. His rule will be in a way pleasing to God and man.<sup>4</sup> He will bring his people to live in the paradisaal state where men and other creatures will live peacefully together; the whole world is brought into the condition intended for it by God. In spite of the critical doubt concerning these two passages, they are of great importance for the concept of ideal kingship and the early development of the Messianic hope.

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1. Zimmerli, Man and His Hope in the Old Testament, p. 102.
  2. On the authenticity of the passage, cf. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 319. Many critics have doubted it, but recently Kaiser, (op. cit., pp. 152-155), has spoken in favour of authenticity.
  3. The expression 'the root of Jesse', refers to the origin of David. Isaiah is probably not thinking simply of any future anointed one seated on the throne of David but of a new David, at whose advent Yahweh will restore the glory of the original Davidic empire (von Rad, op. cit., p. 170).
  4. Kaiser, op. cit., pp. 157ff.

According to von Rad, Isaiah's teaching is mainly based on two election traditions, namely, the Zion tradition and the Davidic tradition.<sup>1</sup> Isaiah has clearly recognized the coming destruction of the nation. But Yahweh will once again make a new beginning for the people of Israel and the ruling house of David. He will save a faithful remnant to be the nucleus of the new Israel. The people will have a faithful and righteous leader who will bring them—and even the whole world—righteousness, justice, and peace. Although he does not promise military victory, he predicts the survival of the nation in the crisis, the inviolability of Zion, and the hope in the new-born king. But this promised salvation is not unconditional, it is based on the remission of sins (cf. 1:18; 6:5;) and on repentance and trust.<sup>2</sup>

For Micah, the country prophet, who might have been influenced by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah,<sup>3</sup> the sins of the people are concentrated essentially in the major cities. He charges both Israel (Samaria) and Judah with degenerate cults and social abuses, yet without doubt his main concern is with Jerusalem (Mic. 1:5-9).<sup>4</sup> Micah regards unrighteousness and unfaithfulness as a breach of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel and Yahweh will not allow such crimes to go unpunished. He pronounces a doom on Judah which will be total destruction. He is the first prophet to announce

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1. G. von Rad, op. cit., p. 174; see also W. Eichrodt, 'Prophet and covenant: the Exegesis of Isaiah', in PE, pp. 167ff.

2. J. Bright, 'Isaiah', PC, 422 e-f.

3. Anderson, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 157.

4. Cf. E. Hammershaimb, 'Some leading Ideas in the Book of Micah' in Old Testament Prophecy, (1966), pp. 30ff.

directly the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (3:12); in this respect he is the forerunner of Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 26). Although Micah vehemently denounces all this yet he does not overstress God's wrath to the exclusion of God's mercy.

The first three chapters of the book of Micah, which are generally ascribed to Micah the prophet, have no explicit perspective of hope, but there is an idea of remnant which indicates a righteous group within the community (Mic. 2:3f.; 3:3). The remainder of the book which is commonly regarded as of later origin, has some explicit message of hope.

In Mic. 5:1-4,<sup>1</sup> the prophet foresees the emergence of a Messianic ruler of Davidic stock, who will bring peace and security to a people purified by suffering. It is worth noting that here the hopeful future calls the people back again to the beginning of their history. As once from the politically insignificant clan of Ephrath, of Bethlehem, Yahweh had raised up a saviour during the oppression of the Philistines, so in the time of trouble when the Assyrian threat to make an end hangs over Jerusalem, a ruler will be called from the ancient clan and turn aside the enemy. Not only will the new dominating ruler from the house of David save his people from the Assyrians, but he will also look after his people by the strength and majesty which he has from Yahweh and he will give them justice and peace. It is not fanciful to assume that when the prophets present their hope of an ideal Davidic King they are not only thinking of the victorious political aspect of his reign but also of the social and religious consequences for society. Hammer-

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1. Cf. A. S. Kapelrud, 'Eschatology in the Book of Micah', VT 11 (1961), pp. 400ff.; M. B. Crook, 'The Promise in Micah 5', JBL 70 (1951), pp. 313ff.; Hammershaimb, op. cit., pp. 47ff.

shaimb is not wrong in thinking that there is hope for unification of the two kingdoms in the passage of Mic. 5:1-4, not only because the hope of a new David (David is the king who unites the nation) but also from v. 3b, when the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.<sup>1</sup> Without doubt, this prophecy is rooted in the Davidic tradition and it has a close relationship with Isa. 7 and 11. The hope of a new king inaugurating an era of peace and justice may be associated with the oracles in 4:1-5.<sup>2</sup> The final verses of Mic. 3 forecast the destruction of Jerusalem and imply its abandonment by Yahweh. But for Micah, unlike Isaiah who looks for a renewal of Jerusalem, the new beginning is bound up with the elimination of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> In Mic. 4:1-5, the prophet describes the future glorious reign of Yahweh from Zion when there will be universal peace. All nations acknowledge the Lordship of Yahweh and people from over the world will come to Jerusalem to hear the words of the Lord.

The attitude of true repentance and hope is graphically seen in Mic. 7:7-20. Yahweh will gather his people from the nations and bring them back to their land in which he will establish them as a new strong nation and carry on his saving work (cf. 2:12f.; 4:6f.). In brief, the themes of hope in the book of Micah are the promise of the remnant, and ideal king, and the renewal of

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1. Hammershaimb, op. cit., pp. 48ff.

2. Cf. E. Cannawurf, 'The Authenticity of Micah IV: 1-4', VT 13 (1963), pp. 26-33; he and some scholars think that Mic. 4:1-5 is borrowed from Isa. 2:2-4. But others think that although it may have been undergone later revision, it may well date to the historical situation of Micah (cf. Kapelrud, op. cit., pp. 395f.).

3. Von Rad, op. cit., p. 170.

Zion with the universal peace. In order to convey the depth of the grace of God, Micah points to the old traditions---the Sinai tradition, the Exodus and Settlement traditions, and the Davidic tradition.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Jeremiah

Jeremiah was of a priestly family from Anathoth and was called to be a prophet when he was young. He had seen the reforms of Josiah, the death of Josiah, and the miserable happenings in the last years of the nation. He was a man of strife and contention (Jer. 15:10). This can be seen both in his external conflict with contemporary religious attitudes and practices and the national foreign policy, and in his inner conflict, a conflict between a profound sense of inescapable divine appointment and the seeming resultlessness of the prophet's work.<sup>2</sup>

In the greater part of Jer. 1-25, the prophet vividly denounces the sins of Judah and predicts the coming judgement of Yahweh---the destruction of the Temple and City and the deportation of the people. He proclaims that Judah is doomed and that doom belongs to Yahweh's righteous ordering of history over the rebellious people of Israel. The inevitable judgement is made explicit, yet, Yahweh's desire is always that his people turn from their past ways and return to him. The aim of the prophet's word to his people is not merely castigation or threat, but the effective repentance of the nation. In fact, the linking of absolute judgement with warning and exhortation to

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1. On this, cf. W. Beyerlin, Die Kulturtraditionen Israels in der Verkündigung des Propheten Micah, (1959).

2. Cf. G. W. Anderson, Prophetic Contemporaries: A Study of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, (London, 1967), pp. 13ff.

repentance is a common characteristic of much of the first part of the book. Jeremiah is the first of the known prophets who actually experiences the destruction of Jerusalem; he is the great interpreter of this most critical event in the entire history of Israel. However, in this period, Jeremiah in Judah and Ezekiel in Babylon give their religious interpretation of those fateful years and of their vision of what lay beyond.

Although Jeremiah's message seems gloomy in the extreme, and is obscured by the presence of much material which does not belong to him,<sup>1</sup> it is in fact a message of hope: the hope of reconstruction arising from repentance (18:1-11; cf. 3:12-14; 4:1-4); the hope of a future for the exiles (24; 29; cf. 5:18ff.; 40:7-41:18); the hope of a settled future for the land of Judah (32:1-15); the union of the nation (33; cf. 23:5f.); the righteous Branch, the Davidic leader (23:5ff.); and the new covenant.

First of all, as has been stated before, the linking of absolute judgement with warning and exhortation to repentance is a common characteristic of much of the first half of the book. Particularly in Jer. 18:1-11, the prophet proclaims that Yahweh is the master of history, controlling the destinies of Israel and the other nations as a potter controls his clay. As a potter remoulds a spoiled vessel in his making, so God will remould his people who had been spoiled by their sinfulness; he will destroy what they had been, and rebuild them to conform to the original purpose he

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1. Cf. S. Herrmann, Die Prophetischen Heilserwartungen im Alten Testament, (1965), pp. 159ff.; E. W. Nicholson, Jeremiah 1-25, CBC (1973), pp. 10ff.

intended for them.<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah shows that on the one hand because the people has forfeited God's good purpose, God's present intention is to judge them and reshape them as a people for his own possession; on the other hand, what is said about repentance or returning is found within the proclamation of salvation, for if the people repent they have still a chance (cf. 3:12-14; 4:14; 35:15).<sup>2</sup> God is not only sovereign Lord free to do what he likes, but he is also gracious and patient, and he leaves the door open for the people to repent and will not let them defeat his purpose to make them his true people.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, Jeremiah's attitude towards disaster is seen in the fact that the exile of the people (597 B.C.) is due to the divine judgement and therefore the exiles in Babylon must subject themselves temporarily to the overlordship of Babylon. In the parable of the two baskets of figs (Jer. 24),<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah portrays exiles as likened to the good figs, and promises of restoration and blessing and renewed relationship to God are declared to them; by contrast, those who are in Judah and Jerusalem, are likened to the bad figs and are condemned to utter destruction. Jeremiah foresees the hollowness of the hopes held by the people after 597 B.C., namely, independence from the Babylonians and the speedy return of the exiles. His message asserts that the judgement of exile is inevitable and, yet, it is the very means whereby Yahweh creates a new

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1. Nicholson, op. cit., p. 155; W. Rudolph, Jeremias, (1958)<sup>2</sup>, p.xvi.

2. Cf. von Rad, op. cit., pp. 198f., 215f.

3. Cf. J. L. Green, 'Jeremiah', BBC 6 (1971), pp. 104f.

4. Cf. Ackroyd, op. cit., pp. 55f.; Nicholson, op. cit., pp.203ff.; E. W. Nicholson, Preaching to the Exiles, (1970), pp. 110f.

beginning for his people; therefore, the exiles are regarded as those who are the object of God's promise of blessing and restoration for the future. Also in the letter to the exiles (Jer. 29),<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah rejects all hopes of a speedy return and indicates that the judgement will befall the people both in Judah and in Babylon who look for immediate restoration (29:15-23).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, he urges the exiles to settle down in Babylon and to seek the welfare of their captors and to pray on their behalf. What is remarkable here is that the command for intercession on behalf of the hated heathen power is unexampled in the literature of the period. Yet, in spite of the fact that he discourages all hopes of a speedy return, Jeremiah does not leave the exiles comfortless. Rather, he assures them that Yahweh will fulfil their hopes and lead them home, and that, in the meantime, they can call on him and find him even in the foreign land. In other words, the exiles can worship God with true devotion and find real blessing in a foreign land without temple or cult. In sum, Jeremiah's letter to the exiles is to indicate that those who have undergone judgement in exile in Babylon are already regarded as the object of Yahweh's renewed grace, and his promises for the future (cf. Jer. 30-33) seem to be directed to them.<sup>3</sup> Yahweh promises the exiles, 'I know the plan I have for you, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and hope (  $\text{אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל}$ ). The view that the future lay with the exiles in Babylon alone eventually takes up a substantial place in

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1. Cf. E. W. Nicholson, *ibid.*, pp. 97ff.

2. Cf. 2 Kgs. 24:10-17; Jer. 27-28. This is also involved with the problem of false prophecy (Nicholson, *ibid.*, p. 107).

3. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 109.

the thought of the chronicler, and no doubt is characteristic of a whole trend in the post-exilic period.<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, Jeremiah's hope for the future is also presented by the promise of an idea of the Davidic house which is found in Jer. 23:5-6, 30:8-9, and 33:14-16.<sup>2</sup> According to Ackroyd, there are two types of presentation of the same material. In ch. 23 the oracle promising a new Davidic ruler comes as the culminating statement to a series of royal oracles linked to the warning and exhortation to the Davidic house and Jerusalem (chs. 21:1-10; 11ff.; 22:1-9). Such material is reminiscent of the conditional promises to the house of David to be found in the books of Kings (1 Kgs. 2:2-4; 9:4-9; cf. 2 Sam. 12ff.) and shows the same appreciation of the relationship between the unfaithful royal house and judgement of the community. And in Jer. 33 the promise of a righteous Davidic ruler is elaborated with an unconditional promise to both royal and priestly lines (vv. 14-18).<sup>3</sup> On the whole, in these passages Jeremiah proclaims that Yahweh will gather his people from all parts of the earth and lead them back to the homeland and remove the evil rulers and replace them by good ones, and he will raise up for them a Davidic king, described as 'a righteous Branch' to rule them in the homeland. He will execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his reign Judah will enjoy peace. His name will be 'Yahweh is our salvation', (i.e., saviour and bestower of every kind of blessing). This name may allude to the last king of Judah, Zedekiah. Thus

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1. Jer. 29:11; Cf. Ackroyd, op. cit., pp. 232ff.; Nicholson, ibid., pp. 127ff.

2. Cf. Nicholson, op. cit., pp. 83ff.; Ackroyd, op. cit., pp. 60f.

3. Ibid.; cf. Bright, Jeremiah, Anchor Bible (1965), pp. 144-146.

Israel can have a peaceful and prosperous life among the nations. This hope is not only the expectation of an ideal leader but also the expectation of a united people under single leadership.

In this connection the idea of the return to Palestine and to union with Judah of the northern tribes is expressed in the significant chapters 30-31. This section has been considerably enlarged in the process of transmission; at all events, it contains a series of sayings which deal with the future of the northern tribes. The main features of the restoration are: the dispersed tribes will be gathered again to their own land; Yahweh will make an end of the nations which have oppressed them; for all time to come the restored Israel will live in prosperity and in security without being troubled by hostile attacks; the capital will be built and an ideal community established; the good old times will come back. Pilgrimages will be made to Zion to worship Yahweh; the purpose of election will be fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

In some passages (chs. 30f.) Jeremiah prophesies the repentance and return of the northern tribes, and their reunion with Judah under the rule of the House of David. In this, Jeremiah's teaching provides a prophetic counterpart to the policy of king Josiah, that the northern part of the country should again become part of a purified and united Israel.

Fourthly, the hope for the renewal of life in Judah itself is clearly presented by the symbolic action of Jer. 32,<sup>2</sup> in which

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1. Cf. Lindblom, op. cit., pp. 373-374; Eissfeldt, op. cit., pp. 361ff.

2. Cf. C. C. Wang, 'Jeremiah's Message of Hope' SEAJT 14--2 (1973), pp. 13ff.

Jeremiah purchases (redeems) a piece of family land at Anathoth. On the basis of Yahweh's promise, Jeremiah buys the land even on the eve of a catastrophe that he himself has proclaimed as inevitable and takes great care that the deed of sale with the signature of witnesses is well preserved.<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah enacts the redeeming will of Yahweh in the situation of a broken covenant. The future of Israel depends totally on Yahweh, and there is no other hope for salvation. In this symbolic action, Jeremiah emphasizes the renewal of life in the homeland described in technical geographical terms and thus assures the exiles about the future and gives them hope.

Fifthly, the main idea of Jeremiah's future hope for Israel is to be found in the re-establishment of the covenant between God and his people. In the parable of the figs (ch. 24), Yahweh indicates that through the judgement of the exile he will make a new beginning for his people and will give them a heart to know him, and they will be Yahweh's people and Yahweh will be their God. This is a striking formulation of the fulfilment of Israel's election as the chosen people. In the prophecy of the new covenant in Jer. 31:31ff., which is addressed to all Israel, Yahweh's creative love is the dominating idea. Yahweh will make a new covenant with his people, a counterpart of the covenant of Sinai, different from it in that the divine law will now be put within men and written upon their hearts. So no one will need to teach anyone else to know the Lord, for they will all know Yahweh from the least to the greatest, and Yahweh will forgive their sin and iniquity. The

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1. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 114.

people will be a holy and forgiven people, and this will result in the restoration of an obedient community to its land.

This is the first time that the covenant is called a new covenant.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the new covenant is externally similar to and internally slightly different from, the old covenant. Yahweh will write his law in the heart of the people, that is to say, they are given knowledge of God and receive the willingness and capacity to obey his will. Yahweh will remember their sins no more and will graciously forgive them. In his reinterpretation of the covenant, Jeremiah exalts Yahweh not only as the Lord of the covenant but also as the creator of the new relationship. He emphasizes the covenantal loyalty and the forgiveness of Yahweh. It is because of Yahweh's unending grace that he can recreate the exiles into a new people, it is because of his forgiveness that he will remake the covenant with this new community.

In brief, the main themes of Jeremiah's message of hope are: people's reconstruction arising from repentance; a future remnant; a Davidic leader and the unification of the nation; and a new covenant. The distinctive features of his hope are not only shown in his emphasis on the inward and individual elements in religion, but also in his promise of a new covenant. Therefore, from all of this, it is clear that Jeremiah looks beyond the terrible disaster to a hope which is ultimately rooted in the enduring nature of the divine promise, and expressed in terms of a reversal of the words of doom.

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1. On the new covenant, cf. J. Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, pp. 332-4; H. S. Gehman, 'An Insight and A Realization', Interp. 9 (1955), pp. 279ff.; S. Herrmann, op. cit., pp. 179ff.; Nicholson, op. cit., pp. 82ff.

#### 4. Summary

From the foregoing survey of the message of hope in the main canonical prophets before Exekiel, it is clear that these messages of prophetic hope are proclaimed in the context of the relationship between Yahweh and his people, even if this particular relationship is the very reason for the prophets to announce severe judgement on the people of Israel. Yahweh is recognized as the hope of Israel, for he is, in a broader sense, the creator and the Lord of history who has a good will for the world, and he is also, in a narrower sense, the God of Israel who is faithful to the covenant and will be the saviour, leader, protector, in the present as well as in the future. The future of Israel lies in her right relationship with Yahweh. The main themes of the prophetic hope before Ezekiel can be seen in the following points.

Firstly, the possibility of repentance is the presupposition of hope. The prophets summon the people of Israel to repentance and return to Yahweh, for the renewal of life and the restoration of the nation may arise from repentance. At least they employ two words for repent, i.e.,  $\aleph \beth$  and  $\square \square \beth$ ; while the latter signifies Yahweh's alteration of his intention of action the former emphasizes on what Israel has to do. Both words contain a special covenantal signification. The prophets appeal to the people not only to repent but also put their trust in Yahweh's promises.

Secondly, Israel will be renewed as the people of God. While pronouncing the judgement of Yahweh, Amos urges the people to seek good and righteousness in the Lord that a remnant may be spared. This idea of remnant is fully developed by Isaiah that if the people repent and put their faith and trust in Yahweh then Yahweh will save

a small group or remnant which is the nucleus of the faithful people in the future. Jeremiah indicates that the exiles are the objects of God's promise of blessing and restoration for the future. But the renewal of the people can be seen in both the repentance of the people and the salvation of Yahweh for his people. Yahweh will perform political and religious salvation for his people and accept them again as his people.

Thirdly, a new covenant will be established between Yahweh and Israel. Hosea describes that, by Yahweh's steadfast love, Yahweh will take Israel to the wilderness in which he will make a new betrothal with her. Through the chastisement in the wilderness where the original covenant bond was established Yahweh will give Israel a new beginning. Jeremiah clearly presents the establishment of a new covenant between Yahweh and the people of Israel. Yahweh will put his law in the heart of his people and thus they can fully know Yahweh; and he will forgive his people for what they have done. Thus Jeremiah's promise of the new covenant makes possible the response of the people to the law of Yahweh and at the same time provides the real hope for his people.

Fourthly, the restoration of the Davidic monarchy—It is not clear how one should interpret in detail the disputed text of Amos 9:11f., in which Yahweh promises to restore the fallen booth of David. And in Hosea 3:5, David is mentioned as the king of the people; this passage may be as Judaic expansion of the text. But Isaiah has apparently promised that Yahweh will raise up an ideal king from the Davidic line and that the new king, equipped with the spirit of Yahweh, will deliver the people of Israel from all oppressions and give peace and justice to his people. Jeremiah also envisages a 'righteous branch from David's line' who will rule

his people with care and righteousness and whose name signifies his rule, 'the Lord is our salvation or righteousness'. The hope for an ideal king seems to appear in the times of political crisis; therefore, this makes the hope of the Davidic king political in character.

Fifthly, the overthrow of the enemy--Yahweh, the Lord of history, will destroy the heathen powers either by his mighty saving acts or by his vicegerent and will give salvation and peace to his people, even if Yahweh has used the heathen nations as his instruments to chastise his people.

Sixthly, the restoration of the land and the transformation of the nature--Hosea promises, through the renewal of the covenant, a renewal of the land and of the natural world. Isaiah demonstrates that when Yahweh raises up a Davidic king who is filled with the spirit of the Lord, the nation will restore its glory and Israel will have a peaceful life with the surrounding nations and even with the animal world. Jeremiah not only proclaims that Yahweh will settle his people in the land which he gave to their fathers, he also purchases a land from his relative to foretell the restoration of the land. The land is the sign of the confirmation of God's grace for his people and of Israel's belonging to God.

Seventhly, the unification of the coming nation--In spite of the fact that Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah have not clearly expressed the reunion of the nation, their hope for a new David and their idea of remnant implies the reunion of the nation under a single leadership. Jeremiah explicitly describes the repentance and return of the northern tribes, and their reunion with Judah under the rule of the house of David.

From all of this, the hope of Israel is seen in the promises and the divine acts of Yahweh which are expressed through the his-

torical events, and are conceived in terms of the relationship between Yahweh and his people. The prophets appeal to the people to turn from their ways and turn back to Yahweh. This repentance of the people seems to be the condition of the continuing existence of Israel. However, the prophets such as Hosea and Jeremiah look to Yahweh's initiative to establish a new covenant with a true knowledge of God; hence, the repentance of the people and the renewal of the nation become possible. Nevertheless, the hope of renewal seems to be conditional, depending upon the repentance of the people even if repentance and redemption are not mutually exclusive. It is also clear that although the prophetic hope of restoration presupposes the collapse of the nation, yet the nation actually still exists. For this reason the attitude to the prophets' proclamation of restoration produced a different response in their hearers in the time before the exile, while the nation still existed, from that of those who lived in the time after the national collapse.

### III. Ezekiel, Prophet of Doom and Hope

#### A. The critical problems of the Book of Ezekiel

The main problems of the book are threefold; the unity and the composition of the book, the place of Ezekiel's ministry, and the chronology of the book. The purpose of this discussion is not to give a full-scale survey of the criticism of the book, but to indicate what are the main problems raised by the book and then present a brief statement of the position on these problems which is adopted in the present study.

Before the twentieth century, few critics cast doubt on the integrity and authenticity of the book. For the book appears, compared to the other great prophetic books, to be one of striking homogeneity, and orderly arrangement. It contains mainly two corpus of Ezekiel's prophecy, whereas the first twenty-four chapters consist of prophecies of judgement such as he uttered before the fall of Jerusalem, the second twenty-four chapters embrace about prophecies against the nations and prophecies of the restoration of Israel. Not only does it bear the stamp of a single mind in its phraseology, its imagery, its literary style, and its mode of thought, but the same historical background is also reflected from beginning to end. Moreover, the unity of the book is further reflected in the apparent orderliness of its composition and in a system of dates in more or less chronological order.

The traditional view on the unity of the book is represented by scholars like R. Smend, S. R. Driver, and G. B. Gray, who maintain that the book is the authentic work of the prophet-priest,

Ezekiel who lived in the sixth century and worked among the exiles of Babylon and that the systematic arrangement of the book is due to the prophet himself.<sup>1</sup> This traditional view is generally accepted and seen in the works of W. F. Lofthouse, H. A. Redpath, A. B. Davidson, and J. Skinner.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the existence of some minor glosses and inconsistencies in the book is admitted.

But in 1900, R. Kraetzschmar found parallel texts and doublets in the book and maintained that two recensions existed, one in the first person and the other in the third person, and were put into the present form by a redactor.<sup>3</sup> His theory reminds one of the statement by Josephus that Ezekiel wrote two books.<sup>4</sup> But it is not clear which 'two books' are meant by Josephus, since he did not give any explanation at all. Against Kraetzschmar's two recensions theory, J. Herrmann argued that there were some original and independent speeches of Ezekiel which were gradually collected and corrected and edited by the prophet himself, and that there were, he admitted, some small additions from a later hand.<sup>5</sup>

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1. R. Smend, Der Prophet Ezechiel, (Leipzig, 1880), pp. xxiff.;

S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, (1891), pp. 278ff.; G. B. Gray, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, (1913), p. 198.

2. Lofthouse, Ezekiel, Century Bible (1907); Redpath, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, (London, 1907); Davidson, Ezekiel, (Cambridge, 1906); Skinner, The Book of Ezekiel, The Expositor's Bible (London, 1895).

3. Krätzschmar, Das Buch Ezechiel, (Göttingen, 1900).

4. Josephus, Antiquities X, v. 1.

5. Herrmann, Ezechiel Übersetzt und erklärt, KAT XI (1924).

G. Hölischer advanced a much more extreme hypothesis, attributing to the prophet only some of the poems and a few brief prose passages and ascribing the remainder of the book to a fifth century editor. The former was a real prophet and a poet, who was deported to Babylon in 597 and belonged to the pre-exilic tradition, and his authentic work mainly in poetic form. The latter was a writer who compiled the book and belonged to the Deuteronomic school. Thus Hölischer concluded that out of the present bulk of the book only 170 verses were genuine, while the rest of the book, which was from the redactor, was unauthentic, and that the book was a Pseudepigraph.<sup>1</sup> W. A. Irwin held that Ezekiel, who was a prophet and never became a priest, carried out his ministry only in Palestine from 600-586 B. C. although he was later deported to Babylon when the nation collapsed, and that Ezekiel delivered his prophecies only in Palestine. He held that only 251 verses in poetic form were genuine and that these original prophecies were later on interpreted and edited by an exilic hand.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Irwin was led to a conclusion which was very similar to that of Hölischer and attributed to Ezekiel only about one fifth of the book.

Doubt has also been cast on the traditional view concerning the place of Ezekiel's ministry. V. Hertrich<sup>3</sup> demonstrated that Ezekiel was in Palestine from the time of his call in 593 B. C. until the second deportation, and that Jerusalem was the historical

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1. Hölischer, Hesekiel. Der Dichter und Das Buch, BZAW 39, (1924).

2. Irwin, The Problem of Ezekiel, (Chicago, 1943).

3. Hertrich, Ezechielp Probleme, BZAW 61 (1932).

setting of the original book of Ezekiel (chs.1-39) which was re-worked and modified by an exilic editor, providing an exilic context and adding chs. 40-48. But Hertrich still kept the traditional exilic date, that given in the book itself. Hertrich's theory that Ezekiel exercised his ministry in Jerusalem and that a redactor was responsible for the transfer to a Babylonian setting is followed by J. B. Harford, G. R. Berry, and I. G. Matthews.<sup>1</sup>

Also influenced by Hertrich, W. O. E. Oesterley and A. Bertholet, who, independently of each other, advanced a theory of the so-called 'double ministry'.<sup>2</sup> Oesterley demonstrated that Ezekiel was called to be a prophet in 602 B. C., i.e., in the reign of king Jehoiakim and worked in Jerusalem until he was deported to Babylonia with the first exiles and thereafter continued his work there, and that it was Ezekiel himself who first put both his Palestinian and his exilic prophecies into writing, but later on work was edited by his co-religionist with some minor additions.<sup>3</sup>

Nearly similar to this conclusion, Bertholet argued that Ezekiel was called twice; the first call (2:3-3:9) was in 593 B. C., after which he carried out his ministry in Jerusalem until the fall of the city; the second call (1:4-2:2) was in Babylonia, after which he worked among the exiles. According to Bertholet, most parts of

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1. Harford, Studies in the Book of Ezekiel, (Cambridge, 1935); Berry, 'The Composition of the Book of Ezekiel', JBL 58 (1939), pp. 163ff.; Matthews, Ezekiel, AAC (1939).
  2. Oesterley, 'The Book of Ezekiel--A Survey of Recent Literature', COR 116 (1933), pp. 187ff.; Bertholet-K. Galling, Hesekiel, HAT 13 (1936).
  3. Oesterley, loc. cit.

the book were originally written by Ezekiel himself, but there was a later editor who compiled them, and transferred the prophet's ministry wholly to Babylonia. It is from this later editor that the present book has all its exilic atmosphere or Babylonian background.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the problem of the chronology is here concerned with two things, i.e., the datings given in the book to specific prophecies and the time in which Ezekiel carried out his ministry. At least 14 dates can be found in the book, but with the exception of those found in 1:2; 33:21; and 40:1; all of these datings do not have clear indications of events from which they are counted. Besides, the most puzzling date is found in the opening words of the book, with reference to 'the thirtieth year'. This much discussed date is by no means clear. Furthermore, the problem of datings has a definite relation to the question of the period in which Ezekiel carried out his ministry.

The radical views concerning the chronology of the book come from C. C. Torrey<sup>2</sup> and J. Smith.<sup>3</sup> Torrey, based on the observation that the religious confrontation between the Samaritans and the post-exilic Jews, argued that the book was pseudepigraph which was written by a prophet in Jerusalem about 230 B. C., supposedly from the time of Manasseh's reign in the seventh century, and that

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1. Bertholet, op. cit., especially pp. xivff.

2. Torrey, Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy, (New Haven, 1930).

3. Smith, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel-A New Interpretation, (London, 1931).

it was originally Palestinian setting but later was edited and transferred by an editor into a Babylonian setting, and that the name 'Ezekiel' was a fictitious name. For Smith, Ezekiel was a real northern Israelite who was exiled in 734 B.C., but in the thirtieth year after the fall of Samaria he returned to Palestine. Instead of going back to northern Israel, he went to Jerusalem and carried out his ministry there under the reign of king Manasseh. Ezekiel delivered two sets of oracles, one in the exile and one in Palestine, which were united and given a Babylonian setting by a later editor.

Some other scholars have advanced some proposals on the date of the prophet. While N. Messel<sup>1</sup> removed Ezekiel from the exilic period and transferred him to the Persian period ca. 400 B.C., L. E. Browne<sup>2</sup> claimed that Ezekiel lived in the time of Alexander and was an exile to Hyrcania in the year 344-343 B.C.

In spite of all assaults from those who advanced drastic views, the older critical view is not without its defenders. The major commentary of G. A. Cooke<sup>3</sup> published in 1936 affirmed the traditional view of the book, particularly on the Babylonian setting. But Cooke admitted that a great number of secondary expansions could be found in the book. Yet, he maintained that the book was substantially a unity in considerably modified form. After the publication of Cooke's work, a number of studies appeared defending the traditional view and challenging the more radical views concerning the problems of the book. Among the new contributions to the traditional

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1. Messel, Ezechielfragen, (Oslo, 1945), especially pp. 14-32.

2. Browne, Ezekiel and Alexander, (London, 1952).

3. G. A. Cooke, Ezekiel, ICC (1936).

view, those of C. G. Howie,<sup>1</sup> G. Fohrer,<sup>2</sup> and W. Zimmerli,<sup>3</sup> are very significant. They apply all critical methods with the help of the results of new archaeological and philological studies to give significant understanding of the book. Recent studies of the book of Ezekiel seem in the main to have followed the traditional view; but the existence of redactional process of the book has received general acceptance. This can be seen in the works by W. Eichrodt,<sup>4</sup> W. Zimmerli,<sup>5</sup> J. Muilenburg,<sup>6</sup> J. W. Wevers,<sup>7</sup> and K. W. Carley.<sup>8</sup> But it should be noted that although there has been an increasing tendency to accept the substantial unity of the book, yet that does not mean that the problems of the book have been solved, and that all drastic criticisms do give significant contributions to the studies of the book. Now, the position underlying the present study is as follows.

First, the fact that the book reflects a single mind and an orderly course of thought, and the systematic arrangement of the composition suggests that it is a substantial unity; although the literary composition of the book is not entirely from Ezekiel. The book as now it stands is the result of a very long process of

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1. Howie, The Date and Composition of Ezekiel, (Philadelphia, 1950).
  2. Fohrer, Die Hauptprobleme des Buches Ezechiel, BZAW 72 (1952); and with K. Galling, Ezechiel, HAT 13 (1955).
  3. Zimmerli, Ezechiel, BKAT (1955-1969), and his articles in GO.
  4. Eichrodt, Ezekiel, OTL (ET, 1970).
  5. Zimmerli, loc. cit.
  6. Muilenburg, 'Ezekiel', in PC (1962), 494a-517h.
  7. Wevers, Ezekiel, NCB (1969).
  8. Carley, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, CBC (1974).

growth. The diversity of interest, the doublets, the repetitions and the inconsistency are not necessarily to be regarded as not coming from the prophet himself. However, in spite of all this, allowance must still be made for the existence of later additions, chiefly in chs. 38-48. These additions and expansions come in all probability from the circle of the prophet's disciples; in effect, they do not contradict the main thought of Ezekiel.

Secondly, according to the information given in the book, Ezekiel was a priest who was deported with the first exiles in 598 to Babylonia where he was called to be a prophet in 593, and where he carried out his whole ministry. 'The Babylonian setting is not obtruded, as one would expect, if it had been deliberately foisted on the material in process of editing. But both in language and in background there is considerable indirect evidence of Babylonian origin.... Spoken and acted prophecies about the Jews in Palestine did not require a Palestine audience and spectators; for elsewhere we find prophecies spoken and acted in Palestine which applied to, or were addressed to, distant foreign nations.... Ezekiel's knowledge of conditions and events in Jerusalem would be derived partly from experience, and partly from reports brought to Babylonia. That he sometimes had, in addition, abnormal knowledge of events taking place elsewhere, or visionary experience in which he felt himself to be transported to Jerusalem, need not be denied on a priori ground.'<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the problem of the chronology of the book is rather complicated, because of 14 dates there are only three which

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1. Anderson, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, p.138.

explicitly refer to the time or the event from which they are counted (Ezek. 1:2; 33:21; 40:1). And as a matter of the historical fact, only 33:21 is a real clear historical date. Furthermore, the disputed date in 1:1 is by no means clear.<sup>1</sup> However, from all these dates and the implication of the content of the book, it seems sound to hold that Ezekiel was a priest in Jerusalem and exiled in Babylonia and there called to be a prophet for a long time. 'The historical allusions in Ezekiel are best explained in term of the early exilic period and there are no convincing references to subsequent history. Further, the cultic regulations in the closing chapters are more easily accounted for as an exilic programme coming between the Deuteronomic and Priestly legislation than on any other hypothesis'.<sup>2</sup>

#### B. Ezekiel, his life and his work

Ezekiel, Jeremiah's younger contemporary, was a Zadokite priest who went into exile in Babylonia in 597 B. C. In the fifth year of his exile, through a wonderful vision which occurred by the river Chebar, he was called by Yahweh, the God of Israel whose presence unexpectedly confronted the prophet in a foreign land in his full royal glory, to the role of prophet and watchman to exercise his ministry to the house of Israel. He was married and had no children; his wife suddenly died before the fall of Jerusalem as a sign of the impending disaster to the house of Israel. His prophetic activity lasted for 22 years (Ezek. 1:1; 29:17). Nothing

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1. Cf. R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, (1969), pp. 836ff.

2. Anderson, op. cit., p. 139.

is known of his life apart from what is contained in the book which bears his name, now is there any tradition to tell when and how he died.

If the book which bears his name is substantial unity and fairly represents his teaching and personality, then he was an extraordinarily many sided character: visionary and moralist; ecstatic and lawgiver; the heir of the rich traditions of the past and the herald of much that lay in the future.<sup>1</sup> He was a man with wide range of tensions within his person. He was a priest; his concern for the right ordering of the ritual and his intention to keep the sacred traditions of cultus, laws, and the temple in the time of the destruction of the nation reflect the highest traditions of the Jerusalemite priesthood. No other prophet of the Old Testament demonstrates such an acute sympathy for Priestly theology and cultic rite. He shows very close affinities in thought and language with the priestly traditions, and his rationalizing and schematizing element in his thought is also typical of the priestly mind. But he is also a prophet who, like his prophetic predecessors, came with a message of divine judgement upon Israel, and in passionate utterances inveighs against her radical sinfulness, and also who experiences his prophetic call and visions, carries out symbolic actions, and utters denunciations of false prophets. His abnormal psychological experiences exemplify in a striking way one feature of the prophetic movement. He is the first known prophet of the exile whose attention is entirely concentrated upon the reality of the disaster, which, for the first time, the

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1. G. W. Anderson, Prophetic Contemporaries, p. 24; cf. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 22ff.

actual destruction of the city and temple and the experience of exile are a central reality.

But he also represents a transition to a new emphasis in prophecy and to new developments in Israel's religion. After the fall of the nation he proclaims the message of hope in a fullness of detail which is characteristic and thus he heralds the post-exilic prophecies of restoration. He is also the morning star of apocalyptic; his imagery, which is often artificial and bizzare, is more akin to the symbolism of apocalyptic than the simpler and more natural symbolism of earlier prophets. 'In his prophecies of restoration, he heightens the element of sheer miracle; and here, too, he is nearer to the apocalyptists than to the pre-exilic prophets. Again, much of his teaching about the future is presented in a form which points forward to the detailed legislation of post-exilic Judaism.'<sup>1</sup> Thus two main spheres intersect in his personality, the life of the priest and that of the prophet, so his life is filled with strain and tension between the tradition he inherited and the demands of his call to be a prophet.<sup>2</sup>

Besides, Ezekiel is also a gifted poet and a versatile prose writer; his prophetic utterances reveal an amazing store of knowledge related to natural, national and international conditions. Not only does he draw extensively on non-Israelite material,<sup>3</sup> he also shows his great knowledge of Israel's earlier prophetic traditions and history. In his theological interpretation of history he presents the history of Israel as from beginning to end a history

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1. Anderson, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 139.

2. Eichrodt, op. cit., p.22.

3. Cf. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 416.

of rebellion, giving no grounds for pride and hope, which is different from that of his predecessors. He predicts utter corruption and also declares the intention of God that man should live, turning from their evil ways. He thus combines the appreciation of what man ought to do in response to the action of God with the realization of the radical nature of sin.<sup>1</sup> He is appointed as a watchman for the house of Israel and he himself feels responsible for the salvation of the individuals as well as the house of Israel. Not only is he a sign for the house of Israel (Ezek. 12:6; 24:24) but his wife is also involved with his prophetic activity (Ezek. 24:15ff.).

Being such a complicated person, he might have been subjected to various influences from every possible side of his world. From the hints in his book one may point out the following factors: a) the Deuteronomic reform in the time of King Josiah; b) the thoughts of his prophetic predecessors, especially Jeremiah;<sup>2</sup> c) the traditional disciplines of priesthood, especially its law and concept of God; d) his profound knowledge and understanding of the traditions and history of Israel; e) his abnormal psychological characteristics; and f) his sensitive reflection of living in a crucial era.<sup>3</sup> One might presume that he spent the rest of his life in Babylon. Although he lived among the exiles, he rarely talked about their situation, instead his message was for the house of Israel as a whole.

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1. P. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, p. 104.

2. Cf. Cooke, op. cit., p. xxxi; Davidson, op. cit., pp. xix, xlivff., J. W. Miller, Das Verhältnis Jeremias und Hesekiel, (Assen, 1955).

3. Cf. Lofthouse, op. cit., pp. 4ff.

Ezekiel's teaching exhibits two main contrasted emphases, corresponding to the two main periods of his prophetic ministry. Before the fall of the nation his work was mainly, if not entirely, directed toward the people in Judah. His task was to convince his unwarrantably optimistic hearers that Jerusalem would fall. But a change came at the moment of the fall of the nation. He became a prophet of salvation and hope, proclaimed words of consolation, and depicted the future of Israel to encourage the people whose optimism had been transformed into a despairing fatalism that God still had a purpose for his people.

After the fall of the nation the people of Israel were divided into three parts: a) the people who lived in Judah; b) the exiles; and c) the refugees who were scattered in other countries. There are at least three main types of reaction to the destruction of the nation.<sup>1</sup> First of all, there was a deep and significant crisis of the traditional faith.<sup>2</sup> The people might have questioned every aspect of their faith, but the main questions seem to be directed to the nature of God. Secondly, their reaction was syncretistic in their life. Some followed the customs, the religions and cultures of the pagan world. It seemed to them that worshipping the gods of the other nations was more practical and advantageous to their living than their worshipping Yahweh. Finally, their reaction was despair. They thought that the departure of the glory of Yahweh from Israel was the sign of destruction. And the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem seemed to have destroyed all the historical

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1. Cf. P. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, (London, 1968), pp. 39ff.

2. Cf. J. Muilenburg, 'The History of the Religion of Israel', IB 1 (1952), p. 331.

evidences of traditional faith. The Israelites might want to seek for the understanding of the will of Yahweh, but the mortal blow was too severe for them to endure. There seemed no future and no hope before them. So it was a dark and gloomy era when Ezekiel had to give his religious interpretation of the crucial age and events and present his vision of what lay beyond. The aim of Ezekiel's commission is seen to be the revelation of God by word and deed, leading to the knowledge of that Yahweh is the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

C. The message of Doom (before the fall of the nation)

As stated in the previous section, Ezekiel's teaching exhibits two main contrasted emphases, corresponding to the main period of his prophetic ministry. Before the fall of the nation he was a prophet of doom, but after the fall he became a prophet of hope.<sup>1</sup> As an exile, Ezekiel found himself occupying a totally different position in the national crisis from those who had stayed at home; but he had indeed shared the common foundation of faith. 'That Israel has been chosen and exalted to be the covenant people by the unsearchable love of God, that Jerusalem occupies a peculiar position among the nations of the world, that the temple should offer a special possibility of personal meeting and fellowship with the divine Lord of the covenant, that is to say, the articles of faith on which the whole people (including the exiles) based their consciousness of their own identity, these were things which the messenger of God not only did not impugn, but took for granted as the premises on which his faith in God was based (5:5f.; 16:1-14; 20:5f.; 23:4)'.<sup>2</sup>

'Ezekiel's prophecies of doom consist of condemnations of the disobedience and apostasy of the people and assertions of the certainty of impending destruction. In general character they belong to the tradition of such prophecies from the time of Amos onwards, but they are marked by a certain lurid quality; and they are accompanied by descriptions of abnormal psychological experiences and actions of the type known as "acted prophecies" or "dramatic

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1. Cf. Anderson, Prophetic Contemporaries, p. 24.

2. Cf. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 27.

symbolism" (e.g., chapters 3-5; 8). Such features are present in the records of earlier prophets; but in the book of Ezekiel they are particularly prominent.<sup>1</sup> Since his calling, Ezekiel was conscious that Yahweh was the mighty Lord of the world, independent from Zion and from every other earthly limitation. Therefore Jerusalem and its Temple, that guarantee in stone of the election of Israel, could be and should be utterly destroyed through his visionary experience, his symbolic actions, and prophetic words.<sup>2</sup>

The call of Ezekiel<sup>3</sup> occurred in the fifth year of his exile near the river Chebar at Tel-Abib, where the divine majesty appeared to him. He encountered the manifestation of the majesty and royal glory of Yahweh proceeding from a storm advancing from the north. In some respects this resembles the experience of Isaiah in his call vision (Isa. 6).<sup>4</sup> The grave significance of the theophany is that here far away in exile, Yahweh as king sitting on His heavenly throne confronts the priest, Ezekiel, and calls him as his prophet in order to reveal his message to his people.<sup>5</sup> The people of Israel are apt to think that the presence of God is linked with a particular land or any earthly limitation. Until that time Ezekiel, like the rest of the exiles, would have felt himself, removed as he was

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1. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 24f.

2. Eichrodt, loc. cit.

3. Ezek. 1-3—this is the most detailed inaugural vision in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. Cf Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, pp. 190f.

4. Cf. Wevers, op. cit., p. 40; Zimmerli, Ezekiel, pp. 35ff.

5. The second call in 3:17-21 is to commission the prophet to be a watchman who should serve with full responsibility for individuals.

from the central religious symbols of his faith, terribly isolated from all that gave meaning to life. Now, with the presence of God in a distant land, Ezekiel acknowledges that Yahweh is the mighty Lord of the universe who is living, majestic, and independent of all earthly limitations.

But, what the present study is here concerned with is the commission by which the prophet is called to proclaim the message of God to a rebellious people (2:4, 5). The messages are contained in the form of a scroll and are described as the words of lamentation, mourning, and woe (2:10).<sup>1</sup> The prophet is warned of Israel's hostility and obstinacy and is assured of the divine protection. Then he is ordered to eat the scroll in order to absorb the divine word.<sup>2</sup> The eating of the scroll and the endowment with divine word also give the prophet the impulse to do his task. The divine word thus becomes part of the prophet's life, expressed in all that he says and does. Thus in his call it has been revealed to Ezekiel that the Israelites have a long history of rebellion against God and that the message which he is going to proclaim is a message of lamentation and mourning and woe.

The other vision which reveals the sins of Jerusalem and its judgement is recorded in chs. 8-11.<sup>3</sup> In a state of trance the prophet

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1. The content of the scroll may be seen as the content of Ezekiel chs. 4-24.

2. For the endowment of the divine word see Jer. 1:9; for the eating of the scroll, see Jer. 15:16; Pss. 19:10; 119:103. Ezekiel's eating the scroll of woe is a visionary experience unparalleled elsewhere in the Old Testament.

3. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 201ff.; he holds that chs. 10:13f. and 11:1-13, 14-21 are the later additions; Wevers, op. cit., pp. 77ff.

is transported from Babylon to Jerusalem; there he sees various forms of idolatry being practised in the temple (8:1-18). There, he sees the coming of God's terrible agents of judgement, who at Yahweh's behest break forth in the city with their instruments of murder to kill all except the small remnant who sigh over the abominations and whom a priestly figure had previously identified by a protective sign. It is then precisely this priestly figure, however, who receives the commission to cast fire from God's sanctuary on the city and to spread the judgement which begins in the sanctuary itself (9:6) throughout the city. This process of judgement reaches its climax, however, when the prophet sees Yahweh's glory withdraw from the sanctuary and desert the land.<sup>1</sup> The departure of Yahweh's glory from the temple is the token of the coming disaster. It seemingly indicates that Yahweh will have forsaken his people and withdrawn his divine presence from the people.

The report of his call does not yet reveal any of the actual content of Ezekiel's harsh proclamation. This content is given in the subsequent chapters of the first half of the book. They also show that Ezekiel delivered his proclamation in two ways, as Yahweh ordered. Accompanying the proclamation by word is a proclamation by deeds, particular symbolic acts which he is commissioned to perform. These acts present most graphically the real content of the prophetic proclamation.<sup>2</sup> Although one can find some symbolic actions which appear in preclassical prophecy and in the great literary prophets, yet such actions occur with particular frequency in Ezekiel.

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1. Zimmerli, in Interp. 23, (1969), p. 142.

2. Zimmerli, ibid., p. 140.

In chs. 4-5:17 there are several symbolic actions which are concerned with the impending siege and subsequent fall of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The beginning of the siege of Jerusalem is described as a figurative siege which Ezekiel conducts against a brick on which a map of Jerusalem is drawn (4:1-3:7). The determination of the besiegers is shown by Ezekiel's attitude, he sets his face against the city.<sup>2</sup> Here the prophet is playing the role of Yahweh -- What the prophet is doing, that Yahweh will do. The prophet's lying in fetters is to bear the iniquity of Israel and Judah (4:4-8); and the increasing famine in the besieged city is shown in the rationing of food and drink (4:9a, 10f.). In ch. 4:12-15, a passage also expanded later, the unclean food which the prophet is to eat shows the situation of exile where one is compelled to live in an unclean territory as a situation of spiritual homelessness. Then in ch. 5:1-4, by the symbolic act of cutting off and destroying his own hair, the prophet proclaims the destruction of the Jerusalemites after the fall of the city. Over a century earlier Isaiah had prophesied a time when Judah would be shaved by the razor of Assyria (Isa. 7:20).

Having made it clear that the complete destruction and disaster will fall upon the inhabitants of the besieged city, it remains only for the prophet to declare the city's identity. This is Jerusalem (ch. 5:4-17).<sup>3</sup> Although Jerusalem is chosen to be the dwelling

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1. Chs. 4:4-8; 4:12-15 are seen as later expansions. Cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 140; Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

2. On the setting of the prophet's face toward the subject of prophecy, see Carley, *Ezekiel among the Prophets*, pp. 40ff.

3. Cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 132ff.; he holds that vv. 5-6a, 8-9, 14-15 are original and the rest of the passage seem to be secondary; also Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

place of Yahweh which is seen as the centre of the world (Ezek. 38:12) and as an example of God's ruling the world, yet the Israelites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, have rejected Yahweh and surpassed the nations in wickedness. Therefore Yahweh has to punish this wicked city so that the peoples of the nations are able to see in Israel a people who have disobeyed God's law and are now an example of God's judgement (5:8f., 14f.). This judgement is intended both as an example and as a vindication of Yahweh's holiness.

Again in ch. 12:1ff. the prophet is commanded to perform the actions of someone who is about to be deported. He is to pack his small exile's baggage in broad daylight in the view of his people and then in the evening load it on his shoulders for his departure. This symbolic act indicates the exile in general and the fate of Zedekiah in particular (Jer. 39:4-7; 52:7-11). According to chs. 12:17-20 and 21:11f., the quaking with which Ezekiel eats his bread and his sighing are symbols anticipating the agony which will come to the people.<sup>1</sup> The people will live in quaking terror at the devastation of their land. When the Babylonians finally threaten Jerusalem, the prophet is instructed to perform another symbolic action (Ezek. 21:23-29). He is to draw on the ground two roads starting from the same point and going in different directions and to put a signpost in the crosspoint to indicate the directions, the one leading to Ammon, and its capital Rabbah, the other to Judah and its capital Jerusalem. There the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar stands at the crossroad and then decides to take the road to Jerusalem and not that to the Ammonite capital.<sup>2</sup> It is Yahweh's

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1. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 271ff.; cf. Ezek. 4:10f., 16f.

2. Cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 484ff.; H. H. Guthrie, Jr., 'Ezekiel 21', *ZAW* 74 (1962), pp. 268ff.

will to use the heathen instrument to punish his rebellious people. Although the heathen king might have not known the intention of Yahweh, the people of Israel should know the coming judgement and the sovereignty of Yahweh. Finally, in ch. 24:15-27 Ezekiel is warned that his wife will die suddenly, but he is not to carry out the usual mourning rites for the dead. When his wife suddenly dies and he acts in this unusual way, he is asked to explain and an oracle applies his action to the coming catastrophe (cf. Jer. 16:5-9). From all that has been shown in the symbolic actions, the message of judgement is plain<sup>1</sup>: that the city will be destroyed and the people will be deported by their enemies. These symbolic actions make clear how the prophet's whole person is possessed by his proclamation. He becomes totally the servant of the acts which he deliberately undertakes, such as the three symbolic acts in chapters 4f. But he is also the servant of what befalls him, so that he is affected simply as one who suffers, his numbness after his wife's sudden death is an example.<sup>2</sup>

His proclamation in words alone, not symbolized in actions or vision, also points toward Jerusalem's end. In chs. 6:1-7:27<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel denounces the radical national sin and proclaims the coming end of the nation in the form of 'the day of Yahweh'. In characteristically rhetorical manner, he is to address against the mountains of Israel, the backbone of the land of Palestine but more especially the seat of the licentious and idolatrous cults, for their

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1. Only one of these symbolic actions is to convey the message of hope, namely, Ezekiel 37:15-28.

2. Zimmerli, in *Interp.* 23 (1969), p. 141.

3. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 142ff.; Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

profanation of the land and the corruption of religion.<sup>1</sup> Yahweh will punish the land and its inhabitants by sword, famine, and pestilence and the destruction will extend throughout the land. Here Ezekiel is renewing under a particular form a complaint voiced by the earlier prophets (cf. Hos. 2:2ff.; 4:13ff.; Jer. 2:23ff.; 3:2, 13; 5:7f.; 13:27; etc.).<sup>2</sup> Then in ch. 7 the prophet says that an end is coming upon the land and doom is coming upon the dwellers in the land.<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel combines the concept of 'the end' and the day of Yahweh in this chapter. Yahweh's day was once looked forward to as a day when Yahweh would bring about the defeat of all Israel's enemies and give his people peace and prosperity. But Amos had rejected that happy prospect, and that concept of the day. Instead he portrayed it as a time when Yahweh would destroy his own people in punishment for their sins (Am. 5:18-20).<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel develops this theme more fully in vv. 10-27. The prophetic theme of Yahweh's day dominates the chapter. The day will be a day of tumult for Judah and it is near. The prophecy emphasizes the imminence of the catastrophe, its inevitability, and its enormity.

Not only does Ezekiel proclaim the message of doom by the proclamation of the prophetic word, but even by parable and allegory.

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1. After the reform of Josiah, there had been a resurgence of the pagan cults, especially the worship of the high-place, in the land, cf. W. F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan, (London, 1968), pp. 181-229.
  2. W. Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p. 95; cf. D. M. G. Stalker, Ezekiel, TBC (1968), pp. 76-77.
  3. Cf. Am. 8:2; 5:18-20; Isa. 2:12-22; Zeph. 1:7, 14-18.
  4. Cf. above, pp. 59f.

The allegory of the vine (ch. 15) portrays the total destruction of the people of Jerusalem because they are unproductive, corrupt, and valueless. The image of vineyard or the vine is used in a number of passages in prophets and the psalms to depict Israel as God's people. But here Ezekiel uses the image of vine to convey the idea of judgement. The vine is useless and fit only for burning. The people and the city are depraved, useless, evil, ready for the fire. 'Characteristically he takes a despairing view of Israel's past and present, a view which he elaborates further in the next chapter'.<sup>1</sup>

In his interpretation of Israel's past history, Ezekiel appears the proclaimer of radical evil against his people. 'Jeremiah's terrible statement on the impossibility of change is here carried to its logical consequences in comprehensive historical-theological contours. It is made clear that Jerusalem and Israel fell hopelessly into evil. Ezekiel takes up images of the earlier prophets, but with terrifying rigor forms them in a message that the people of Yahweh are radically corrupt, in the literal sense of "radical" that is, from the roots'.<sup>2</sup>

Ch. 16 contains a long diatribe against Jerusalem as an adulterous and unfaithful wife. Here the prophet takes up a motif from Hosea and Jeremiah, but formulates it in his own way. He explores the pagan mixed origin of Jerusalem. 'The sinful propensity of Jerusalem is already contained in this Canaanite origin. It is a hereditary condition'.<sup>3</sup> The description continues how Yahweh

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1. Cooke, op. cit., p. 156.

2. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 143.

3. Ibid.

raises this child who had been turned out by her parents, as a foundling, gives her rich jewelry, even takes her in marriage, but receives nothing from her but thanklessness and faithlessness. The judgement that she will be treated according to the law concerning adulteresses and muderesses is the only possibility left.

The same motif is taken up again in chapter 23. Although clearly starting with Jeremiah 3:6-10, Ezekiel here speaks of two women representing the two kingdoms of Israel. He adds the ancient creedal statement of Israel's exodus from Egypt, and traces the paths of both women from Egypt. But here also, even beyond the beginnings of the Exodus, the theme of the original depravity of these two women is included. Then follows the story of Yahweh who married them. But these two women sought to satisfy their own desires and interests, irrespective of the allegiance they owed to Yahweh. Their sin is shown in their apostasy and foreign alliances. The sinfulness of the beginning leads with an inner compulsion to the later faithlessness. That is the nature of the house of Israel, in both kingdoms.

Ch. 20 is Ezekiel's recitation of Israel's sin and judgement in the past history, accompanied with the proclamation of purification and restoration in the future. As far as the message of judgement is here concerned, one can find that in vv. 1-31 the prophet divides Israel's history from the very beginning in Egypt down to his times into several phases, that these phases are in the same appearance, and that in every phase of its history Israel had already forced Yahweh to punish them, even to make the decision to scatter them among the nations. The central accusation is their rebellion against God. Here in a powerful reformulation of ancient tradition the radical sinfulness of the house of Israel from its beginning

and the unresisting decline to God's judgement are expressed.<sup>1</sup>

Ch. 17 appears also in the form of allegory, or better in fable, to announce the judgement against the oath-breaking King Zedekiah who sinned against Yahweh himself, before whom he had sworn his oath. This oath-breaking is involved with Zedekiah's appeal for help from Egypt and this leads to immediate retaliation by Babylon. By the allegory Ezekiel announces the enthronement of Zedekiah, his alliance with Egypt and revolt from Babylon, his deposition and deportation. He then contrasts the perjured and fallen monarch with the messianic king and his universal reign.

The lamentation in chapter 19, with its characteristic Kinah metre (3:2),<sup>2</sup> expresses Ezekiel's proclamation upon the theme of the destruction of the three princes of Israel. His imagery is clearly derived from the royal ideology of the Davidic house.<sup>3</sup> The lamentation is here also in a parable. Two princes of Judah are represented as young lions, sons of a lioness, and a third as vine-branch (possibly Zedekiah; cf. ch. 17). Ezekiel employs the form of lament to foretell the events that will bring mourning in the future when God's judgement will fall on the wayward. Thus Ezekiel gives vent to his inner grief over the imminent and horrifying fate of Judah, for judgement will bring to a tragic end the Davidic lineage of kings of Judah and the last remaining semblance

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1. Zimmerli, *ibid.*, p. 145.

2. Cf. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*, pp. 420ff.; Irwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 119ff.; Wevers, *op. cit.*, pp. 146.

3. Mulenbarg, in *PC* (1962), 504g; the lion (Gen. 49:9; Num. 23:24; 24:9; Mic. 5:8); the vine (Gen. 49:11-12); and the sceptre (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17).

of Israelite nationalism'.<sup>1</sup>

'Jerusalem's excess of guilt is expressed in another way in 22:1-16 by the catchword "bloody city". In 6-12 in his presentation of the sinful city, the prophet proceeds through lists of legal prescriptions in the style of the Decalogue or lists in Leviticus 18-20 and accuses the city of every single sin. Such a legal "accusation of sin" was already introduced in 16:2 and 20:4 with similar introductory words; "And you, son of man, will you not judge, will you judge the blood city? Then declare to her all her abominable deeds." The stereotyped repetition of this introductory formula leads one to think that we have here a fixed form (Gattung) of judicial accusation (perhaps only from Ezekiel's school)'.<sup>2</sup> The purpose is to show that the destruction of Jerusalem is not only just, but also necessary.

From all that has been considered about the message of doom in the book of Ezekiel, there is no denying the fact that the covenant relationship is the main concern of the prophet, only in this context, he carries out his accusation and warning. He asserts Yahweh's faithfulness and grace, at the same time he denounces Israel's rebellion against Yahweh. Before the fall of Jerusalem he proclaims that the city has to be destroyed. He is called to be a watchman to warn his people of the disasters which will soon come. The people seem to have made an idol of their history, and they appear to worship the Temple, the City and the Nation. They have lost the true knowledge of Yahweh. In addition to the idols of their own traditions, they bring in many kinds of pagan gods

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1. John T. Bunn, 'Ezekiel', BBC 6 (1972), p. 285.

2. Zimmerli, in Interp 23 (1969), p. 146.

and worship them alongside with Yahweh, and thus forget their special relationship with Yahweh. They have also committed violence, adultery, and other immoral things. Besides, Ezekiel also uses the past traditions of Israel to indicate the radical sinful origin which leads to the present decline and apostasy. He declares that Yahweh is the sovereign Lord, holy, just, and faithful; and Israel has been a rebellious house, unholy, unjust, and unfaithful.

Yahweh is holy and righteous, and his divineness cannot be sullied; rather than allow this to happen, Yahweh will let his glory depart from the land, the temple, and the people. Yahweh's holiness is linked closely with his glory. The Kabod of Yahweh is the radiant power of his being, as it were the external glorious manifestation of his mysterious holiness, which extends all over the earth. The departure of Yahweh's glory from the Temple and the land is the distinctive sign of the impending disaster, even if Ezekiel predicts the judgement of Yahweh in various forms. Although he repeatedly emphasizes the severe judgement which will soon befall the people, yet he also proclaims that Yahweh has no pleasure at all in the sinners' dying, but desires their turning away from the evil way; and at the same time Ezekiel repeatedly stresses that all the judgement is in order to enable Israel to know Yahweh. His message of doom is not merely to express the sins of the people and the wrath of Yahweh, but also to serve as an expression of the justice, or more profoundly, the salvation of Yahweh. So the justice of Yahweh and his salvation give answers to the purpose of Yahweh's judgement on his people.

In short, Ezekiel's message of doom stands in the prophetic tradition of judgement, but it has a certain extreme quality. The

main themes of his message of doom are: the complete destruction of the Temple and the city which has a affinity with the prophecies of Jeremiah and of Micah; the departure of the glory of Yahweh from the Temple and the land, which is a distinctive feature of his message of doom; the deportation of the people; and the people's quaking terror and hopeless living in the land of devastation. His message of doom emphasizes the imminence of the catastrophe, its inevitability, and its severity. Thus Ezekiel expresses the message of judgement in such an extreme way that there is no possibility of hope unless there is a miraculous new beginning.

#### D. The message of Hope (after the fall of the nation)

Having considered the message of doom which Ezekiel addressed to his people during the opening years of his ministry, we now turn to the message of hope in which he promises his people a new future. A complete section of his message of hope is found in the second half of the book (chs. 25-48); but the main themes of the message of hope are collected in chs. 33-37. But even in the first part of the book some oracles of hope are already found in the oracles of doom. The passages which are found in 11:14-21; 16:60-63; 18; and 20:32-44 are particular expansions of original words of judgement made somewhat later by Ezekiel himself or by his school.<sup>1</sup>

According to the arrangement of the material of the book, the second part of the book is divided into two sections: the oracles against the nations (chs. 25-32) and the prophecies of restoration (chs. 33-48). Since the message of hope is mainly found in chs. 33-37, therefore the present study will concentrate on this section.

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1. Zimmerli, in Interp., 23 (1969), p. 152.

Ezekiel's message of hope contains the judgement of the nations and the restoration of Israel;<sup>1</sup> but the judgement of the nations is the negative aspect of the message of hope, and no discussion of it will be offered here. We turn now to the principal passages in which the positive expression of that hope is contained. In dealing with these passages, the present study will mainly concentrate on their expressions of the message of hope and will not give detailed account of their historical settings.

#### I. Ezek. 11:14-21

In the visionary report of chs. 8-11 Ezekiel is shown the excessive idolatry of the Temple and the coming destruction of the city. This impending destruction of the city, caused by the corruption of the cult, is shown as the slaughter of the inhabitants of the city by the divine messengers (ch. 9);<sup>2</sup> the city destroyed by heavenly fire (ch. 10); the death of Pelatiah (ch. 11:1-13); and the departure of the glory of Yahweh (ch. 11:23). However, before the departure of Yahweh's glory, there is an oracle ch. 11:14-21 describing a bright future for the exiles.

The passage has been thought to be secondary and out of place, and has been ascribed to the later period of Ezekiel's career or to a later hand.<sup>3</sup> By contrast with the previous passage 11:1-13, there

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1. The judgement on the enemy is a manifestation of the glory of Yahweh and this intervention involves the liberation of Israel.
  2. Parallel can be found in Ez. 12 where the angels kill the first-born of Egyptians. It is noticeable that in the earlier time Yahweh sent his angels to kill the Egyptians in order to bring his people freedom and salvation; he now sends his angels to kill his people for their evil-doings and puts an end to the nation.
  3. Cf. Cooke, *op. cit.*, p. 124; Bertholet, *op. cit.*, p. 41; H. G. May, 'Ezekiel', *IB* 6 (1956), p. 121.

is no description of any vision or symbolic action. For this reason and also because of its appearance in the context of judgement, therefore it seems to have nothing to do with the vision of chs. 8-11. The appearance of the oracle in the visionary report of chs. 8-11 seems abrupt and improper, yet, it is not impossible that after the proclamation of the judgement the prophet might present the message of hope.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the oracle originally had nothing to do with the vision of chs. 8-11, it is simply an independent oracle. But the oracle was later inserted into the vision by Ezekiel himself (or his school) as 'a balance to the absolute gloom of the judgement on Jerusalem, more particularly as a divine response to the intercession of the prophet who despairs for the future of the remnant of Israel'.<sup>2</sup> The main message of the passage is, therefore, to answer the despairing cry of the prophet and the claim of the Jerusalemites. Although it is expanded somewhat later by the prophet himself, it seems to have been spoken at a time when Jerusalem and the Temple still stood, as is presupposed in v. 15.<sup>3</sup> The oracle has been expanded by some minor accretions. This is seen in the inconsistency of the mood, of person, and of number, in the speeches of the sentences. But the present study takes it as substantially a unity.

The structure of the oracle is this: v. 14 is the introductory formula which shows the revelation of Yahweh; v. 15 shows the claim of the Jerusalemites that the exiles are far away from the Lord and that they themselves are inheritors of the land; v. 16 denies that

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1. Cf. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 95; cf. Zimmerli, in *Interp.*, 23 (1969), p. 152.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 153; Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

they are far away from the Lord; vv. 17-20 describe the new Israel in the homeland to which they will have returned, and how they will remove away all the idols and abominations, gain a new heart and new spirit by which they can keep the laws of Yahweh who will take Israel as his people; and v. 21 is a warning. The form of the passage seem relative to the process of the court in which the issue—who is the true Israel—is discussed.

The claim of the Jerusalemites seems to both the exiles and those left behind to be true and logical. For the exiles are far away from the Lord (far way from the land and the Temple) and have lost every claim to the land once given them by Yahweh. This claim is based on the old conception that each land has its own deity and on the theology of Deuteronomy which stresses that if the people are faithful to the laws of God they will be prosperous and peaceful in the land; and if they are unfaithful, calamity will fall upon them (cf. Deut. 4:26).<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Israelites have long thought of the temple as the primary meeting place with God. The Jerusalemites might also think that they are the righteous ones and are the true recipients of the land, and that the exiles are unrighteous ones who are expelled from the land which is under the control of the land which is under the control of the heathen gods, and are no longer the people of God.

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1. According to Davidson, the words of David, 'For they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord' (1 Sam. 26:19; cf. Deut. 4:28; 26:36; Jer. 16:13; Hos. 9:3), show that living in the foreign land was to come under the dominion of other gods (op. cit., p. 74).

An attempt has been made to make the peculiar expression  $\text{עֵינַן עֲרַבָּה}$  refer particularly to the synagogue in Babylonia.<sup>1</sup> Targum paraphrases v. 16b into 'And I gave them synagogues which rank second to my temple'; hence the mediaeval Jewish name for a synagogue, 'little sanctuary'.<sup>2</sup> It is true that synagogue worship did take its origin in the state to which the exiles were reduced. But the further assertion, that such a 'little sanctuary', i.e., the synagogue as a place of cult without sacrifice, was at that time deliberately brought into existence, is one which the available evidence is plainly insufficient to establish.<sup>3</sup> The word,  $\text{עֵינַן}$ , means 'slightly' or 'little', either of time or extent. Cooke holds that this adverb has reference to degree rather than time (cf. 2 Kgs. 10:18; Zech. 1:5).<sup>4</sup> The word  $\text{עֲרַבָּה}$  is used to confirm the divine presence (sanctuary) of Yahweh in the foreign land.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that Ezekiel means here to foretell that the exile will be of short duration; but he does not elsewhere refer to its duration in any way.<sup>6</sup> So the expression that Yahweh has been ( $\text{יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ ) to the exiles a small sanctuary refers to the taunt of the dwellers in Jerusalem that the exiles are far from

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1. Cf. A. Menes, 'Tempel und Synagogue', *ZAW* 50 (1932), pp. 268f.; he relates this passage to the idea of an altar without a sacrifice in Josh. 22; but this is far from convincing.
  2. Cited in Cooke, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
  3. Cf. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
  4. Cooke, *loc. cit.*
  5. Cf. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp. 75f.; he writes, 'The presupposition of the words is that in the normal relationship between God and people, Yahweh actually becomes a sanctuary, i.e., he offers himself for personal encounter in the services of the Temple.'
  6. Lofthouse, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

the Lord and have not any claim in the land. Although it is true that Yahweh has scattered them to exile, nevertheless, he himself has been a sanctuary (divine presence, sanctification, and religious joy) to them even if it is in small measure.<sup>1</sup> G. Jahn suggests that the word 'sanctuary'  $\psi\tau\pi\omega\delta$  should be rendered 'stumbling block'  $\psi\pi\iota\omega\delta$ , so that the text is read, '...scattered them among the countries, and I became a stumbling block to them in the countries etc.'. 'Stumbling block' was changed to 'sanctuary' as being unworthy of God, and 'for a while' was added to restrict the punishment to the period of exile.<sup>2</sup> Although Stalker seems in agreement to some extent with Jahn's opinion,<sup>3</sup> he points out how Yahweh is 'to a small extent a sanctuary' for the exiles -- they have at least a prophet among them and can observe the sabbath and circumcise their sons; they can also meet together to pray and lament and hear the laws or instructions. They are not, as their opponents alleged, completely cut off from Yahweh.<sup>4</sup> Here there are some wider questions to be considered in this passage.<sup>5</sup> These are a) the question on the nature of God whether he is bound by the earthly limitation; b) the question on the nature of religion that whether worshipping God should be in the Temple and in the land of Israel or not; c) the problem of theodicy--are the exiles greater sinners than the men who are still in the homeland; and d) the question on who is the true Israel?

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1. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

2. G. Jahn, *Das Buch Ezechiel*, (Leipzig, 1905), cited in Stalker, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

3. Stalker, *ibid.*, pp. 113f.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

5. Cf. *ibid.*, 112f.

In his discussion of these questions which are motivated by the despairing cry of the prophet and the claim of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Ezekiel is granted two great oracular promises<sup>1</sup>—that Yahweh has been a small sanctuary to the exiles and that he will gather and bring them back to their homeland. But more than all this, Yahweh will, through his pure grace, give the exiles a new heart and new spirit so that they can obey his laws and statutes, and thus take them as his people again.<sup>2</sup>

In 11:16 Yahweh confirms that he has brought the exiles far from the land and the temple,<sup>3</sup> but denies that they are far from him;<sup>4</sup> he has been in some measure a sanctuary for the exiles. This very important promise affirms the presence of God with his people independently of any sacred building or temple and this involves a new concept of the relation between Yahweh and his people, which is expressed in a life lived without a visible temple and a particular land.<sup>5</sup> 'For the exiles, to have faith means to free themselves from their dependence on the Temple city, understand the judgement

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1. Muilenburg, *op. cit.*, 500c; the two oracular assurances are introduced by the formula—Therefore say, 'Thus says Yahweh'.
  2. The issue of the true Israel is an issue of identity which is the most crucial crisis of the exiles and is one of main concerns of the prophet; no wonder why he confirms strongly that Yahweh will be again God of Israel and Israel his people.
  3. Ezekiel loves to use the phrase 'scatter the people among the peoples or the nations' with the verbs  $\text{אָרַץ}$  and  $\text{פָּרַץ}$  (12; 15; 20:23; 22:15; 36:19), but here  $\text{אָרַץ}$  was replaced by  $\text{פָּרַץ}$ .
  4. Zimmerli, (*Ezekiel*, p. 252), contends that 'far from the Lord' means death, for this meaning can be deduced from the complaint of the exiles in 33:10 and 37:11; how can we live? and our bones are dry.
  5. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 97; cf. Ezek. 1:15-21; here the prophet is confronted with the glory of Yahweh in its full majesty and it is revealed that God dwells not only in Jerusalem, the chosen place of his presence, but also in the heathen land (cf. Jud. 5:4f.; 2 Sam. 5:24). The theme of the temple or the presence of Yahweh will be dealt with later.

upon it, and accept it.'<sup>1</sup> According to Zimmerli,<sup>2</sup> v. 15 the claim 'they are far away from the Lord' is by no means clear; for in 8:6; 44:10 Yahweh has been driven far away from his sanctuary by the abominations of the people. Zimmerli also argues that v. 16b should be understood with reference to v. 20, the covenant formula.  $\square \eta' \eta' \{ \chi \} \square \eta \{ \eta' \eta \chi \} \eta \chi \eta$ , which is derived from the priestly circle. The proclamation of  $\psi \tau \rho \omega \{ \square \eta \} \eta' \eta \chi$  is an exactly priestly variation of the covenant form. He explains this in terms of the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 17:3), the calling of Moses (Ex. 6:7), and the giving of the law (Ex. 29:45), so that Yahweh the God of Israel thus establishes his sanctuary in Israel and his presence in the midst of his people.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, when Yahweh declares that he has been, even just for a little time and/or in small measure, a sanctuary for the exiles, he means that the exiles are not far from him and they are his people who will receive a new heart and a new spirit and are the true Israel.<sup>4</sup>

Vv. 17-18 have been regarded as secondary.<sup>5</sup> But it is unnecessary to see them as unauthentic. Zimmerli demonstrates that the original text of 11:14ff. shows the central promise of renewal of covenant through the giving of a new heart and a new spirit to the people, but the external restoration must follow; so that Ezekiel has later expanded the passage with the themes of the gathering of

1. G. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 408.

2. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 249-250.

3. Ibid.

4. Cf. Jer. 24; 29; 30-31.

5. These verses are introduced by a fresh instruction to prophecy and the form in v. 17 is in the direct address with second person suffix; cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 251; Wevers, op. cit., p. 97; but Eichrodt (op. cit., p. 111) and Fohrer, (Ezekiel, p. 61) treat them as authentic.

the people and of return to the land, which explain the guarantee of the covenant reality.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that in v. 16 the prophet affirms the message of Yahweh in the actual experience of the exiles, that Yahweh has scattered them among the people<sup>s</sup> and has been as a sanctuary in small measure for them. In vv. 17-18 Yahweh promises the exiles the return to the land and the possession of the land of Israel. This promise can answer both the cry of Ezekiel in 11:13 and the claim of Jerusalemites. Yahweh does not put an end to his people but gives them a new beginning to be his people. There parallels to these two verses are in Deut. 30:3f.; Jer. 23:3; 29:14; 31:8; Ezek. 12:16; 34:11-16; 36:24, 29; 37:21; and 39:27. When Yahweh delivers his people from the exile and returns them to the land they will put away all idolatry which has been the main cause of the judgement of Yahweh. 'Restoration is to be the signal for reformation. The first task of the exiles on their return will be put away the detestable things out of the land. The abominations of idolatry must be removed before the ideal nation of the future can come into existence.'<sup>2</sup>

In vv. 19-20 Ezekiel presents a distinctive promise of Yahweh who, as the Creator of Israel, will give Israel a new heart and a new spirit. LXX renders  $\gamma \pi \chi$  as 'another'  $\gamma \pi \chi$ . Although  $\gamma \pi \chi$   $\gamma$  can be found a parallel in Jer. 32:39, yet in view of Ezek. 18:31 and 36:26 some MSS., Targ. and Syr. read it as  $\psi \gamma \pi$  which forms a better antithesis to 'the stony heart' than  $\gamma \pi \chi$

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1. Zimmerli, loc. cit.

2. Cooke, op. cit., p. 125.

does.<sup>1</sup> Actually the two terms, heart and spirit, are complementary and they go side by side in Ezekiel's expression, for they represent the whole personality of a man and they are regarded as the sources of emotions, intellectual activity, and voluntary action, the heart was more the seat of understanding and responsible behaviour and the human spirit more the seat of the disposition or moods over which the individual had little control. Together they describe the will and temperament of man.<sup>2</sup>

Yahweh will replace the stony heart, which is a heart of stubbornness, indifference, and unfaithfulness, with a heart of flesh, which is a heart of obedience, faithfulness, and sensitivity. The renewal of new heart and spirit pertains to the whole personality in terms of a new will and a new attitude towards things.<sup>3</sup> Not only will Israel, as she possesses a new heart and a new spirit, be able to turn away from her sins, but she will also be able to turn towards her God. In earlier times, it was Saul, the first king of Israel, who had received the gift of a new heart (1 Sam. 10:9), but it is a recurrent feature of Ezekiel's message of hope. One will also recall the new covenant of Jeremiah (31:31-34; cf. Deut. 30:11-14) since the wording and the fundamental idea are very similar in Jer. 31:31-34 and Ezek. 11:17-20 and 36:26-28.<sup>4</sup> While Jeremiah explicitly mentioned the new covenant,

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1. Cf. S. Herrmann, op. cit., p. 245, note. 3; Davidson, op. cit., p. 75.

2. Carley, op. cit., p. 71; cf. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 499.

3. Cf. Eichrodt, ibid., Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 877.

4. Cf. J. W. Miller, Das Verhältnis Jeremias und Hesekiels, (1955), pp. 98-100. On the comparison between their relation, it will be seen later.

Ezekiel speaks of a new heart and a new spirit and concludes with the covenant formula.

Reventlow<sup>1</sup> has attempted to demonstrate that the Holiness Code is the ritual for a cultic ceremony at the covenant festival in which the prophet will pronounce blessings and curses, and that Ezekiel is the prophet who holds the office to carry out the sacred liturgy; therefore the covenant tradition that he shares with the Holiness Code is the basis of his prophecy. Reventlow maintains that in 11:17-21 there are many parallels to the Holiness Code in words, in forms, and in thought. He thinks that this prophecy is a disputation oracle which has the background of legal procedure.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, S. Herrmann,<sup>3</sup> and G. Fohrer<sup>4</sup> argue that this passage has applied and reinterpreted Deuteronomy.

It is true that here the words like  $\omega\tau\rho\omega$ ,  $\text{D}'\text{ll}$ ,  $\text{S}\text{I}\text{S}\text{I}\text{X}$ , the phrase 'they will walk in my statutes and keep my judgements and obey them', and the idea of Yahweh's being a sanctuary for the people, are closely related to the Holiness Code (cf. Lev. 26:3-6; 18:4; 25:18). But there are also many similarities between Ezekiel 11:14-21 and Deuteronomy.<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel mentions the claim of the Jerusalemites which is related to the threat of the people in Deut. 4:25ff., both are related to the motif of the land. Ezekiel prophesies of the gathering and return of the people (cf. Ezek. 11:17 and Deut. 30:3-5) and he anticipates their obedience to Yahweh's statutes, so that they might live as his people (cf.

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1. H. Reventlow, Wächter über Israel, pp. 50ff.

2. Ibid., pp. 52-54.

3. S. Herrmann, op. cit., pp. 245f.

4. Fohrer, op. cit., pp. 61ff.

5. Cf. S. Herrmann, op. cit., pp. 245ff.; Fohrer, op. cit., p. 61.

Ezek. 11:20 and Deut. 7:6; 26:16-19). More important is Ezekiel's reference to the new heart and new spirit which Yahweh will give to the People. Although the heart is referred to once in Lev. 26:41 as the medium of human response to the divine will (Lev. 26:41), it is frequently referred to in such a way in Deuteronomy (6:5; etc.). This characteristic conception of the Deuteronomic tradition helps explain the divergence between Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant and the parallel prophecies in Ezekiel, in which the gift of a new heart makes possible the observance of Yahweh's statutes and judgements (Ezek. 11:20; 36:27; Deut. 26:16). It is hard to tell whether the phrase 'statutes and judgements' belongs to the priestly terminology or Deuteronomy's; but one thing is sure, that is, that here they are related to the covenant motif and they can express the relationship between God and his people.

The promise of the new heart and new spirit of Israel will not go alone without the re-establishment of the covenant. Yahweh will be their God, Israel Yahweh's people. After the proclamation of the salvation Ezekiel gives a warning of punishment to the people who follow the idols. From this one can see that before the fall of the nation Ezekiel still asks his people to turn away from the idolatry and repent.

From all of this, one can understand that the oracle in 11:14-21 is originally to answer the claim of the Jerusalemites and then the cry of Ezekiel for the future of his people. This claim contains two inseparable statements, i.e., the exiles are far away from Yahweh and the Jerusalemites will possess the land. This claim is coloured by the legal element and religious belief; it implies two counter questions: Who are far away from Yahweh? and

who can inherit the promised land ? The answers to these two questions from Ezekiel are different from those of the Jerusalemites. Ezekiel reveals that although the exiles are far away from the land and the temple, nevertheless Yahweh is still with them and is a sanctuary for them. Yahweh is still the God of the exiles and exile does not mean the end of the relationship between God and his people. The answer to the issue of 'far away from Yahweh' is significant for the people in their understanding of the relationship between Yahweh and his people and the nature of God. It is true that the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel can be related to the promised land and the Jerusalem Temple, but as a matter of fact, the land and the Temple are not the guarantees of the relationship of God and his people. To some extent, they can be seen as the concrete signs of the presence of Yahweh, but they shall not be absolutely seen as the only conditions for seeking of Yahweh's presence. But now, because of the sins of Israel, the corruption of the temple and the ritual, Yahweh's glory has been driven away from the temple and the land. In fact, dwelling in Jerusalem does not mean to have the promise of the divine presence, on the contrary, Ezekiel proclaims the inevitable destruction of Jerusalem (Ezek. 2:3-15; etc.; cf. Jer. 13:24). To be in exile far away from the homeland is a terrible judgement for the exiles, but Yahweh will not forsake his people in the time of disaster. He will be God for those who are truly seeking for his presence everywhere.

As to the inheritance of the land, Ezekiel answers the claim of the Jerusalemites with the assertion that Yahweh will gather the exiles and bring them back to the land which he grants to them.

He will grant them a new heart and a new spirit so that they can obey the will of Yahweh. They will be the true people of Israel and the owners of the land. Ezekiel's hope for the future is pinned on these exiles and not on those who remained in Judah and Jerusalem. In brief, the themes of hope in this oracle are: the promise of the divine presence for the exiles; the promise of the liberation from the exile; the promise of a new heart and a new spirit for the remnant; and the promise of the land of Israel. Further, the passage implies the establishment of a new covenant.

2. Ezek. 18; 33:1-20; and 14:12-23

There are some passages in the book of Ezekiel which can be considered together, and which are related to the message of hope; these are chs. 18; 33:1-20; and 14:12-23 (cf. 3:16-21). For they are closely interrelated in thought and in diction. Their forms are in common related to the legal disputation and their main contents are concerned with the theodicy which is related to the judgements of Yahweh against the people as a whole and the responsibility of the individual. The Israelites held the concept of solidarity which is commonly described by the term 'corporate personality', but this does not mean that the concept of solidarity excluded all individual right and responsibility. But the problem of personal morality and responsibility is created by the great crisis in the history of Israel. From the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel onwards there is a new emphasis on the individual status in the Israelite religion. Deuteronomy had already condemned the concept that fathers should be put to death for their children's sins and vice versa (Deut. 24:16). This point has been raised again by Jeremiah

and Ezekiel who see no religious structure enduring in which the individual person can hope to achieve communion with Yahweh. While Jeremiah seems to emphasize the devotional life of the individual, Ezekiel emphasizes the personal responsibility.

### Ch. 18

This chapter contains the fullest explanation of the theme of individual responsibility and more significantly includes a prophetic statement of God's active desire to reclaim and forgive the sinner. As if in debate with his people, Ezekiel takes up some popular sayings (vv. 2, 19, 29) to explain and affirm the justification of God's action towards his people and the possibility of the renewal of life. 'There is a double background to the prophet's argument: on the one hand the keen Israelite awareness of the effects of the sin of an individual on other members of the community to which he belongs, and on the other the immediate situation in which the despairing exiles felt that the sins of an earlier generation had brought about their present plight and destroyed any hope of a national restoration'.<sup>1</sup> From the despondent complaints of the people (cf. 33:10; 37:11) and from the invitation to return in 18:30-32, it is probable to assume that this chapter belongs to the period after the fall of Jerusalem.

Ch. 18 can be divided into four parts: vv. 1-4, vv. 5-20, vv. 21-29, and vv. 30-32.<sup>2</sup> To begin with, Ezekiel takes the current proverb of sour grapes and answers it with his fundamental

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1. Anderson, Prophetic Contemporaries, p. 27.

2. Cf. Barnabas Lindars, 'Ezekiel and Individual responsibility', VI 15 (1965), pp. 452-67. He rightly demonstrates that individual responsibility should be differentiated into criminal responsibility and the responsibility of the individual before God.

confession—every living soul belongs to God and thus one who sins shall die. Ezekiel then gives three comprehensive cases for consideration of the principle briefly enunciated, the case of a righteous father, a wicked son of the righteous father, and a righteous son of the wicked father (vv. 5-20). In presenting the case in the form of a history of three generations, Ezekiel is consciously alluding to the tradition of retribution to the third and fourth generation. For the purposes of his argument only the last of the three cases, where the son might be expected to suffer for the sins of his father, actually fits the point at issue. The other two are preparing the ground for it, so that it forms the climax. At v. 19 Ezekiel points up the climax by inserting the objection of his interlocutors; 'Yet ye say, wherefore doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?' The answer is that, because the son has himself behaved righteously, 'he shall surely live'.<sup>1</sup> In vv. 21-29 there are two complementary cases of the wicked who repents and the righteous who sins, in which Ezekiel offers the principle of individual redemption and reveals the real intention of Yahweh's action. Each one will be judged on the basis of his inherent condition and it is by what he is now that he is judged. Yahweh's action is just and what he desires is not the death of the sinners, but their turn-

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1. Cf. Lindars, *ibid.*, p. 462; Zimmerli, (*op. cit.*, pp. 397-398), suggests that vv. 5-9 consist of a list of legal requirements, a priestly declaration namely, the formula, 'he is righteous', and then a promise of life 'he shall surely live'; the other two sections (10-13 and 14-18) are in same form with minor variations. He therefore thinks that vv. 5-18 are in the form of priestly 'entrance liturgy' and these conditions can be found mostly in the Holiness Code or in the Book of the Covenant.

ing away from their evil past. Here the real purpose of the prophet is to evoke the repentance of the people.

The popular saying, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge', might express various feelings as it came from different mouths; but here it mainly represents the view that the exiles must have gathered from all the denunciations of Ezekiel on the inevitable destruction of Jerusalem (e.g., ch. 16) and the concept of solidarity with aggregate responsibility for acts of sin which dominated early Israelite religion (cf. Ex. 20:4; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9; Josh. 7:24ff.; 2 Kgs. 24:1-4). This saying expresses not only the protest against the judgement of God but also a mood of moral paralysis and feelings of fatalism.<sup>1</sup>

'Ezekiel's reply is expressed in an elaborate two-fold argument. First he asserts that merit does not descend to an unrighteous son from a righteous father, and that guilt does not descend from an unrighteous father to a righteous son. Each must answer for his own deeds. Then, from the alternation of righteous and unrighteous generations, the prophet turns to repentance and backsliding within an individual life. If an unrighteous man turns to God, his past is not held against him; if, on the other hand, a righteous man falls away into wrongdoing, it is by what he is now that he is judged'.<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel here asserts that everyone will be responsible to God for his own conduct and he who is just will live and he who is wicked shall die. Ezekiel asks his people to repent and turn away from sin and get a new heart and a new spirit; for Yahweh loves all souls and has no pleasure in the death of anyone. Although the

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1. Stalker, op. cit., p. 156.

2. G. W. Anderson, loc. cit.; cf. also his The Prophetic Gospel (Studies in the servant Songs), (London, 1952), pp. 26f.

claim of the righteous dying because they turn to sin may seem harsh, the opportunity for the wicked to leave past guilt behind is all the more significant for Ezekiel's sweeping condemnation of Israel elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> It is true that this is not simply an argument about individual moral responsibility. More than that, 'Ezekiel is confronted by a despairing generation, who hold that the present and the future have been irrevocably determined by the past and that no new beginning is possible. His answer is that for those who turn to God a new beginning is possible now.'<sup>2</sup> This answer seems consonant with Jeremiah's answer to the same question (Jer. 31:29ff.). While Jeremiah proclaims the New Covenant, Ezekiel on the one hand stresses the possibility of individual repentance and on the other hand proclaims the future restoration in the last portion of the book (Ezek. 33-48). Whereas Jeremiah declares that the popular saying will cease to be uttered in the new age, Ezekiel says that it will be uttered no longer from now onwards. Further, Ezekiel's hope of reconstruction arising from repentance also recalls that of Jeremiah in 18:1-11, where the prophet proclaimed that on the one hand Yahweh would judge his people and reshape them for his own possession, and on the other hand Yahweh, in his sovereign grace, would give his people another chance to rise to his purpose.<sup>3</sup>

From this one can see that Ezekiel is not primarily concerned to formulate a doctrine of individualism, but rather, in facing the actual situation of the exiles, to point out the new orientation of

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1. Carley, Ezekiel, p. 121.

2. Anderson, Prophetic Contemporaries, pp. 27f.

3. Cf. above, p. 76.

life.<sup>1</sup> This is the very way to approach life by which one can repent and turn to Yahweh, and meanwhile one will accept Yahweh's gracious offer of forgiveness and redemption and will be brought into a new life,

Ezek. 33:1-20<sup>2</sup>

This passage needs to be seen in conjunction with 3:16-21 and ch. 18 while 33:1-9 finds its parallel with 3:16-21, 33:10-20 is closely related to 18:20-32. Ezekiel is appointed as a watchman whose task is to give warning to his fellow-countrymen of the impending danger; but his responsibility is not simply for the community in general, but also for the individuals of whom it is composed. Apparently, Ezek. 33:10-20, like the discussion in ch. 18, starts from a popular saying (v.10), 'Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?', which finds its parallel in Ezek. 18: 21-29. The people now realize their sins, but they complain that they see no hope in the present and the future. The prophet is to counter this mood with the saying already given in 18:23 and 32, that Yahweh has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but the wicked should turn from his way and life. But if the words were in the form of a question in 18:23, and of a simple statement in 18:32, they are here an impassioned oath of asseveration.<sup>3</sup> Once again here the prophet

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1. Cf. C. J. Mullo Weir, 'Aspects of the Book of Ezekiel', VT 2 (1952), pp. 109-11. He argues that Ezekiel does not deny the fact of inherited penalty and Ezekiel's teaching is by no means immoral, nor contrary to the facts of life (cf. 109, 111), but cf. McKenzie, A Theology of the Old Testament, p. 117.
  2. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 803ff.; also see below, pp. 272ff.
  3. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 804.

presents the way of life and calls the people to repentance. Here it is clear that God's grace consists, therefore, not in overlooking sin but in giving sinners one final opportunity of repentance and salvation.<sup>1</sup>

God will not compromise with the corruption of his people and he surely has a purpose in all that he has done and will do for his people. 'The possibility of a new life was opened to those who were destined for death. At that point, the shape in which it appeared was that of the majestic measures taken by the Lord of humanity in face of doubts as to his righteousness. But now it comes confirmed by an oath in an impassioned expression of the will to redeem, shown to these broken men, awakening their dead will to live by the irresistible force of merciful love. Even where they see nothing but death, God's will is still directed towards life.'<sup>2</sup> The inward change of direction towards the goal promised by God which is given here is thus the content of conversion, which God means to make possible by his offer of grace. It changes the death sentence into a promise of life, whereas to say, "no" to it is to exclude oneself from life.<sup>3</sup>

Ezek. 14:12-23

In Ezek. 14:12-23 Ezekiel seems to answer the questions which may arise in the minds of those to whom Ezekiel proclaimed the message of doom. The passage falls into two parts: vv. 12-20 and vv. 21-23. The first part is a legal supposition that God will send any one of his four great judgements, famine, evil beasts, sword,

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1. Mullo Weir, op. cit., p. 111.

2. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 454.

3. Ibid., p. 456.

or pestilence, upon a country for their sins against Yahweh. Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in that land, they should by their righteousness save neither sons nor daughters, only their own souls. The second part is the application of the legal supposition to the situation of Jerusalem. 'The basic principle articulated here is that righteousness is an individual, not a corporate affair, that righteousness is neither negotiable nor transferable, and that the unrighteous cannot be immune to judgment due to any kind of human relationship.'<sup>1</sup> Even the three paragons (Noah, Daniel, and Job)<sup>2</sup> of righteousness cannot save their children but themselves in the coming destruction.

This is quite different from the account of Abraham (Gen. 18: 22-32 in which Yahweh has promised Abraham that for the sake of ten righteous men Yahweh will not destroy Sodom. This is also contrast to the traditional concept of solidarity which indicates that the individuals share the fate of the family or the community. The passage also finds its parallel to Jer. 15:1-3 where Jeremiah himself has interceded for Jerusalem, but he is replied by Yahweh in the negative answer. Not even if Moses and Samuel, the two great intercessors of the past, interceded together would God relent and

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1. Bunn, *op. cit.*, p. 270; cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

2. Noah was the righteous man of his time and by his righteousness his family was saved from the Flood (Gen. 6:9; 7:1ff.). Daniel was a wise and righteous ruler who appears in a Ugaritic text (cf. *ANET*. pp. 149-155). Job was the hero who was described in Job 1:1, 8. 'They are chosen in contrast to the great Israelite figures, Moses and Samuel, not as intercessors but as outstanding, non-Israelite examples of personal integrity.' Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

avert the judgement appointed for his people. Features of both the passages in Genesis and Jeremiah are combined in Ezekiel 14:12-23. Ezekiel proclaims his oracle in the style of casuistic law, i.e., 'when...then' and logically demonstrates that Yahweh is dealing justly.<sup>1</sup> The righteous will be saved, but they will save neither their sons nor their daughters; and the wicked will be destroyed. This argument is exactly similar to that of ch. 18. By the threat of the inevitable doom and the discourse of the justice of Yahweh's action, Ezekiel tries to give new insight to his people into their relationship with God in the present situation; at the same time, he asks them to repent. It is important to know that one of the functions of message of doom is the call to repentance. Ezekiel's emphasis on individual moral responsibility is by no means to exclude the concept of solidarity, but is in order to give the new hope to the people and to call them to repentance in the time of crisis. Moreover Ezekiel indicates that God's authority extends to all countries and peoples. Therefore, this can be conceived along with the judgement against the nations.

From all of this, one can understand the main task of the prophet who acts as a watchman. Ezekiel here in 18, 33:1-20, and 14:12-23 not only breaks the traditional bondage of the collective responsibility, but also presents the gracious offer of salvation of God. Yahweh is just in what he has done on Israel and he is also a God who does not wish the death of the wicked but their turning away from their sinful way. In 18:30-32 Ezekiel calls the people to respond to the possibility of attaining life that had just been

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1. Wevers, op. cit., p. 114; cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 317.

declared (18:1-29).<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel addresses people for whom exile has severed all ties by the name of 'the house of Israel', which forms a strong contrast to the other name 'the house of rebellion'. The house of Israel as a whole is rebellious and is the object of divine judgement; but as an individual each will be judged as he deserves and each can possibly have the new life if he repents.<sup>2</sup> For the Israelites, life is not merely continued physical existence, nor some kind of future existence; life means good health and material prosperity, which are only to be found in obedience to, and fellowship with God. For the exiles, far from the Temple and familiar patterns of worship, the possibility of such life in a renewed relationship with God must have seemed beyond imagining.<sup>3</sup> But 'what is required now is no more outward assent, but an inner re-orientation, a revolution in one's whole intimate inward attitude toward God'.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to the earlier promise of the people's spontaneous renewal by God (11:19; cf. 36:26), here Ezekiel declares that man can by his will, change his mode of life. The command here emphasizes the need for men to accept the new God-given possibility of renewal. However, a contrast between exhortations to repentance

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 121; cf. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp. 246ff.

2. '...when Ezekiel uttered his prophecy, the responsibility of the individual was generally recognized in ideas of divine retribution just as much as it was in the field of criminal justice. On the other hand the nation's sins were part of the national history and this always suggested a longer view, in which cause and effect might be traced through many generations'. — Lindars, *op. cit.*, p. 458.

3. Carley, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

4. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

and belief in the necessity of divine action to make repentance possible can be seen in the words of other prophets (Hos. 14:1-3; cf. Jer. 3:19-4:4; 24:7; 31:31-34).<sup>1</sup> By discussion of the problem of theodicy, Ezekiel gives a direct appeal for a free decision to the conscience of the individual. Each one can establish a personal relationship with God who removes man from the chain of guilt down the generations, and gives him a new start by forgiving him, and thus guaranteeing him a life and a future.<sup>2</sup>

3. Ezek. 16:59-63; 17:22-24; and 20:32-44<sup>3</sup>

Ezek. 16:59-63

Ch. 16 appears as a long diatribe against Jerusalem as an adulterous woman.<sup>4</sup> Jerusalem is personified as a foundling child who was abandoned by her parents with complete ruthlessness. When Yahweh passed by and saw her, he took her home. He looked after her discreetly and brought her up. At last, Yahweh wooed her and married her. He graciously covered her with love and ornaments. But in spite of all he had done for her, because of her inherent nature, she deserted him and became a harlot committing whoredom with strangers. This brought terrible punishment upon her, for curse and judgement came with the broken covenant.

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1. Carley, op. cit., p. 121.

2. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 248.

3. Here it may be convenient for the purpose of this study to put these three passages into one section even if they contain different themes of hope.

4. Wevers, op. cit., p. 113. The diatribe is usually to give reason or to make known the announcement of the judgement; cf. ibid., p. 17.

The marriage relation as a figure for the relation between Yahweh and his people seems to have originated with Hosea. Hosea's own domestic experience with an unfaithful spouse was used by that prophet as a symbol of Yahweh's tragic experiences with Israel (Hos. 2). Israel's harlotry consists of both political and religious submission to any other stronger foreign nation.<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah, strongly influenced by the older prophet, developed this marriage motif to show the Yahweh - Israel relation (Jer. 2:2) and to express the concept of Israel and Judah as 'sisters' (3:6-11).<sup>2</sup> In addition, Isaiah also described Jerusalem as a harlot (Isa. 1:21). Ezekiel makes extensive use of the same theme in both chs. 16 and 23. 'But there are features of the motif in Ezek. 16 which are more directly reminiscent of Hosea's prophecy, according to which Israel is "decked" ('adah) with Yahweh's gifts of gold and silver and misuses these - although in different ways - in her cultic activities. Also, it is said that Yahweh himself will uncover the nakedness of the harlot before her lovers.'<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel also applies the so-called 'finding motif',<sup>4</sup> (which is a sidespread fairy-tale motif of the foundling child who was preserved from disaster by the intervention of a beneficent power and brought to prosperity and happiness,) to describe how Yahweh found Israel in the wilderness and a relationship

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1. Ibid., cf. O. Eissfeldt, 'Hesekiel Kap 16 als Geschichtesquelle', in Kleine Schriften II, (Tübingen, 1963), pp. 101-106; Pedersen, Israel III-IV, p. 594.

2. Wevers, op. cit., pp. 118f.; cf. Carley, Ezekiel Among the Prophets, p. 55.

3. Carley, ibid., p. 49.

4. R. Bach, Die Erwählung Israels in der Wüste, (Diss., Bonn 1952), reviewed in THLZ 78 (1953), col, 687.

was established there, as a result of which Israel became the bride of Yahweh. The theme is alluded to in Deut. 32:10 and Jer. 2:2f., as well as in Hos. 9:10, and possibly 10:11. Ezekiel relates it to Jerusalem in ch. 16, where the first contact between Yahweh and the personified city takes place when Yahweh comes across an outcast child lying in a field.

The original prophecy of this chapter is found in vv. 1-43. It consists of a) the tale told as a metaphor of Jerusalem's rejection of her covenant responsibilities in vv. 1-14, b) the interpretation of the metaphor in vv. 15-34, and c) the judgement denounced against the unfaithful woman in vv. 35-43.<sup>1</sup> The remainder of the chapter (vv. 44-63) is comment on the original text (vv. 1-43) and has been added either by Ezekiel himself or by his followers. Vv. 44-58 show a combination of the words of the prophet in vv. 1-43 and in ch. 28, in which Jerusalem is charged with crimes worse than those of her sister-cities. Finally vv. 59-63 promise a future hope for Jerusalem, that is, Yahweh will establish with her an enduring covenant in which Yahweh's grace will cause Jerusalem to know her shame and humiliation. The metaphor of this unfaithful woman -- Jerusalem -- enables the prophet to strengthen the emphasis on the

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1. The delimitation of the chapter here follows the opinions of the following scholars: S. Herrmann, (op. cit., p. 102), Eichrodt, (op. cit., p. 202), and Zimmerli, (op. cit., pp. 341ff.). While Herrmann and Eichrodt think that vv. 1-43 are original prophecy and vv. 44-63 are later added by the prophet himself, 'Erläuterungen' are later added by Ezekiel himself or by his followers. Zimmerli regards vv. 44-58 and vv. 59-63 as inseparable from vv. 1-43 because they are thematically dependent on the latter and because they are the result of the traditional transaction which derived from the time after the fall of Jerusalem (pp. 342, 365).

grace of Yahweh, and also gives a religious value to judgement. Jerusalem is corrupt because she is ungrateful and even her parents are corrupt. It is no wonder that the whole story of her marriage with Yahweh is one of unfaithfulness. The uniqueness of the metaphor is that Ezekiel does not begin his description of Israel by referring to her as Yahweh's chosen people; but instead, in a humiliating way, begins by describing Israel as an unwanted baby-girl of non-Israelite parents, who soon afterwards becomes Yahweh's foundling child.<sup>1</sup>

Ezekiel 16:59-63 must be the latest section of the chapter and is an addition by the school of Ezekiel which develops the main features of Ezekiel's teaching in 16:1-58, i.e., the rejection of the covenant (of the woman), the figure of the sisters, and a promise of salvation, in order to complete the prophecy. Before mentioning the everlasting covenant the author tells of the unfaithfulness of Jerusalem who despises the oath and breaks the covenant. Although Jerusalem does not remember the covenant which she has made with Yahweh, Yahweh will remember the covenant so that he not only needs to punish her but also will establish a new enduring covenant with her. Here the author, like Amos (Am. 3) sees the intimate relationship between Yahweh and Israel is the very reason for punishment. The notion of covenant obviously appears also in v. 8 and the phrase 'in the days of your youth' also appears in v. 43; both appear in this section as the background of Yahweh's salvation. The covenant made with Jerusalem in the days of its youth is the Sinai covenant; here Jerusalem is seen as the

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1. S. W. Wahono, Ezekiel's Interpretation of Israel's Past History, as Exemplified in Chapters 16, 20, and 23, (unpublished thesis, Univ. of Edinburgh, 1974), p. 276.

representative of the entire nation.<sup>1</sup> In this present passage two words are worth noting, i.e.,  $\text{זָכַר}$  and  $\text{זָכַר}$ .

Although Zimmerli is right to point out that the covenant idea belongs to the self-evident materials of Ezekiel's tradition (cf. 16:8; 16:59-62; 34:25; 37:26; 44:7) and does not belong to the special words of Ezekiel's theological language,<sup>2</sup> yet here the emphasis is not only on the word  $\text{זָכַר}$  but also on the word  $\text{זָכַר}$ . The word  $\text{זָכַר}$ , a cultic term,<sup>3</sup> is of significance. Jerusalem's 'Nicht-Gedenken' is contrasted with Yahweh's gracious remembering, and this, in turn, will bring Jerusalem's remembrance of her past.<sup>4</sup> The remembrance of Yahweh is here to emphasize the relationship between Yahweh and Israel and also to indicate the possibility of the renewal of the covenant. The expression of an everlasting covenant is an emphatic way to ensure the relationship between God and his people. 'Outside the prophets, and except 2 Sam. 23:5; an everlasting covenant is a term which belongs to P; it sealed the promise to all flesh (Gen. 9:16), and to the family of Abraham (Gen. 17:7, 9; Ps. 105:10=1 C. 16:17)...'<sup>5</sup> Also  $\text{זָכַר}$   $\text{זָכַר}$

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1. Martin H. Woudstre, 'The Everlasting Covenant in Ezekiel 16:59-63', *CTJ* 6 (1971), p. 30

2. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

3. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, I*, pp. 242ff.; see also, B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel*, SBT 37 (1962), especially pp. 59ff.; P. A. H. de Boer, *Gedenken und Gedächtnis in der Welt des Alten Testaments*, (Kohlhammer, 1962); Willy Schottroff, *'Gedenken' im Alten Orient Und im Alten Testament*, (Neukirchener Verlag, 1964).

4. Zimmerli, *loc. cit.*, p. 180.

5. Cooke, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

(vv. 60, 62) is characteristic of the Priestly school of writers, while Ezekiel prefers the older expression -- to cut a covenant. But it is not impossible for Ezekiel to use different verbs in his expression of the establishment of the covenant.

It is important to note that the everlasting covenant will be made after the punishment resulting from Israel's violation of the covenant. Also one must understand that Yahweh does not completely reject his people even though the words of the prophet are so harsh. Punishment does not necessarily mean complete separation between God and his people. When the author of this passage states that Yahweh will remember the former covenant, he is not only emphasizing the promise of Yahweh's new act but also implying the punishment of Jerusalem's sin. On the one hand, one must notice that in affirming the significance of the former covenant there seems to be a contrast with Ezekiel's view that that covenant had been continually dishonoured and had been broken irrevocably. But on the other hand, one also should bear in mind that the word of Yahweh which the prophet spoke was in every case a word addressed to men in a specific situation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, although this passage is full of priestly quality, this does not necessarily mean that it is foreign to Ezekiel. One more thing to be noted is that Jerusalem had been described as an unwanted child deserted in the wilderness and had been accused of being an unfaithful wife of Yahweh, a worse apostate than the sister-cities, but the future Jerusalem is described as the mother (central) city of the land.

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1. Carley *op. cit.*, p. 65.

In conclusion, in this passage the author declares that Yahweh will remember the original covenant established at Sinai (cf. v. 8), by which he will punish the apostasy of Jerusalem and will also establish her an everlasting covenant. His grace of remembering will evoke Jerusalem's response, and at long last she too will remember her way (cf. vv. 22, 43) and no longer be consumed in shame. If the words are not directly from Ezekiel, they represent the same tradition.<sup>1</sup>

#### Ch. 17

Ch. 17 falls into three parts: vv. 1-10--the parable; vv. 11-21--the interpretation of the parable and vv. 22-24--a supplementary parable. In the parable of the two eagles (Nebuchadnezzar and Hophra),<sup>2</sup> the tip of cedar (Jehoiachin), and the seeding vine (Zedekiah) Ezekiel sets forth contemporary events and condemns the disloyalty of Zedekiah to Babylon. Zedekiah is criticized for breaking his oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar by seeking aid from Egypt. The expected help from the Pharaoh will not materialize, and Zedekiah will be carried to Babylon where he will suffer just punishment. It is striking that 'The severity of Ezekiel in condemning Zedekiah's breach of the vassal oath is unparalleled in prophecy. It is not true to say that only Ezekiel opposed violation of political oaths, for earlier prophets had appealed to Hebrew kings not to join in rebellions against their overlords. But never was the judgement upon revolt so pointed and absolute, as is underlined by

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1. Cf. Muilenburg, in PC, 503j.

2. Cf. L. P. Smith, 'The Eagle(s) of Ezekiel 17', JBL 58 (1939), pp. 43-50; M. Greenberg, 'Ezekiel 17 and the Policy of Psammetichus II', JBL 76 (1957), pp. 304-309.

the identification of the broken covenant and oath with very demand of Yahweh.....<sup>1</sup> Both Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 27) and Ezekiel have looked beyond politics, and realized that what had happened was ordained by Yahweh. Rebellion against the oath of allegiance sworn by the king in the name of Yahweh is not only rebellion against the will of Yahweh but also the cause the immediate retaliation of Babylon. Ezekiel may have written this parable close to the time of Zedekiah's revolt against Babylon (589-587 B.C.).

The second parable is much further removed from the original parable of two eagles, although it is intended to relieve the despairing note of the previous verses. 'Das Heilswort wurde nach Zedekias Sturz, 587, in Exiliskreisen, deren Hoffnungen Jojachin galten, von Ezechiel oder seinen Schülern Nachträglich angefügt'.<sup>2</sup> There are some similarities between vv. 3, 4 and v. 22, and the imagery and language have affinity with the motif of the world tree in Ezek. 31:1ff.<sup>3</sup> It is God who, unlike the first eagle, plants the tender sprig, a future ruler of the royal line, in the highest mountains of Israel. This new ruler will be appointed by God and will bring peace to the world. This new Israel of the future is not to come into being as a result of any power of recovery still lingering within it, but solely as a result of the divine action.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the parable is to show the Lordship of Yahweh in world affairs (v. 24, cf. Isa. 2:12-17) and to show that despite

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1. Gottwald, op. cit., pp. 306f.

2. D. Baltzer, Ezechiel und Deuterocesaja, p. 137.

3. Ibid.

4. Cf. May, op. cit., p. 155; K. Seybold, Das Davidische Königtum im Zeugnis der Propheten, (1972), p. 143.

all appearances, Yahweh remains faithful to his promise to David made through Nathan (2 Sam. 7).<sup>1</sup>

From the content and form of the passage it can be seen that the author uses the David-Zion tradition<sup>2</sup> and expresses his message in the imagery of the tree of life with which is involved with relationship between Israel and the nations.<sup>3</sup> The tender sprig (cf. Ezek. 17:3, 22; Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Isa. 53:2f.) is the Messiah of the Davidic line.<sup>4</sup> 'There is a deliberate insistence on the inconspicuousness of the shoot chosen by Yahweh so as to display the miracle of the divine saving work through the way in which it thrives, just as in Isa. 11:1 and 53:2f.'<sup>5</sup> Yahweh will give the royal family a new beginning; even if the beginning is not conspicuous, yet when the Messiah of the Davidic line is established in Zion not only will the welfare and peace of Israel be affected (cf. 34:25-31; 37:24-28; Isa. 2:2-4 Jer. 17:25-26; 33:14-16) but his sovereignty will also be acknowledged by the surrounding nations.

As to the highest mountain of Israel this must be the holy mountain of Zion (cf. 20:40; Isa. 2:2) which reflects the mythological element of the world-mountain (the concept of the navel of the world). It is usual to hold that the tree of life exists in the centre of the earth and that it symbolizes the state of paradise on earth. Here these mythical elements are applied in

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1. Stalker, op. cit., p. 154.

2. Cf. Seybold, op. cit., pp. 142f.

3. Cf. Geo Widengren, The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion, (Uppsala, 1951).

4. On the identification of the Messiah, see R. S. Foster, 'A Note on Ezekiel XVII 1-10 and 22-24', VT 8 (1958), p. 379.

5. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 228.

the promise of the manifestation of the Messiah and of the centrality of Jerusalem. It is true that the highest mountain of Israel may refer to the Temple of Jerusalem and that the message of the parable is centred upon the religious recognition of the world-God.<sup>1</sup> But it is not true to claim that the meaning of the parable is concerned with the significance of the Temple<sup>2</sup> and has nothing to do with politics. It is through the kingship of the Davidic Messiah that the true knowledge of Yahweh will be well demonstrated, and true peace will be realised in Israel.

After all, in this passage the author employs highly figurative imagery to express his hope that the deported king Jehoiachin would be restored to his rightful place. This hope expresses implicitly both the reestablishment of the Davidic dynasty and the restoration of the nation. Yahweh in his sovereignty will give the royal house a new beginning, even if this beginning is not conspicuous, yet when the Davidic kingship is established in Zion not only will the welfare and peace of Israel be affected but also his sovereignty will also be acknowledged by the surrounding nations.

#### Ch. 20

Ch. 20 is Ezekiel's recitation of Israel's sin and Yahweh's judgement in the past, accompanied with the proclamation of the purification and restoration of Israel in the future. The chapter has a very complicated literary problem and scholars' opinions on the problem are various.<sup>3</sup> The delimitation of the chapter is in

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1. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 229.

2. S. Herrmann, op. cit., pp. 258-259.

3. Cf. Wahono, op. cit., pp. 86ff.; Wevers, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

two parts: vv. 1-31 and vv. 32-44.<sup>1</sup> The original account can be found in vv. 1-31 in which Ezekiel surveys the entire history of Israel phase by phase, and declares that the radical sinfulness of Israel from beginning to end is a history of rebellion against Yahweh that determines Israel's coming judgement. This rebellion of Israel is understood by Ezekiel in terms of Israel's disobedience to Yahweh's commandments in view of the covenant tradition. Formally this account is a recital of the abominations of the fathers in three stages; Israel in Egypt (vv. 5-9), the first generation in the wilderness (vv. 18-26), with two concluding oracles both introduced by the formula 'Therefore say to the house of Israel, thus says Yahweh', viz., vv. 27-29 and vv. 30-31.<sup>2</sup> These two conclusions are different from each other in that in v. 27 the concluding words are appropriate to what is said in vv. 1-26. Instead, it is a new command to the prophet to utter a new accusation against the people. It seems that there is a close connection between vv. 1-3 and vv. 30-31, for they are obviously the introduction and the conclusion of vv. 1-31.<sup>3</sup> Vv. 27-29 appear as a supplementary summary of Israel's sin in Canaan added by a follower of the prophet. On the whole, the recital is in the form of a prophetic invective patterned on a schematized historical framework paralleling some of the central affirmations of faith in Yahweh's acts of salvation.<sup>4</sup> Zimmerli finds out that Ezekiel has taken the elements of the little

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1. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 438ff.; 452ff.; J. Herrmann, op. cit., pp. 122, 126; Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 263, 276; Wevers, loc. cit.

2. Wevers, ibid., p. 151.

3. Wahono, op. cit., pp. 97ff.; Wevers, loc. cit.

4. Ibid.; Zimmerli (op. cit., pp. 439ff.) holds that vv. 27-29 is the school's later expansion.

historical credo into this account and therefore his negative recital of Israel's history can be orientated antithetically to the outline of the salvation history which is found in the credo-formula.<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that Ezekiel's recital of Israel's history, from the beginning to his own time, has the same appearance. In every phase of its history Israel had already forced Yahweh to make the decision to scatter them among the nations and send them to exile.<sup>2</sup> In all this Ezekiel utters the message of denunciation and judgement on the people in terms which go beyond those used by his prophetic predecessors. This uniqueness and the radical nature of Ezekiel's interpretation of his people's past history lie in his own constant stress on the darker side of that history and in his extravagant elaborations of the traditional elements which serve his purpose.<sup>3</sup>

Turning now to the form and content of vv. 32-44, this passage is divisible into two sections, i.e., vv. 32-38, which deal with the theme of the entry of the people into the promised land and vv. 39-44, which deal with the future worship in the land. The delimitation of these two sections is based on the fact that both sections begin with a form of speech which is characteristic of Ezekiel, namely, the disputation form (vv. 32, 39) and end with 'Erkenntnisformel' which is also characteristic of Ezekiel (vv. 39, 42, 44).<sup>4</sup> The section is actually not part of the original recital

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1. Zimmerli, *ibid.*; Wahono, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

2. For the sake of Yahweh's name, in the first three phases Yahweh did not punish them with the severe judgement (cf. vv. 9, 14, 17, 22, 24). But the postponement of Yahweh's judgement will not be applicable to the current generation.

3. Wahono, *op. cit.*, p. viii.

4. Wahono, *ibid.*, p. 39.; Baltzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

of Israel's history. The situation presupposed is the full exile after the fall of Jerusalem. Yet this section is closely related to the recital and reflects it.<sup>1</sup> It seems possible that this is Ezekiel's own postscript since there is nothing inherently inconsistent with vv. 1-31. Surely there are some accretions (vv. 33, 37-38).<sup>2</sup>

'The word of the exiles in v. 32 reflects a feeling of hopeless abandonment by Yahweh rather than defiance of him.'<sup>3</sup> This deep sigh of depression can also be found in 33:10 and 37:11, where as here the exiles find no hope in the future.<sup>4</sup> But this verse seems to contain two inseparable ingredients. On the one hand the exiles think that their present disaster was a consequence of the last generation's sin determined already in the time of the wilderness (v. 23). On the other hand, when they are rejected by Yahweh, they think that they may assimilate with the heathen and adopt other gods and other worship.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, what concerns Ezekiel in vv. 33-44 is not only to proclaim the new Exodus which Yahweh will perform but also to emphasize the true Yahwism which is related to the Zion tradition.

Listening to the sad voice of the people, Ezekiel proclaims that Yahweh will perform a new Exodus for them. What is interesting here is that Ezekiel employs intensively the vocabularies and the themes of the old credo on the one hand, and on the other, lays

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1. Wevers, op. cit., p. 151.; S. Herrmann, op. cit., p. 265.

2. Wevers, loc. cit.

3. Stalker, op. cit., p. 175.

4. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 453.

5. Ibid.

his emphasis in this second Exodus on the purgative judgement in the wilderness, which is related with the theme of Temple-Worship.<sup>1</sup> Yahweh will reign over the exiles with a strong hand, with arm outstretched and wrath outpoured. Van den Born associates the phrase 'I will reign over you' with 1 Sam. 8 where the popular voice expressed the people's wish to be like the other nations and have a king to reign over them (cf. 1 Sam. 8:20; Ezek. 20:32).<sup>2</sup> But here in Ezek. 20 the message is not concerned with the proclamation of the kingship of Yahweh but concerned with Yahweh's Lordship in his historical salvation.<sup>3</sup> Yahweh will bring his scattered people out of exile and gather them from the lands and take them to the wilderness. This second Exodus will be performed by Yahweh with a 'strong hand and an outstretched arm', a phrase originally used as a symbol of protection for Israel and judgement against her enemies as in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 26:8). But here this phrase is not only used as a symbol of Yahweh's power to deliver his people from exile but also as a symbol of judgement against Israel. It is clear that this phrase is used with the phrase 'wrath outpoured' and refers both to judgement and to the bringing and the gathering of the people.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the exiles, not just the exiles in Babylon but also those exiled to Assyria (2 Kgs. 17:6) and Egypt (2 Kgs. 25:26) as well, are to be gathered together in the second exodus.

It is interesting to observe that the new Exodus here lays

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1. Baltzer, op. cit., p. 5.; cf. Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 277ff.
  2. Van den Born, Ezekiel, (1954), in loc. (not seen); cited in Stalker op. cit., p. 175; cf. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 277.
  3. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 454-455.
  4. Zimmerli, ibid., S. Herrmann, op. cit., p. 264.

emphasis on Yahweh's judgement on Israel and on the right service of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> The exiles will be led into the wilderness where they will be subjected to the kingly judgement. But this new sojourn by Israel in the wilderness is given a depth and earnestness through this act of judgement which distinguishes it from similar pictures of the future to be found in Hosea and Deutero-Isaiah. Hosea thinks of Israel's new sojourn in the desert as a tenderly living visitation, by which God will associate once more with his people as in the early days (Hos. 2:16f.).<sup>2</sup> In Deutero-Isaiah, the frequent pictures of the wanderings in the wilderness serve as material to set up a permanent memorial to the triumph of God the redeemer. The dry ground is transformed into a garden of Paradise, in a way very reminiscent of the liturgical hymns, which love to dwell on how the wanderings in the wilderness serve as a special revelation of God's providence (Pss. 105:37ff.; 114; 99:6-8; 136:16; Deut. 33:10-12; Neh. 8:12-15).<sup>3</sup> In Ezekiel the recollection of the "wilderness of the land of Egypt" leads rather to thoughts of the sentence which God executed there upon his rebellious people, as is realized and recorded also by the old tradition (Ex. 32:15ff.; Num. 11; 14:10ff., 16:31ff.; in Ps. 106:7ff., very probably under the influence of Ezekiel it is converted into an exhortation to

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1. Baltzer, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

2. Cf. above, pp. 63f.

3. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 279; cf. Baltzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 12ff.; W. Zimmerli, 'Der "neue Exodus" in der Verkündigung der beiden Exilspropheten', in *GO*, (1963), pp. 172-204.

repentance).<sup>1</sup> D. Baltzer is right to point out that the traditio-historical background of the new Exodus here is to be found in the revelation of God in Ex. 6.<sup>2</sup> Yahweh heard the moaning of Israel and he revealed himself through his name as the God who fulfilled his promise and redeemed Israel from Egypt. The message which Moses announces contains: 1) the promise to deliver; 2) the establishment of the covenant relation; 3) the gift of the land.<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel 20:5ff. is seen by Childs as the earliest commentary on Ex. 6 and it speaks of the revelation of the name as a solemn oath which God swore, committing himself to Israel as God.<sup>4</sup> The message which Ezekiel conveys contains: -1) the promise to deliver; 2) the purgative judgement which produces the true people of God in the land; 3) the right service of the Lord. While Ex. 6 emphasizes the revelation of Yahweh's name which is a revealing of his power and authority, Ezek. 20:33-44 emphasizes the revelation of Yahweh's lordship and judgement. This can be seen in the fact that Ezekiel recalls the rebellious history in 20:1-16 where the main accusation is the disobedience of the people in terms of their idolatry.

In view of their idolatry shown in vv. 1-26 and thier apostasy shown in v. 32, Ezekiel proclaims that after the judgement of the

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1. Eichrodt, loc. cit. What is interesting is that the verb  $\text{עָנָה}$  is used in the niph'al form (vv. 35, 26), and this form occurs in elsewhere in the Old Testament always related to the disputation form of speech, or the so-called  $\text{עָנָה}$  pattern, (cf. Isa. 43:26; 59:4; Pss. 9:27; 37:33; 109:7; 1 Sam. 12:7; Ezek. 17:20; 38:22; Prov. 29:9).

2. Baltzer, loc. cit.

3. Childs, Exodus, p. 115.

4. Ibid., p. 113.

people in the wilderness Yahweh will take the people into the promised land and there in his holy mountain Yahweh will accept his people in terms of accepting their sacrifice. Consequently, Yahweh will sanctify his holy name before the eyes of the nations; Israel will truly know Yahweh as God;<sup>1</sup> and Israel will remember and loathe her rebellion against God. With these words of promise Ezekiel declares once again that Yahweh is the God whom Israel should worship. The good relationship between God and Israel is expressed in terms of Yahweh's acceptance of the sacrifice of Israel. This promise foreshadows the vision of the new temple in chs. 40-48 and it emphasizes the right worship characterizing the restored community.<sup>2</sup>

Although in Ezek. 20:39-44 the word, temple, is not used,<sup>3</sup> yet in v. 40 one can find the expressions  $\text{בְּיָדָיִךְ יְהוָה}$ <sup>4</sup> and  $\text{בְּיָדָיִךְ יְהוָה}$ <sup>5</sup>. These two expressions both indicate the Temple in Jerusalem where Yahweh will reside in the midst of the people. It will be recalled that when Israel was led out of

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 45ff. He holds that in the divine name is encompassed the whole redemptive power of God and his essential character.
  2. Cf. Carley, Ezekiel, p. 135.
  3. Baltzer, (op. cit., pp. 35f.), investigates four expressions which can represent the word 'temple' in the book of Ezekiel. They are ,  $\text{בְּיָדָיִךְ יְהוָה}$  (8:14, ;6; 10:19; 11:1; 44:4, 5; the word  $\text{בְּיָדָיִךְ יְהוָה}$  occurs 47 times in chs. 40-48);  $\text{בְּיָדָיִךְ יְהוָה}$  which occurs not less than 16 times;  $\text{בְּיָדָיִךְ יְהוָה}$  which occurs 10 times; and  $\text{בְּיָדָיִךְ יְהוָה}$  (37:27; 43:7, 9).
  4. This expression occurs only here in the book of Ezekiel. It finds its origin in the Zion-tradition (cf. Isa. 11:9; 56:7; 57:13; Ps. 2:6).
  5. This phrase has affinities with Ezek. 17:22ff. and 40:2. In these cases it is related to the theme of Temple-City tradition.

Egypt they were to 'worship Yahweh in his mountain' (Ex. 3:12; etc.). When Yahweh purifies his people in the wilderness, he will lead them into the promised land. The ironic command in v. 39 indicates that if the exiles want to serve the idols they can; but Yahweh's name will no longer be defiled by such abominable worship. Above all, what is significant here is that Ezekiel after exposing the rebellious history of Israel, reveals how Yahweh brings about salvation and eventually transforms the history of God's judgement into a prediction of a salvation that is to come.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Ezek. 34

Generally, ch. 34 can be divided into three sections, i.e., vv. 1-16, vv. 17-24, and vv. 25-31. The first two sections are in the same pattern, i.e., accusation, judgement, and promise; but while the first section deals with the shepherds, the second deals with the sheep. The third section contains the promise of peace and prosperity for the sheep. The chapter can be assumed to be a unity, for it deals with the promise about the future and the shepherding of God. Ezekiel takes the leaders and the people of the past as the background of his message and proclaims the promise of Yahweh to his people and casts all in the general imagery of shepherd and sheep.

In vv. 1-16 Israel's shepherds<sup>2</sup> are castigated because of

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 281; Maillenbourg, *op. cit.*, 505f.

2. The title 'shepherd' used to represent rulers or deity is familiar not only in Israelite's religious literature (cf. Jer. 2-8; 3:15; 10:21; 23:1-4; Mic. 5:5; Isa. 40:11; 44:28; Zech. 10:2-3; 11:3-8; 1 Kgs. 22:17; Ps. 23; 74:1; etc.) but also in other literature of the Ancient Near East. Cf. G. Ernest Wright, 'The Good Shepherd', *BA* 2 (1939), pp. 44-48.

their greed, exploitation, irresponsibility, and bad leadership. As a result, the sheep are scattered over all the earth and become the prey of the wild beasts. Vv. 2-6 are a woe oracle, a form of prophetic invective as at 13:3-7,<sup>1</sup> which is followed by a special Ezekielian title 'the shepherds of Israel'.<sup>2</sup> This oracle against the evil shepherds is based on the pattern of Jer. 23:1-2. There too a woe oracle against the shepherds is followed by a judgement oracle and a salvation oracle. But Ezekiel's oracle is much more detailed. The invective in vv. 3-4 charges the shepherds with greed, neglect, and bad leadership. Because of the negative aspect of the invective against the shepherds Ezekiel must have had the image of the good shepherd in mind. The good shepherd will devote himself to the needs of the flock and look after his flock with gentleness and care (cf. v. 16). Because of the want of leadership, the sheep are scattered and caught up in a wilderness of futility and they become the victims of their own shepherds (cf. v. 10). So Yahweh, the owner of the flock, will remove the hired shepherds from their office and also save his sheep from all dangers. It is interesting to see that the call for the attention of the shepherds is a call for pronouncing judgement (cf. vv. 7-9). Then in vv. 11-16 Yahweh promises that he will search for his sheep everywhere, that he will rescue, gather, and lead them back to the fold where they will be fed in good pasture and watered by streams, and that he himself will be their shepherd.

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1. Wevers, op. cit., p. 258; Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 336.

2. Cf. Wevers, loc. cit.; Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 834;

Cooke, op. cit., p. 373.

By using this allegory Ezekiel reprimands the failures of the past political leaders. The suffering and scattering of the people in the exile is described as the result of their irresponsibility for the catastrophe which has befallen the nation. Ezekiel's condemnation is directed at all the irresponsible kings of the past (cf. 17:1-21; 19:10-41; 22:30-32).<sup>1</sup> It is likely that the whole people of Israel was in Ezekiel's mind; this can be seen from the phrase 'the shepherd of Israel' in v. 2 and the clause 'my flock is scattering.....over the whole earth' in v. 6. Therefore it is not only the exiles in Babylon to which he refers but also the exiles in Assyria. In this oracle Ezekiel treats the bad political leadership of Israel as the main reason of the exile and the scattering of the people. Because of the failures of the political leaders, Yahweh puts an end to their rule and replaces them with a new leadership.

What is important to notice is that the main purpose of ch. 34 is not to rebuke or judge the past leaders, but to promise ideal leadership for the people. The rebuke on the evil shepherds mainly serves as the background for the appearance of the good shepherd. Ezekiel does not intend to build any national system, but to indicate that it was the failure of the political leaders that caused the destruction of the nation, and that it is Yahweh alone who will save the people from the exile and will take them into a land of their own and restore their national life.

Confronted with the exiles who are like scattered sheep and

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1. Wevers (loc. cit.) says that there is no point in seeking to identify the shepherds since Ezekiel simply had the ruling class in mind.

the prey of wild beasts, Ezekiel proclaims the message of hope that Yahweh himself will rescue (כ' ג'ן) them from exile, gather (ג'ן) them from the nations, and bring (כ' ג'ן) them back to their own land and that Yahweh will take charge of the flock and will be their good shepherd. In vv. 11-15 the features of allegory still remain, but its historical interpretation is already incorporated in the imagery in the features which refer to Israel: the sheep are brought out from the peoples and gathered from the countries and brought into their own land.

Vv. 11-12 show how Yahweh will act when his sheep are scattered abroad. Yahweh will ו'ן and ו'ן his sheep out of danger. These verbs are important for indicating, on the one hand, the true office of the shepherd, and the saving action of Yahweh on the other. Not only will Yahweh search for those who have strayed or been scattered, but he will also bestow his complete care on them.<sup>1</sup> As far as the message of hope in the passage is concerned, the theme of searching for the scattered or lost sheep is an important promise, for it indicated what Yahweh will do for the exiles after the day of judgement.<sup>2</sup> This theme is equivalent to the themes of delivering, gathering the people from the nations and of leading them back to their land.<sup>3</sup> This can be seen in vv. 13-14 in which

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 838-839. He writes, 'Im vorliegenden Zusammenhang ist es das sorgfältige Anschauen und Abzählen der Herde und die darin angelegte Bereitschaft, das Verlorene zu suchen und das Zerstreute zusammenzubringen' (p. 839).
  2. The phrase 'on a day of clouds and thick darkness' is descriptive of the day of Yahweh, here it denotes the destruction in 586 B. C.; cf. 7:7; 13:7.
  3. Cf. Ezek. 11:17; 36:24; 27:21; Jer. 23:3; 31:8; 32:27; Mic. 2:12.

there are two kinds of activity, i. e., Yahweh will bring and gather them from the nations and lead them back and feed them in their own land. This political deliverance is very important to the exiles, for to return to their land is their greatest hope. Furthermore, Yahweh will put them in the land of Israel, which will be a land of peace and prosperity, and Yahweh himself will rule his people as the good shepherd of the sheep. The beautiful imagery of Ps. 23 is most evident in this promise. Although one cannot find the words  $\eta\beta\eta\chi$ ,  $\text{ושׁ}$ ,  $\text{דסן}$ ,  $\text{ד'סן}$ , etc. in the book of Ezekiel,<sup>1</sup> 'The new intimate fellowship between God and people cannot be more vividly expressed than by the love with which the shepherd approaches the stunted, smitten remnants of the people.'<sup>2</sup>

It is striking to find that in this passage the divine 'I' appears at least 15 times and the divine 'my' 12 times. While the latter is to emphasize the relationship between Yahweh and his people, the former affirms the role of good Shepherd. Because the people of Israel are Yahweh's people he will rescue them and restore them to the land of Israel. Here the reason for salvation is seen in the relationship between God and Israel. But this is by no means to contradict Ezekiel's concept of Yahweh's act as being for the sake of his name. Although Ezekiel does not explicitly use phrases such as the love of God, the grace of the Lord, or Yahweh's faithfulness to the covenant as the reason for Yahweh's salvation yet all this is contained in the expression 'for the sake of Yahweh's name'; actually the divine warning and the promise of

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 877.

2. Eichrodt, loc. cit.

the saving act of Yahweh are expressions of Yahweh's love and grace and of his faithfulness to be the God of Israel. The concept 'for the sake of Yahweh's name' still finds its background in the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. As a matter of fact, the real motive for God's salvation is still to be found in the bond by which he freely linked himself with his people, by love, grace, or 'his name's sake'.<sup>1</sup>

Even before the fall of Jerusalem all the judgements that the prophet announced are an offer of grace, for such judgements and warnings are already an exhibition of grace. Apart from Yahweh's love, why should he trouble any more with a rebellious people or raise up prophets at all?<sup>2</sup> Before the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel emphasizes that if the people first repent, God will deliver them (cf. 2:1-6; 3:4-19; 6:8-10; 13:22; 14:6f.; et. al.), but after the fall, he emphasizes that salvation will come before repentance (chs. 34-37). To emphasize the sin of the people and the judgement of God, he tries to persuade his people to seek an opportunity of repentance, for the judgement is involved with mercy and deliverance and hope and the grace of Yahweh. He confirms the great possibility of the gracious forgiveness and salvation of Yahweh and thus offers some sort of solution of their present problems. The impression of the book of Ezekiel is that the redemption 'for the sake of Yahweh's

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1. Cf. E. Jacob, op. cit., pp. 290f.

2. Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, (1946), p. 59; Eichrodt thinks that the threat and warning to the people is intended as a *παράκλησις*, an address of promise, appeal, and admonition, a word of warning to the people (op. cit., p. 445).

name' overshadows the idea of repentance and the other reasons of salvation.

What is also to be noted is the promise that Yahweh himself will be a good shepherd and he will not only remove the evil shepherds but will also search for his sheep and put them in a good pasture. It is unlikely that Ezekiel wants to abolish completely the monarchy and envisage a theocracy, as G. A. Cooke has maintained.<sup>1</sup> For Ezekiel has promised a new Davidic prince and a united kingdom (34:23f.; 37:15-23) for the people in the future. When he pronounces that Yahweh will remove the evil shepherds Ezekiel already expects the appearance of the new shepherd, who will take the place of those have been dismissed. Whereas Ezekiel looks forward to a good shepherd—Yahweh as the shepherd in the salvation context and a new David after the restoration of the people in the land, Jeremiah predicts new shepherds for the sheep (Jer. 23:4). In fact, there was no real tension between monarchy and theocracy as long as belief in an ideal king existed in the message of the prophets.<sup>2</sup> Whenever Ezekiel speaks of the lot of the new Israel, he always assumes an historical and political existence for God's people within their own ancestral land.<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel's extraordinary emphasis on Yahweh's role as the good shepherd is not intended to create a new political system, but is a message of hope to emphasize Yahweh's saving acts for the people. In this passage the prophet puts more weight on the element of political salvation than on the element of internal restoration.

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1. Cooke, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

2. Cf. E. Hammershaimb, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

3. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology II*, p. 234.

Vv. 17-24 also consist of accusation, judgement, and promise. Having dealt with the shepherds and promised Yahweh's salvation for the people, Ezekiel turns against social injustice among the people and promises a new Davidic leader, the servant of the Lord, who will rule over the people. The starting point of this passage is also the promise of a good shepherd. The historical background of this promise is based in the social injustice in the past which is seen as one of the reasons of the exile and destruction (v. 21). Ezekiel's accusation against the rapacious greed of the powerful members of the community and their failure to consider the rights of others makes him stand in the same line with his predecessors, Amos, and Micah (cf. Am. 4:1; Mic. 2:2). But here Ezekiel's anti-social guilt is sketched in living colours by using the imagery of the sheep. In order to keep justice and peace in the community Yahweh will judge among the people. This judgement, for the oppressed, is soteriological, i.e., the flock will be saved, an uncommon notion in Ezekiel because here judgement is a proclamation of redemption from oppression.<sup>1</sup> For the whole community, the judgement on the powerful oppressors is a means to get liberation for the true members of the community. So Eichrodt is right to put this kind of judgement side by side with the purifying judgement of 20:33ff.<sup>2</sup> While the latter is in the context of a new Exodus, the former is in the internal restoration.

As in the case of vv. 1-16, here the judgement should not be taken as the main purpose of Ezekiel's prophecy although one has

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1. Wevers, op. cit., p. 262.

2. Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 473-474; Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 840.

not necessarily to accept the opinion of Hblscher and Cooke that the threat of a divine judgement upon the community itself does not occur in the message of hope in Ezek. 33ff.<sup>1</sup>

The invective and the judgement against the powerful, oppressive leaders of the people mainly serve as the background for the appearance of a Davidic ruler. After the promise of the salvation of Israel from the nations and of the restoration of Israel to their own land Ezekiel envisages that Yahweh will set up a leader to take care of his people and to keep justice and peace in the community.<sup>2</sup> This message of hope is to assure the people that Yahweh will choose a good leader for them and under this leadership the people will be united and secure, for Yahweh will be their God and a new David will be their prince. A contradiction has been detected between vv. 23f., which envisages God setting a new Davidic ruler as shepherd over his flock, and vv. 11-15, which state that God himself will act as a good shepherd. But these two themes are by no means contradictory; for on the one hand, God appears as a good shepherd to emphasize the intimate relationship between Yahweh and his people by which Israel can hope to be delivered, and on the other hand, God appoints a Davidic shepherd because a new Davidic leader is to carry out God's will to take care of the people. This new David only appears after the re-establishment of Israel which has been accomplished by God alone.

This makes Ezekiel's hope for the ideal king quite different from the traditional hope of a deliverer for the nation. The new David is to be appointed as the head of the people but he is the

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1. Cooke, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

2. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

servant of Yahweh, who will faithfully fulfil the duties of a shepherd. Ever since the word spoken by Nathan in 2 Sam. 7, the Davidic dynasty had begun to be an integral part of Israel's hope of salvation, and the Davidic kings were always greeted at their accession as kings bringing salvation, and distinguished by attributes, as is clearly seen in the royal psalms (cf. Pss. 2, 45 and 110). Every new son of David who succeeded to the throne could potentially be the messianic king who would bring salvation, if it should please Yahweh to choose him for that purpose. Isaiah and Micah did indeed predict in very harsh language the rejection of the Davidic house, but they still held on to the house of David's father, Jesse, and thought that the future deliverer would come from some contiguous branch of the house, so as to show the word spoken by him was to be fulfilled. Nevertheless, Jeremiah harked back to the old line, and felt able to speak of the righteous or genuine scion of David, whom Yahweh himself would raise up (Jer. 23:5f.), where he uses the same word as Ezekiel for the setting up of this king. Ezekiel, too, on his part shows how closely he agrees with Jeremiah in the way he takes up and accentuates this line of thought. "My servant David" is therefore equivalent to "My servant of the family of David", and has no connection whatever with any resurrection of the original David, a notion which is in any case completely alien to Israelite ways of thinking.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, that the ideal ruler is actually named David (cf. 37:24) represents a future recapitulation of the idyllic golden days of long ago. David was the ancestral hero of the kingdom

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1. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 476.

and it was fitting that those days should return.<sup>1</sup> 'Both the person and the reign of David were idealized. He was not in general terms but in truth a man after God's own heart. His rule was not merely extensive, it was universal. He gave the people victory and secured them peace—he was a leader and commander of the people (Isa. iv. 4; Ps. xviii. 43). Such shall be the king of the restored community when Jehovah is indeed the God of Israel'.<sup>2</sup> Therefore 'my servant David' indicates the genuine relationship between Yahweh and his earthly representative and denotes what kind of leader the people can hope for.

The phrase 'one shepherd' not only recalls the tradition of David's humble origin as a shepherd in 2 Sam. 7:8, but also implies the unity of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah once they are restored (cf. 37:15ff.). Although Ezekiel 34 finds its parallel in Jer. 23:1ff. and may be suggested by Jeremiah, yet, while Jeremiah announces that Yahweh will appoint shepherds for the people, Ezekiel predicts that Yahweh will be their shepherd in the time of affliction and will set up one Davidic shepherd for them after the restoration of the people to their own land.

In v. 24 there is the promise—I, the Lord, will be their God, and David, my servant, shall be prince over them—which finds its parallels in Hos. 3:5 and Jer. 30:9.<sup>3</sup> But in these two cases David is titled as king, not prince. This formula is also to be found in Ezek. 37:23-24 and it indicates explicitly both the political and religious states of the new Israel. As to Ezekiel's usage of

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1. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

2. Davidson, *loc. cit.*

3. Cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 842.

and  $\gamma^{\prime} \delta$ , it will be dealt with later in the exegesis on 37:15ff. Here it is important to stress that all the messages of Ezekiel claim a special relationship between Yahweh, the God of Israel, and Israel, the people of God. The fundamental promise of the new Israel is that Yahweh will be the God of Israel and Israel God's people. The new Israel may appear as one nation (cf. 37:15ff.) under one single leadership; and the leader is to lay emphasis on his leadership and responsibility, and not on his majesty and power--the servant of Yahweh and the shepherd of the people. G. von Rad demonstrates that both passages in Ezek. 34:23f. and 37:23ff. do not expound strongly the Davidic-Messianic tradition, instead, these two passages show their close relation to Exodus-Sinai tradition. Ezekiel has fused the Sinai tradition and Davidic tradition which Jeremiah still kept essentially separate. But the Sinai tradition dominates his thought--under the new David, Israel will obey the commandments (Ezek. 37:24).<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, to other nations the head of the new Israel is seen or called  $\gamma^{\prime} \delta$  in its general sense, but to Ezekiel and his people the future leader will be called  $X^{\prime} \psi J$ . For  $X^{\prime} \psi J$  is used to denote the political leader who has been raised either by Yahweh or his fellow-countrymen to a position of leadership. This proper station is emphasized by placing David's position as prince in second place to Yahweh as their true king. Here Ezekiel illustrates a high ideal of kingship in the Old Testament and of the place of Yahweh as the true king--king of Israel from whom the kingship of the house of David was derived.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Von Rad, op. cit., p. 236.

2. Taylor, op. cit., p. 219.

In Ezekiel only Yahweh himself brings forth hope and salvation, and not his servant or the deliverer of the people; so the future ruler of Israel, overcoming their enemies by war and bloodshed, is not to be found there. The future leader does not appear on the scene until after Yahweh has accomplished judgement and thus taken the decisive step to bring in the new age.<sup>1</sup> Here the hope is a messianic expectation, but it is not believing in or depending on salvation from the Messiah. Messianic hope is a hope by which the people of Israel are looking forward to political freedom, the internal transformation of the nation, and a harmonious life in a land of peace, blessing, and prosperity. But believing in the Messiah, or expectation of the Messiah, is to hope that at a certain time there will appear a powerful human saviour who through his power and spiritual gift from God, will rescue Israel from all enemies and troubles. The people will have a moral transformation and they will enjoy blessing and peace, living in paradise, and then through them the blessings of paradise will prevail throughout the whole human race.

Having delivered his people from the nations and put them in their own land and set up a ruler for them, Yahweh goes further, promising his people a peaceful and prosperous life in the future. He will establish a covenant of peace with them (v. 25; 36:28; 37:26; cf. Hos. 2:17-20; Lev. 26:4-6) and promises them peace, prosperity, and his presence. The foundation of peace is the willing presence of Yahweh (vv. 30-31), and peace and prosperity are the natural

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 477; cf. Stalker, *op. cit.*, p. 41;

H. Ringgren, The Messiah in the Old Testament, (London, 1956).

results of Yahweh's presence with his people. In vv. 25-31 the connection with the motif of 'Rest' in the Exodus-Covenant tradition can be found.<sup>1</sup> After the Exodus from the bondage of Egypt Israel was led toward the promised land where the people could possess the land and enjoy rest from the enemies round about (cf. Deut. 12:9f.; 25:19; 33:14; Josh. 21:44; 22:4). The peaceful possession of the land was thus to be their national hope. Hosea also described the beautiful state after Yahweh once again took Israel into the wilderness and gave her a new beginning, and granted her peace and joy (Hos. 2:14-20). But Reventlow<sup>2</sup> and D. Baltzer<sup>3</sup> find that 34:25-30 and 37:26-28 and Lev. 26:3-13 are closely related in their words and contents. They find these passages appear as the so-called 'Segensworten' which correspond to the so-called 'Drohworten' in Lev. 26:14ff. and Deut. 28:15ff., and they are spoken in the context of the covenant relation. But these Segensworten in Ezek. 34 are developed in the imagery of shepherd and sheep and underlined with the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel. Ezek. 37:26-28 then combined with the word ' □ 5 19 ' underlined the promise of the new David. However, no doubt this promise of peace and prosperity can be conceived in the covenant relationship between God and his people and here Ezekiel does not proclaim it in its legal sense.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, op. cit., p. 224f.

2. Reventlow, op. cit., pp. 44ff.

3. Baltzer, op. cit., pp. 156ff.

4. Contrast, Baltzer, ibid., p. 159. For after the fall of the nation Ezekiel promises the message of hope which is completely from the grace of Yahweh.

An everlasting covenant between God and Israel has already been mentioned in Ezek. 16:60. But here Ezekiel has shown what peace actually involves in practical terms. The expression 'a covenant of peace' is a stronger expression than the covenant itself (Ezek. 37:26; Isa. 54:10) and is to emphasize the peace and the welfare which the people will have.<sup>1</sup> While covenant refers to the special relationship between Yahweh and his people, peace is involved not only in the state of those who are united in a harmonious community but also in the welfare and prosperity of the community. Peace is practically a synonym for 'covenant'; for covenant can be expressed by saying that the peace of Yahweh prevails in Israel, therefore the relation between them is characterised by love, and the feeling of fellowship among kinsmen.<sup>2</sup> This new covenant is established after Yahweh's liberation of Israel from the nations and after the restoration of Israel to her own land. Ezekiel does not treat it as the foundation of salvation, but sees it as the guarantee of God concerning their future relationship. This is a remarkable way of expressing the promise of God by which Israel will have a new beginning and become the people of God in the land of Israel. This new covenant of the future is a gracious gift of Yahweh and the people do not owe any obligation or responsibility; this state of life is the central hope of the exiles.<sup>3</sup>

The former covenant has a slightly legal emphasis, but here

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1. Cf. Pedersen, Israel I-II, (1926), p. 235.

2. Pedersen, Israel III-IV, (1940), p. 612; cf. G. E. Wright, The Challenge of Israel's Faith, (London, 1946), p. 94; von Rad, op. cit., pp. 129-35.

3. Cf. Pedersen, Israel I-II, p. 326.

the new covenant has no legal emphasis. In the old covenant peace presupposes a good relationship between God and his people and is the result of fulfilment of the demands of the covenant, but here peace and prosperity are not to be seen as the results of Israel's faithfulness to the covenant, but as the gracious gift of Yahweh (cf. Hos. 2:17ff.; Isa. 29:17ff.; 32:15ff.; Jer. 31:4ff.; 32:40ff.). This new covenant which will ensure Israel's future security and prosperity seems to be a development of Hosea's description of the new covenant. In Hosea Yahweh as an independent arbitrator for Israel would establish a covenant with wild beasts, birds, and reptiles. Here in Ezekiel Yahweh does not act as a mediator, but he will make for Israel a covenant of peace. The wild beasts are not the other party to the covenant. They are to be removed from the land. From this, it can be seen that Ezekiel has adapted Hosea's thought to that more commonly found in the Old Testament, the covenant tradition.<sup>1</sup> Fundamentally both Hosea's and Ezekiel's ideas of the covenant are the same, but their way of expressing them is different. On the whole, Hosea, Ezekiel, and the author(s) of the H Code use a tradition of covenant blessings. There is no doubt that Ezekiel's prophecy has its close connection with the Holiness Code, yet the parallels between them are too brief, therefore, it is hard to show clearly the direction of literary influence.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter the themes of hope are shown in Yahweh's replacement of the evil shepherds and Yahweh's promise to be the Good Shepherd for the people; in the appointment of a Davidic prince as the shepherd of the people; and in the establishment of the covenant of peace.

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1. Cf. Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p. 50; Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 481f.

2. Cf. Carley, op. cit., pp. 62ff.; Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 70ff.

The first part of the chapter (vv. 1-15) is an oracle concerning the land of Israel which not only finds its counterpart in ch. 6 but is also connected to the oracle against Edom in ch. 35. The second part of the chapter has some prophecies concerning the restoration of the house of Israel. The chapter as a whole is concerned with the restoration of the people of Israel and of their land. Formally vv. 1-15 can be divided into two sections, i.e., vv. 1-11 the denunciation against the enemies of Israel and the promise of prosperity and repopulation for the land of Israel and vv. 12-15 a later addition.<sup>1</sup> In vv. 1-15 there are seven introductions to several sayings (vv. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13), three commands to prophesy (vv. 1, 3, 6), and three conclusions (vv. 11, 14, 15). The literary structure is so complicated that it is difficult to distinguish the original core of the prophecy.<sup>2</sup> But thematically this section is quite consistent on the restoration of the land of Israel.

Vv. 16-38 can be divided formally into six sections: vv. 16-21, 22-23, 24-28, 29-36 and 37-38, but mainly there are two sections: vv. 16-23 and 24-38. Thematically vv. 16-23 deal with the reason for the restoration of Israel. The introductory part presents the reason for the exile and the profanation of Yahweh's name. The oracle which follows stresses the reason for the restoration. It is not for the sake of Israel but in order to vindicate Yahweh's holy name. Vv. 24-38 describe the internal and external restoration of the people. Some later additions are attached by later tradition-

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, *ibid.*, p. 859; Wevers, *op. cit.*, pp. 267f.

2. Wevers, *ibid.*; Carley, *Ezekiel*, pp. 238f.

alists (vv. 33-36 and 37-38). The Greek text of Ezekiel in the papyrus Codex 967 (i.e., the John H. Scheide Collection)<sup>1</sup> shows that Ezekiel 36 ends with v. 23a.<sup>2</sup> This may prove that vv. 1-23a are the original section which comes from the prophet. Generally the omissions and variants of the Hebrew Text with the text of Septuagint may be due to the fact that the passages are not in the translator's exemplar or that they are copyists' errors, or that at times there was a deliberate change on the part of the editor in the interest of clarity or even brevity, or for other reasons.<sup>3</sup> On Ezekiel, F. V. Filson has shown how two large omissions in Codex 967 (e.g., Ezek. 12:26-28; 36:23b-38) may be accidental and due to the copyist.<sup>4</sup> In the case of 36:23b-38, it may be omitted by the translator who has seemingly quite frequently omitted repetitious words and phrases in the interest of a simpler text. Therefore, the literary style and the thought of 36:23b-38 can be shown to be integral to the book of Ezekiel.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the fact that this chapter is full of literary problems, yet the content and the diction are fully in accordance with the message of Ezekiel, especially with the restoration of Israel which Ezekiel promises after the fall of the nation. But the chapter is to be seen as a later addition by Ezekiel or by his school. It seems

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1. Cf. May, op. cit., pp. 48, 63; J. W. Wevers, 'Evidence of the Text of John H. Scheide papyri for Translation of the Status Constructus in Ezekiel', JBL 70 (1951), pp. 211-6.

2. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 873; May, loc. cit.

3. May, ibid., p. 63.

4. F. V. Filson, 'The Omission of Ezek. 12:26-28 and 36:23b-38 in Codex 967', JBL 42 (1943), pp. 27-32.

5. May, loc. cit.

to show what Yahweh is going to do to vindicate his holy name—by the restoration of his people and of the land.

In vv. 1-15, Ezekiel declares that Yahweh will condemn the enemies who occupied the land and who disdained Israel with arrogance; and that Yahweh will bless the mountains of Israel and make them into a land of unexpected prosperity with inhabited fortified cities and a great population. The passage begins with a divine command to the prophet to prophesy coupled with a demand for attention to the mountains of Israel. Then Yahweh reveals the reason why he will punish the enemies. The oracle takes the 'because.... therefore' (  $\text{ל}^{\text{פ}} \text{ל}^{\text{פ}}$  ) form—a demonstration oracle.<sup>1</sup> The enemy (  $\text{ל}^{\text{פ}} \text{ל}^{\text{פ}}$  ) has said, 'Aha! now the everlasting highlands are ours' (v. 2). This malicious joy of the enemy can also be found in 25:3; 26:2. And the claim to possession of the land appears also in the judgement on Edom in 35. Because the term  $\text{ל}^{\text{פ}} \text{ל}^{\text{פ}}$  is in the singular and the claim to possession of the land is unlawful, this oracle seems to be directed mainly against Edom. But here the enemy can also be regarded in a general as the rest of the nations (cf. 36:3, 5, 6, 7,). Therefore Yahweh who swore by the uplifted hand (cf. 20:5) will make the nations around Israel suffer the same fate as they meted out to Israel in their malice, and they will bear the same taunts themselves.<sup>2</sup> This judgement is related to the themes of the promise of return to their own land and of the verification

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1. Cf. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 17. This is the most common type of oracle in Ezekiel, in which the prediction is preceded by a motivation. Such an oracle begins with a 'because' clause and ends with a 'therefore' statement.

2. Cf. Carley, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

of the land.

In earlier days, because of the sins and defilement of the people Ezekiel set his face against the mountains of Israel and proclaimed their destruction; now because of the malicious delight and the unlawful claim of the enemy, Ezekiel sets his face against the nations and pronounces their destruction. Moreover, he promises the mountains of Israel fertility, prosperity, and deliverance from all enemies. In contrast to the mockery of the enemy over the desolation of the land, Yahweh blesses the land. The themes of transformation and restoration of the land depicted here in vv. 8-11, can be found in Lev. 26:3-9; Ezek. 17:23; 34:25ff.; and 36:33ff. In contrast to the unlawful claim over the land by the enemy, Yahweh claims the land as the inheritance of his people. The fruitfulness and fertility of the land are the signs of divine blessing and here it is the prelude to the return of the exiles (v. 8; cf. 34:11ff.).

In this passage, Ezekiel personifies the land and seems to give it character, personality, and feelings. Yahweh had indeed put the land under the same curse as its people and had cut off the root through which it received life from the gifts and forces of nature, but he would now accept it once more as his and would bestow again the full stream of life from his gifts of creation.<sup>1</sup> Once again the people and the land will have a close relationship; the land will do no harm to the people (vv. 13-15). It is Yahweh's drawing near which makes the forces of fertility flow out of the land in such a way that the land will no longer constitute a temptation for the people, but will represent a picture of the goodness of the one

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

creator of all.<sup>1</sup>

The passage vv. 16-38 has sometimes been thought of as a compendium of the theology of Ezekiel.<sup>2</sup> It exhibits the key reason of Yahweh's salvation and describes the internal and external restoration of Israel. In this particular passage the prophet refers back to Israel's history of transgression which terminates in the dispersion of the people throughout other lands. This is described as the history of the profanation of the name of God. Yahweh himself, who had been bound to this people by his name, was profaned among the peoples, because the peoples among whom the Israelites are dispersed can: 'These are the people of Yahweh, and yet they had to go out of the land' (v.20). So it is the honour of this divine name that provides the particular grounds for the intervention of Yahweh in which he again gives his people a future and a hope.<sup>3</sup> But how does Yahweh vindicate his holy name? Not only through the punishment of enemies but also through the resurrection of Israel. The recognition formula is here the key to the passage. From all that Yahweh will do, the peoples as well as the Israelites will know the authentic being of Yahweh.<sup>4</sup>

Vv. 17-19 indicate the reason for the exile of the people. Because Israel had defiled the land with idolatries and social violence, and because of the accusations which had been shown in the message of doom in chs. 1-24, especially chs. 7; 8; 14; 16; 20; 22; and 23, therefore Yahweh had to punish his people and to scatter them

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1. Ibid.

2. Cf. Bertholet, op. cit., p. 125; Wevers, op. cit., p. 272.

3. Zimmerli, Man and His Hope in the Old Testament, p. 117.

4. Ibid., p. 118.

among the nations (cf. 12:15; 20:23; 24:14). The land is holy because it is the possession of Yahweh and is sanctified by Yahweh's presence in it, but it is rendered unclean as by menstrual uncleanness (v. 17; Lev. 15:19-33; 18:25, 27ff.). Ezekiel employs the word

נִחַשׁ נִחַשׁ, which is derived from the sacral law to describe the defilement of the land. He takes this cultic term and applies it not only to cultic sin (cf. 20:30f) but also in a more general sense as showing contempt for God's holiness by breaking his commandments.<sup>1</sup>

Vv. 20-21 show the nature of Israel's profanation of Yahweh's name. Not that they sin grievously in exile, but that they are in exile (v. 20) and that their nation has collapsed and their land is occupied. These are thought of by the nations as the signs of the failure of Yahweh. The relationship between God, people, and land was an intimate one in ancient Israel. The land and the people of Israel are signs and witnesses of Yahweh's Lordship and glorification. Although the exile of Israel is necessary because of the rebellion of the people, yet this creates a wrong knowledge of Yahweh among the heathen for they think of Yahweh as a weak or common god who cannot protect his people. Yahweh's holy name represents his faithfulness and power and is here personified as something apart from Yahweh himself.<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy has strongly stressed that in some places Yahweh will put his name there in order that Israel can worship Yahweh (Deut. 12:5).

The name of Yahweh has been attached to both the land and the people so that they are the land and the people of Yahweh. Now

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 494.

2. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 273; cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, p. 375.

here the people say to the exiles, 'This is the people of Yahweh and they have to come out of the land'. This sentence contains (1) the true relationship between God and Israel--the election of Israel; and (2) the relationship between Yahweh, Israel and the land which Yahweh had given to the fathers as the land of Israel. The exile seems to render the name of Yahweh isolated from the people of Israel and from the land.<sup>1</sup> This saying of the heathen contains both the mockery of Israel by the nations and the implication that Yahweh cannot control history. 'Evidently it was originally the will of God that he should have a prosperous and blessed people, the name of whose God the heathen would pronounce with awe and reverence. Here, as in 5:5ff., we meet with a world-wide obligation imposed upon Israel according to Yahweh's plan; her fellowship with God was to throw a bright light out into the world around her. Israel's sanctification of the name of God by her obedience to this obligation was to witness clearly to God's life-giving election and thus to establish the knowledge of God in the heathen world. But now... profanation had taken the place of sanctification and clear witness to God had been replaced by the scandal of a God reduced to helplessness.'<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, after revealing the reason why he exiles Israel and the consequence in the desecration of his name, Yahweh declares to the prophet that he will vindicate his holy name. It is in this declaration that Israel finds her future. }  $\text{NPK}$  in imperf. cons. form with Yahweh as its subject indicates Yahweh's determina-

1. Ibid.; cf. Num. 14:13-19; Ex. 32:12--Moses' appealing for his people.

2. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 495.

tion to act. 'Wahrscheinlicher aber wird darin erkennbar, dass auch die prophetische Heilsverkündigung an das Volk schon laut geworden ist und dass das eigentliche Absehen dieses Wortes dahin geht, deutlich zu machen, wieso solche Heilsaussage überhaupt möglich ist. Schon das Wort 35:1-36:15 hatte der Frage nach der "Begründung" der Heilszusage Jahwes gerufen. Die Frage hat sich offensichtlich der Exilsgemeinde gestellt: Wie kann denn der Heilige überhaupt sein sündiges Volk, das er um seiner Heiligkeit willen verstossen muss, wieder begnadigen? Das vorliegende Wort will auf diese Frage antworten.'<sup>1</sup>

Vv. 22-23 begin with the divine command to make a proclamation and then follows the introductory formula of messenger-speech. In these two verses Ezekiel presents the very reason of Yahweh's redemption of his people. Because of concern for his name, Yahweh is going to act to remove the profanation of his name and so be recognized by the peoples that he is Yahweh. Ezekiel had earlier mentioned Yahweh's concern for the honour of his name as the motive for his action (cf. 16:60-63; 20:9, 14, 22, 44). Now concern for his name is indicated as God's sole reason for restoring Israel. The conception that Yahweh acts only for his name's sake is a remarkable thought of Ezekiel and is not found in the earlier prophets, but it is an idea held in common with Deutero-Isaiah (cf. 48:25; 28:11).<sup>2</sup> It is linked with the destinies of Israel and involved with her role among foreign nations. 'It contains the prophet's philosophy of history. History, particularly that of Israel in the face of the nations, is Jehovah operating for his

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1. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 876.

2. Carley, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

name's sake... The "name" of God here is not the mere word "Jehovah", neither is it what might be called his "reputation", though both are included in it. The idea of the prophet is suggested by the fact that he who is God alone and over all is known to the world as Jehovah, the God of Israel'.<sup>1</sup>

As Yahweh has linked his name to Israel, respect for him and knowledge of him are bound up with the fate of Israel. The appropriate punishment for the sins of Israel would have shown him, in the eyes of the nations, to be fickle and powerless, for the peoples conceive of him only through the political achievement of Israel. The destruction of the nation and the exile of the people become the profanation of Yahweh's holy name, because the nations conclude that Yahweh the God of Israel is so weak and powerless that he cannot protect his people. They do not understand the meaning of Yahweh's judgement on his people. The motive of the divine act of judgement on his people can be evidently found in the passages such as 7:8; 14:19; 20:8; 21:36; 22:31; 24:8, 14; 18:13; 36:21. But these are also the motive of the divine salvation that Yahweh will not let the sins of Israel and the humiliation of Israel to defile his name. Thus his holy name appears as the ground of new salvation so that his judgement is not simply an expression of his wrath but also an expression of his righteousness. This can be seen in many places that the acts of Israel seem in contrast to the justice of Yahweh (7:3, 8; 18:30; 23:14; etc.). So the justice of Yahweh and his salvation give the answer to the purpose of Yahweh's judgement on his people.

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1. Davidson, op. cit., p. xli.

In order to reveal his sovereignty and power both to his people and to other nations, Yahweh will  $\bar{\eta}\bar{\omega}\bar{\gamma}$  the restoration of Israel. 'This "manifestation" is therefore much more than simply inward or spiritual; it is an event which comes about in the full glare of the political scene, and which can be noticed by foreign nations as well as Israel. Jahweh owes it to his honour that the covenant profaned by all the heathen should be re-established. There is an unmistakable element of reason in this method of argument. In order to make the whole saving work theologically comprehensible, Ezekiel takes the radical course of relating it to Jahweh's honour, which must be restored in the sight of the nations'.<sup>1</sup>

Although this concept of Yahweh's action for his honour seems to be 'a hard saying',<sup>2</sup> nevertheless, to the exiles, it offers a new hope which, in contrast to their own deep despair and helpless notions about God's dealings, gives them an indissoluble guarantee of their restoration.<sup>3</sup> 'If Israel can still possess any sort of hope, it must have as its sole basis the certainty that God's fidelity to his own intrinsic nature (and that is precisely what is ultimately meant by the hallowing of his name) must necessarily lead to his sanctifying and renewing the people whom he has rejected.

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1. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, p. 236.

2. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 496. It should be noted that 20:31 and 36:23 are in the legal setting. Zimmerli (op. cit., pp. 876ff.) points out the similarity of legal-polemic setting between Ezek. 36:22-32 and Isa. 43:22-28. Both do not begin with the message of hope but with the polemic rejection of Israel's salvation foundation.

3. Eichrodt, loc. cit.

With absolute consistency in this way, all expectations of salvation are given a basis beyond human expectation. God's honour demands that he shall sanctify his name in the eyes of the whole world.<sup>1</sup>

Vv. 24-32 show how Yahweh will sanctify his name (v. 22). According to the text as it now stands, the first thing Yahweh wants to do is to take the exiles from the nations and gather them together and bring them back to their own land. This promise of salvation which consists of three elements i.e., taking (  $\pi p \zeta$  ), gathering (  $\gamma \rho \rho$  ), and leading (  $\nu \sigma \tau \chi \rho \lambda \eta$  ) can only be found in two parallel passages 34:13 and 37:21.<sup>2</sup> This promise has its base in the Exodus-Settlement traditions in which Yahweh had delivered (  $\zeta \nu \pi$  ) the Israelites from Egypt and led (  $\chi \rho \lambda \eta$  ) them into the land of Canaan. In the old Exodus traditions there is no mention of Yahweh's gathering of his people. But both exodus events lead to the same purpose, that is, Yahweh leads his people into the land of Canaan and makes or takes them as his people.

The bringing back of the people to their own land is the preliminary work which is essential for the restoration of the nation, but it is an indispensable external restoration. Return to the homeland is the greatest hope of the exiles. In the homeland they can renew their religious and political life. Here through the salvation of his people from the enemies' control and the re-establishment of the nation of Israel Yahweh will have sanctified his name in the eyes of the nations.

After the return to the land, the people will be cleansed

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 496f.

2. Cf. Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

inwardly with pure water, given a new heart and a new spirit, and filled with the spirit of Yahweh (vv. 25-27).<sup>1</sup> Restoration is not only external salvation but also internal transformation. Since the cause of Israel's punishment is her sin and rebellion, the new Israel will be an obedient and transformed people; because Yahweh is holy, his people must be holy too. In this sense, restoration is a kind of creation, a creation of a new obedient people. The inward creation here is depicted in three acts of Yahweh, i.e., purification from old sins; the gifts of a new heart and a new spirit; and the gift of Yahweh's spirit in man's heart. Using the sprinkling motif of the cultic purification (cf. Num. 19:9-22; Ex. 12:22; Lev. 14:49ff.), Ezekiel promises his people that Yahweh will purify them and forgive them.<sup>2</sup> This promise of purification and forgiveness can be found in the parallel passage in Ps. 51:7.<sup>3</sup> Here hope is expressed in the freeing or purification from old sins and in Yahweh's forgiveness.<sup>4</sup> For salvation always goes side by side with forgiveness. The people in the new era is a forgiven people; the conspicuous marks are re-creation and purification.

In addition, for the restoration to be a meaningful sanctification of Yahweh's name, not only will the people be delivered from the nations and led back to the homeland, but they will also be transformed into a holy people. The second act of Yahweh is the transformation of their hearts and spirits. Ezekiel uses the parabolic method to describe how Yahweh will transform the heart and

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

2. Cf. *ibid.*; Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 263; Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

3. There is no attempt to portray an actual rite performed by a priest, but is a symbolic expression.

4. Cf. the complaints of the people in 33:10 and 37:11.

spirit of the people (v. 26; 11:19; 18:31). The transformation is done by the gift of a new heart and a new spirit from Yahweh. Here obviously Ezekiel is influenced by Jeremiah, but while Jeremiah conceives the new covenant in terms of the divine response and reward for Israel's repentance, Ezekiel appears to leave no room for merit on Israel's part. Whereas Jeremiah, who uses the old thought forms to express his meaning, attaches the key word 'new' to the covenant (Jer. 31:31ff.), Ezekiel relates the word 'new' to the heart and the spirit of the people. The difference is not to be in the substance of the covenant but in the hearts of the Israelites who enter into it. The heart of stone means a heart of stubbornness, hardness, and rebellion; this is the expression of the heart of the old Israel. The heart of flesh means the heart of obedience, faithfulness, and sensibility; this is the heart of the new Israel. Here 'flesh' is not opposed to 'spirit', but to 'stone'. New heart and new spirit pertain to the whole personality, it can be explained in terms of a new will and new attitude of spirit towards things.<sup>1</sup> It may be true that Ezekiel's idea of a new heart and a new spirit is influenced by Jeremiah's idea of a new covenant, yet Ezekiel's understanding of the nature of his people should not be overlooked (cf. chs. 15:16; 20 and 23).<sup>2</sup> 'But if the one prophet declares that God will forget Israel's sin and the other says that Israel will not be

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 499; cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 879.

2. Eichrodt (*op. cit.*, pp. 499f.) demonstrates that the new creation is related to Israel's real central sin, her insensitiveness, as a result of which she has completely closed herself from all God's declaration of his love and all his appeals, so as to become a rebellious house.

allowed to forget, essentially both men are saying the same thing, namely that the only hope is that, men being what they are, God will have to perform a new creative act in their hearts. Otherwise restoration to their own land would only mean the beginning all over again of the whole sorry story'.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the people will have bestowed on them the spirit of God which is 'a motive power pervading all that is within and bringing union with God's nature and will'.<sup>2</sup> Formerly, the divine spirit would enable a man with some special capacity to perform special tasks (e.g., Jud. 3:10; 1 Sam. 10:6; 16:13). Here the divine spirit not only gives a man power to shape his life in accordance with God's commandments but also appears to be a permanently effective power. This deepening or enlarging of the meaning of the word 'spirit' beyond its former limits is significant.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the divine spirit is the most significant element for the revival of the people, but also appears as the assurance of Yahweh's presence in the new Israel. Since Israel possesses a new heart and the spirit of God, she will be able to turn away from her sins and obey the will of the Lord. Consequently, the people will permanently possess the land which Yahweh grants to them. In that promised land a new Israel will appear: Yahweh will become the God of Israel and Israel Yahweh's people.

This is, in effect, a renewal of the covenant relationship. G. von Rad suggests that the best starting-point for interpreting the passage vv. 24-28 is the covenant confirmation through which

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1. N. W. Porteous, 'Old Testament and History', ASTI 8 (1970-1971), p.61.

2. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 500.

3. Ibid.

Ezekiel speaks of a saving appointment of Yahweh analogous to the making of the old covenant.<sup>1</sup> Although the word 'covenant' is not mentioned here (cf. 34:25; 37:26) or in 11:14-21, the content of both passages is very similar to Jeremiah's pericope on the new covenant (31:31-34).<sup>2</sup> As stated above, Jeremiah's prophecy has great influence on Ezekiel's thought on the inner renewal of the people. There are some similarities between them, yet some differences should not be overlooked. First of all, they use some similar words, such as  $\text{נָתַתִּי}$  (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27; 11:19),  $\text{וְאֵלֹהֵי}$  (Jer. 31:22, 31; Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26; this way of expressing the people's hope is parallel only in Deutero-Isaiah). Secondly, Jeremiah speaks of the new covenant whereas Ezekiel speaks of new heart and new spirit, but Ezekiel's renewal of the heart simultaneously goes with a new covenant. They express the goal of the future ideal with the same form: 'they will be my people and I will be their God' (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:28; 11:20). The purpose of God's saving action is to create a people able to obey the commandments perfectly and thus Israel as well as the other nations may have a full intimate knowledge of Yahweh (cf. Jer. 31:29; Ezek. 36:22).

Thirdly, both are related to a forgiving expurgation of sins (Jer. 31:34b.; Ezek. 36:25; cf. 11:18). But Ezekiel goes into more detail over the human aspect than Jeremiah—Yahweh will replace their stony heart with a new heart instead. Fourthly, both emphasize the fulfilment of the law in the future; while Jeremiah promises that Yahweh will put his law in the heart of the people ( $\text{וְאֵלֹהֵי}$  '  $\text{וְאֵלֹהֵי}$  )

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1. G. von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

2. *Ibid.*; cf. J. W. Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-100.

אִלֵּי אֱלֹהִים). Ezekiel goes much further and promises that Yahweh will bestow his spirit on his people ( אֶלֶּם אֶלֶּם אֶלֶּם אֶלֶּם ). In addition, Ezekiel has mentioned that when in her completely transformed state Israel looks back on her evil past and remembers it, she will loathe herself (Ezek. 36:31). This feature seems also to make Ezekiel's inner renewal go much beyond that of Jeremiah.<sup>1</sup> From all of these, it is clear that the promises of the new heart and of the divine spirit within are the great things that Ezekiel has to offer and the fulfilment of these promises bears out the establishment of the covenant between Yahweh and the people of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

After the creation of a new Israel, Yahweh promises the transformation of the land of desolation into a land like Eden, a land blessed with fertility, productivity, and prosperity (vv. 33-36; vv. 37-38). Thus the restoration of Israel to the promised land will be an object lesson to both the people and the nations. The nations will acknowledge the restoration as the work of Yahweh and therefore form their knowledge of God (cf. 36:29; 36:35f.). The people of Israel will be prosperous in the restored land and will have a genuine relationship with their God.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Von Rad, loc. cit.

2. Vriezen, op. cit., pp. 75f.

3. The earlier refusal of God to respond to the inquiries of his people (cf. 14:3; 20:3, 31) indicates the broken relationship between God and Israel. Now Yahweh's promises to respond to the inquiry of the people indicates the re-establishment of genuine relationship between God and his people.

The final section of the book is presented as an account of a single vision which depicts the new temple to be established, its sacrificial worship and personnel, the duties and privileges of the prince, the apportionment of the land, and some other matters affecting the life of the restored community. The most significant features of the vision are the return of the glory of God to the new temple (43:1-12) and the impressive symbolism of new life and hope which then begin to flood from it (47:1-12).<sup>1</sup> Formally this vision is very closely linked up with two earlier visions: (a) that of the profanation of the Temple (chs. 8-10), which culminates in the departure of the glory of Yahweh from the temple and city, and (b) that of the glory which appeared to the prophet beside the river Chebar (1-3:15).<sup>2</sup> But 'Es geht in 40-48 dann doch nicht allein um einen dem Menschen gesetzlich aufgetragenen Zustand, dessen richtige "Verfassung" hier geregelt würde, sondern ganz ebenso um die Ankündigung einer wunderbar von Jahwe gewirkten neuen Realität. Das ist am deutlichsten in 47:1-12, aber auch in 43:1ff. zu sehen. Die Aussagen von 40-48 knüpfen in ihrer inhaltlichen Ausrichtung ganz unverkennbar an die Verheissungsworte von 34-37 an. Dort hatten 37:26-28 auch ausdrücklich die Errichtung des neuen, ewig bestehenden Heiligtums in der Mitte des Volkes durch Jahwe ausgesprochen und daran die Bundesformel gefügt. In dem von Gott neu gegründeten Heiligtum sollte die dauerhafte Bundeszugehörigkeit Jahwes mit seinem Volke selbst der Völkerwelt sinnfällig vor Augen geführt

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1. Carley, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

2. Stalker, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

werden.<sup>1</sup> It also has affinities with the promise of Yahweh's spirit among the people in 37:1-14 and the promise of right service in the high mountain in 20:32ff. 'Die ganze Schau des neuen Tempels und seiner Ordnung erscheint von hier aus als die volle Entfaltung der von Jahwe verheissenen Zukunft Israel.'<sup>2</sup>

The section, however, is not the product of a single mind and it appears to be the result of accumulations having a long literary history in which the original text has grown and has been added to with different themes. As it is full of difficulties, it seems hardly to be treated as a unity. But undoubtedly, these chapters possess original texts which belong to Ezekiel and the remainder are the result of the school or the followers of Ezekiel. It is not the main intention of this present thesis to deal with the literary problems of this section, but it will treat these chapters as the final product of Ezekiel's prophecy and will not overlook the difficulties. Also, as far as the message of hope is concerned, it is not our intention to deal with all chapters in this section even though they are all related to the description of the ideal community in the future; nevertheless, the themes of the return of Yahweh's glory to the new Temple and of the symbolism of the river from the Temple will be our main concern.

R. E. Clements has pointed out the threefold basis of Israel's existence is a triple promise of God: the nationhood of Abraham's descendants, the possession of the land of Canaan, and the divine

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1. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 978; cf. Stalker (*loc. cit.*) who mentions that Ezekiel takes up the idea, found also in Isaiah and Micah, of the physical elevation of Mount Zion above the other mountains.

2. Zimmerli, *loc. cit.*

presence in Israel. But all three of these had been seriously questioned by the disasters of 597 and 587 B.C. Israel was no longer a nation but was in exile; it had been dispossessed of its land and the Temple had been destroyed and Yahweh's presence withdrawn.<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel before the fall of the nation, repeatedly gives warning that the sin of the people will cause their great punishment. He reprimands the religious leaders who introduce the pagan practices and symbols into the temple and thus profane the holy place of Yahweh (chs. 8-11). All the land is full of evil, violence, injustice, and idolatry. These abominations forced the glory of Yahweh to depart from the people and their temple. The departure of Yahweh's glory clearly denotes that Yahweh will withdraw his presence and punish his people. It is the ominous token of destruction for the people. Ezekiel's vision of the future includes the picture of a holy nation, with the holy temple at the heart of its life. He proclaims that Yahweh will be the God of Israel and his presence will be in the midst of them for ever (cf. 37:26-28; 40:40). In chs. 40-48 the presence of Yahweh is delineated by emphatic words and concrete expressions. Accordingly, the temple is the most concrete sign of the divine presence and is also a sign of election.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in order to emphasize the presence of Yahweh, Ezekiel sketches out the practical religious plan for the new Israel. Significantly, the last verse of the book of Ezekiel can be viewed as the conclusion of this final section of the book—'Yahweh is there' is the new name of Jerusalem.

The promise of Yahweh's presence residing among the people is

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1. Clements, God and Temple, p. 112.

2. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, pp. 326f.

the most important factor in Ezekiel's message of restoration and is an indispensable element of the new Israel. For the divine presence is the source of all power, blessing, and life. The prophet realizes that the most important task for the people is how to keep a good relationship with their God. Israel as a whole has to obey Yahweh's will and worship him with their whole being and display their holiness. How important it is that he has this kind of understanding when the nation collapsed and the people were exiled. All the various detailed descriptions of the temple and its regulations which appear in chs. 40-48 are the outworking of this primary belief in the holiness of Israel. And they are intended to serve as the guarantee of Yahweh's presence and at the same time as the future guidelines for Israel's life in the new era.<sup>1</sup>

To Ezekiel, cult and regulation are expressions of religion and the organization is an expression of that propriety of approach which belongs to the true worship of God. Attention should be drawn here to his description of the temple and its regulation. The prophet not only proclaims the promise of Yahweh's presence among the people, but he also has the intention of preserving the proper traditions (about the structure of the temple and its regulation). At the same time, he, as a practical reformer,<sup>2</sup> crosses out some regulations which he thinks are not appropriate for the service of Yahweh. The theme of the temple thus runs through the entire book of Ezekiel, and is the key to the understanding of his message.

After the detailed description of the temple area in Ezek. 40-

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1. Cf. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, pp. 111f.; Clements, op. cit., p. 106.

2. De Vaux, op. cit., p. 323; Cooke, op. cit., p. 425.

42:20, the prophet depicts the return of the glory of Yahweh to the new temple. This corresponds to the report of the departure of the glory of Yahweh in chs. 10-11. The glory returns by the east gate of the Temple as the presence of Yahweh moves through it, just as the destruction of the Temple and the city symbolized the departure of Yahweh's glory. The description of Yahweh's glory recalls the earlier visions in chs. 1-3 and 8-11 in which Ezekiel is lifted up and transported around and hears the sound of rushing water and the words of the Lord. When Ezekiel sees the return of Yahweh's glory, he is assured by the divine voice that Yahweh will remain in the midst of Israel forever. This is the significant sign of restoration and it must have filled the prophet with incredible joy and satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

The primary meaning of the word  $\text{כבוד}$  is 'weight'; from this primary meaning there is developed the further meaning of the outward manifestation of the inner worth. The glory of Yahweh, which like his name and his face are vehicles of his essential nature, is understood as the external manifestation of Yahweh's power, holiness, majesty, and gracious presence.<sup>2</sup> The expression always appears in connection with some sacred object, such as Mount Sinai, the tabernacle, or the temple, and with the works and the miracles of Yahweh (cf. Ex. 24:15-17; 23; Num. 14:10; 16:19; 1 Kgs. 8:10-11; Pss. 19:2; 24:7-10; 66:2; Isa. 6:3; 35:2; 59:19; etc.). According to Priestly tradition, Yahweh is absolutely transcendent and he reveals himself in his glory which is the promise of his presence (Ex. 33:15-16).

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1. Carely, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

2. Cf. Pedersen, *Israel I-II*, p. 246; cf. G. R. Berry, 'The Glory of Yahweh and the Temple', *JBL* 56 (1937), p. 115.

'The transcendent God does not dwell in the tent sanctuary, but rather appears in it from time to time in a cloud with his kabod.'<sup>1</sup> One of the characteristics of the Priestly Code is that it declared from the beginning that God had promised to dwell with his people (Ex. 29:45f.; 33:15f.; Lev. 26:11f.).<sup>2</sup>

Ezekiel came from a family of priests and he, undoubtedly, stands in the priestly קִדְשׁ tradition. 'The glory of God is one of the central ideas in the book. It expresses not so much an aspect of the divine being as God Himself in His transcendent majesty. Its counterpart on the human side is the phrase which God uses in addressing Ezekiel: "son of man", i.e., mere man, mortal man, emphasizing the frailty, transience, and insignificance of man. This kind of emphasis on the difference between God and man may easily degenerate into a conception of the distance between God and man, so that God is thought of as remote and coldly aloof from human concerns. That there is no coldness and indifference in God as Ezekiel proclaimed Him to be evident, . . . , from the terms in which he expresses his prophecies of hope. That He should be remote and inactive would be the very negation of the central Israelite faith in God which Ezekiel shared. But His otherness means that He will not compromise with the corruption of contemporary Judah, that His purpose will not be deflected by the nationalistic ambitions of those in exile and in Jerusalem itself who hope for the speedy downfall of Babylon, that He will continue to act in accordance with His own nature.'<sup>3</sup>

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1. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 184f.

2. Y. M. Congar, The Mystery of Temple, (ET, 1962), p. 17.

3. Anderson, Prophetic Contemporaries, pp. 25f.

As in the case of Ex. 40:34-38 which presents a luminous picture of Yahweh's glory entering into the tabernacle and symbolizing Yahweh's accompanying with Israel on her way, Ezekiel gives the description of Yahweh's glory entering and filling the temple as the climax of his description of the new temple. That which characterizes 'the glory of Yahweh' in Ezekiel's vision is its igneous, luminous character (1:4-28); it is like a dense cloud, enveloped in brightness; it is like a mass of fire or of gleaming metal, and is associated with a brilliant, radiant human form.<sup>1</sup> Through this gradiose vision, 'Ezekiel learns that God's presence is not restricted to a single place, but the believer may experience it wherever he may happen to live. This represents a fundamental break with tradition.'<sup>2</sup> Whereas the departure of Yahweh's glory from the temple and the city symbolizes the destruction of the city (10-11), the return of Yahweh's glory symbolizes the renewal of Israel (43:1-12; 44:1-5). But there is a precondition for Yahweh's abiding presence with his people--the temple must be safeguarded from all profanation.<sup>3</sup> There must be no more royal burials, no more royal buildings, within the sacred area, no more foreigners ministering at the altar. The prophet is told to show the people how the temple is to be arranged, and to write down the ordinances and laws which are to govern the practice of worship.<sup>4</sup>

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1. P. van Imschoot, Theology of the Old Testament I, (ET, 1954), p. 206.

2. Fohrer, op. cit., p. 417.

3. Stalker, op. cit., p. 238.

4. G. A. Cooke, 'Some considerations on the Text and Teaching of Ezekiel 40-48' ZAW 42 (1924), p. 107.

In ch. 47:1-12 the prophet portrays, with fantastic mythological material and in grandiose symbolic speech, a picture of living waters which flow out of the temple and cause marvellous natural effects. This passage can be treated as the climax of the theological development of the chs. 40-48. Or it can be said that it is the climax of Ezekiel's description of the Temple and its regulations. The Temple is clearly the significant symbol of Yahweh's presence and this presence is the source and the guarantee of all blessing and life which will bring about the wonderful effects signified by the abundance of blessing and the transformation of life and nature. This is the most wonderful promise familiar to the Israelites. Thus, the believers can obtain the joy of forgiveness, peace of soul, and new life; but it also is established as the centre of the national life in the coming age, a source of benediction to the land and to the people. So the uniqueness of the Temple is not its structure; it is because of its relation to the God of Israel--Yahweh.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The background of the passage is the mythological motif of the river of God with its life-giving streams. Gen. 2:10 speaks of the river which flowed out of Paradise and became the four world rivers, and Ps. 46:4 of "the river whose streams make glad the city of God".<sup>2</sup> The origin of the stream is the dwelling place of Yahweh (43:1ff.). Ezekiel has combined the paradise tradition with the Zion-Temple tradition in his description of the restored community of Israel.<sup>3</sup> The symbolism of this temple-river is so dramatic in

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1. Cf. G. von Rad, Studies in Deuteronomy, (London, 1953), pp. 37ff.

2. Stalker, op. cit., p. 309; cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 1199.

3. Baltzer, op. cit., p. 155.

its expression of hope for the people, that it is as remarkable as that of the resurrection of the dry bones in ch. 37.<sup>1</sup> This image of lifegiving waters flowing from God's dwelling place recurs in later prophecies (Joel. 3:18; Zech. 13:1; 14:8).

The promise of the presence of Yahweh is a striking comfort and encouragement to the Israelites. It can wipe out their doubts their fears and despairs. It gives them faith, hope, and guarantee, and thus they can tolerate all insults in the time of trouble. Now they know that the departure of the glory of Yahweh from the temple is the sign of punishment and destruction; and its return is the sign of salvation and life. Ezekiel understands that Yahweh has complete freedom to reside anywhere he desires, and is not limited by time and space. In order to affirm the reality of Yahweh's election and divine presence, he delineates in detail the structure of the temple and the regulation of the cultus. 'As Ezekiel had seen in his vision the ruin of Jerusalem with the departure of Yahweh from his sanctuary, so the restoration of Jerusalem would find its climax in the return of Yahweh to dwell permanently in his rebuilt temple. The crowning hope of the future is the re-establishing of the divine presence in Jerusalem which will make possible all those blessings which Israel desired, and which set this nation apart from all others. We have seen that the presence of Yahweh in Jerusalem, as it was believed to have been realized in the Solomonic temple, was the basis of a cult-prophetic hope for the future. In Judah's cult, especially in its acclamation of Yahweh as the divine king, the people looked forward to a perfect realization of what that kingship meant

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1. Cf. Carley, op. cit., p. 310.

in the realms of nature and history. Now Ezekiel introduces a new and important theme. In the present he asserts that Yahweh is not in Jerusalem, but promises a time in the near future when Yahweh will return to this elect city. From being the basis of a future hope, the belief in the divine presence has become an object of that hope itself. The promises of the cult-festivals have been transformed into an eschatology. The older order had collapsed, and Ezekiel now foretold that birth of a new order in which the ancient hopes would find a glorious fulfilment. The return of Yahweh would be the supreme gift which would open the door to all other benefits that Israel could wish for'.<sup>1</sup> So the whole key to the significance of Ezekiel's religious programme for the restored nation is contained in the name which is to be given to the restored central city of the community 'Yahweh is there'.

It is understood that Yahweh always stays in the midst of the people of Israel, both before and after the destruction of the Temple. But Ezekiel indicates that the departure of the glory of Yahweh is the sign of the destruction of the Temple and the City. He did this in order to warn them of this coming punishment and to invite them to repent. And yet, despite the destruction of the Temple and the nation, he maintains that these are acts of the justice of God. The conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple are not a denial of the presence of Yahweh in Israel's midst, but a confirmation of it. When the people are exiled, far from the land, the prophet proclaims not only that Yahweh will be as a temporary temple for them in the foreign land, but also that Yahweh will be

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1. Clements, op. cit., pp. 105f.

with them in their land in the coming age. The theological implications of this are striking, contrast the situation at Syene in Egypt, where the Jews had a temple of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> The events that had happened are the consequence of Yahweh's wrath, but it also means that the events are the promises of the coming new creation. In order to create a new Israel which can fulfil the demands of the covenant, Yahweh destroys the old one. Here one can find the presence of Yahweh still remaining in Israel, even although it seems to appear like a terrible judgement.

Ezekiel's description of the divine presence in the future seems to be exaggerated by the use of the mythical form. It is futile to try to understand it literally, rather, one must interpret it symbolically. Here some eschatological and messianic elements can be found, but it is also clear that the prophet has a great expectation concerning the nation, and concerning the peace of their religion within their history. As a reformer, the prophet is planning how to give concrete expression to those ideas of holiness, purity, and spirituality which are the soul of his preaching. It is because of this, according to de Vaux, that the vision of the temple came to birth.<sup>2</sup> It is not merely a concrete expression of the hope for but also religious plan for the restored community of the future. Ezekiel must have had the faults of the past Temple and its regulations in his mind.<sup>3</sup> He therefore preserves the proper structure of the Temple and its rituals and gives them an appropriate emphasis, but he also amends some of them. This religious

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1. May, op. cit., p. 121.

2. De Vaux, op. cit., p. 323.

3. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 278.

thinking has predominantly been of a symbolic nature, and religious institutions have usually made very considerable use of visual and verbal symbolism.<sup>1</sup> The temple he describes does indeed outline the characteristics of a religious reality present on the earth, it translates into visible and corporeal phenomena the spiritual demands of a new presence of Yahweh's glory.<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel is the prophet of restoration and hope, and the central feature of this hope is that Yahweh, by means of the glory which accompanies his presence will return to Israel and once again make his abode in Jerusalem whose name will be  $\eta \delta \psi \quad \eta \iota \eta$  .

#### 7. Summary

The foregoing study of the message of hope in the book of Ezekiel other than chapter 37 shows that the prophet, on the one hand, declares the possibility of renewal through repentance and/or return to Yahweh, and on the other hand, proclaims Yahweh's gracious salvation for the people described mostly in the latter part of the book. The proclamations of salvation as well as the proclamations of judgements, either on the people of Israel or on the nations, are often expressed in the concluding declaration: 'And they (you) shall know that I am Yahweh'. The purpose of this literary form is to stress that every action of Yahweh, be it judgement or justification, has as its object to make Yahweh known to his people and beyond them, as is expressly stated in some places, to the nations. Just as in former times the Exodus from Egypt made Yahweh known to his people through his interpreter Moses, so now Yahweh's

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1. R. E. Clements, God's chosen People, p. 11.

2. Congar, op. cit., p. 69.

action of judgement and justification in history, which the prophet proclaims, makes him known.<sup>1</sup> To some extent, this revelation can be seen as the basis of Israel's salvation.

By the threat of inevitable judgement and the discourse of the justice of Yahweh's action, Ezekiel tries to give new insight to his people into their relationship with God in the present situation. One of the functions of the message of doom is to make the people realize their own sinfulness which has merited punishment; but this message is intended also to show Yahweh's desire that they should repent and be saved. Those who receive the judgement, accepting its rightness by their knowledge of God, and turn willingly back to Yahweh, have the new possibility of life, they will be the true recipients of God's promise. Here hope is not only shown in release from the past sinful burden, but also in Yahweh's willingness to forgive. Ezekiel warns the people of the inevitable judgement on the nation as a whole, but in order to evoke people's repentance he discusses the individual moral responsibility and the possibility of life for individuals. He takes up the old prophetic exhortation to repent, which can lead to the salvation and renewal of the people.

Before the fall of the nation, Ezekiel, like his predecessors, emphasizes that if the people first repent, God will forgive and deliver them (cf. 2:1-6; 3:4-19; 6:8-10; 13:22; 14:6f.; et. al.); but after the fall he emphasizes that salvation will come before repentance (cf. chs. 34-37). Although the book of Ezekiel indicates that the salvation 'for the sake of Yahweh's name' overshadows the idea of repentance and other reasons of salvation, yet the sal-

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1. Cf. W. Zimmerli, The Old Testament and the World, p. 65.

vation is an act of mercy, brought about by the willingness of God to have his people again in their land and to create his people again as a holy people. The essential emphasis of the restoration of Israel is therefore on the absolute priority of divine action. This divine action is due to the majesty and honour of Yahweh himself, in which Yahweh has attached his name to the people of Israel, so that through the judgement on the nations and the restoration of Israel, Yahweh restores to his name its honour and creates new knowledge of his own nature. It is the honour of the divine name that provides the particular grounds for the new act of Yahweh in which he gives his people a future and a hope.

Ezekiel's proclamation of the message of hope stresses the context of the promised new life for Israel. In other words, Yahweh will create a new Israel through whom the nations are to know Yahweh and recognize him in his action toward his people. The message of hope can be understood in two aspects, namely, the political salvation and the inner salvation of the people. Moreover, Ezekiel's message of restoration is not only concerned with the political and the spiritual salvation at a particular time, it is also concerned with the validity and perpetuity of the salvation. In other words, he is concerned with the blessed state of Israel in the new age.

The political deliverance is very important to the exiles for the liberation from the exile and the return to their homeland are their great hopes. Although the promise of the political salvation can be found in Ezekiel's prophetic predecessors, it was of particular importance for the people when the nation had totally collapsed. The exile is the most crucial time for the Israelites in their history. Yahweh will gather his people and deliver them out of

the nations and lead them back to their land. This political salvation is the first stage in the life of the new Israel in Ezekiel's presentation of hope. This involves the destruction or defeat of the enemies and the exiles' return to their land. Yahweh, the Good Shepherd and righteous King, will seek or gather his people from where they have gone, will also carry out his judgement among them. After the purifying judgement of the people in the wilderness, Yahweh will take his people into the promised land and there he will accept them once again as his covenant people. It is important to notice that this political salvation is always related to the Exodus traditions in which Yahweh had first shown his saving work on behalf of his people. Yahweh is the mighty saviour who will deliver his people from the exile and destroy the enemies and lead his people back to their land.

Not merely does Ezekiel proclaim the promise of political salvation, he even emphasizes more the promise of new life for Israel. Therefore he is concerned with the purification and even the new creation of the people. He proclaims that Yahweh will transform or create a new heart and a new spirit for Israel so that they can be attentive to the law of Yahweh and will be a holy people of God. This inner redemption is most important for the new Israel because a holy people is the most fundamental factor for Israel to be a nation. It is the people whom Yahweh will establish covenant with, and whom Yahweh's spirit will reside in. One will find that in his presentation of hope for the inner creation of the people Ezekiel is based on his belief that Yahweh is the Creator and Saviour.

As noted above, after the political and spiritual salvation of the people Ezekiel further describes the next stage of the restoration of Israel. He proclaims that the people will be settled in

the land of Israel where they will live peacefully and prosperously in the land forever. For Yahweh will establish them a covenant of peace, give them a good land, set up a Davidic leadership for the new nation, and grant his divine presence in their midst. Yahweh's glory will return to the new Temple which will be at the heart of the restored community. This divine presence in the midst of the people is the source of salvation and life; there will be a holy people of God living peacefully in the holy land. Yahweh will make his abode in Jerusalem whose name will be יהוה שמה. When Ezekiel describes the state of the new age, he mostly uses the David-Zion traditions to illustrate the main aspects of the hope.

#### IV. Hope as exemplified in Ezek. 37

Ezekiel 37 consists of a vision and a fantastic symbolic action; both the vision and the symbolic act reveal to the exiles that they have a future and hope. The vision of dry bones (37:1-14) records an ecstatic visionary experience of the prophet and the interpretation of the vision. In the vision Ezekiel experiences the miracle of creation by which Yahweh has caused the dry bones to become strong men. Then is explained the relation of the vision to the people of Israel. The symbolic action of two sticks (37:15-28) takes account of the performance of unifying the two sticks and of the interpretation of the action. Ezekiel is told to join two sticks into one to symbolize the unification of the two separate parts of Israel in the future and relates the theme of unification to other themes of the restoration of Israel. With respect to its content, Ezek. 37 seems to be a unity; for the first part deals with the national rebirth and the second deals with the reunion of the divided parts. But, as a matter of fact, the second part of the chapter is not an actual part of the vision, nor of the divine interpretation of it. However it is to be thought of as in the closest connection with it and as shedding abundant light on it. We now proceed to an examination of the two parts: vv. 1-14 and vv. 15-28.

##### A. Ezek. 37:1-14

1. Translation (changes in the text which are presupposed in this translation are referred to the notes which follow)

- 1). The hand of Yahweh was upon me and he brought me out by the spirit of Yahweh and put me down in a valley which was full of bones.

- 2). And he led me round among them and behold, there were very many bones upon the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry.
- 3). And he said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' And I answered, 'Lord God, you know'.
- 4). And he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, O dry bones, listen to the word of Yahweh.
- 5). Thus says the Lord Yahweh: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live;
- 6). and I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin and put breath in you and you shall live; then you shall know that I am Yahweh'.
- 7). So I prophesied as I was commanded; and when I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, there was a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.
- 8). And when I looked, behold, there were sinews upon them, and flesh was upon them and the skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.
- 9). Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind; thus says the Lord Yahweh, O wind, come from every quarter (from the four winds) and breathe upon these slain, that they may live'.
- 10). So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the wind came into them and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great host.
- 11). Then he said to me, 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off".'

- 12). Therefore, prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord Yahweh, behold, I will open your graves, and bring you up out of your graves, (O my people), and will bring you into the land of Israel.
- 13). And you shall know that I am Yahweh, when I open your graves (O my people).
- 14). And I will put my spirit within you, that you shall live and I will place you in your own land, and you shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken and I have done it, says Yahweh'.

## 2. Textual notes

### V. 1.

It is rather unusual in the book of Ezekiel that the account of the vision begins with the perfect form of the verb  $\bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}}' \bar{\text{h}}$ . Elsewhere this verb is normally used by the prophet in waw consec. + imperf. form to introduce the word of Yahweh, or to report a particular event, or to indicate the date of the event. This verb appears in all the vision accounts in the book (cf. 1:1; 3:16, 22; 8:1; 37:1 and 40:1) in which it is used in two different forms—perfect form in 37:1 and 40:1 and waw consec. + imperfect form in 1:1; 3:16, 22; 8:1. Therefore G. and Syr. presuppose  $\bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}}$  instead of  $\bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}}' \bar{\text{h}}$ . 'Nüheres Zusehen ergibt, dass la sich in einer gewissen Nähe zum Eingang der grossen Vision vom neuen Tempel in 40:1ff. befindet. Dort führt der Text nach einer umständlichen doppelten Datumsangabe mit dem gleichen  $\bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}}$  fort, das sich in 37:1 findet. Statt des hier folgenden  $\bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}}$

$\bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}}$  folgt dort ein analoges  $\bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}} \bar{\text{h}}$ .<sup>1</sup> In all

1. Zimmerli, Ezechiel, p. 891.

the cases except in 37:1, the verb is followed by or followed a date.

The subject of the verb 'JX51' is not indicated, but obviously it is Yahweh.

'JΠ'J' appears again in 40:2 meaning 'put me down'. This consonantal form might be from either Π'JΠ (Hiphil A) 'cause to rest' or Π'JΠ (Hiphil B) 'lay down', 'place'. It has been suggested that it be pointed 'JΠ'J' = and he laid me down.

G. L. Targ. add □TK to 51/155, which makes the sense more explicit. Lit. v. lb is: '...and put me down in a valley and it was full of bones.'

V. 2.

G<sup>B</sup> and Syr. omit the second ΠJΠ; there is also a suggestion that it be changed to ΠJΠ, but the repetition is one of the characteristics of Ezekiel (2:9; 8:7; 47:1; etc.).

V. 3.

According to G<sup>B</sup> the word 'JTK is omitted as is now also known from Pap. 967. Apparently, 'JTK as the perpetual Qerê for 'Yahweh' crept into the text, and only 'Yahweh' should be read throughout Ezekiel.<sup>1</sup> Zimmerli mentions this verse in his examination of God's names in the book of Ezekiel. He writes, '...Das

ΠΠ' 'JTK steht hier im Anruf an Jahwe, der durch vorausgeschicktes ΠΠX gesteigert ist. In diesen Zusammenhang gehört auch der Vokativ in 37:3, dem das einleitende ΠJX fehlt. Textkritisch bestehen keine Bedenken gegen diese Verse'.<sup>2</sup>

1. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 52; cf. Harford, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-9;

Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 1250-8.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 1250.

v. 5.

Eichrodt points out that the words  $\text{הַלְבִּיטוּ אֶת עֵינֵיכֶם אֶל הַשָּׁמַיִם}$  are 'a further piece of information added by some one who did not realize that we have just been told to whom the words are addressed'.<sup>1</sup>

$\text{רוּחַ חַיִּים}$  are translated into  $\text{πνεῦμα ζωῆς}$  by G. and Eichrodt gives the same translation (the breath of life).

v. 7.

Three MSS read  $\text{יָנִיב}$  and G. L. Syr. and V. presuppose this reading. This expression occurs again in v. 10. But it seems unnecessary to emend the word; Targ. follows the MT completely.

The peculiar form  $\text{יָבִיב}$  where the 2nd. m. pl. has replaced the 3rd. f. pl. imperf.  $\text{יָבִיבָה}$ , has a parallel in Jer. 49:11.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that  $\text{יָבִיב}$  be emended to  $\text{יָבִיבָה}$  or  $\text{יָבִיבָה}$  in accord with the subject  $\text{עֵינֵיכֶם}$ . It has also been suggested that  $\text{עֵינֵיכֶם}$  simply be deleted. But the problem is, as the text now stands, that the term  $\text{עֵינֵי}$  in this vision is used either in masculine or feminine form. Howie thinks that this is the result of the scribal mixing of genders at an early date in the course of textual transmission, when Aramaic-using scribes were unfamiliar with Hebrew grammar.<sup>3</sup> The problem may be left open.<sup>4</sup>

The word  $\text{שָׁטַט}$  here as well as in 3:12f. is used with  $\text{עֵינֵי}$  in a construct relation to heighten the impression of 'shaken'.

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

2. Cf. G. R. Driver, 'Linguistic and Textual Problems: Ezekiel', *Biblica* 35 (1954), p. 303.

3. C. G. Howie, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

4. Cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 887.

The noisy sound must be the result of the movement of the bones approaching one another. This word  $\text{סִיפ}$  is not represented in G., but it seems appropriate in the MT. Some have held that it was an earthquake sent by Yahweh.<sup>1</sup>

V. 8.

$\text{קָרַץ}$  Gal. imperf. with subject is peculiar and it takes  $\text{רִיב}$  as its accusative, as in the case of v. 6. The niph'al

$\text{קָרַץ}$  is suggested as the correct form by some Greek MSS., V. and Syr. This verb occurs only here and in v. 6 in the Old Testament.

V. 10.

Only one MS reads  $\text{סִיפ־בְּיָמַי}$  instead of  $\text{סִיפ־בְּיָמַי}$ . But  $\text{סִיפ־בְּיָמַי}$  is the hithp. form of  $\text{סִיפ}$  with  $\text{י}$  assimilated (cf. Jer. 23:13). J. Herrmann presupposes  $\text{סִיפ־בְּיָמַי}$  as the original form (cf. v. 7).<sup>2</sup>

V. 11.

G. R. Driver at first argued in 1938 that after  $\text{וְיָרַד}$ ,  $\text{וְיָרַד}$  should be pointed  $\text{וְיָרַד}$ ; but later in 1954 he abandoned his proposal and accepted the MT text.<sup>3</sup> Following Targ., Bertholet<sup>4</sup> and Fohrer<sup>5</sup> presuppose  $\text{וְיָרַד}$  instead of  $\text{וְיָרַד}$ .

1. Cooke, *op. cit.*, p. 399. He finds some similar occurrences in Isa. 9:4; Jer. 10:22; 47:3; Nah. 3:2; which he interprets as the shaking of the earth by a marching army or chariot. Also Ezek. 1:24f.; 3:12f.; 10:5.

2. J. Herrmann, *Ezechiel*, p. 232.

3. G. R. Driver, *Biblica* 19 (1938), p. 182; and *Biblica* 35 (1954), p. 303.

4. Bertholet, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

5. Fohrer, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

NEB translates the phrase  $\text{לִפְסוּלֵינוּ הַחַיִּים}$  'Our thread of life is snapped'. But the rendering 'Our hope is lost' (cf. 19:5) is unexceptionable, and indeed may be regarded as preferable, since the normal sense  $\text{אָבַד}$  is simply 'to perish', 'be lost'; and there seems no need to depart from the normal rendering of  $\text{נִפְסוּל}$  as hope, although  $\text{נִפְסוּל}$  does mean a line or core.

Felix Perles suggests that, by revising the word division of  $\text{לִפְסוּלֵינוּ הַחַיִּים}$ , the last clause of v. 11 can be read as  $\text{לִפְסוּלֵנוּ הַחַיִּים}$  (our web is cut off).<sup>1</sup> NEB accepts this suggestion. But this phrase  $\text{לִפְסוּלֵנוּ הַחַיִּים}$  does not occur again in the Old Testament. Vv. 12f.

G<sup>B</sup> and Syr. rightly delete the word  $\text{וְהָיָה}$  which seems to be superfluous.

### 3. Literary, form-critical, and traditio-historical analysis

From a cursory glance at the account of the vision, one gains the impression that it consists of two closely interrelated units, i.e., vv. 1-10 the description of the vision and vv. 11-14 the interpretation of the vision. Hence this account of the vision, on the one hand, has a logical structure in which at first the prophet describes the picture of the vision which he saw (vv. 1-10) and then gives an interpretation of it (vv. 11-14). On the other hand, it presents a unified idea of resuscitation by which the prophet gives the message of hope to combat the despair of the people

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1. F. Perles, '  $\text{לִפְסוּלֵנוּ}$  = Gewebe im Alten Testament', (Orientalische Literaturzeitung XII 1909), pp. 251f. (not seen by me).

These two units are thus not isolated from each other, but complement each other. V. 11 indicates the motif of the vision and the current feeling of the people in exile. Therefore the vision seems to be suggested by the saying current among the people; 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; and we are completely cut off.'; and the vision is born out of the despairing feeling of the people and the revelation of God. Moreover, coupled with what has been said above, there are some literary and formal balances between these two units. One can find the same words, phrases, forms, and procedure of the movement of resuscitation in both units. From this it is justifiable to say that the description and the interpretation of the vision correspond closely.<sup>1</sup> This is adequate evidence for the unity of the passage.

But on a closer reading of the passage, one will find that it is not without problems. These problems can be found in the facts that vv. 12f. introduce a new figure—the grave—and the prophet does not give any explanation of it, and that the object of God's act of salvation is the whole house of Israel (v. 11), not only the slain (v. 9) or the exiles (v. 12). These problems have been dealt with by the scholars in their examinations of the passage; and most of them agree that this section is a unity although some minor glosses can be found. But in order to have a clear view of the passage, it is necessary to have a general look at what scholars have said about the problems of the text, the date, and the setting of the passage.

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1. Here the description and the interpretation of the vision are the same revelation of God; the former is the visual revelation and the latter is the auditory one.

Davidson takes the passage as a unity, but he admits the inconsistency displayed by the prophet; for in vv. 1-2 the dry bones are represented as lying on the face of the valley, but in v. 12 the dead are buried.<sup>1</sup> This view is followed by Cooke<sup>2</sup> and Taylor.<sup>3</sup> These scholars find the inconsistency in the passage, but offer no explanation of it. However, some others maintain that the passage has a unity, either by giving some positive reasons to explain the inconsistencies or by deleting them or treating them as additions or glosses. About the relation of vv. 1-10 and vv. 11-14, Eichrodt observes that 'the original form of this symbol retreats into the background in the words of promise which next follow, so that the revival of the nation now resembles that of a corpse made to rise out of its grave. Here the land of exile has become a grave, the dwelling place of death, in a way which could be seen as a reality at the end of each individual life, and on a large scale in the fate of deported nations. In the portrayal of Yahweh's action, the exodus of the people from Babylon, the great graveyard of the nations, is evidently easier to realize, because it can be directly connected with the return to the home country, the land of life'.<sup>4</sup>

Zimmerli<sup>5</sup> goes further and demonstrates that this section has a complete unity because the two units of the passage stand in close relationship for understanding the vision and its 'Deutung',

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1. Davidson, op. cit., p. 267.

2. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 400f.

3. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 235f.

4. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 510. The 'Symbol' is the symbol of the bones contained in vv. 1-10.

5. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 833f.

since the interpretation contains the same 'eigentliche Verkündigung an das Volk'. The form can also be found in Ezek. 17 and 21:1ff. Ezekiel often uses a new speech to explain the prophecy, which is motivated by the disputations or complaint of the people. Secondly, v. 11 is the important 'Überleitung' from the description to the interpretation of the vision. He points out that on the origin, date, and unity of the passage, a decisive clue is provided in v. 11, the popular saying of the exiles. Zimmerli writes, '11 erfüllt somit eine doppelte Funktion: 1) Er deutet das Bild der Vision und ist darin nach rückwärts bezogen. Gleichzeitig leitet er 2) die Form des Disputationswortes 11-14 ein, in welchem Gott, ganz so wie etwa in 33:10ff., gegen die Resignation des Volkes die Gegenaussage seines verheissenden Wortes setzt.'<sup>1</sup> It is unnecessary to see vv. 13b-14, as 'Variante' of 12b, 13 with e.g., J. Herrmann.<sup>2</sup> It is equally unnecessary to separate vv. 12b-13 from vv. 12a, 14 as do Fohrer and Kraetzschmar.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Zimmerli says, vv. 12-14 contain 'der schon mehrfach festgestellten Form des erweiterten Erweswortes... Das Instrumentarium der Ezechielischen Formmöglichkeiten ist hier mit einem gewissen Prunk gehandhabt'.<sup>4</sup>

By contrast, Hölischer holds that this passage (i.e., vv. 11-14) has nothing to do with the prophet, but comes from the redactor. 'Es ist ganz überflüssig, das Satz für Satz nochmals nachzuweisen'.. 'Aus Hesekiel (19:5) ist  $\text{אֲנִי הָיִיתִי בְּיַד הַיְהוָה}$  37:11 entlehnt; die Volksstimmung Kennzeichnet der Redaktor, wie auch sonst, wie an der Gleichfalls redaktionellin Stelle 3:22 die  $\text{אֲנִי הָיִיתִי בְּיַד הַיְהוָה}$ '.<sup>5</sup> He then

1. Zimmerli, ibid., p. 888.

2. Op. cit., p. 236.

3. Fohrer, op. cit., p. 209; Krätzschar, op. cit., p. 251.

4. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 889.

5. Hölischer, op. cit., pp. 174f.

compares this to the vision in 1:1ff. and 8ff., saying, '...was er hier schaut, ist nur ein symbol. Dabei ist das ganze eine seltsame Mischung von Wirklichkeit und Illusion'. Hölischer thinks that vv. 12-13a are an awkward modification and makes the vision much oblique.<sup>1</sup>

Following Hölischer, Irwin<sup>2</sup> argues that the passage cannot be genuine and that there is no basis for postulating authorship by Ezekiel. He finds that some words and phrases such as 'the hand of Yahweh', 'son of man', 'spirit', 'knowing that I am the Lord', and 'I, the Lord, have spoken and will act' are similar to chs. 3 and 8; and that therefore vv. 12ff. are secondary.

Herntrich maintains that the vision of 37:1-14 is parallel in form to visions in the other great prophets, perhaps the greatest of them all. He believes that this passage genuinely comes from the prophet; the redactor has not touched it. Herntrich divides it into: vv. 1-10 the vision of the battlefield; v. 11 the short interpretation; and vv. 12-14, added at a later time by the prophet himself.<sup>3</sup>

Bertholet contends that vv. 12b, 13 are secondary, and should be separated from the original account of the vision. Moreover, he argues that this vision should be attached immediately to 3:24a because both the visions of 3:22-24a and of 37:1-14 are in the same setting—  $\bar{n} \bar{y} \bar{p} \bar{d} \bar{n}$  (valley). The prophet is actually there when the vision comes to him.<sup>4</sup> Following a line more or less similar to

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

2. Irwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 246f.

3. Herntrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-118.

4. Bertholet, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 127.

that of Hölischer but taking a different view from Bertholet, Fohrer holds that the present passage is a unity with an addition (vv. 12a $\beta$ -13), by Ezekiel himself and that the passage consists of '7 Strophen zu je 7 Kurzversen (1-2. 3-4. 5-6. 7-8. 9. 11. 12a $\alpha$ + 14) and 1 Strophe zu 4 Kurzversen (10) mit prosaischer Einleitung vor der 2. 3., 5. and 7. Str (in 3a. 5a. 9a. 11a) und prosaischer Überleitung in der 2., 5. und 8. Str (in 4a, 9a, 12a $\alpha$ )...'.<sup>1</sup>

From the traditic-form-critical point of view Wevers believes that the setting of the vision is the same as that of the inaugural vision, and that the account, vv. 1-10 is followed by an interpretation in vv. 11-14, which formally has two conclusions. Only v. 14 is original to Ezekiel and vv. 12a $\beta$ , b., and 13 are a doublet from a later traditionist.<sup>2</sup>

From all of this, the view that the passage is unified in thought, and authentic to the prophet gains more acceptance than the other views mentioned above. Although a seeming inconsistency exists between vv. 1-10 and vv. 11-14, because the latter introduces a new figure, nevertheless, one considers the affinity in thought and form of the whole passage to be more important than a possible difference. The present thesis takes it as a unity with a small number of glosses.<sup>3</sup>

So far we have seen some problems over the unity and authenticity of the passage. We now turn to consider the date and the setting of the passage. It has been suggested that an original date has fallen out,<sup>4</sup> but it seems that no evidence can be offered

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1. Fohrer, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

2. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

3. Cf. above, pp. 207f.

4. Cf. above, p. 203.

as to what it might have been. Therefore it may or may not have had a date attached at the beginning of the passage. However, from the despondent feeling of the people expressed in v. 11, most scholars date this passage after the fall of Jerusalem. There is no evidence for fixing an exact date, but one can obtain an approximation. Eichrodt suggests that 'the utter despair expressed in the words of the exiles cited in v. 11 to which the words in 33:10 present a parallel may indicate a period still fairly close to the fall of Jerusalem during which the prophet's office of administering consolation had not as yet been able to take effect...yet the obvious allusion in v. 14 to 36:27 should nevertheless warn us against giving this present passage a position antecedent to the promise expressed there'.<sup>1</sup>

Eichrodt's observation on the date seems very likely since, after the fall of Jerusalem, the reconstruction of Israel and its faith was Ezekiel's main task.<sup>2</sup> This visionary report might be the turning point of his prophecy from doom to hope. Wevers believes that according to the material, the four visions (1:1-3:15; 8-11; 37; and 40-48) seem to represent four critical points in the prophet's life and thought; 'the first forms the basis for his prophetic work since it was his call experience; the second (including that of 11:1-13) epitomizes the message of doom prophecy before 586 B. C.; the third lies at the heart of the immediately post-586 restoration prophecy; and the final one records the prophet's dreams for the future age'.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp. 506f.

2. Cf. W. F. Lofthouse, The Prophet of Reconstruction (Ezekiel), (London, 1920).

3. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

When one considers the date of this present passage, one should not forget Bertholet's view. Bertholet assigns chapter 37 to Ezekiel's Babylonian period after the fall of Jerusalem, and he argues that, because its setting is so similar to the second call of Ezekiel in 2:1-3:24a, this chapter was originally linked to 3:24a as a part of the vision account in the valley of Tel-abib.<sup>1</sup> In this connection he takes 3:16a to refer to the date of the present passage.

But, from the text as it now stands, Bertholet's proposal is unlikely, because 3:22ff. is concerned with the assertion of the presence of Yahweh and the call of the prophet, yet this is completely irrelevant to the content and the context of 37:1-14. 37:11 shows clearly the collapse of all the hope of the exiles. To this, the prophet proclaims the message of hope to encourage them and meet their urgent needs.

As far as the setting of the passage is concerned, not only does one have to take the historical background, suggested by the dating, into consideration, but also pay some attention to the disputed word  $\eta \nu \rho \alpha$ . For this word  $\eta \nu \rho \alpha$  with the article  $\eta$  leads one to assume that the valley is a certain valley with which the prophet was familiar. Many scholars<sup>2</sup> hold that the valley is the one in which the prophet received his call. It was this valley in which the prophet was commanded to announce the message of doom before the fall of the nation; after the fall he received the mission to declare the message of hope in the same

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1. Bertholet, op. cit., pp. 13, 27.

2. Cooke, op. cit., p. 399; Bertholet, loc. cit.; Davidson, op. cit., p. 267; Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 392.

valley. It is possible that this valley in the present passage is the one in which Ezekiel was called; but it is by no means certain. L. E. Browne holds that the valley is the valley mentioned in Gen. 11:2 where the tower of Babel was built as a typical place in which evil was rampant.<sup>1</sup> J. W. Miller, who finds some words such as bones, graves, in Jer. 8:1-3, contends that the chilly picture of Ezekiel 37:1-14 is the same as the dire picture of Jerusalem presented in Jer. 9:1-3.<sup>2</sup>

Hertrich maintains that the valley is the place where the prophet received his first call, and that it was near Jerusalem that Ezekiel actually saw the horrible picture.<sup>3</sup> J. Morgenstern, comparing Zech. 14:4f., suggests that this valley is at the bottom of the mount of Olives where the dead, whether they are in Palestine or other places, will come back to life in the Day of Judgment and resurrection.<sup>4</sup> Riesenfeld argues that the valley is a traditional cultic battlefield where the cultic drama was enacted in the New Year festival.<sup>5</sup> But he refers to another word, i.e.,

פִּנְיָ, whose original meaning is a deep, mysterious, waste plain where violence and death flourish. He says, 'As to the valley ( פִּנְיָ ), we must not forget neither the kindred associations evoked by Old Testament expressions such as "the valleys of the weeping" ( אֲבֵי הַפִּנְיָ Ps. lxxxiv. 7) and "in the valley of Sheol"

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1. Browne, Ezekiel and Alexander, (1952), pp. 18f.

2. Miller, op. cit., p. 91.

3. Hertrich, op. cit., p. 117.

4. J. Morgenstern, 'The King-God among the Western Semites and the Meaning of Epiphanes', VF 10 (1960), p. 181.

5. H. Riesenfeld, The Resurrection in Ezekiel XXXVII and in the Bura-Europos Paintings, (Uppsala, 1948), pp. 13ff.

(  $\int$ ixv'p $\int$  Prov. ix. 18). Already in the Ras Shamra texts the cultic fight is said to take place in a valley (p $\int$ )'.<sup>1</sup>

But Fohrer rightly states that although the valley looks like a battlefield, nevertheless, what is involved is 'an inward experience and not an outward event'.<sup>2</sup> It is true that although the vision is a mingling of the real and the imaginary, it is fairly sure that in the description of the vision experience, the subject matter may or may not be real; it is hard to identify the unnamed places or characters in the vision. Besides, if it is a vision, it is beyond the limitations of time and space, and what is important is the symbolic meaning of its subject matter. Therefore there is no need to treat the description of the vision in a physical sense. In a great valley-plain, which was once a battlefeld where many people had died and were unburied, the prophet gets the impression that the valley-plain not only ein Zeichen von Tod-  
-das grosse Sterben.<sup>3</sup> What is important is not which valley-plain it is, but what the prophet sees in the valley-plain. It is interesting to note that the word  $\int$ ixv', valley-plain, found in Gen. 11:2; Deut. 8:7; 11:11; Isa. 40:4; 41:18; 63:14; represents a place where people can cultivate land and live, and is a good place which people hope for. If the land of Israel which was originally a good land for them to rest in and live on is symbolised it means that the land is now full of death and fear. But this is not certain.

Now we turn to see the form and structure of the passage.

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1. Ibid., p. 16.

2. Fohrer, op. cit., p. 208.

3. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 893.

The account of the vision is related by the prophet, who tells the audience what he experienced in person; it is reported in the first person and is a so-called 'Ich-Bericht'. It is also appropriately regarded as a vision report<sup>1</sup> which is a report of 'seeing' in an ecstatic or trance-like state. It is usually concerned for his people. The vision is thus a form of the revelation of God. One finds that the divine 'I' is very prominent in this prophetic vision report. Being empowered by the spirit of Yahweh, the prophet felt that he was transported to a certain valley-plain in which he was shown and also took part in the vision. He is not only a receiver of revelation or a spectator of the vision, but also partakes in the divine event; it is, in Lindblom's terminology, an 'autodramatic vision'.<sup>2</sup> But it is not meant to exclude the other vision elements; as a matter of fact, this vision contains pictorial, dramatic, and autodramatic elements together.<sup>3</sup> The structure of the vision here is one of the characteristics of Ezekiel.

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1. Cf. B. O. Long, 'Prophetic Call Traditions and Reports of Vision', ZAW 84, (1972), p. 496. Long demonstrates that vision is quite similar to dream. There seems to have been little functional difference between these phenomena. The characteristic pattern is: 1) Opening--some form of r'h followed by hinnē; 2) Body--description of the vision; and 3) Meaning--conveyed in the ecstatic state by question and answer dialogue. Occasionally, a straight-address from the 'revealer' to the man who 'sees' provides the significance.
2. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, p. 41, roughly classifies vision into three types according to the elements contained in the vision: Pictorial, dramatic, and autodramatic vision. If the visionary himself plays a conspicuous role in that which happens in the vision, the vision is thus autodramatic.
3. Cf. ibid., pp. 125f.; he also classifies Ezek. 37:1-14 as a pictorial vision.

It is significant that the reporter describes not only the scene of the vision, but also the development of the vision; then an interpretation is given to explain the meaning of the vision. For the description is only a feeble attempt to reproduce something that in itself was ethereal and ineffable. The content of an ecstatic vision is always mysterious, unnatural, and unlike anything else known through normal perception.<sup>1</sup> So if it is a vision, it needs an interpretation to give its relevance to the subject matter with which the vision is concerned.

Now look at the form and structure of the passage from another point of view. It is important to understand the difference between vision and reality; while vision is mysterious, unnatural, and symbolical, and beyond the limitations of space and time, reality is historical, natural, meaningful, and under the limitations of time and space.<sup>2</sup> Therefore vision is often involved with mythological and imaginative elements, whereas reality is expressed by the materials of the traditions of history and of current affairs. Usually the vision report consists of the description of the vision and the interpretation of the vision. The present vision report also consists of the description of the vision and the interpretation, and although they use different kinds of material, they indeed deal with the same problem and convey the same message.<sup>3</sup> Vv. 1-10 are the description of the vision of dry bones

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1. Ibid., p. 125.

2. The word, 'meaningful' means 'sensible' in the logical understanding of man.

3. Both the description and the interpretation of the vision are concerned with the national rebirth of Israel.

(vision) and vv. 11-14 are the interpretation of the vision (reality). But the purpose of the vision is, as G. von Rad says, '...not to impart knowledge of a higher world, it was intended to open the prophet's eyes to coming events which were not only of a spiritual sort, but were also to be concrete realities in the objective world'.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, to understand this vision one must recognize the problem which the prophet is trying to solve. The problem is shown in v. 11 (cf. chs. 18 and 33:10-20)—the feeling of despair and desperate hopelessness among the people. On this basis, one can understand the meaning of the figurative speech in the description of the vision. It is clear that after reporting his ecstatic feeling (vv. 1f.), Ezekiel is shown the problem of his people and then given the solution to the problem. In the description of the vision the problem is shown in the question in v. 3: Can these bones live? In the interpretation of the vision in v. 11, Yahweh indicates that these bones are the whole house of Israel. So the question becomes this: Can the house of Israel live? The despairing statement, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost and we are clean cut off', implies the negative answer to the question—Can we live again?—which doubtlessly reflects a question often found on the lips of the exiles.

Now, the solution of the problem—Can these bones (the house of Israel) live?—is expressed in vv. 4-10 in the vision description and in vv. 12-14 in the interpretation of the vision; this is: Yahweh will revive and restore these bones (the house of Israel)

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1. G. von Rad, The message of the Prophets, (1965), p. 38.

and grant his spirit within them and cause them to live. This saving act of God proceeds in two stages: first, the restoration of the external form, and second, the granting of the spirit of Yahweh. Both passages (vv. 4-10 and vv. 12-14) have some common elements: the command-formula  $\text{סִי רָכַחְתָּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל}$  and the Botenformel  $\text{רָכַחְתָּ הַדְּבָרִים הַלְלוּ$ , and the Botenwort  $\text{הַדְּבָרִים}$  used with the Schwurwort, the divine pronoun  $\text{אֲנִי}$ .<sup>1</sup> Vv. 4-10 can be divided into two sections (corresponding to the two stages of restoration): a) vv. 4-8 the resuscitation of the bones of the corpses; and b) vv. 9-10 the restoration of inner life. Vv. 12-14 can also be divided into two sections (corresponding to the two stages of restoration): a) vv. 12-13 the salvation of the house of Israel from the nations (political and/or external restoration); and b) v. 14 the granting of Yahweh's spirit within the people (inner restoration). If this is so, then the passage itself possesses a complete unity and therefore vv. 12f. in fact do not introduce a new figure. For to the exiles the foreign lands are like the graveyard where they seem to be cut off from all sources of life.

It is interesting to see that the restoration is described in terms similar to both the creation of man and of the people of Israel. It is described in two stages; this is done in order to emphasize the spirit of Yahweh in creation and is intended as a matter of fact to stress that life and hope come from Yahweh. What is important for the understanding of this vision report is that the resuscitation of the dry bones underlines the creation faith, and the restoration of the people of Israel underlines the Exodus-Settlement traditions.

1. Cf. R. Rendtorff, 'Botenformel und Botenspruch', ZAW 74 (1962), pp. 176f.

The new creation proceeds in two stages like the creation narrative of the Yahwist in Gen. 2. The first stage of the resuscitation in the vision is the transformation of the dry bones into corpses by Ezekiel's prophesying of Yahweh's command to the bones; the second stage is the resuscitation of the corpses into living men by Ezekiel's prophesying to the wind to blow over the corpses. Here the new creation is developed in the revelatory state of mind and is not historical in the narrower sense of the term.

There are also two stages of restoration implied in the interpretation of the vision in vv. 12-14. The first stage of the creation is the deliverance and the settlement of Israel by her God; this is the external restoration of Israel. The second stage is the granting of the spirit of Yahweh in the midst of the people; this is the internal restoration of Israel. Here the promise of restoration is proclaimed (and will be proclaimed) by the prophet, in the salvation history. The promises of salvation, both political and spiritual, and of the presence of God, are the most important elements in the entire message of hope in the book of Ezekiel. In the promise of the presence of God, the prophet looks into the future and starts to prophesy in the present, and thus the vision is closely related to the prophetic office.<sup>1</sup> It is Ezekiel's task to bring Yahweh's promise and a message of hope to his people. When he reports his visionary experience to his audience, his action in speaking to his people is equivalent to the expression 'I prophesied as I was commanded' in his description of the vision. Therefore the command and the promise of Yahweh in the vision are distinct

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1. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

from the prophet's own words in reporting the vision. This is also so because the vision description is part of the experience of the prophet. It contains the command and the promise of Yahweh and illustrates that promise. But, when the prophet interprets the vision, he employs the message of promise and this becomes part of the history of salvation and at the same time a fulfilment of his mission. It is his mission to proclaim the message of hope in the present and the future, and the result will be effected at the moment when he prophesies and will also be achieved in the future. From all of this, it seems that the description and the interpretation of the vision stand in a close relationship, but this deserves more consideration later.

With respect to the provenance of the vision, most scholars recognize the problem posed in v. 11, the disputation of the people, and the purpose of the vision which is the reconstruction of the faith and hope of Israel. It has been suggested that this vision (37:1-14) is connected with the text of Hos. 6:1ff. (cf. Hos. 8:14).<sup>1</sup> There are themes common to both passages; 'in both, resurrection means the national revival of the People of Yahweh, is to be the work of the God of Israel, and concerned with the nation as a whole and not an individual'.<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel was inspired by Hosea who had predicted the possible renewal of life within the covenant relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel.

H. Riesenfeld<sup>3</sup> contends that the vision of 37:1-14, as well as the passage from the prophet Hosea, can be shown to be based on

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1. Davidson, loc. cit.

2. R. Martin-Achard, From Death to Life, (London, 1960), p. 100.

3. Riesenfeld, op. cit., pp. 3ff.

the myth of the dying rising god and on its concomitant ritual. Reisenfeld thus demonstrates that the belief in the resurrection (bodily resurrection in the Day of Judgement) was known before the exile and was derived from the New Year festival, whose central idea is the continuation or periodic regeneration of life. Thus, the idea of a new life had its origin in the ritual of the annual festival in which the king played an important part, symbolically representing the god of nature or of the nation.<sup>1</sup> He finds certain traces which stress the affinity of the New Year festival with Ezekiel's vision, such as the idea of the spirit of life,<sup>2</sup> the relation of life and land,<sup>3</sup> and the scene of dry bones in the battle-field.<sup>4</sup>

Riesenfeld's theory seems doubtful and its argument weak for it is based on an unsound hypothesis. The autumn festival is not primarily concerned with the regeneration of natural life, but the confirmation of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people. The existence of Israel is not the result of any cultic repetition, but is the result of the grace of Yahweh her God. If Ezekiel employs the mythical material, he is not intending to exploit the function of myth, but to prevent mythical influence on the faith of Israel and to convey the revelation of Yahweh to his people.

Herrntrich, who holds that the prophet carried out his ministry in Jerusalem, thinks that this vision can be seen in terms of an

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1. Ibid., pp. 5ff.

2. Ibid., p. 13.

3. Ibid., pp. 14-16.

4. Ibid., p. 17.

historical experience of the prophet. He writes, 'Es mögen sich in der Zeit der furchtbaren Belagerung manche Kämpfe hier (d.h., bei Jerusalem) abgespielt haben; denn es ist anzunehmen, dass Ezechiel genau so wie Jeremia in seinen Visionen zuerst etwas Reales sieht und sich daran die prophetische Schau anknüpft'.<sup>1</sup>

Against this view and that of Riesenfeld, the origin of the vision can be found in the words of the people expressed in v. 11.<sup>2</sup>

The historical situation of the exiles after the fall of Jerusalem can afford a perfect explanation of certain details in the prophet's vision and it is not at all necessary to have recourse to the oriental myth of the dying and rising god for its interpretation. Although Ezekiel might be familiar with Hos. 6:1ff., nevertheless it is by no means certain that he is strictly dependent on his predecessor; on the contrary, his starting-point appears to be totally different. Hosea's contemporaries reveal that they conceive of the resurrection in the light of the practices of heathen cultures, based on the phenomena of nature; Ezekiel, on the other hand, founds it on the Yahwistic conception of the creation of man, as it is set forth in Gen. 2:7. Zimmerli is right in saying, 'So wird man bei der Rückfrage nach der Herkunft des Bildgutes der Vision weder in zeitgeschichtliche Erinnerungsbilder noch in ältere Israelüberlieferungen zurückgreifen müssen, noch auch vom Motiv der Schlachtfeldsage ausgehen dürfen. Das gesamtwort selber verrät den aktuellen Ursprung des Bildes von den vertrockneten Gebeinen, das dann dramatisch mit der Verheissung des Gottes konfrontiert wird, der

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1. Hertrich, op. cit., p. 117.

2. Martin-Achard, op. cit., pp. 101f.

als der Schöpfer des menschen auch Macht hat, tote Gebeine wieder zu lebendigen Menschen umzuschaffen. Zugleich aber stösst man mit dieser Erkenntnis vom Werdegang des Bildwortes erneut auf eine Eigenart des ezechielischen Wortes, die anderswo Konstatiertes neu bestätigt'.<sup>1</sup>

Again, the key to understanding the vision aright is to see it in the context. After the judgement of Yahweh on the people, he is concerned with his holy name and also feels compassion at the despair and sadness of the people. He gives his promise of salvation to the prophet in the vision. From this one sees that the foundation of the vision is in fact of the love and sovereignty of Yahweh, even if there is no mention of the love of Yahweh. This is a descending process, from divine to human. Now there is also present an ascending process, from human affair to divine event. After the fall of the nation Ezekiel knows the despondent feeling of the people, so he must try to help them; therefore he presents his case in his communication with Yahweh. In his meditation or imagination, he feels that Yahweh has shown him the resuscitation of the dry bones in a visionary state of mind, by which Yahweh promises life and hope to the people who are under the power of death. This is mainly based on his faith in the power of the living God; what Yahweh has done before, he will do again, for he is always the God of Israel and has bound his name to the people of Israel. The vision is thus a means by which the knowledge and imagination of the prophet become vehicles of the revelation of Yahweh. Therefore he may employ the current saying of the people, the traditional

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1. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 890.

form and theme of the creation, some mythical elements, and the traditions of Heilsgeschichte to express his visionary experience. Yet, the prophetic vision is here a compound of the prophet's words and the revelation of God, in which the divine initiative is prominent. In the following examination of the passage one needs to distinguish two levels, namely, vision and reality, and one needs to approach the text from both the theological and historical points of view.

There are four sections of the book which are described as visions: the inaugural vision in 1:1-3:15, the vision of the abominations in chs. 8-11, the vision of the revived dry bones in ch. 37, and that of the new Temple in chs. 40-48. These visions are all ecstatic and are introduced by the same technical phrase 'the hand of Yahweh was upon me' describing entrance into trance state, whereas the technical term for ecstasy as such is 'vision of God'. The vision has some certain points in common with the dream state. In both, the categories of time and space are avoided. However, the vision is not equated with the dream, for the vision includes awareness of entrance to and departure from the ecstatic state and it did not occur during sleep (cf. Ezek. 8:1). Moreover, the vision normally contains dialogue and is closely related to the prophetic office. Thus it contains relevant interpretative oracle to convey the divine revelation. Although the vision is an individual experience, its telling is a prophetic revelation. For the vision is not primarily concerned with the visionary experience, but with the revelation of God revealed in it, about how God will deal with his people in history.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Wevers, op. cit., pp. 12f.

#### 4. Exegesis of the passage vv. 1-14

##### Vv. 1-2 The bones in the valley

These two verses are the description of the situation of the bones indicating what the prophet has seen in his visionary experience. Ezekiel feels himself in the grip of Yahweh and in a trance is brought to a certain valley-plain which it would seem was once a battlefield, for many dry bones are strewn there. Due to the fact that the passage begins with  $\bar{\eta} \bar{\eta} \bar{\eta} \bar{\eta}$  which elsewhere follows on an indication of the date, it has been suggested that an original date has fallen out.<sup>1</sup> However, this passage is dated from the earlier part of Ezekiel's prophecy after the fall of Jerusalem.

'The hand of Yahweh was upon me'  $\bar{\eta} \bar{\eta} \bar{\eta} \bar{\eta} \bar{\eta} \bar{\eta} \bar{\eta} \bar{\eta}$  is a characteristic phrase in Ezekiel. It is used in all (with minor variations) seven times (Ezek. 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1). Throughout the book it indicates extraordinary divine influence. It is a description of the prophet's experience while he is receiving a revelation from Yahweh. All the visions of Ezekiel are introduced by this formula (cf. also 33:22). It is remarkable that this formula occurs only once in Isaiah (8:11) and once in Jeremiah (15:17), and is not found in the other prophetic books; but is found in the stories of the earlier pre-classical prophets (1 Kgs. 18:46; 2 Kgs. 3:15). This is one of the indications of Ezekiel's links with an earlier phase of prophecy.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cf. above, p. 203.

2. Cf. Zimmerli, in VT 15 (1965), pp. 515ff.; Carley, Ezekiel

Among the Prophets, pp. 13ff.

The primary sense of the word  $\text{yad}$  is 'hand', but it is often used in the figurative sense of 'power' (cf. Gen. 39:8; Ex. 3:8). The symbolic laying on of hands was important in acts of blessing (Gen. 48:14) and of sacrifice (Lev. 4:3f., 15).<sup>1</sup> At the commissioning of Joshua, the laying of Moses' hand on the younger man signified the transfer of authority (Num. 27:18, 23). Zimmerli has suggested that the Exodus tradition was the source of Old Testament interest in the hand of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> The image satisfactorily described Yahweh's means of action in the world. The Deuteronomists frequently refer to the 'mighty hand and outstretched arm' of Yahweh as the means of deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19, etc.). In pre-exilic prophecy, however, the allusions to 'the hand of Yahweh' are found more in passages concerning divine judgement against Israel (e.g., Am. 9:2; Isa. 5:25); and in the post-exilic material, the phrase is used to express success in human endeavours (cf. Ezra 7:6, 9; 8:18; Neh. 2:8, 18, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

According to Lindblom, the origin of the idea of Yahweh's hand in prophetic contexts lies in the physical sensation of being seized and pressed by an external power connected with the ecstatic experience.<sup>4</sup> When the hand of Yahweh was upon the prophet and impelled him to do something which was not from his own will, it overpowered his thought and feeling, so as to make the prophet see a vision different from everything he had experienced before, or do something unusual. When the prophet is in this inspired or ecstatic state of mind, he feels quite passive and is convinced

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1. Cf. Carley, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

2. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*, p. 47.

3. Cf. Carley, *op. cit.*, pp. 13f.

4. Lindblom, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

that an alien person or irresistible force has taken possession of him. He describes this experience by means of expressions indicating acts of force, at times external to himself.<sup>1</sup> When the prophet Elijah girded up his loins and ran before Ahab's chariot to the entrance of Jezreel, Yahweh's hand came upon him (1 Kgs. 18:46).<sup>2</sup> When during an expedition against Moab the Israelite army and their cattle could get no water in the desert and Elisha was asked to help, when music had been played, the hand of Yahweh came over the prophet so that he could deliver an oracle (2 Kgs. 3:15). Here it seems to indicate that the hand of Yahweh came upon Elisha on specific occasions which the prophet could arrange, and in the special condition of mind he was made aware of Yahweh's will concerning specific matters.<sup>3</sup> Isaiah, too, experienced the mysterious hand which had signified a divine revelation and forced him on to a new career (Isa. 8:11). When Jeremiah was grasped by the hand of Yahweh he was torn away from the group of the merry-makers and thus he sat alone (Jer. 15:17). Here the hand of Yahweh signifies Yahweh's direction of the prophet.

Thus, when Isaiah and Jeremiah speak of the hand, the term seems to be a general expression for ecstasy or divine constraint. It is characteristic of Ezekiel to use 'the hand of Yahweh', 'the spirit of Yahweh', and 'the word of Yahweh' as the causes of his revelatory experience.<sup>4</sup> The hand of Yahweh and the spirit of

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1. Ibid., p. 45.

2. Cf. Carley, op. cit., p. 16; he holds that the hand of Yahweh was connected with translocation of the prophet from place to place.

3. Ibid., p. 19.

4. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 310.

Yahweh are substantially identical in their effect. They are both expressions of the divine power which is effective in ecstatic experience. The distinction between the hand of Yahweh and the spirit of Yahweh seems to be that the one gave the expression of a visible, the other of an invisible agency: the hand appeared to grasp the prophet by the forelock, the spirit impelled his movement. Both are mentioned together in 3:14 and 37:1, in order to emphasize the revelation of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> However, here in 37:1, it seems to imply that the hand of Yahweh serves as the cause of the ecstatic state of the prophet, while the spirit of Yahweh serves as the power for the visionary movement. Eichrodt demonstrates that when the prophet wants to describe the overwhelming effect of Yahweh upon him in a state of ecstasy, the phrase 'the hand of Yahweh' seems to express the concrete impression and immediacy of his experience of Yahweh better than the term  $\Pi\text{I}\text{I}$  of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup>

As noted before, the expression 'the hand of Yahweh' in Ezekiel finds its closest affinities in the stories of pre-classical prophecy in Kings. But it should be noted that in Ezekiel, 'the hand of Yahweh' is associated with visions (cf. 1:3; 3:22; 8:1; 37:1; and 40:1) to emphasize the visionary state and the movement, whereas the stories about the hand of Yahweh in Kings seem to express the stories in their historical sense.

The term  $\Pi\text{I}\text{I}$  is frequently referred to in Ezekiel, whereas it is almost completely absent from the recorded prophecies of his predecessors. It can mean 'wind', 'breath', or 'spirit'; the former

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1. Cf. Cooke, op. cit., pp. 90f.

2. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament II, p. 56.



discovers that they are very many and dry. In v. 2 two things about the bones are stressed, their number and their aridity. The latter shows that they have been dead for a long time and therefore completely lost the vitality they once possessed; the former emphasizes the satiety of death.<sup>1</sup> There is no mention of the reaction of the prophet to this scene as in 4:14 (cf. 39:11-16), the danger of impurity from contact with the dead.<sup>2</sup> But seeing a gloomy picture like this in which he saw nothing but many dry bones, he might have thought that this valley was the place where death was triumphant. Although the word  $\text{נַחֲלָה}$  with the article  $\text{הַ}$  seems to indicate that this valley is a specific valley with which the prophet was familiar, yet, there is no clear evidence to identify it.<sup>3</sup> Thus Ezekiel seeks to show he was in a revelatory state of mind and what he at first saw in that situation was many dry bones strewn on a wild valley. One also finds that Ezekiel expresses his impression of the picture in his special usage of words. The words  $\text{אֲחֵי$ ,  $\text{אֲבִיבִים}$ ,  $\text{אֲבִיבִים}$ ,  $\text{אֲבִיבִים}$ ,  $\text{אֲבִיבִים}$  show his impression of the gloomy scene. The phrase  $\text{אֲבִיבִים אֲבִיבִים}$  is Ezekiel's way of expressing emphasis; and the term  $\text{אֲבִיבִים}$  occurs in Ezekiel not less than 78 times (35 times in chapters 1 and 40-43).

### V. 3 The question of Yahweh and the answer of the prophet

In this verse there is a dialogue between Yahweh and man, which consists only of a question from Yahweh and an answer from

1. Wevers, op. cit., p. 278.

2. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 893.

3. Cf. above, pp. 214ff.

the prophet. The question seems to be impossible to answer and the answer is therefore ambiguous. The dialogue between God and the prophet is one of the characteristics of Ezekiel's vision.

What has been displayed in the vision up to that moment leads to Yahweh's question to Ezekiel, 'Can these bones live?' and Ezekiel's answer, 'Lord, You know'. The surprising question from Yahweh must have seemed absurd and futile, for what is contemplated in this question is the resuscitation, not of someone recently dead but of dessicated and dismembered skeletons. How can these dry, dessicated bones come together and live again as a man? It is completely impossible for man to give a positive answer. The obvious answer, to Ezekiel, is a definite 'No'; yet in the presence of Yahweh who is omnipotent, Ezekiel cannot but give an ambiguous answer, 'Lord, you know'.

But the problem at issue is what the answer, 'Lord, you know' means. This sentence is not found in the other canonical books except in the New Testament Apocalypse (Rev. 7:14). Does it indicate a question to which the prophet does not know the answer? Does it suggest positive or a negative answer or a combination of both? Many explanations have been suggested; and most scholars are agreed that the prophet's answer is a combination of a positive and a negative. From the human viewpoint the answer is negative; and from Yahweh's point of view it is positive. The latter is based on Ezekiel's faith in Yahweh, and the former on common sense. The prophet acknowledges the divine understanding and his own ignorance.

However, Ezekiel's answer is not only involved with clear human self-understanding, but also with his faith in God, although

his answer seems to suggest a lack of faith. If one is forced to express what the answer is, it can be said that one should treat it as a negative statement--'Lord, you know but I do not know' or 'Lord, I do not know, you know'.<sup>1</sup> This answer expresses the speaker's ignorance and his desire for information;<sup>2</sup> neither Ezekiel nor the author of the Revelation offers the answer to the question, which is not merely a 'yes' or 'no' question, but each offers some information concerning the problem. There is no denying that Ezekiel's answer pertains to a profound realization of his faith in Yahweh and his understanding of man; it seems to be an expanded answer of negation. While Bertholet understands the phrase 'you know' as 'I do not know; but you are capable of all things',<sup>3</sup> Stalker thinks that the answer could possibly mean--it is possible for you.<sup>4</sup>

Does this answer of the prophet indicate any hint about an idea of eschatological resurrection ? It does not, because Ezekiel shows his ignorance after Yahweh's question, and the dialogue is made in a visionary state. Besides, the main message of the vision is concerned with the nation as a whole, not with the individual's physical resurrection, and there is no trace or element of eschatology in this passage. Ezekiel may have known some stories about the revivification of the dead (1 Kgs. 17:17-24; 2 Kgs. 4:31-7; 13:21), but this is not enough for one to say that here there is

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1. Another instance, which is not quite parallel to Ezekiel's answer is found in 2 Cor. 12:2f. where Paul reports someone's visionary experience.
  2. Cf. R. H. Charles, Revelation I, ICC, p. 213; J. F. Walwood, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 145.
  3. Bertholet, op. cit., p. 127.
  4. Stalker, op. cit., p. 257.

a general eschatological idea of resurrection. H. Haag points out that the answer of Ezekiel suggests that in Ezekiel's time people knew nothing of a general eschatological resurrection of the dead (cf. Job 14:14).<sup>1</sup> However, one also finds some scholars who hold that from the examination of the elements of the vision, the resurrection of the dead was envisaged as a possibility, but, their arguments are far from convincing.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to see that in his description of the visionary experience (37:1-10), Ezekiel presents it as if he did not know the real symbolic meaning of the vision. He treats it as a miracle of resuscitation the like of which he has never heard before and describes vividly what he has seen in the vision. There is no suggestion in the description of the vision that these bones are the bones of Israelites; but when he hears the words of Yahweh in v.11, he then understands that these bones are the house of Israel. So one assumes that Ezekiel did not know the symbolic meaning of the vision before Yahweh's interpretation in vv. 11-14. Since the vision is not the reality, but is a reflection of the reality, without referring to the reality of which the vision is symbolic, one cannot fully understand what is the real meaning of the vision.

As far as the meaning of Yahweh's question is concerned one needs to analyse it in detail. The phrase  $\square \tau \times \sim \gamma \Delta$  is a characteristic phrase in Ezekiel.<sup>3</sup> It is striking that this phrase

1. H. Haag, Was lehrt die literarische Untersuchung des Ezechiel—Textes, (1943), pp. 51-60. cited in Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 893.

2. Cf. Riesenfeld, op. cit., p. 11; Jacob, op. cit., p. 310.

3. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 70; H. Haag, ' $\square \tau \times \gamma \Delta$ ', WTAT II, cols. 685-9; S. Mowinckel, He That Cometh, pp. 346-50; B. W. Bacon, 'The "Son of Man" in the usage of Jesus' JBL 41 (1922), pp. 143-82; C. B. Houk, ' $\square \tau \times \sim \gamma \Delta$  Pattern as Literary Criteria in Ezekiel' JBL 88 (1969), pp. 184ff. Houk suggests that the phrase is a sign of the authenticity of the passage or section which immediately follows it. Cf. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 61.

occurs not less than 93 times in the book of Ezekiel, whereas its occurrences outside the book of Ezekiel number only 14 times, i.e., Num. 23:19; Isa. 51:12; 56:2; Jer. 48:18, 33; 50:40; 51:43; Pss. 8:5; 80:18; 146:3; Job. 16:21; 26:6; 35:3; and Dan. 8:17. These occurrences, can be divided into two groups: (1) the phrase in the book of Ezekiel and Dan. 8:17 refers to an individual<sup>1</sup>; (2) in the rest of the occurrences it is either a title of the king (cf. Pss. 80:18; 146:3) or refers to mankind in general. As to the emphasis of the phrase in the book of Ezekiel, most scholars are in agreement in taking this phrase as referring to the contrast between Ezekiel, a man with his human weakness, lowliness, and creatureliness, and Yahweh, the Lord, with his glory, majesty, and almightiness. But the phrase also expresses as in Ps. 8:5, the weakness of the creature to whom the mighty Lord shows such condescension.<sup>2</sup> Though Yahweh is transcendent, he loves to communicate with humble man. From this, one can conclude that this phrase is a typical Ezekielian phrase; throughout the book of Ezekiel he is called  $\square \tau \chi - \gamma \Delta$  (unlike Amos 7:8; 8:2 and Jeremiah 1:11; 24:3 who are called by their names). In this vision this phrase occurs twice (vv. 3, 11), and this phrase is also found in Gilgamesh IX, 38, therefore some argue that this term has a Babylonian element, but Ezekiel's use of the phrase needs no such explanation.<sup>3</sup>

As far the important word  $\square \text{S} \text{S}$ , one finds that it appears 14 times in this vision, and that it is fitting to explain or

1. Cf. Wahono, *op. cit.*, pp. 104f.; in Dan. 8:17 it refers to Daniel and in Ezekiel it refers to Ezekiel himself.

2. Eichrodt, *loc. cit.*

3. Cf. Zimmerli, *loc. cit.*

illustrate the situation of the nation and the feeling of the people. For the bone of man can stand for man himself in his vitality, therefore the bone can represent the whole being (cf. Gen. 29:14; Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:13f.). This has been well characterized as the 'Stereometry of expression'.<sup>1</sup> This stereometric thinking covers the sphere of man's existence by enumerating his characteristic organs, thus denoting man as a whole (Prov. 13:5). One may ask why Ezekiel employs this term as the subject matter of the vision. There are at least three reasons: 1) The bones can stand for the whole being of man; 2) Ezekiel employs it directly from the lamentation of his contemporaries; and 3) the dry bones can fully represent the feeling of death, the people's situation (of hopelessness and lifelessness).

Another important word  $\bar{\text{N}}'\bar{\text{N}}$  calls for much attention because this is the main idea or theme of the vision. The verb with its related word  $\bar{\text{N}}'\bar{\text{N}}$  in the Qal form appears no less than 206 times in the Old Testament; and it appears in the book of Ezekiel 43 times. From this statistical view of the word it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the term is an important one in the book of Ezekiel.

When Yahweh asks Ezekiel the question, Yahweh's main concern is not the bones which are strewn on the plain, but the life of his people. But when Yahweh asks Ezekiel the question, Ezekiel understands that these are dry bones scattered on the ground and he does not know that these bones are the Israelites' bones.

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1. B. Landsberger, Eigenbegrifflichkeit, p. 17, cited in H. W. Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament, p. 8; G. von Rad, Wisdom in Israel, (ET, 1972), pp. 26ff.

Facing the question, 'Can these bones live again?' he replies, 'Lord, I do not know, but you know'. The dialogue is calculated to heighten the wonder about to be related. From Yahweh's answer to his own question, it seems that Yahweh did not expect the answer from his prophet.

If the question in v. 3 is a question relating to the section vv. 1-10, then vv. 4-10 are the answer to the question. The section vv. 4-10 can be analysed into 1) vv. 4-6 the first command of Yahweh and vv. 7-8 the work of the prophet; and 2) v. 9 the second command of Yahweh and v. 10 the work of the prophet.<sup>1</sup> The resuscitation of the bones develops in two stages, namely, the restoration of the external forms of man and the restoration of the inner life of man. The command of Yahweh is introduced in the formula  $\text{וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה}$

$\text{אֶל־הַנְּבִיאַתְיָאֵלֶיךָ}$  and the content of the command is introduced by the formula  $\text{כִּי־אֶמַר אֲדַבְּרֵנּוּ יְהוָה}$

The work of the prophet is introduced in the same formula by

$\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע הַנְּבִיאַתְיָאֵלֶיךָ כְּשֶׁאָמַר יְהוָה}$ . The correspondence between Yahweh and the prophet thus brings about the wonderful resuscitation and the procedure of the resuscitation is similar to that of the creation story in Genesis 2.

#### Vv. 4-8 The restoration of the external form

a) Vv. 4-6 the command of Yahweh and its content.

The section begins with the introductory formula  $\text{וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה}$  by which Yahweh declares the divine words (the command to prophesy) to the prophet, and the divine words to the dry bones (the command

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1. See above, pp. 218ff.

to hear). Then the messenger formula *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֲדַבֵּר* declares the contents of the command of the Lord, and lastly it concludes with the recognition formula *וַיִּדְבַּר אֲנִי כִּי אָמַר יְהוָה*.

The formula *וַיִּאמַר אֲלַי* is a plain prophetic formula which announces the word and/or the event of Yahweh's revelation; it is a simplified form of *וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֲלַי לֵאמֹר*. According to Zimmerli, of the 52 units in the book there are 46 units introduced by the sentence *וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֲלַי*. The use of the first person suffix in the word *אֲלַי* seems to be very characteristic of Ezekiel.<sup>1</sup> Although this formula was not invented by Ezekiel, its frequent occurrence in the book is remarkable. The formula *שִׁמַּע דְּבַר יְהוָה* is also an introductory formula of the prophetic oracle; it is a form of command. J. Lindblom points out that this phrase 'hear this' is a typical opening for public speeches.<sup>2</sup> After this formula there follows an utterance, a proclamation of Yahweh (cf. Jer. 23:33; Zech 9:1; 12:2; 2 Kgs. 9:25). The formula *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה* is one of the most common prophetic formulas whose origin is affiliated to the oracular terminology of the ancient world.<sup>3</sup>

According to the development of the vision, when the prophet is wondering about Yahweh's question, he gets the answer from Yahweh that Yahweh will bring together the scattered bones and grant them the breath of life by which they will live again. The information is conveyed not only by the words of the questioner as in Rev. 7:14, but also by Ezekiel's partaking in the visionary

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1. Zimmerli, in *VT* 15 (1965), p. 516; and his *Ezekiel*, pp. 88f.

2. Lindblom, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 103; cf. R. Rendtorff, *op. cit.*, pp. 165ff.



to prophesy to the dry bones, and that Yahweh will restore sinew, flesh, and skin upon them and finally put breath in them so that they may live as normal human beings. Thus the peculiar description of the resuscitation serves to stress the picture and the development which the prophet saw in the vision.

The phrase  $\text{וְיָדַעְתֶּם כִּי יְהוָה אֲנִי}$  is so important, it demands further interpretation.<sup>1</sup> This is the form of speech which best characterizes Ezekiel, because with the verb in either second or third person it occurs no less than 63 times in the book which bears his name. This form of speech is also found in 1 Kgs. 20:13, 28; and Ex. 14:4; 16:12, which point to the Deuteronomic writer and Priestly writer respectively; but it is completely absent from the books of the canonical prophets before Ezekiel. As the number of occurrences shows, this special form has a very decisive meaning for Ezekiel. Zimmerli names this formula as 'Erweiswort'—word of demonstration.<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel's announcement of an approaching action by Yahweh repeatedly leads to the proclamation: "...and you (or they) shall know that I am Yahweh." Ezekiel did not invent this form nor use it for the first time; it is to be found in 1 Kgs. 20:13, 28 in a prophetic narrative about the old northern prophets of the ninth century. From form-critical analysis of this language, Zimmerli<sup>3</sup> finds that two different elements are combined in the final formulation. The formula 'and you shall know' or 'thus you will know' derives from the legal language of a process of proof

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, 'Das Wort des göttlichen Selbsterweises (Erweiswort), eine prophetische Gattung', GO, (1963), pp. 120-32; M. Schmidt, Prophet Und Tempel, 1948, pp. 112-5; Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 15.

2. Zimmerli, in Intern. 23 (1969), p. 147.

3. Ibid., pp. 147f.

(cf. Gen. 42:34); the form 'that I am Yahweh' has a clear Sitz im Leben in the Sinai tradition (Ex. 20:2). Further, this recognition formula always precedes a statement about Yahweh's actions; therefore the purpose of the actions is the creation of knowledge, the knowledge that he is Yahweh. So with this peculiar form of proclamation, the prophet not only announces a future act of Yahweh but formulates this announcement in a manner which expresses the hidden intention of Yahweh's act.<sup>1</sup> Here in this section (vv. 4-6) Yahweh will be realized as the Lord over life and death, the living God.

b) Vv. 7-8 The action of the prophet

In this section Ezekiel reports how he carried out the command of Yahweh, and the result of his action. After receiving the mission and the command of Yahweh, Ezekiel did as he commanded. When he was prophesying he saw a wonderful miracle happening; he heard a sound like rattling, while the bones came together; and then they were covered with flesh and skin, and were equipped with sinews; they became human bodies but were still dead, for there was no breath in them. In order to give his audience a clear impression of his visionary experience, Ezekiel employs words and phrases such as 'I prophesied as I was commanded', 'when I prophesied', 'a noise', 'a rattling', 'bone to its bone', 'as I looked, behold..'

It is striking that here the powerless human being has become the proclaimer of the mighty God. The prophetic words are powerful and creative. It is obvious that the new creation is the work of

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, in VT 15 (1965), p. 526.

Yahweh, by the power of the divine word acting through the mouth of the prophet. In this first stage, the bones become human bodies by the prophesying of the prophet. It is significant that in the passage 37:1-10 the word occurs no less than six times,<sup>1</sup> not only to stress the task of the prophet but also to emphasize the power of the prophetic word. It seems that here the prophetic word is similar to the creative words of Yahweh in Gen. 1, which brought the creature into existence.<sup>2</sup>

If one compares the creation here to that of the Yahwist's narrative in Gen. 2, one finds some similarity and some differences between them. Both of them have the same procedure completed in two phases, namely, the formation of the physical body and the endowment of the breath of life. However, they have some differences: 1) man in the J narrative was made from the dust, while in Ezek. 37:1-10 man was made from the given skeletons; 2) in J, man was created by the breath which came directly from the mouth of Yahweh, whereas here the life-breath came from everywhere in the universe (v. 9); 3) the creation in J was performed by Yahweh himself and not through any mediator or messenger, while here in 37:1-10, the creation was made through the prophet, by his prophesying that the new creation was achieved;<sup>3</sup> 4) as far as the form is concerned, the J creation account is third-person narration, but in Ezekiel the account is an 'Ich-Bericht' reported by the prophet who played a role in the vision; 5) in J the creation story is viewed in the

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1. D. Baltzer, *op. cit.*, p. 113; cf. R. Rendtorff, 'X'2J', *TWNT* 6 *Προφήτης κτλ*, pp. 796-812.

2. Baltzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-3.

3. But throughout the vision, Ezekiel has acted under the order of God and has even described his own implicit obedience to God's order.

scope of salvation history, while in Ezekiel 37:1-10 the creation is a visionary experience. Nevertheless, there is no denying that the prophet has used the ideas, form and material of the traditional creation story. In other words, this vision account has its background in the creation accounts of the J and P traditions.

Vv. 9-10 The restoration of the inner life

a) V. 9 The command of Yahweh and its content

The resuscitation is described as in the account of how the first man was created, with respect to his form, but without as yet bringing the forms to life, parallel to the first stage in Gen. 2:7. Here comes the second command of Yahweh. The structure is similar to vv. 4-6 although there is a slight difference between them. Here the formula 'Hear the word of Yahweh' is absent; and  $\Pi\Gamma$  is actually the subject of  $\text{יָצַד}$  and  $\text{יָפַד}$ , while in v. 6, the divine 'I' is the subject of  $\text{יָצַדְתִּי הַפְּתוּתִי}$  and  $\text{קָרַמְתִּי}$ . In vv. 4-6, the object of the promise is the dry bones which are represented as 'you', so the structure is the direct form. But in v. 9 the object of the promise is the slain, while the object of the command of the prophet is the wind (  $\Pi\Gamma$  ). The structure seems to be stereotyped.  $\Pi\Gamma$ , the object of the command, is the instrument of Yahweh and is not the object of the promise.

What does  $\Pi\Gamma$  mean here? This term, with the definite article, may indicate a particular wind, but because it is in the visionary scene it is probable that it denotes wind in general. Obviously this  $\Pi\Gamma$  is different from the  $\Pi\Gamma$  in vv. 1 and 14, but, to some extent, it is similar to the  $\Pi\Gamma$  in vv. 5, 6, and 8. One has to bear in mind that the visionary language may be



in the battle, therefore it suggests that the background of the vision is a valley-plain which has been used as a battlefield. It is simply a battlefield where one can find a great many bones and corpses. There is no sufficient evidence to prove that corpses lying in a valley and their revivification are traditional elements of Israel religion.<sup>1</sup> In this verse the main content of the command is that when the wind blows over the slain it will cause them to live. And it can be completely understood in its literal sense because it is a visionary activity. Examination of this command shows that the breath represents vitality.

b). V. 10 The action of the prophet

In this second stage <sup>E</sup>zekiel was commanded to summon the wind from every quarter of the earth to enter the lifeless bodies, breathing into them and causing them to become living men, so that they could stand up on their feet and become an exceedingly great army. Here the notion of  $\Pi\Gamma$  is extremely prominent in the vision. When the wind enters into the bodies, it becomes the breath of life by which the bodies become not only living men but also become a great army. Therefore this breath of life is not only the vitality of the individual but also the vitality of the great army. If the dry, dessicated and dismembered bones symbolize death, defeat, and powerlessness in respect of battle, this great army symbolizes the life, victory, and power of a people. At this stage the spirit of life inundates the valley

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1. Cf. Riesenfeld, op. cit., p. 16.

where death and darkness and hopelessness had once dominated; now the plain becomes the place where life and hope are victorious. What Ezekiel sees now is not the gloomy and dire valley strewn with many dry bones, but a great army standing in the valley ready to do something.

Having seen the miraculous work of Yahweh in the vision, Ezekiel may have raised some questions in his mind about what he had seen and done, such as, what were the bones or what they represented; what was the meaning of the vision; or what was the revelation of Yahweh conveyed by the vision? Usually after the revelatory account of the prophetic vision or symbolic action, an interpretation is given in order that the audience can fully understand the meaning and how the message applies to themselves.

The interpretation of the vision is made by Yahweh in vv. 11-14, presupposing some of the questions mentioned above. The obvious example is the statement—'These bones are the house of Israel'—which is the answer to Ezekiel's question—'What are these bones which are strewn upon the valley? And the relevant question is—'What is the meaning of the vision if the bones denote the whole house of Israel? To this, Yahweh's answer is given in vv. 12-14—'they say, "Our bones are dried up; and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off"...Therefore...I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land...You shall know that I am Yahweh'.

In this connection, one can detect the main problem posed in the vision. In the first section of the passage the main question is explicitly found in v. 3—'Can these bones live? Ezekiel, a human being, answered, 'Lord, (I do not know), you know'; and

Yahweh's answer to his own question is expressed in the miraculous resuscitation of the bones by Yahweh. Although Yahweh does not answer the question with 'Yes', his answer is positive and is expressed in that the dry bones do live again. In the second section of the vision, the question---Can these bones (the whole house of Israel) live ?---is implicitly conveyed in the promise of Yahweh and the complaint of the people. The answer of the people to the question is negative, because they said, 'Our bones are dried up; our hope is lost; and we are clean cut off'; but Yahweh's answer is positive, for he will put his spirit in the people and he will deliver them from the exile and return them to their homeland. From this analysis one finds that the same question has different answers from Yahweh, the prophet, and the exiles.

Now, in order to understand the meaning of the passage, one must know the problem which the prophet wanted to solve, and in order to identify the problem, one must argue back from the solution of the problem offered by the prophet.<sup>1</sup> If this is accepted one finds that the key point of the vision lies in what the people are saying about their problem. The question of Yahweh in v. 3 is derived from the saying of the people and can be treated as an extension or a reflection of the saying. The solution of the problem is offered in vv. 4-10 and vv. 12-14. Whereas the latter serves as an interpretation and confirmation of the promise, the former is represented in a resuscitation in the visionary scene. Therefore the problem which the prophet wants to solve is how to

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1. Cf. R. G. Collingwood, Autobiography, pp. 26f.; Collingwood explains the relationship between the problem and the answer.

combat the despairing feeling of the people as cited in v. 11, and his solution is shown in his visionary experience in which Yahweh will grant his spirit to the people and create a new Israel.

The interpretation of the vision is completely a divine word, although the saying of the people is quoted in v. 11. This divine speech formally consists of; the reason for action ( אָמַר יְהוָה ); the command to action ( וְאַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל ); the content of the promise ( כִּי אֶמְרָא אֲדַבְּרָא יְהוָה Botenformel ); the first recognition formula; the second recognition formula.

#### V. 11 The desperate and hopeless situation of the people

While wondering about the wonderful scene of the resuscitation Ezekiel hears the word of Yahweh by which Yahweh explains the meaning of the visionary movement to Ezekiel, although the section vv. 11-14 is also a part of the vision report. The visionary miracle is not concerned with the mass of dry bones scattered in the wild valley but is concerned with the people of Israel. In the words, 'These bones are the whole house of Israel', Yahweh relates the vision to the Heilsgeschichte of Israel (the living reality). Therefore the interpretation of the vision should be understood historically and existentially.

Most scholars agree that v. 11 is the key point of the passage 37:1-14. Zimmerli argues that this serves (at least) a double function, i.e., to explain the description of the vision in vv. 1-10 and relate it to the second section vv. 12-14; and to introduce the disputation of the people to whom Yahweh declares his promise to meet their resignation.<sup>1</sup> This verse has been carefully dealt

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1. Zimmerli, Ezekiel, p. 338.

with by D. Baltzer.<sup>1</sup> He contends that there are two NS (Nominal-  
satz) in this verse. The first NS v. 11a $\beta$ , is the direct interpre-  
tation of the Visionsbericht (37:1-10) and the second NS

□'ר'א'ח ׀׀׀׀ ׀׀׀׀ + Zitat in v. 11b 'Eine mehr indirekt zu  
erschliessende Deutung mittels des Zitates hinzufügen (über ihre  
Besonderheit ist weiter unten zu handeln)'. Besides, he finds  
that the form of 37:11-14 is similar to Ezek. 12:26-28, thus he  
thinks that the first NS v. 11a $\beta$ , is a secondary addition to v. 11;  
and 'Der erste NS hätte dann ursprünglich allein für sich bestanden  
und den Visionsbericht Ez. 37:1-10 unterschriftlich abgeschlossen,  
so wie der Schlusssatz des ersten Teils des ursprünglichen Visions-  
berichtes von Ez. 1:1-3:15 in Ez. 1:28, um dann nachträglich der  
Einheit Ez. 37:11-14, ihre Einführung geringfügig verändernd  
( ׀׀׀׀ ׀׀׀׀ statt umgekehrt), eingefügt zu werden'.<sup>2</sup> But this  
opinion does not seem to do complete justice to the passage.

As stated above, this verse consists of two statements; the  
first one is Yahweh's statement which presupposes the question—  
What are these dry bones? the second one is the statement of the  
people which presupposes the question—How can we live? The  
structure of the verse is similar to v.3a. It begins with the  
simple introductory formula 'א'ח'ר'א' to introduce the word  
of Yahweh; then follows the typical call of the prophet □'ר'א'׀׀׀׀;  
then follows the statement of Yahweh identifying the bones; and  
lastly comes the reason to explain why the bones are the house of  
Israel. It is true that this verse is the key point of the passage.

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1. Baltzer, op. cit., pp. 100-6.

2. Ibid., pp. 102f.

'These bones are the whole house of Israel', in these words Yahweh explains the symbolic meaning of the visionary description and also relates the visionary scene to the Heilsgeschichte of Israel. Because 'the prophetic visions are recounted, not as throwing light on the prophetic experiences themselves, but primarily for their bearing on what God was believed to be doing or to be about to do with his people Israel'.<sup>1</sup> 'These bones', in the description of the vision, are many and dry, strewn on a wild valley, but in spite of their lifelessness and hopelessness, Yahweh revives them. In the same manner, the Israelites felt a deep hopelessness about their future, but in spite of the hopeless situation Yahweh would create from them a new life and new people.

What does the phrase 'the house of Israel' mean? This phrase occurs in the book of Ezekiel eighty-three times; its frequent occurrences seem to invite more attention. 'Israel' is the descendants of Jacob, for what is significant is that for Ezekiel Jacob is the father of the people Israel, or the father of the twelve tribes.<sup>2</sup> From the context in the book of Ezekiel one finds that: 1) in the majority of the cases the prophecies are used of the men of Judah and Jerusalem, especially in the oracles of judgement;<sup>3</sup> 2) in some cases the phrase is directed chiefly to the men of Jerusalem and Judah, and may at the same time include men of the North; in other words, the whole people of Israel;<sup>4</sup> 3) it may possibly

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1. Porteous, op. cit., p. 41.

2. Hicks (op. cit., pp. 783f) thinks that the making of Jacob as the father of Israel, the twelve tribes, was a very late development of the tradition of Jacob the individual.

3. Harford, op. cit., p. 31; cf. also pp. 77-101.

4. Ibid., p. 32; cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., pp. 1258-61.

denote the northern kingdom (cf. 4:5; 25:3; 37:16). But it seems justifiable to demonstrate that in most of the prophecies of judgement, 'Israel' is the people of Judah and Jerusalem, including the exiles regarded as representative of all Israel. Zimmerli thinks that for Ezekiel, 'Israel' means the whole people of Israel.<sup>1</sup> But it does not seem natural for the prophet to give severe judgement to the people who are in complete despair (the people of North). In the context of restoration, Ezekiel always has the whole people in his mind. Thus the vision is interpreted as pertaining not simply to the Babylonian exiles, but to the whole people of Israel.

The quotation of the lamentation of the people consists of a threefold expression of the saddest feeling of the people. In all these three clauses of the quotation, one can detect that it is full of the despair and chilly feeling of the people. An old Chinese saying expresses it thus: 'The most miserable sadness is the feeling of the death of one's heart'. When one feels life is so miserable and hopeless, then nothing remains but the moving body with an empty soul. 'Wie Krankheit ist es eine schwächere Form des Lebens, so dass man in ihm langsam dahinstirbt und sich dem Tode nähert'.<sup>2</sup> The same feeling of despair can also be found in 33:10 and 18.<sup>3</sup> From the form-critical point of view, these three clauses each find parallels in the Psalms and the Wisdom literature.

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1. Zimmerli, *ibid.*

2. Fohrer, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

3. Cf. above, pp. 127-32. In Ezek. 19:5 Ezekiel transforms the lament for the princes of Israel into a proclamation of the judgement executed upon the Davidic dynasty, which has become the prey of the power of death. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-6.

'Our bones are dried up' means that the exiles have completely lost their vitality because they have lost everything which they depend on to live. The bones can stand for man himself in his vitality and his expression of it. The statement by the men that their own bones are dried up is therefore perfectly intelligible. In Ezekiel, this idea takes solid shape as an objective fact, so that he employs the image of actual dead bones to represent the present condition of the people.<sup>1</sup> In exile, Israel had lost its nationhood, its land, city, Temple, faith and future; therefore they were forced to feel that they were completely hopeless. Not only did they lose all external form as a people or a nation but also they were clean cut off. This feeling is exactly like the feeling of the poet in Ps. 88:3-5, who feels that he is near the realm of the dead because he is expelled from the sphere of Yahweh's influence (cf. Ezek. 11:16; 33:1-10). In other words, they think that they have no relationship with Yahweh their God at all, therefore they are in the realm of death.

Zimmerli<sup>2</sup> observes that the speech in Prov. 17:22 is very similar to the expression in 37:11; a downcast heart dries up the bones (cf. Ps. 35:10; 31:11; 102:5). It seems that the exiles employ the physical organ of man to describe their despair. 'Our hope is lost' (has perished), this clause can be found in 19:5 with different person and number (19:5 3 per. sing. and here it is 1 per. pl.). It is also found in Job 7:6; 8:13; 11:20; (14:19) 17:15; Prov. 10:28; 11:7; Ps. 9:13f.; being without hope can be identified with being dead or in Sheol. This central portion of the lament of

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1. Eichrodt, *ibid.*, p. 510; on the bones see above, pp. 263f.

2. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 897,

the people is thus very relevant to the term 'graves' in v. 12, whose connotation is very close to the dry bones valley in vv. 1-10. It is to be noticed that man who has no hope has no faith at all. It may be true that when Jerusalem was destroyed the exiles had temporarily lost their faith.

The clause  $\text{לֹא־יִשְׁׁרָׁתָּנוּ}$  has been revised by Perles<sup>1</sup> into  $\text{לֹא־יִשְׁׁרָׁתָּנוּ}$ . Perles translates it as 'our thread of life is cut off'. This phrase and its expression cannot be found elsewhere in the Old Testament. But the verb  $\text{שָׁרַת}$  in its niph' form does occur 6 times in the Old Testament (Est. 2:1; 2 Chr. 26:21; Ps. 88:6; Isa. 53:9; Lam. 3:53f.; Ezek. 37:11). In these cases the verb is used to express the one who is cut off from the cult, from the hand of Yahweh, and from the land of life. It is important to notice that in these instances this verb is related to the idea of death or grave ( $\text{קֶבֶר}$ ) and pit ( $\text{בֵּיׁר}$ ). According to Cooke, there is a touch of emotion in the Hebrew which cannot be reproduced.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to notice that this sentence is used in both spiritual and political aspects to describe the despair of the people. 'How can we live?' the exiles may often ask; and their answer seems to be negative. This threefold expression seems to cover all aspects of the exiles' despair. Lifelessness, hopelessness, powerlessness are a result of the feeling of despair.

#### Vv. 12-13 The promise of the external restoration

These two verses are disputable because 1) there is a new figure

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1. Perles, loc. cit.

2. Cooke, op. cit., p. 400.

emerging into the vision report; 2) the resuscitation here is not of unburied bones or the slain, but of the dead from their graves; 3) in v. 11 these bones are the whole house of Israel, while the deliverance from the grave concerns only the exiles. Therefore there are some scholars<sup>1</sup> who treat it, or part of it, as a later addition. But against this, Eichrodt<sup>2</sup> and Zimmerli<sup>3</sup> maintain that the section is authentic because these two verses express the same thought of the resuscitation of Israel.

V. 12 begins with  $\gamma \supset \delta$  as the logical sequence of  $\delta \gamma \alpha \chi$  and follows the command formula and the Botenformel. And in v. 13 it ends with the recognition formula. The structure is similar to vv. 4-5a and v. 9, both of which are the command of Yahweh, and especially to the section vv. 4-6, for they are all the divine words to the prophet to indicate his task and the content of the command. As stated above, it seems that the creation is to be presented in two phases; in the first section (vv. 1-10), the first stage is from vv. 4-6 the divine command and its content and vv. 7f. the prophetic word (the work of the prophet); the second stage is from v. 9 the divine command and v. 10 the prophetic words (the work of the prophet). In the second section vv. 11-14, the first stage of creation is vv. 12f. the command of Yahweh and its content (there is no mention of the work of the prophet because the recounting of the visionary experience is the prophesying of the prophet), the second stage is v. 14 the content of

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1. Bertholet, Fohrer, Wevers and others treat vv. 12-13a as a later addition, see above, pp. 211f.

2. See above p. 209.

3. See above pp. 209f.

the command. If the creation in the first section is a revelation, then the creation in the second section is the promise which will be achieved from the present to the future. Vv. 12f. is the first stage of Yahweh's creation which seems to concern the external aspect, namely, the external restoration of Israel. It is not concerned with the visionary experience of the prophet, but with Yahweh's dealing with his people in the on-going history.

In the first stage of restoration Yahweh will deliver Israel from the lands of exile and lead them to settle in the land of Israel. 'In the portrayal of Yahweh's action, the exodus of the people from Babylon, the great graveyard of the nations, is evidently easier to realize, because it can be directly connected with the return to the home country, the land of life'.<sup>1</sup> There are three main verbs  $\text{פָּתַח}$ ,  $\text{פָּדָה}$  and  $\text{חָיַב}$ , all of which are positive words for the salvation. 'I will open your graves' is equivalent to 34:27, 'I will break the bars of their yoke and deliver them from the hand of those that served themselves of them'. The action of Yahweh is an action of liberation, it is similar to the act of salvation in the old Exodus. Yahweh delivered the people of Israel from the land of Egypt and led them into the promised land and built them into a nation; that was a creation, a creation of a new nation. 'I will raise you out of your graves' also conveys the same stress on Yahweh's salvation of Israel from exile. It can be found in 1 Sam. 12:6; Hos. 12:14 and in Ezek. 34:13; 36:24; 37:21; 39:25-29. Why does the prophet employ the new figure, grave, and the idea of the land? Apparently the grave

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1. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 510.

is the place in which death occupies the controlling position and it is the proper figure of speech to indicate the present 'place' of the exile in its historical sense. It is quite relevant to the dry bones in the visionary scene. Employing the idea of the land, Ezekiel is thinking of the rebirth of the nation, for the land is the necessary destination of Yahweh's deliverance of the people. In their own land they can hope to build their nation, they can practise the cult to worship their God; in their land they can live as a free and blessed people.

As far the nation is concerned, the people and the land are the most important factors in its construction. Therefore in the first stage Yahweh will deliver the people from the exile and settle them in their land as the preliminary work of the restoration of the nation. For Israel, to live hopefully is to have their nationhood and to live in their own country. It is their urgent hope that they can return to their homeland and establish their nation. Saying this is not to exclude their inner needs, in other words, their spiritual foundation. For the creation is integrated although formally it may be seen in two stages of its development. From all that Yahweh has done Israel will discern new knowledge of God.

As far as the traditio-historical background is concerned, it is evident that the tradition of the Exodus and the promised land underlies this first stage of creation of new Israel. Yahweh is the saviour who will deliver them from the exile and Yahweh is the great leader who will lead them to the homeland. The themes of new Exodus and the new Settlement in the Promised land had been dealt with by his predecessor, Hosea, who promised his people that

Yahweh would bring them once again from the land of Egypt and lead them through the wilderness where Yahweh would once again make a covenant with them and then take them into the land of Israel. Ezekiel in many places promises that Yahweh will gather them and lead them into the land or the mountain of Israel, and that Yahweh will make a new peaceful covenant with them assuring them of their rest and their peace in the land. In Hosea, the promise seems conditional because before Yahweh's salvation the people should turn away from their evildoing; but in Ezekiel the promise seems unconditional because Yahweh will save them and return them into their homeland, then they will regret or repent of their evil past. It is possible, according to Riesenfeld, that the phrase 'the land of life' can be traced in the cult, connected with the New Year Festival because it is an old hope of the people (cf. Ps. 27:13; 106:9; Isa. 33:11).<sup>1</sup>

#### V. 14 The promise of the inner restoration

The creation described in the vision description shows that if there is no breath of life in the human body, the body is a corpse; but when the bodies have breath, they become not only living men, but also a great host. Death and life depend on whether one has breath or not. In the same manner, although Yahweh delivers the people from the exile and returns them to their land, if he does not grant his spirit among them, the people will still be like the dead and they can not live as the people of Yahweh. The culminating promise is that Yahweh will not only restore

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1. Riesenfeld, op. cit., pp. 17f.

the external aspect of the people, but will simultaneously grant his spirit within them. So the resurrection of the nation can be gained only by the endowment of Yahweh's spirit. From this promise, hope and life must show their strength, and despair and death set free their captives. 'All the immeasurable might and boundless compassion of the divine Lord will go forth to the desperate in this miraculous act. Thus, like his previous acts of judgement, this present act leads to a fresh knowledge of his nature and therefore to inward fellowship with him; twice over it is formally stressed that this has always been the fixed objective he has sought on the way of his salvation'.<sup>1</sup>

Doubtless, v. 14 properly applies the vision to the exilic situation as a prediction of divinely given life issuing in a return to the land.<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable that here the promise of Yahweh's spirit goes with the new settlement of the people in their land. Therefore, to some extent, this vision of Ezekiel serves to show to the house of Israel the promise of a new homecoming into the land of Israel.<sup>3</sup> But this new settlement in the land of Israel should be understood in view of Yahweh's dwelling in the midst of the people is not only the promise of Yahweh's presence, which is the source of all blessing and hope, but also relates the assurance of the inner transformation of the people. In this connection, the promise of the granting of Yahweh's spirit is of the same significance as the idea of the Temple or the idea of

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 510.

2. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

3. Zimmerli, in *Interp.* 23 (1969), p. 153.

Yahweh's dwelling in the midst of the people. According to Zimmerli,<sup>1</sup> he finds two things in the vision: First, the present situation of the people is similar to death—hopelessness in all aspects of life; but by virtue of his absolute creative authority Yahweh creates new life out of this utter lostness. Secondly, what is announced here cannot afterwards be employed to honour any man. It takes place so that Yahweh will be acknowledged insofar as, in his new act of creation, he reveals himself to his people. God is the one who speaks here through his prophet's word; God's word is what happens. Furthermore, in 36:16ff. it is shown that the exiles are ridiculed by the nations and consequently Yahweh's name is sullied. 'These are Yahweh's people and they had to leave their land'. It is God's unique logic that he does not dissociate his name from his people, but in an inexplicable faithfulness allows it to remain bound to them. Because of this connection, he begins to be jealous of his name. This connection can also be found in the case of Ezekiel 20:33ff; the proclamation of the new Exodus, already formed in Hos. 2:16f. and developed in the proclamation of Deutero-Isaiah.

About the double recognition formula, Wevers is of the opinion that 'Formally the interpretation has two conclusions, only one of which is original to Ezekiel. Verse 13a and verse 14b contain recognition formulae addressed to Israel, the latter ending with the conclusion formula'.<sup>2</sup> He continues to demonstrate that v. 14 is the original interpreting oracle, whereas vv. 12a, b, 13 are doublet

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-5.

2. Wevers, *loc. cit.*

from a later traditionist.<sup>1</sup> But, as was mentioned above, there are two aspects of the promise depicted here: the external restoration and the internal restoration. Although the restoration is seen as both external and internal, the prophet's proclamation seems to be undergirded by the procedure of the creation described in the first section of the vision. Therefore this double recognition formula appears in this connection. The expanded recognition formula  $\text{וְיָשִׁיבָם אֶל אֲרָצָתָם}$  appears as the word of demonstration which can be also found in 12:25, 23; 17:24; 22:14; 36:36.

## 5. National Rebirth

### a). The resuscitation of Israel

The vision of the valley of the dry bones has been understood 1) as teaching the physical resurrection of the dead in general;<sup>2</sup> 2) as the description of the restoration of Israel which includes physical resurrection;<sup>3</sup> 3) as the representation of spiritual resurrection or the conversion of an individual soul;<sup>4</sup> or 4) as the restoration of Israel that is to be applied spiritually to the Church.<sup>5</sup> These views, in fact, are not justifiable interpretations of the vision. The vision is a parable of the national restoration of Israel. The present thesis does not include in its scope a

1. Ibid.

2. The early Rabbinic and Christian traditions both take it as a teaching of physical resurrection, cf. S. Spiegel, 'Ezekiel or Pseudo-Ezekiel?', HTR 24 (1931), pp. 256-81; R. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, 'The conception of the resurrection in the Ezekiel panel of the Dura Synagogue', JBL 60 (1941), pp. 43ff.;

Riesenfeld, op. cit., pp. 27ff.

3. O. Procksch, 'Auferstehung', BGG 1, col. 627.

4. Cf. Unger, 'Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Restoration' BS 106, p.317.

5. C. F. Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel, vol. 2, pp. 127ff.

survey of these diverse interpretations of the vision, but will demonstrate the position which the vision takes in its Old Testament context. Also the problem of whether Ezekiel was aware of the possibility of a physical resurrection is beyond the scope of the present study.

As demonstrated in the exegesis of the passage, the question 'Can these bones live?' is the real question which the exiles ask. From their laments found in Ezek. 18; 33:10; and 37:11, it seems quite clear that their answer to the question is completely negative after the fall of Jerusalem. Not only do they complain about the alleged injustice of Yahweh's judgement, but they also protest that they can entertain no hope and that their situation is really similar to the state of dry bones in a wild valley. This feeling must have been very bitter indeed, for this people should have been a people with great hope and a bright future, a blessed people. But since they had witnessed the fall of Jerusalem which was regarded as the ultimate guarantee of their survival as a nation, they felt as if they had been given up to be the prey of death; that is, they could describe themselves as already given over to death, their bones already dried up, i.e., deprived of the last remnant of life.<sup>1</sup> So the vision is a fair reflection of the despondency with which Ezekiel was faced, though it must be admitted that his earlier prophesyings had, in part at any rate, contributed to the people's despair. Ezekiel's main task is to combat the despairing feeling of the exiles or fight against the defeatism of the exiles.

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1. Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 509f.

In this present passage the feeling or the situation of the exiles is revealed in vv. 1f. and v. 11. Although it may be true that the line of demarcation between reality and image was much less definite for the Israelites than for modern people, yet, the division or the distinction between them is necessary. For if not, it would not have been necessary for the prophet to provide an interpretation of the description of the vision. The present vision account consists of the description of the visionary picture and movement (vv. 1-10) and the interpretation of the vision (vv. 11-14). The description of vision is not the reality, but is symbolic in character; it should not be taken in a narrowly historical sense. But the interpretation of the vision serves to relate the central symbolic meaning of the visionary description to the historical reality of the people of Israel. The vision is only a means of revelation used to confirm or convey what is revealed in its interpretation. For it is important that the vision is seen not as throwing light on the prophetic experience itself, but primarily for its bearing on what God is about to do with his people. Thus Yahweh is not concerned with the dry bones strewn in the valley, but he concerns himself with the people of Israel whose harassed, hopeless, and lifeless situation fairly resembles the desiccated, and dismembered dry bones strewn over the valley.

By contrast, Yahweh's answer to the question--Can these bones live?--is absolutely positive even if he does not directly answer it with a clear 'Yes'. In the description of the vision he shows that, through his spokesman Ezekiel, the dry bones restore their external forms first and then revive into the living men by the granting the spirit of life. The resuscitation of the dry bones

proceeds as the creation of the original man and it is indeed a demonstration of faith in Yahweh's creative power. In the interpretation of the vision Yahweh points out that those bones are the whole house of Israel. In spite of the fact that the people of Israel feel that they are like the dry bones, lifeless and hopeless, buried in the graveyard, Yahweh will deliver them out of the foreign land and settle them in their homeland, and further grant them his life-giving spirit in their midst. From what Yahweh will do in the future, the people will know that Yahweh is their Lord who is their sole hope. The expectation of the restoration of Israel is now the central theme for the prophet which he expresses in a wide variety of contexts; but here he correlates the creation faith with the other traditions. Whereas the creation faith provides the model for describing the visionary description of the restoration, the Exodus tradition provides the model for the political salvation of the people, and the David-Zion tradition<sup>1</sup> provides the model of the cultic restoration of the people. Those who are thus to be raised are already physically alive; thus, obviously this vision is not the description of the physical resurrection of the people, but is the promise of the political and spiritual salvation for the people.

In order to understand the meaning of resuscitation properly, the following thesis will consider--What does 'to live' mean and what does Ezekiel say about it, especially in the present visionary account or, how does he answer the exiles' question--How can we

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1. The theme of the divine presence is closely related to the Zion tradition; for Yahweh has made his abode in the Temple and in Jerusalem.

live again ?

Our understanding of the meaning of life in ancient Israel owes much to the contribution of H. Wheeler Robinson on the Hebrew conception of corporate personality.<sup>1</sup> Robinson contends that in Old Testament thought not only the individual person, but also a whole community can be treated as a personality, as a corporate personality, and this personality includes not only those who are alive at the moment, but also their ancestors and posterity. It is not to be regarded merely as a literary personification, or as an ideal figure, but quite realistically as a living entity.

With this understanding, Israel sees her early history present in the individual figures of the patriarchs. On the other hand, the Israelite says his thanksgiving for the harvest with the whole story of his people in the Exodus and the taking of the land; he has taken part personally in this history (Deut. 26:8ff.). Both these attitudes show the constant to and fro movement in the presentation of Israel's history, which can be portrayed as the story of an all-embracing corporate personality, as well as of the individual member of the people.<sup>2</sup>

Through the Exodus, Yahweh brings forth the people of Israel and gives them the promised land. Life, to Israel, is to live in this land. She knows then from the very beginning that her life comes from the hand of Yahweh. The period of political danger can only heighten this conviction. The history of the patriarchs makes

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1. H. W. Robinson, 'The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality' in Werden und Wesen des Alten Testament, BZAW 66 (1936), pp.49ff.

2. W. Zimmerli, The Old Testament and the World, p. 107.

it clear that Israel cannot take for granted her existence as a people. And it is Yahweh's fidelity to his promise to Abraham that ensures the existence of the people as a people.<sup>1</sup> Israel knows that this promise is her support and her guarantee of life and she lives in this knowledge. Now we turn to some philological and semantic observations on the meaning of 'to live'.

'Life' חַיִּים, is plural in form, which must be to stress its intensive character. The verb 'to live' חָיָה, seems in Semitic languages originally to have had the sense of muscular contraction, in contrast with death, whose verbal root signifies to be stretched out, to be relaxed.<sup>2</sup> It seems to indicate that life is not mere existence, but is a dynamic force, an active power. 'To live is more than to be. The Israelite defines life not conceptually, but functionally, he knows it in its manifestation'.<sup>3</sup> It is usually identified with the breath or the blood, without which it is inconceivable. When man was created by God as a living being, God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. The breath as characteristic of life immediately shows man's indissoluble connection with God. This is because the existence of man of a living being is due to Yahweh's infusion of the breath of life, even though everything to do with man is earthly and material. Hence man is destined to live in spite of his unaltered weakness and his inclination to sin.

On this showing, when one confesses that man is created by

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1. Ibid., p. 108.

2. Martin-Achard, op. cit., p. 5.

3. Ibid.

God and man's life is solely dependent on God, one is simultaneously confessing that God is a living God who is the creator and the controller of history. This confession is the foundation of the hope of man; Yahweh is the living God, the Lord over life and death; he creates life, sustains it, and restores it, by his creative and redemptive deeds which are wrought in the history of world salvation. Hence in the Old Testament God is called the living God; he reveals himself as a living person, who speaks, acts, sees, and hears, in contrast with a mute and motionless idol. The expression, 'Yahweh is living',  $\text{יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ חַי}$ , is a typical formula, doubtless employed in the swearing of oaths, the abuse of which explains the Third Commandment; it emphasizes an essential characteristic of the God of Israel, just as the words 'I am living',  $\text{אֲנִי חַי}$  do when the prophet employs them to support the statements he makes in Yahweh's name.<sup>1</sup> This living God creates a living man, grants him life, power, and mission. If human life is viewed as a creation from chaos and lifelessness, man, who has the breath of life from God and is the image of God, has responsibility and/or mission to keep the order and life of the created world for his maker. Therefore man's mission is to live in the world, to love his fellow-men, to rule over creation, and to praise God.<sup>2</sup> In order to realize his destiny as living in the image of God, man has all the time to communicate with God who is the source of his life and

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 12; cf. Ezek. 5:11; 14:16, 20; 16:48; 17:16, 19; 18:3; 20:3, 31, 33; 33:11, 27; 34:8; 35:6, 11; usually this formula is used in the oracle of judgement.

2. Cf. Wolff. Anthropology of the Old Testament, pp. 223ff.

the source of all life.<sup>1</sup> In order to achieve a good relationship with God, man has to seek knowledge of the divine will and obey his command. To do that, man possesses 'life'. Life, for the men of the Old Testament, is ultimately identified with obedience to the divine will; to live is to walk in the ways ordained by the Lord.<sup>2</sup>

Putting the problem of life in another way, in Ps. 88, a dead man is described as one who has been expelled from Yahweh's sphere of influence (cf. Job. 7:21; Ps. 115:17; Isa. 38:18f.), in other words, death means to be cut off from Yahweh. 'When man is beyond the possibility of praising God, he is truly "in death", "in real objective fact". Thus the dangerously ill, the accused who face the court with no support, the persecuted who are helplessly delivered over to their enemies--all these already belong to the world of the dead'.<sup>3</sup> In this understanding, life therefore means to have a relationship--to have a relationship with God; death means the lack of any relationship with God. Life involves the existence of a normal relationship with God and with the people in the community; and righteousness and peace are the essential condition of life in its concrete sense. Furthermore, life has various manifestations and diverse forms. Since it is identified with the phenomena it produces or with the relationship it appears to involve, it has to do with every sphere of human existence. However, one may indicate what is the ideal life: the life of

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1. Cf. Jacob, op. cit., p. 117.

2. Martin-Achard, op. cit., p. 13; cf. Deut. 30:15ff.; Am. 5:4, 14ff.; Mic. 6:9.

3. Wolff, op. cit., p. 111; cf. Martin-Achard, op. cit., p. 46.

the man who grasps the true relationship with God and receives the blessing of God. The ideal life for Israel is the life of God's blessing; the blessing of God is the power by which life is maintained and augmented.<sup>1</sup> This should be conceived in terms of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and his people. Therefore, for a true Israelite, life is to secure a sound relationship with God; this is obtained by the loving guidance and gracious blessing of God, and also by the true knowledge of God. However, due to his natural inclination to sin and all the circumstantial temptations, man goes astray from God; and the results are loneliness, suffering, failure, fear, separation, sin and death, which threaten man's life and the order of the community. From this situation the prophets seek to recall Israel.

Amos summons the people of the Northern kingdom to seek Yahweh and to live (Am. 5:4, 6, 14); according to Zimmerli,<sup>2</sup> the formula 'seek me and live' is a prophetic imitation of the priestly Torah, for he finds that when Amos declares the words, 'do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beer-sheba', Amos is standing against the instruction of the priests in the Northern kingdom and the instruction found in its connection with pilgrimage to the holy places (Ex. 23:14-17). The priests recommend that Israelites should come to the holy sanctuaries to renew their relationship with God and therefore get life. But Amos changes the object of the command or the instruction and says, 'Seek me (or good) and you shall live'. 'The culminating part of Amos's message is that Israel now has to deal directly with Yahweh; not

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1. Cf. Jacob, *op. cit.*, p. 179; Achard, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

2. Zimmerli, "'Leben" und "Tod", im Buche des Propheten Ezechiel', in *GO*, p. 135.

the Yahweh of the sanctuaries and pilgrimages, but an unknown Yahweh who was coming to perform new deeds for Israel'.<sup>1</sup> To Amos, the way to live is to change one's knowledge of Yahweh (Seek me) and to do good (cf. Prov. 3:16), then Yahweh will be with one.<sup>2</sup> In Hosea 11:1-8 one hears the merciful voice of Yahweh, 'How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel'. Israel, by Yahweh's mercy, has not been cut off (death) from Yahweh, and Yahweh is still full of compassion for Israel and gives her his love and mercy. In Hos. 6:1-3, one can see that the calling to return in hope to be healed is the way to receive life.

As stated above, the term  $\text{נָשָׂא}$  occurs quite frequently in the book of Ezekiel, therefore it is important to see what Ezekiel says about it. First of all, one finds the phrase  $\text{וַיִּשָּׂא יְהוָה}$  occurring a great deal in the book. In order to emphasize the word of Yahweh, Ezekiel adds this phrase before or after the words of Yahweh; this phrase is the so-called 'oath formula'. It is characteristic that Ezekiel often uses this phrase  $\text{וַיִּשָּׂא יְהוָה}$  together with the phrase  $\text{נָשָׂא יְהוָה}$  (e.g., 5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; 16:48; 17:16; 18:3; 20:31, 33; 33:11, 34:8; 35:6, 11). It is used in some cases with oracles of judgement.

Secondly, it appears frequently in the disputations of the people and the answers from the prophet. In chapter 18, when

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1. Von Rad, Theology of the Old Testament II, p. 134.

2. Cf. A. Kapelrud, Central Ideas in Amos, p. 36, 'Seeking' for Yahweh represents the wider range of every turning toward to Yahweh and appears to be a technical term for repentance in the situation of lament (cf. 2 Sam. 12:16; Ps. 27:8; Hos. 3:5; 5:6; 10:12 etc.).

the people complained that 'the way of Yahweh is not just', and that they bore the penalty and suffering for an earlier generation's sins; the prophet, although he does not deny the fact of the connection between the destiny of the individual and the guilt of his ancestors (cf. 16; 20; 21:3, 9; 23;) he asserts that everyone will be responsible to God for his own conduct, and he who is just will live and he who is wicked will die. Ezekiel asks his people to repent and turn away from sin and get a new heart and a new spirit; for Yahweh loves all souls and has no pleasure in the death of anyone, 'So turn, and live' (18:32). Here the immediate concern of Ezekiel is that, 'it was dangerous for the exiles to be concealing themselves behind an unbalanced view of their national responsibility in order to avoid the prophetic demand for repentance and a new way of life'.<sup>1</sup> He is concerned with the individual and he thus illustrates the fact in terms of three generations of one family. The illustration's background lies in the priestly tradition. Lindars<sup>2</sup> contends that an important distinction between criminal responsibility and the responsibility of an individual before God should be made; while the latter is concerned with the ideas of divine retribution of reward and punishment, the former is a matter of social legislation. 'When Ezekiel uttered his prophecy, the responsibility of the individual was generally recognized in ideas of divine retribution just as it was in the field of criminal justice. On the other hand the nation's sins were part of the national history, and this always suggested a longer view,

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1. Taylor, op. cit., p. 148.

2. Op. cit., p. 452.

in which cause and effect might be traced through many generations'.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, in 33:10-20,  $\text{נָּוֹן}$  the verb or the substantive  $\text{נָּוֹן}$  occurs no less than 11 times. The problem of the exiles is that of how they can live when they feel so guilty for their sins. They sighed a lament, 'Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away because of them; how can we live?' (v. 10).

'This lamentation not only suggests a deep conviction of sin but also an overwhelming feeling of despair. It is the hard blow which has struck the men speaking in this way, by which their eyes are opened to see the full seriousness of what they have stiffly refused to admit, the sin against a holy God'.<sup>2</sup> There was nothing left for them, for everything that had made for life, such as their nation and home, the Temple, and their faith in the future, lay buried beneath the ruins of Jerusalem. The hope to return to their homeland was banished, they felt that they were really cut off from God. 'How can we go on living?' they cried. Yet this confession does not suggest a petition for mercy and forgiveness from the people to Yahweh. That is because judgement by him implies utter annihilation, unlit by a single gleam of light.<sup>3</sup> The feeling of the people is very similar to the words in Isa. 40:27 and Isa. 49:14. If life is freedom from sin and a good relationship with God, then here it seems rather that death occupies the position. How does Ezekiel answer the problem? He proclaims that Yahweh, who is righteous and holy, will punish the evildoer, and Yahweh,

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1. Lindars, *ibid.*, pp. 458f.

2. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, p. 453.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 454.



than he must heed the warnings of the watchman.<sup>1</sup> Here life is possible for the one who follows the instruction of the servants of Yahweh, namely, hears the words of Yahweh and thus maintains his security and happiness of life.

Zimmerli<sup>2</sup> has pointed out that Ezekiel begins with the conditional life-promise (cf. 3:17-21; 18; 33:1-20) and ends with the unconditional life-promise (cf. 37:1-14; 47:9; etc.). It is true that before the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel urged his people to turn away from their evil ways and obey the statutes and laws of Yahweh. And if the people do this then they can live and keep a right relationship with Yahweh no matter what they have done before, and wherever they are. But it seems that the people are unable to fulfil the requirements of life, therefore punishment (or death, in the covenantal context) will be upon them. After the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel promises his people that Yahweh will change Israel and cleanse them and grant them a new heart and a new spirit (new life), therefore they will be able to keep the statutes and the laws of Yahweh and be taken for the people of Yahweh. It is to be noted that before the fall of the nation Ezekiel still hopes for the repentance of his people and stresses the salvation of individuals. Here the salvation appears after the repentance of the people. But after the fall of the nation his message of hope (life and salvation) appears before the repentance of the people and he stresses the salvation for the whole people of Israel.

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1. Lindars, *ibid.*, p. 461.

2. *Op. cit.*, pp. 179ff.

Thirdly, in Ezek. 47:1-12 the promise of life is expressed in terms of the presence of Yahweh in the midst of the people. The divine presence is the source and the guarantee of all blessings and life, and therefore it will bring about the wonderful effects and transformation of life and nature. This is illustrated in terms of the water of life which flows out of the new temple which is the significant sign of Yahweh's presence. The divine presence is an old blessing and promise (Gen. 28:25; Ex. 3:12; 1 Kgs. 8; etc.) familiar to the Israelites. In this sense the presence of Yahweh described in terms of Temple and its regulations and the promise of the spirit of Yahweh are in essence the same to the prophet.

Now, the verb  $\text{חַי}$  occurs not less than 7 times in the vision of the dry bones and, undoubtedly, life is the main theme of the vision. At six points in the description of the vision (vv. 1-10), the verb  $\text{חַי}$  means literally 'to live' or 'to revive'. Life is lost and is not only the collapse of the body but, more important, the lack of the breath of life. But from these dry bones, Yahweh the Creator creates a great army. The main concern of this visionary description is to reveal that Yahweh is the God of Israel, who can create life from the lifeless situation. Then when Yahweh identifies the situation of Israel with the dry bones he promises that he will give life and hope for Israel from the deathly, hopeless situation. Those dry bones are not the Israelites who died long time ago but the Israelites who are now alive. How does Yahweh create life for Israel? By the free gift of his spirit, Yahweh gives life to Israel and this life has its historical setting in the deliverance of the people from the exile and

their restoration to their land. This recalls the origin of Israel, in that her existence was a result of Yahweh's having saved her from Egypt and of the granting of the promised land.<sup>1</sup> The great images in which Israel is called out of Egypt as a son (Hos. 11:1), or presented as the spouse of Yahweh (Hos. 2:4ff.; Jer. 2:2; Ezek. 16:23), show that the life of Israel comes from Yahweh who has led Israel out of Egypt in order to bring her to the place of rest. Life for Israel is to live in the land where she is near to God (Lev. 25:23). When the people live in their land and have been granted the spirit of Yahweh, this people really live as the people of Yahweh. So the return to their homeland indicates the saving act of Yahweh and Ezekiel understands that it is the great hope of the exiles.<sup>2</sup> Thus, to return to the land is seen as the precondition of a new Israel. Ezekiel illustrates this national resuscitation in the visionary description and then asserts Yahweh's political and spiritual salvation for Israel. Political salvation is the preliminary work, but what is more important for the life of Israel is the endowment of Yahweh's spirit in the midst of the people.

This hope of national revival is unique because it here appears with the first known prophet of the exile. This hope reflects the real collapse of the nation.<sup>3</sup> Although the hope of national revival has been sought in every crisis in their history, nevertheless, the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of the people is the most crucial one in Israelite history. After the crucial

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1. Cf. above, pp.265f.

2. Cf. Ezek. 11:16-18; 12:16; 20:32-44; 34:11-16; 36:7, 16-24; 37:21.

3. Cf. Mowinckel, He That Cometh, p. 133.

event the people seem to have nothing in which to place their hope. Despite this unique feature of this hope, it is national and therefore has a historical origin. This origin is seen in the election and the covenant of Israel by Yahweh. 'Yahweh could not let His chosen people go. He had something great in store for them, an enduring and glorious future.... In the prophets of doom this faith acquired a deeper insight; Yahweh could not abandon His own plan and His own goal'.<sup>1</sup> Although the pre-exilic prophets attack the naïve anthropocentric faith in the covenant and providence, they really have shared the faith about Yahweh's relationship with Israel. After the nation collapsed, the hope for restoration became a constant element in the prophetic message. 'The task was now one of positive, constructive work. It was a matter of using the experience to evoke a genuine national repentance and of maintaining courage and hope, so that the people might not lose itself in despair and be merged in heathenism'.<sup>2</sup>

But, specifically, the national resurrection depicted in the vision of the dry bones recalls the passage in Hos. 6:1-3.<sup>3</sup> This penitential song should be understood in its larger unit from Hos. 5:8-6:6 and in its smaller unit from Hos. 5:15-6:6.<sup>4</sup> 5:15 is the interpretation of the punishment depicted in 5:8-14; it is a declaration by Yahweh that he will withdraw to await Israel' penitence. 6:1-3 is a liturgical expression of the demanded penitence; the song continues the sequence, because it picks up and responds to elements of 5:11-14. The divine saying in 6:4-6 is an oracle answering the song. This song is composed of two elements: a

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1. Mowinckel, *ibid.*, p. 134.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

3. Cf. Martin-Achard, *op. cit.*, pp. 74ff.; J. Wijngaards, 'Death and Resurrection in covenantal context (Hos.VI 2)', *VT* 17 (1967), pp. 226ff.

4. Mays, *Hosea*, p. 37.

twofold summons to return to Yahweh and to acknowledge his lordship, followed by assertions of confidence that Yahweh will save. Faced with the disaster and calamity of civil warfare (Assyrian crisis) the song was composed in the situation for use in a liturgy of lament and penitence in response to Hosea's prophecy.<sup>1</sup> It has 'a double character; its language is determined in part by its relation to Hosea's preaching, but its significance and intention depends on the cultic environment of Israel's Canaanized worship'.<sup>2</sup>

The urgent and sympathetic appeal to return to Yahweh is grounded in the nature and character of God who has 'torn and struck' his people, but who also will heal and revive them sometime after the chastisement.<sup>3</sup> It is possible to understand the anticipated healing and revival of the people in moral and religious terms, the fruit of the true knowledge of Yahweh. This should be conceived, with Wijngaards, in the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and his people.<sup>4</sup> Here the song is concerned not with the personal resurrection of the Israelites, but with the revival of the nation, a hope of divine intervention.

Though Ezek. 37:1-14 and Hos. 6:1-3 bear witness to the common theme concerning the national revival of the people of Israel, their situations are different. While Hosea's hope presupposes the coming destruction of the Northern Kingdom, Ezekiel's hope reflects the real collapse of the nation. The hope in Hos. 6 is

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 93f.; cf. Ward, in *Interp.* 23 (1969), pp. 394ff.

2. Mays, *op.cit.*, p. 94.

3. On the interpretation 'After two days...; on the third day', cf. Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 395; Wijngaards, *op. cit.*, pp. 230ff.

4. Wijngaards, *ibid.*, pp. 236-8.

an appeal and conditional life-promise, Ezekiel's hope is the revelation and the promise of Yahweh and therefore is an unconditional life-promise. Besides, the hope in Hos. 6:1-3 has reflected strong Canaan-mythical elements, but Ezekiel's hope shows the features of the creation faith and other historical salvation traditions. In spite of these differences, it is still possible that Ezekiel has been more or less influenced by Hosea.

Another instance of the national revival can be recalled in Isa. 26:8-21, more specifically, 26:19. Isa. 24-27 has been called 'the Isaiah Apocalypse', but it is doubtful whether this title does justice to the character and the content of that section.<sup>1</sup> Although it has some features similar to that of the Apocalyptic writings, it lacks some characteristics of the Apocalyptists. It has been reasonably suggested that the content of these chapters together with some parts of the Old Testament (e.g., Ezek. 38f.; Joel; and Zech. 9-14) provided the material out of which Apocalyptic writing developed.<sup>2</sup> These chapters are prophetic rather than apocalyptic; and their composition is a distinct form of prophecy representing 'a phase in that development by which prophetic predictions became less obviously related to the immediate historical future and to the causal historical process by which that future was to arise from the present, and also become less an interpretation of what God was doing in the plain harsh realities of the here and now and more an attempt to describe the almost unbelievably glorious realities of a world renewed and transformed by a divine miracle'.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cf. G. W. Anderson, 'Isaiah XXIV-XXVII reconsidered', *SVT* 9 (1962), pp. 118ff.; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, OTL (1974), pp. 173ff.
  2. A. S. Herbert, *Isaiah 1-39*, CBC (1974), p. 144.
  3. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

Isa. 26:8-21 seems to be a national lament which indicates the expectation of peace and prosperity cherished by the returned exiles.<sup>1</sup> It concludes with an assurance of divine aid that, by the wonderful act of Yahweh, those faithful Israelites will be caused to rise from the realm of death and/or distress into salvation.<sup>2</sup> V. 19 is the confession of faith which forms a contrast to v. 14 in which the prayer declares the destruction of the enemy and trust in Yahweh. Like Ezek. 37:1-14, this passage speaks metaphorically and symbolically of the salvation to new life to be expected at the time of Yahweh's intervention. The people of God will experience the joy of the coming salvation. From the shades of the dead Yahweh will create life and peace.<sup>3</sup>

It is true that both Ezekiel 37:1-14 and Isaiah 26:19 describe the revival of the nation in terms of the figure of resurrection. But whereas the resurrection of the dead in Ezekiel is fulfilled by the spirit of life, here in Isa. 26:19 the dew (with a heavy mythological element) is seen as the life-giving power of the earth and the dead.<sup>4</sup> And Ezekiel's hope of revival is a prophetic promise while in Isaiah 26:19 the hope is expressed in a national lament, in the form of a confession of faith.

#### b) The spirit of Yahweh

The revival of Israel depends entirely on the God of Israel;

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1. Kaiser, (op. cit., p. 212), believes that the hope expressed in vv. 12-15 could be understood in view of the considerable contraction of Jewish territory after the catastrophe of 587, although he sees v. 19 as a later insertion from the time of the Hellenistic period.
  2. Cf. Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, p. 388.
  3. By contrast, Martin-Achard (op. cit., pp. 130ff.), Kaiser (op. cit., pp. 215ff.), Lindblom (op. cit., pp. 414f.), hold that this verse proclaims the real resurrection of the dead.
  4. Martin-Achard, op. cit., pp. 137f.

Yahweh will deliver them and lead them into their land, he also will grant his spirit among them. Although the external political and internal religious salvation are two aspects of the same hope, yet, from the presentation of his hope Ezekiel seems to stress that the key source of life for Israel is the spirit of Yahweh. Ezekiel, in contrast to the pre-exilic canonical prophets who avoid speaking of 'spirit' as the power which authorizes the prophet, does not hesitate to speak of the spirit.<sup>1</sup> The spirit is referred to very often in Ezekiel. It is 'the spirit' which animates the living creatures of the opening vision. Spirit provides physical power for Ezekiel to stand upright, after lying prostrate before the awesome vision of divine glory (2:2; 3:24); the spirit of Yahweh has lifted the prophet from place to place in the visions (3:12; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1; 40:1ff.). But, more important, the spirit of Yahweh is involved in the message of restoration (36:27; 37:14; 39:29; cf. 11:19; 36:26). The term

רוח occurs no less than 52 times in the book of Ezekiel; it can mean wind, breath, spirit, or the spirit of God, sometimes indeed it is difficult to know how to translate it. Because of its importance in the book, and because of its ambiguity, it demands attention.

First of all, רוח can mean the objective wind, the moving air.<sup>2</sup> In the book of Ezekiel the stormwind (13:11, 13) is used as

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1. Zimmerli, 'The message of the prophet Ezekiel', pp. 134f.; this is one of the features indicating the close relationship between Ezekiel's prophecy and that of preclassical, pre-literary prophecy.

2. Ezek. 5:10, 12; 12:14; 17:21.

a metaphor for Yahweh's destructive power which will destroy the false hope of the people. It is usually used to express the unseen power of Yahweh, especially in judgement, but sometimes is used to describe the theophany of Yahweh (Ezek. 1:14; 2 Sam. 22:11; Ps. 18; Ex. 19:18). The phrase  $\square \cdot 7 \text{ק} \text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$  (Ezek. 17:10; 19:12; 27:26), the east wind, appears as a destructive power to threaten the natural world. This phrase can also be found in Ex. 10:13; 14:21; Jer. 18:17; Jon. 4:8, etc. There is no need to assume that the enemy will come from the east; it might be reasonable to suggest that the metaphor is drawn from a local phenomenon of Palestine which is threatened by the destructive wind from the Arabian desert.<sup>1</sup> When Ezekiel employs the term

$\text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$  for a natural wind, it is always implied that the wind is the instrument of Yahweh and is 'a mighty phenomenon standing at Yahweh's disposal'.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, since the wind is so mysterious and powerful in some sense, therefore it is always supposed by primitive man that it has life, and by extension it has been thought of as the 'breath' of nature. The biblical writers develop this idea and express it as the breath of life coming from Yahweh. This breath of life is the vital power of man; life and death depend on this breath. According to Zech 12:1; and Eccles. 12:7, Yahweh forms the  $\text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$  within man and therefore this  $\text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$  should return to God again.

$\text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$  used in this sense, can also be found in Jer. 10:14; 51:17; Job. 19:17; Num. 16:22; 27:16; Hab. 2:19 and it is a parallel to the term  $\text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$  (Gen. 2:7; Isa. 42:5). In this

1. Zimmerli, '  $\text{ן} \text{ן} \text{ן}$  ', in Ezekiel, p. 1262.

2. Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament, p. 33.

way,  $\text{רוח}$  is both naturalized in human life as the breath of life, and also used to express man's relationship to God his creator. In the book of Ezekiel  $\text{רוח}$  means the breath of man's life (37:5, 6, 8; 10:17). The dry bones have no  $\text{רוח}$  so that they have no life; and under Yahweh's command, the prophet prophesies to the wind, which will become the breath of life, to enter the corpses and cause them to live. This breath of life is the fundamental element of physical human life. It does come from Yahweh but, strictly speaking, it is distinct from the spirit of God which enables man to do some prodigious and miraculous deeds, or stirs the prophets to deliver their prophecy.

Thirdly, connected with the second point, the term  $\text{רוח}$  means the principle and quality of man's spiritual life. It comes from Yahweh as a gift or blessing to man and does not come from within the human soul. By this, man can communicate with God and keep a good relationship with him. In other words, the spirit of God is the divine principle of man's spiritual life; it is equivalent in some measure to the image of God. Ezekiel promises the exiles that Yahweh will give them a new spirit.

$\text{רוח ה' וְהָיָה כִּי יָבִיאוּ אֹתָם אֶת הָרוּחַ הַחַי וְהַקָּיִם}$  (11:19; 18:31; 36:26) and a new heart, therefore they will be able to keep the law of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> Yahweh will put his spirit within them and cause them to walk in his way. With this inner transformation of the people, Yahweh and Israel can establish a new covenant. This promise of the inner change of

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1. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 38; Wolff points out that in the case of the new heart, the point is the pure guiding of the conscience; in the case of the  $\text{רוח}$  it is the steadfast power of the will to act accordingly (cf. Ezek. 44:3).

the people is one of the main messages of hope to the people (Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26; 37:23). This hope can also be found in Ps. 51:12-14 and Jer. 31:31ff.<sup>1</sup> The spirit of Yahweh is the blessing of Yahweh to the people as the principle of the individual life as well as that of the people as a whole. This promise of Yahweh's spirit within the people is the promise of the presence of Yahweh which is the foundation and the source of all hope and blessing. In this connection, the spirit of Yahweh promised in the midst of the people is related to the idea of the dwelling place of Yahweh--the Temple. The Temple is the visible embodiment of the presence of God and the spirit of Yahweh is his invisible presence. The absence of God is a feature of Israel's laments which speak of the God who is not with them, who does not hear, answer, help, and save; and this, in Ezekiel, expresses the sign of judgement (cf. 11:22ff.).

Fourthly,  $\Pi(\gamma)$  can mean the spirit of God that is an active agent of the divine revelation and providence toward Israel. The spirit of Yahweh is described as the source of strength for the leaders of the people and the source of revelation for the prophet.<sup>2</sup> When the spirit of God came upon the Judges (Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 9:29; 13:25; 1 Sam. 11:6ff.), they become powerful leaders and when the spirit come upon the prophets, they could perform abnormal deeds (1 Sam. 10:6; 1 Kgs. 18:46) and deliver their prophecy (1 Kgd. 22:23; 1 Sam. 19:18f.; Ezek. 11:5; Mic. 3:8).

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1. Cf. Num. 11:29; Isa. 11:4-5; 32:15-17; Joel. 2:28f.; Zech. 4:6; Ezek. 37:14; 39:29.

2. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, pp. 56ff.; Carley, Ezekiel Among the Prophets, pp. 24ff.

Furthermore, the spirit of God is the power which transports the prophet from one place to another (1 Kgs. 18:12; 22:24; 2 Kgs. 2:16; Ezek. 3:12; 8:3; 37:1; 11:1; 43:5). From these passages, one can see that the spirit of Yahweh is the fundamental cause of the revelation of God for the servants of Yahweh, and the agent of the divine activity.

Mowinckel<sup>1</sup> argues that the virtual absence of allusions to the spirit of Yahweh in the pre-exilic reforming prophets is to be explained by reference to the so-called 'false prophets'. He notices that the use of ecstatic techniques and the demonstration of spiritual possession by prophets who are not really concerned for Israel's well-being (e.g., Mic. 3:5; Jer. 23), led the reforming prophets to turn from appeals to the concept of the spirit of Yahweh as the source of inspiration to the concept of the word of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> In brief, the reforming prophets refer to the word of Yahweh rather than to the spirit of Yahweh to validate their prophecy. But Mowinckel points out that Ezekiel, unlike the older reforming prophets, is a true ecstatic of the ancient type, although he shares the reforming prophets' moral and religious ideas.<sup>3</sup> In the book of Ezekiel the spirit of Yahweh is likewise the power of inspiration and ecstasy, but it seems that Ezekiel prefers the idea of the hand of Yahweh to that of the spirit of Yahweh when he describes the revelatory state of

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1. S. Mowinckel, "'The Spirit' and 'The Word' in the Pre-exilic Reforming Prophets", *JBL* 53 (1934), pp. 199ff.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 225; the prophets have received the word of Yahweh, and there are religious, rational and moral criteria for knowing what really is the word of God.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

mind. He prefers to use the spirit of Yahweh as the power which transports him from one place to another in the visionary experience.

Finally,  $\Pi\Gamma$  can mean direction in Ezek. 37:9 and 42:20. The phrase  $\Pi\Gamma\Gamma\Gamma$   $\text{רָבִיבִּים}$  should not be translated as 'four winds, or four spirits', but translated as 'four sides, or every side'; it indicates the direction. The phrase can also be found in Jer. 49:36; Zech. 2:10; 6:5; Dan. 8:8; 11:4 and in Enuma Elish 4:46.<sup>1</sup>

Now, in this vision, the  $\Pi\Gamma$  in the first part of the visionary account (vv. 1-10) expresses the divine power which creates life in man, as in Gen 2:7; Isa. 32:15; and Ps. 104:30. This is the only meaning which is parallel to blessing, which is used in its original sense of vitality which bestows life. In the second part of the visionary account (vv. 11-14) the spirit of Yahweh expresses the promise of the divine presence which is related to the idea of Temple and the idea of Yahweh's dwelling in the midst of the people.<sup>2</sup> This divine presence is the source of life (Ezek. 47:1-12) and the sign of the election of the people. But it also relates to the promise of the inner change of the people. It is the gift of Yahweh's spirit that creates a new heart and a new spirit in the people so that they are able to walk in the way of Yahweh and keep the laws of the Lord. Thus this promise is confirmed with the establishment of a new covenant between Yahweh and the people. The spirit of Yahweh makes the people

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1. See Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 895; cf. J. M. P. Smith, Old Testament Essays, (1927), pp. 166-9.

2. Cf. Pss. 36:7-9; 42:1ff.; 84.

live as the people of God and grants the knowledge of Yahweh to the people so that they may live in the present harsh reality. This gift of Spirit is the central feature of the new Israel.

c) That you shall know that I am Yahweh

As noted in the exegesis of the passage, the phrase 'You shall know that I am Yahweh' is frequently repeated in Ezekiel and best characterizes Ezekiel.<sup>1</sup> Zimmerli calls it the 'Recognition formula'.<sup>2</sup> 'With this peculiar form of proclamation, the prophet not only announces a future act of Yahweh but formulates this announcement in a manner which expresses the hidden intention of Yahweh's act. In xxxvii 12 we hear: "See, I open your graves and raise you out of your graves (as my people) and bring you into the land of Israel, and you will know (we can also translate: in order that you may know) that I am Yahweh when I open your graves and raise you out of your graves (as my people)". Yahweh acts; and the goal of that action is the creation of knowledge, the knowledge that he is Yahweh. But this is always formulated in the first person. The content of this knowledge is the sentence:

אני יהוה "I am Yahweh". We have in this a formula of self-revelation by which Yahweh steps out of his incognito, just as we find it in the preamble of the Decalogue or the postscript of the Holiness Code'.<sup>3</sup> This form in fact reveals the fundamental saving events of Yahweh with a revelatory purpose and power, as

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1. Cf. above, pp. 279-81.

2. Zimmerli, in VT 15 (1965), p. 526; 'Das Wort des göttlichen Selbsterweises (Erweiswort), in GO, pp. 120ff.; Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p. 15.

3. Zimmerli, loc. cit.

he has been revealed in Ex. 3:13, the revelation of Yahweh's name and his personal freedom.

This demonstration-formula consists of two elements, the formula 'and you shall know' or 'thus you will know' which derives from the legal language of a process of proof (cf. Gen. 42:34) and the formula 'that I am Yahweh' which has a clear setting in life in the Sinai tradition (Ex. 20:2).<sup>1</sup> This recognition formula always precedes a statement of the reason for the decision (die Ankündigung). In 1 Kings 20:13 and 28 certain prophets gave Ahab favourable information from Yahweh during the king's struggles with Syria. In both cases the prophetic words consist of three parts, the middle one of which involves the simple prediction: 'See, I am giving them into your hands'.<sup>2</sup> Von Rad has identified this as a form of reply to specific questions in the context of the holy war.<sup>3</sup> It could be uttered by priests and by judges as well as by prophets. The stereotyped phrase thus goes back to an early stage in the development of prophetic speech-forms, back to a time when priests and prophets were not clearly distinguished.<sup>4</sup> The form was used when a leader of the people asked Yahweh whether battle should be joined with Israel's enemies. In both cases in Kings, it is implied that Syria, with her great army, scorns the Israelites and their God, which gives the reason for Yahweh's answer seen in the first part of the

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1. Zimmerli, in Interp. 23 (1969), pp. 147f.

2. Cf. Carley, op. cit., p. 37.

3. G. von Rad, Der Heiligen Krieg im alten Israel, (1951), pp. 7ff.

4. Ibid.

prophecy.<sup>1</sup> From these observations Zimmerli concludes that Ezekiel has been influenced by the pre-classical prophetic tradition.<sup>2</sup>

In Ezekiel, this formula has been used a) for Jerusalem to know Yahweh's judgement (cf. 5:13; 6:13, 14; 7:9, 27; 22:16, 22, etc.); b) for the exiles to know Yahweh's judgement (cf. 12:20; 15:7; 17:21; 24:24; 33:33); c) for the nations to know Yahweh's judgement on Israel (12:16; 21:4, 10); d) for the nations to know Yahweh's judgement on themselves (cf. 25:7, 11; 26:6; 35:4, etc.); e) for Israel to know Yahweh's grace (34:20; 37:13f.; 20:38, etc.); f) for Israel to know Yahweh's judgement to the nations (cf. 28:24, 26); and g) for the nations to know Yahweh's grace to Israel (36:23, 36, 38; 37:28). In the Pentateuch this formula always refers to the divine activity for the people of Israel (Ex. 6:7; 7:5; 14:4; Deut. 4:35; 7:9; 8:5; 9:3, 6), but in Ezekiel it also refers to punishment. In the historical literature this formula is employed of the great events in national life in order to show the revelatory principle (Josh. 3:10; 4:24; 1 Sam. 17:46f.; 1 Kgs. 8:43, 60; 18:37; 20:13; 28; 2 Kgs. 19:19) although it appears with small variations. These are the events which impart the knowledge of God, a knowledge which is not only a recognition of the divine attributes, but always a proclamation of his activity.<sup>3</sup>

Fohrer<sup>4</sup> has criticized Zimmerli's study of this formula on the grounds that the two occurrences in 1 Kgs. 20: 13 and 23 do not

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1. 1 Kgs. 20:13, 'Have you seen...?' and v. 23, 'because the Syrians have said...'

2. Zimmerli, in GO, loc. cit.

3. Muilenburg, in PC, 496a.

4. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, pp. 409ff.

provide a broad enough basis for the assumption that centuries later Ezekiel made use of an early literary type. Fohrer believes that 1 Kgs. 20:28 (perhaps also v. 13) is a secondary interpolation, which interrupts the continuity of the passage. Therefore these two prophetic sayings are not Ezekiel's prototype, but are instead given their present form by the Deuteronomic redactor on the basis of Ezekiel's words.<sup>1</sup> But this is not a convincing argument. For it is widely recognized that the tradition of Ahab's wars and death in 1 Kgs. 20 and 22 derives from a sound historical source.<sup>2</sup> Not only is the oracle in 1 Kgs. 20:13f. a genuine ancient prophecy,<sup>3</sup> but the vocabulary and concepts of both 1 Kgs. 20:13 and 28 are attested in early traditions.<sup>4</sup> Thus it is justifiable to agree with Zimmerli that Ezekiel has used the old tradition.

From a form-critical analysis of the formula, Zimmerli finds that two different elements are combined in the formula. The formula 'You shall know' derives from the legal language of a process of proof; the formula, 'that I am Yahweh' derives from the cultic tradition, in which with these words signify the presence of Yahweh among his worshippers.<sup>5</sup> This form 'I am Yahweh' is 'the form of self-presentation by which in encounter an unknown person introduces himself. Thus in the great scene at Sinai, Yahweh in the first sentence of the Decalogue emerges from his mystery and reveals himself to his people with "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exod, 20:2).

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1. Ibid.

2. Carley, op. cit., pp. 38f.; Eissfeldt, op. cit., pp. 285ff.

3. Von Rad, op. cit., p. 54.

4. Zimmerli, in G0, pp. 61ff.

5. Zimmerli, in G0, pp. 11ff., 128.

Thus, here, according to the full recognition formula, that which is to be recognized is Yahweh, who comes forth in revelation'.<sup>1</sup>

As noted above, most of the instances outside Ezekiel of the recognition formula refer to the saving activity of Yahweh, but Ezekiel also uses it to refer to Yahweh's punishment of Israel as well as the nations. Moreover, the form is found in Ezekiel with some parts enlarged upon and, in certain cases, with parts omitted, but there has been a radical inversion of its former usage.<sup>2</sup> Thus, 'this formula seeks to say that the ultimate meaning of God's action toward his people is to recognize God's revelation in this action. He presents himself to his people in his action as the one he is. By his deeds he wants to be recognized as the Lord with whom Israel has to do'.<sup>3</sup>

Eichrodt also notices that the phrase 'I am Yahweh' which is used to describe the content of this knowledge is a formula which points back to a cultic event, God's own affirmation of the incomparability of his own nature, as he makes himself known in concluding the covenant. The knowledge envisaged here is not therefore instruction about a timeless truth, but an inward realization of God's will to reveal himself in a direct encounter with his action in history, which lays claim to man and brings him to the point of decision.<sup>4</sup> The knowledge of God is a key concept in the religion of the Old Testament. According to Vriezen, the nature of this knowledge of God is an intimate relationship between the holy God and man; it embraces much more than a mere intellectual

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1. Zimmerli, in Interp. 23 (1969), p. 148.

2. Carley, op. cit., p. 39.

3. Zimmerli, loc. cit.

4. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 33.

knowledge because it concerns itself with the whole of human life. It is essentially a communion with God, a knowledge of the heart demanding man's love; its vital demand is that man should act in accordance with God's will and walk humbly in the ways of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> To know God is to hear him and to respond to this knowledge. From the revelation of God in deeds and in word, man receives an indication of what God does in the world and of what God requires of man.<sup>2</sup> Now the problem at issue is, what is the knowledge of God in Ezekiel. If the knowledge of God is the Israelites' response to God's confronting of them in crises, the deliverances, and disasters of their national life in history;<sup>3</sup> then in this most critical time of Israel's history, what does the prophet convey about the true knowledge of God?

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1. Vriezen, op. cit., pp. 153ff.; cf. Zimmerli, in GO, pp. 41-119. Eichrodt (The Theology of the Old Testament I, p. 356-60) said that in Hosea and Jeremiah the knowledge of God was not intellectual contemplation or theoretical knowledge of the divine will, but the act whereby man admits the nature and will of God as these have been revealed into his inmost spiritual self, with the result that that self now seems permeated and conditioned by the essential character of God (p. 359).
  2. S. Mowinckel, Die Erkenntnis Gottes bei den alttestamentlichen Propheten, (Tilleggshäfte, Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift, 1941). Mowinckel says, "knowledge of God" means for the Israelites a mutual personal relationship of community with Him: to know his name, his essence, his will, his sentiments and reactions, and to know them existentially, so that one receives thereby the direction, the quality, the content and the guidance of one's own life, inasmuch as one's personal will, sentiments and ideas are subordinated to the will of Yahweh and stand at his disposal, one's entire life is surrendered to him, and in virtue of the confidence which arises thence one acts instinctively and consciously "in one spirit"....' (p. 6).
  3. C. R. North, The Thought of the Old Testament, (London, 1948), p. 24.

From the terms Ezekiel uses, one gets the impression that at this point Ezekiel's message of hope for the future closely resembles that of Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31ff.) which finds its climax in the knowledge of God which is experienced within the new covenant; but whereas the knowledge of God in Jeremiah is related above all to the individual experience of communion with God and probably has as its background Jeremiah's own inner struggles, in Ezekiel, as is shown by much in the earlier parts of the book, the knowledge of God is not only an inward relationship to him, but a right understanding of his historical dealing with Israel in judgement and in mercy.

After the exile in 597 B.C., Ezekiel might have been like the other exiles who regarded their God as smaller and weaker than the gods of the nations because, they did not understand the crucial event nor the meaning behind it. But in the inaugural vision by the Chebar river, Ezekiel realized that Yahweh was the God of the Universe, who was not tied to the Temple nor to the land, but who could freely be present anywhere he so desired, that is, even in a foreign land.<sup>1</sup> He also realized that Yahweh was the almighty God had all power; he was omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.<sup>2</sup> As Deutero-Isaiah declared that the Lord's hand was not shortened that he could not save, but the sins of the people had made a separation between them and their God (Isa. 59:1-2), Ezekiel presented his God as one who was not too weak to save them, because he was

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1. Cf. Ruth 1:16; 1 Sam. 26:19; 2 Kgs. 5:17-19. where the texts show the relationship between deity and the land.

2. If Ezekiel had known the three modern words---omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence---he might have used them to express Yahweh.

the sovereign king of history who in his justice would punish his rebellious people, and who in his gracious love would save the whole world through the event. Although the prophets before him had realized in some sense that Yahweh was the Lord of Universe, none had described him so clearly and concretely. Yahweh controlled the destiny of human history, the nations as well as Israel were in his hand.<sup>1</sup>

This inaugural vision's main concern is the call of the prophet; but it is more than that. In the context of the exile this was a crucial point, a turning point of Hebrew faith. Ezekiel must have known that Yahweh was the Lord of the whole world and the God of all nations. This must have been a great comfort for him and for the exiles to know that this God whose dwelling place was on Mount Zion could be present with them by the river Chebar, amid all the sordid heathenism and idolatry of Babylon's life. This vision gave historical and spiritual perspective to the chosen people. This indicated that God still cared for his people, even in the punishment of their exile (cf. 11:14-21).

Before the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel proclaimed that the city had to be destroyed. He was called to be a watchman to warn his people of the disaster which would soon come. Since Israel had been a rebellious house, unholy, unjust, and unfaithful, therefore Yahweh who was holy and whose divinity could not be sullied, rather than allow this to happen, would let his glory depart from the land, the Temple, and the people. Yahweh's holiness was closely linked with his glory. The departure of Yahweh's glory from the Temple

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1. Davidson, loc.cit.

was the token of the coming disaster, it would seem to indicate that Yahweh had forsaken his people and withdrawn his divine presence from the people.

Just as the departure of Yahweh's glory was the token of coming disaster, Ezekiel asserted that the return of Yahweh's glory to the new Temple was the token of the coming salvation. Having been a priest, Ezekiel had a sympathetic feeling for the Temple and its ritual. 'The temple was the indispensable centre and rallying point for Israel in the period of the restoration. It was the focus of their religious life, the visible pledge and witness to Jehovah's presence among his people, when all outward tokens of national power and greatness had passed away'.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, the Temple would be God's earthly dwelling place, and thus would be the token of him who alone was the source of every blessing. So Ezekiel depicted a Temple from which the river of life flowed out to transform the salty, withered, and sterile land (47:1-12). 'Yahweh is there' would be the new name for Jerusalem. The divine presence of Yahweh, for Ezekiel, was the source of power, life, and blessing. This was to be the goal of Israel's faith, and he emphasized the point a great deal.

Yahweh was the sovereign king who was just and righteous. As he was a just God, he would not overlook the sin of the people but would punish them as they deserved. In order to punish the rebellious house and to accomplish the salvation in its wider sense, Yahweh would destroy their nation, their Temple, and their city, which seemed to have been obstacles to their faith, and instead

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1. A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Doctrine of the Prophets, (London, 1906), p. 347.

he would scatter them to foreign countries. Because of the historical disaster, the people were complaining about Yahweh's justice (cf. 33:17-20; 18:2). They were not only bewildered but impugned the fairness of the divine action. Ezekiel took various ways of demonstrating God's absolute justice. In three of his best known allegories (chs. 16, 20 and 23), he reviewed the nation's history, to prove that Israel from the very beginning to the end had been a rebellious house. They could not fulfil the demands of the covenant. They deserved to be punished. Furthermore, Ezekiel was convinced that even in the judgement God remained absolutely just towards the individual (14:12ff.; 18:1-32). Ezekiel advanced a view of individual responsibility. Everyone would be judged according to his deeds and rewarded as he deserved. Yet he repeatedly proclaimed that Yahweh had no pleasure at all in the sinner dying, but desired that he should turn from his ways and live (18; 33:1-20).

After the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel revealed that Yahweh was not too weak to protect them from the attack of their enemies. Yahweh had to punish Israel, destroy their Temple and their nation, and scatter them into other countries because he wanted to make a new beginning for them. The exile was the centre and not the end of the history of Israel. On the one hand, Ezekiel proclaimed the message of hope from Yahweh in order to comfort the Israelites; on the other hand, he wanted them to understand the significance of the events which had occurred. Yahweh was the sovereign king who was faithful. He would clean up the promised land which was polluted by idolatry and expel all its enemies. Then, and only then, would he deliver his people from exile and return them to their home land and create a new Israel out of the huge valley of dry bones.

After the purification in the furnace of exile, Israel would become an obedient people of God. A new spirit would then prevail in the midst of the people because Yahweh had forgiven this 'rebellious people' and had made a new covenant with them. There would be a future of prosperity and peace. Yahweh's divine kabod would be upon them and his sanctuary would be in their midst. For Yahweh was the key to life, and the divine presence was the source of their material prosperity and spiritual peace. This is why the prophet so strongly emphasized the holiness of the Temple. When Yahweh found all these things present, then Israel will know Yahweh and all nations will acknowledge his greatness.

#### 6. Summary

The vision of dry bones appears a unified idea of resuscitation by which the prophet presents the message of hope for the national rebirth to combat the despairing feeling of the people. The form of the vision is very characteristic, for in the vision the prophet plays an important role and also there is a conversation between God and the prophet. The vision consists of two sections, namely, the description of the vision and its interpretation. Whereas the description of the vision employs the imaginative and unnatural material and reflects the creation faith which is seen in the P and the J accounts of creation; the interpretation employs historical material which has as its background the Exodus traditions and probably the David-Zion traditions. Although the account of the vision and its interpretation use different materials, they in effect deal with the same problem and convey the same message of hope.

The problem which underlies the vision seems to be the question--How can we (the Israelites) live again? This can be seen in the disputation of the people expressed in v. 11 where the people complain that they can see nothing to hope for in the future because of the disaster which they have experienced. The hopeless situation of Israel is shown in vv. 12, where many dry bones are scattered and strewn on the valley plain. The situation of Israel is described as a situation is similar to what Ezekiel saw in the valley plain where death is in control. Although the people cannot see any hope in the future, Yahweh promises them that he will create a new Israel from the hopeless state by a miracle performed by Yahweh who is the creator and saviour. In the visionary description Yahweh reveals that he will restore the desiccated and dismembered bones to human bodies and then grant them the breath of life; therefore they will live again and become a great army. Yahweh can create life from death. In the interpretation of the vision Yahweh promises that he will deliver the people of Israel out of the nations and place them in their land, and more importantly, grant his spirit to them. Therefore Israel will live again as a people of God living in their land. The creation and restoration of the people is described in two stages, namely, the external salvation and the internal salvation. Yahweh will not only restore the external aspect of the people, but also simultaneously grant his spirit to them. The life of Israel depends solely on the endowment of Yahweh's spirit.

In this vision account, Ezekiel does not present the general doctrine of resurrection, but, through the metaphor of the resurrection of the dry bones, he promises a national rebirth for his

people. It is significant that the creation faith finds its close relationship with the creation of Israel in the Exodus-Settlement traditions. Yahweh is the Lord of life and the Saviour of Israel in her crisis. Therefore hope and the future of Israel lie completely in him; and Israel should not be feeling hopeless and depressed, for she still belongs to Yahweh her God. In the face of the hopeless people Ezekiel proclaims that Yahweh will save them out of death and grant his spirit to them and create a new Israel so that they may know that Yahweh is their Lord.

1. Translation (changes in the text which are presupposed in this translation are referred to the notes which follow).

15. The word of the Lord came to me: 16. 'You, son of man, take a stick and write on it: For Judah and the children of Israel associated with him. Then take another stick and write on it: For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the children associated with him. 17. Then join them together so that they become one stick in your hand. 18. When your people ask you, "Will you not show us what you mean by these?" 19. Then say to them: "Thus says the Lord, Yahweh, behold, I will take the stick of Joseph and the tribes of Israel associated with him and join to it the stick of Judah, and make them one single stick so that they may be one in my hand."

20. When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, 21. then you will say to them: "Thus says the Lord, Yahweh, behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all sides and bring them back to their own land. 22. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and they shall have one king to be king over them all; and they shall no longer be two nations and no longer divided into two kingdoms. 23. No longer shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, and their abominations, and all their transgressions. I will save them from all their backslidings in which they have sinned, and I will cleanse them and they shall be my people and I will be their God.

24. My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall

all have one shepherd; they shall follow my ordinances and carefully keep my statutes. 25. They shall live in the land which I gave to my servant Jacob, wherein their fathers dwelt; they and their descendants shall live on it forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever. 26. And I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant for them; and I will set my sanctuary among them forever. 27. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. 28. Thus the nations shall know that I am Yahweh, who sanctifies Israel--when my sanctuary is in the midst of them forever.'

## 2. Textual notes

V. 16. MSS<sup>ken</sup> and G<sup>B</sup> omit the word  $\text{ן סל ח}$ ; but it may stay to stress the imperative mood, cf. 7:2; 21:24; 22:2; 27:2.

$\text{ן טו ו' } \int \text{ ק דו' } \int$  according to Ges-K. 119 u, this  $\int$  is called the Lamedh inscriptionis which introduces the exact wording of an inscription or title. This  $\int$  can be found also in Isa. 8:1f. Therefore, Fohrer<sup>1</sup> accepts the suggestion that this  $\int$  is not genitive, nor dative, but, as in Isa. 8:1f., used to introduce 'Wortlaut der Aufschrift'. But Zimmerli<sup>2</sup> finds that this  $\int$  is similar to that of Ezek. 21:25 as part of the inscription to show the appropriation (Zueignung).

$\text{ן ר ב ן}$  may be read as  $\text{ן ר ב ן}$  as Q suggests, because the plural of the word is also found in Judg. 20:11 and Cant. 8:13.

The phrase  $\text{ן טו ו' } \int \text{ ק דו' } \int$  corresponds to the text of 4:1f. and it shows the divine order to the prophet. In this connection G presupposes  $\text{ן טו ו' } \int \text{ ק דו' } \int$  instead of  $\text{ן טו ו' } \int \text{ ק דו' } \int$  which appears also in the

1. Fohrer, Ezechiel, p. 209.

2. Zimmerli, Ezechiel, p. 904.



V. 18. For  $\gamma\psi\chi\delta\iota$  G<sup>B</sup> presupposes  $\gamma\psi\chi\delta\iota\eta\eta$  since this is more in accordance with Hebrew usage of the future. It is usual to continue  $\eta\eta$  with a perf. with waw consec., not an imperat.<sup>1</sup>

V. 19  $\delta\iota\gamma\theta\chi\gamma\iota\beta\gamma\psi\chi$  is a later addition which attempts to make the definition as unmistakable as possible. From the implication of the Amarna letter 245, 35, R. Gordis emends  $\gamma\iota\beta$  into  $\gamma\theta\beta$  and reads 'the stick of Joseph, which stands for Ephraim'.<sup>2</sup> But from v. 16, it is clear that it is a later addition which intends to make the meaning clear.

$\delta\iota\gamma\theta\chi\gamma\iota\beta\gamma\psi\chi$  appears in G. as 'in the hand of Judah' and in V. 23 'in his hand', this perhaps expresses the bias of the translators. In v. 17, cf. the similar phrase 'in your hand', i.e., the hand of prophet, but here Yahweh is to perform the same action by actually uniting the two states into one.

Fohrer would delete v. 21  $\alpha\chi$ , i.e., 'and say to them, thus says Lord Yahweh', because he holds that vv. 19a $\beta$  -b, 20, 21a $\chi$  are out of place.<sup>3</sup> However, it seems that from v. 21 a new speech begins.

V. 20. This verse has been regarded as a gloss; for it is said that it is only a variant of v. 17, the symbolic action, and is no other than an interpretation.<sup>4</sup> In this, Zimmerli points out that a new speech is introduced in v. 20 since the words of God in v. 19 are still descriptive of the symbolic action.<sup>5</sup> And it seems that v. 20 shows the real performance of the action by the prophet.

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1. Cooke, op. cit., p. 405.

2. R. Gordis, 'A Note on YAD', JBL 62 (1943), pp. 341f.

3. Fohrer, loc. cit.

4. Cf. Wevers, op. cit., p. 280.

5. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 907.

V. 22. G. (cf. L.) translates } בארץ בהרי ישראל as ἐν τῇ γῆ μου καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν Ἰσραήλ. It seems that the MT text 'the land and the mountains of Israel' is more suitable; for it corresponds to v. 21 'to their land'. Fohrer and Wevers hold 'the mountains of Israel' as an addition.<sup>1</sup>

G. and V. change ךָּל into א'שׁ to correspond to 34:24. Although א'שׁ, א'שׁ, א'שׁ, are employed here by the prophet, and seem unusual, yet, they seem to denote the king and the nation in the general sense. G. also deletes the second ךָּל (cf. V. and Syr.). Wevers thinks that ךָּל may be a copyist's dittograph of א'שׁ.<sup>2</sup>

G. and V. omit the last ךָּל and indicate that that is unnecessary emphasis. Syr. puts this ךָּל in the beginning of v. 23 and omits the ךָּל in the following.

V. 23. The meaning of א'שׁ is 'their dwellings'; many manuscripts present it variously. Probably Syrm. ἀποστροφῶν ( א'שׁ ) is the right reading. 'Backslidings' does not appear again in Ezekiel, but it is often used by Jeremiah (Jer. 2:19; 3:22; 5:6; 14:7).

G. and L<sup>w</sup> delete the phrase א'שׁ וּבְכָל פְּסֵי הָהָרִים which may be a later expansion of 'idols'.

V. 24. V. 24a is regarded by Zimmerli as a later addition which should be attached to v. 23.<sup>3</sup>

V. 25. א'שׁ וּבְנֵיהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם עַד עוֹלָם; this clause is absent in G. and L<sup>w</sup>. It seems that the clause is tautologous, but here the emphasis is on the perpetuity of the land, so it may stay as

1. Fohrer, *loc. cit.*; Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

3. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 908.

it stands in the MF text.

Comparing the word order  $\text{׳}729 \text{ } 717$  here and in v. 24  $717 \text{ } ׳729$  Zimmerli thinks that it is due to different hands.<sup>1</sup> But it is by no means certain.

V. 26. It is very difficult to translate  $\text{׳}57 \text{ } 57 \text{ } 57$ . It might have arisen from  $\text{׳}57 \text{ } 57 \text{ } 57$ , G. deletes these three words, it is probably a better text.

### 3. Literary, form-critical, and traditio-historical analysis

In the first half of ch. 37 Israel's restoration (national resurrection) is portrayed by the prophet as a wonderful resurrection from death. The second half goes one step further and describes the restoration as a reunion of the divided kingdoms into a single one. This last part is not an actual part, or a sequential part of the vision of the dry bones, or of the divine interpretation of it.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars have noticed the close affinity between the two parts of the chapter;<sup>3</sup> for instance, S. Herrmann<sup>4</sup> sees the two parts as having an indispensable relation to each other. He says, 'Die zwei entscheidenden Motive werden durch zwei getrennte, nacheinander geschilderte Handlungsabläufe herausgearbeitet. Das Bild von den Gebeinen will dem ganzen Israel das künftige Leben verheissen. Indem v. 11 sagt, dass das ganze Haus Israel gemeint sei, nimmt die dort beginnende Deutung der Gebein-Vision schon den Scopus der Symbolhandlung mit den beiden Stüben vorweg, die die Vereinigung der beiden Teilreiche Israel und Juda darstellen soll'.<sup>5</sup> J. Herrmann

1. *Ibid.*, p. 914.

2. M. F. Unger, 'Ezekiel's Vision of Israel's Restoration', *BS* 107 (1950), p. 52.

3. A. B. Davidson, *op. cit.*, pp. 206f.; S. Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

also says, '37:15-28, wenn auch nicht einfach Fortsetzung von v. 1-14, schliesst doch gedanklich an 1-14 an : das wiederhergestellte Volk wird durch Gottes Wundermacht zu einem Staate, der die Wiederholung des davidischen Einheitsstaates ist, aber in idealer Vollendung'.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that this is one of the main texts in which Ezekiel describes an idealistic form of the nation in which the people can have political freedom and harmonious life in a land of peace, blessing, and life. That is an age of peace under the government of a good leader and the presence of Yahweh in the midst of the people. All effort to achieve this end is only through the saving act which Yahweh is about to do in the near future. Here the prophet reveals the message of Yahweh, which is primarily concerned with the political problem and then developed or related to the other aspects of the new Israel.

The message of the reunification of the nation is described by a symbolic action which Ezekiel is ordered to perform before his people. The passage shows how the prophet receives the command, the interpretation of the action, and its relation to the other themes of the restoration. Ezekiel is told to take two sticks and to write on the one, 'For Judah and the children of Israel associated with him', and on the other, 'For Joseph and all the children of Israel associated with him', and then to join them together into one stick in his hand. Then to the questioning audience Yahweh explains the meaning of the symbolic action and relates this promise to the other messages of restoration which have been proclaimed before. Yahweh will deliver the people from the nations and lead them back to their homeland, he will make them one nation as before, under one leadership; he will forgive them and cleanse them and

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1. J. Herrmann, Ezekiel, p. 237.

also make with them an everlasting covenant, and his sanctuary will be a lasting sign and promise of his divine presence among his people.

The present passage as it now stands may have been expanded by some later hands, but the expansions seem, on the whole, not to contradict the main thoughts of the prophet.<sup>1</sup> For the words, forms, and themes seem to be identical with those of the prophet. The theme of the unification of the nation goes through all the passage and roughly portrays a contour of the new Israel. Most of the scholars assign the passage, save for a few expansions, to Ezekiel; by contrast, while Hölischer assigns it to the redactor,<sup>2</sup> May regards it as the product of 'the editor'.<sup>3</sup> Following, but in distinction to Hölischer, Irwin realizes that although some dubiety may exist about the passage, there is an original poetic oracle within vv. 16f., and 21f. Therefore, he asserts that the oracle is a genuine utterance of Ezekiel.<sup>4</sup> The present thesis will take it as a unity in the wider sense of the term.<sup>5</sup> Firstly, because the language, the form of the literary units, and the themes of the passage are to be found elsewhere in the book of Ezekiel; secondly, because symbolic action is frequently used by the prophet; and thirdly, because the main thought of the symbolic action is in accord with the setting in life of the exile.

In analysis of the passage, the opinions of scholars diverge.

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1. Cf. Wevers, op. cit., p. 280; Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, pp. 263ff.
  2. Hölischer, op. cit., p. 176.
  3. May, in IB 6, p. 270.
  4. Irwin, op. cit., pp. 248ff.
  5. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 907; Fohrer, op. cit., pp. 210f.; Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 512ff.; Cooke, op. cit., pp. 397f.; Davidson, op. cit., pp. 266ff.

Bertholet,<sup>1</sup> Fohrer,<sup>2</sup> and Eichrodt,<sup>3</sup> with slight differences, divide the passage into three units, i.e., vv. 15-17 the symbolic action and the question which may be asked by the audience; vv. 18-22 the interpretation of the symbolic action; and vv. 23-28 the later addition of some themes of restoration by the prophet. Davidson thinks that chapter 37 is the last step of the restoration of Israel and that the second half of the chapter can be divided as: vv. 15-23 a symbol of the union of the two kingdoms and its explanation; vv. 24-25 a Davidic ruler for the new nation; and vv. 26-28 promises of an everlasting covenant and the divine presence.<sup>4</sup> Hertrich holds that vv. 15-19 are the symbolic action, and vv. 20-28 are an exilic appendix which is written by another hand in the style of Ezekiel. Further, he sees that vv. 20, 26b, and 28b are glosses and that the passage is delivered by Ezekiel in the time soon after the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> Most scholars can discern the description of the symbolic act and its explanation, but they regard the last section vv. 24-28 as either a later addition by other hands or a later addition by the prophet himself, or the natural sequel of the symbolic act.<sup>6</sup>

As far as the date of the passage is concerned, most scholars assume it to be sometime after the fall of Jerusalem, for it connects with the other messages of the restoration. From the indication shown in the book of Jeremiah about the collapsed situation in

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1. Bertholet, op. cit., p. 129.

2. Fohrer, op. cit., p. 210.

3. Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 512ff.

4. Davidson, op. cit., p. 266.

5. Hertrich, op. cit., pp. 118f.

6. Cf. Wevers, op. cit., p. 280; Stalker, op. cit., pp. 258f.

Judah one can hardly accept the opinion of Hertrich that the oracle is proclaimed soon after the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> According to the present writer this oracle may belong to the latter part of the message of the restoration.<sup>2</sup> This part of the message is the prophet's portrayal of a new, holy, and peaceful future for the people and it is the central message of the restoration proclaimed by the prophet. It contains at least four factors: 1) a new people, 2) a new government, 3) a new land, 4) a new temple.<sup>3</sup> To the Israelites these four factors are indispensable for the reconstruction of a nation and thus the prophet depicts the new Israel in terms of the political structure, even if he still lays much emphasis on religion. The message of the unification therefore belongs to this latter part of the message which would have been delivered later than the first part about the assurance of the salvation and restoration.

Now some literary problems should be taken into consideration. First of all, the symbolic action seems to have two interpretations, i.e., v. 19 and vv. 21f. or vv. 21-28. Both are introduced by an introductory formula vv. 19, 21. Wevers argues that only the interpretation in vv. 19f. is the original one, while the second interpretation, in vv. 21-28, is a verbose amalgam of restoration hopes representing the later thoughts of the Ezekiel school even though it begins with an introductory formula (v. 21) and ends

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1. Hertrich, *op. cit.*, p. 119; cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 908.

2. In the first part of the message of the restoration three ideas dominate, 1) the return of the people to the homeland, 2) the judgement against the enemies, and 3) the national rebirth. These hopes ensure the renewal of the people and are the pre-conditions of new Israel.

3. There are four factors which constitute a nation in the general sense, namely, people, land, government, and power.

with a recognition formula as well.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he argues that even the original interpretation in vv. 19-20 shows accretion, for v. 20 is simply a variant of v. 17 and not an interpretation at all.<sup>2</sup> In this, Zimmerli rightly points out that a new speech is introduced in v.20 since the words of God in v. 19 are still descriptive of the symbolic action, and therefore further interpretation is needed.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, some scholars question the authenticity of the inscription on the sticks.<sup>4</sup> Most commentators agree that the phrase 'the stick of Ephraim' in v. 16 is a gloss; there is no convincing reason to delete the remainder of the inscriptions. This will be seen later.

Thirdly, if one admits that there are two interpretations of the symbolic action, then what are they? Most, if not all commentators, agree that v. 19 is the first interpretation. Many hold that v. 20 is a gloss which should be deleted.<sup>5</sup> But recent opinions on the second interpretation are more or less in a general consensus that vv. 21-23 is a second interpretation although some think that some expansions have been made in it.<sup>6</sup> Yet some discrepancies have been found. They are: firstly, in v. 22 the king is termed  $\gamma\}x$  and in v. 24 David is indicated as the king; but in v. 25 David

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1. Wevers, op. cit., p. 280.

2. Wevers, ibid.

3. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 907.

4. Wevers, loc. cit.; Cooke, op. cit., p. 401; Bertholet, op. cit., p. 129; H. G. May, op. cit., pp. 270f.

5. Hertrich, op. cit., p. 118; Fohrer, op. cit., p. 211; Wevers, loc. cit.; Cooke, loc. cit.; Stalker, op. cit., p. 258.

6. Especially vv. 24-23 has been seen as additions or expansion by a later hand(s).

is called  $\aleph' \psi 1$ ; secondly, only vv. 21f. have a close relationship to the symbolic action while the remainder of the second interpretation only has a remote relationship to it; thirdly, the order of writing  $\gamma 117 \gamma 129$  is different (vv. 24f.); and fourthly, the term for sanctuary is different (vv. 26-28). From these difficulties some scholars hold that there have been some expansions of the interpretation, that vv. 23-28 is a later addition by the prophet<sup>1</sup> or vv. 24-28 are a later addition by a later hand.<sup>2</sup>

From the form-critical point of view, Zimmerli<sup>3</sup> argues that in addition to the different usage of the term for the ruler in vv. 20-23 and vv. 24b-28, the covenant formulas in v. 23b and v. 27 indicate the ending of the units (cf. 11:20; 14:11; 34:20) and the theme of unification disappears in vv. 24b-28 in which the emphasis is on the perpetuity of the promises. Also a form can be found in 34:24 (cf. Hos. 3:5; Jer. 30:9), namely, 'Yahweh will be their God and David their king' (vv. 23b-24a). Based on these observations, he concludes that the covenant formula in v. 23b shows the end of the second interpretation and vv. 24b-28 belong to a later hand appended to the second interpretation and v. 24a can be explained as an addition to vv. 20-23. Zimmerli's proposal is indeed a good solution for the literary difficulties of the passage. But some flaws should be pointed out in his proposal. First of all, it is true that in Hos. 3:5 and Jer. 30:9 the formula—Yahweh your God and David your king—can be found, but the clause 'they shall be my people' does not appear in these passages. In Ezekiel 37:23,

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1. Bertholet, *op. cit.*, p. 129; Fohrer, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

2. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 907; Carley, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

3. Zimmerli, *loc. cit.*

one cannot remove the clause, 'They shall be my people', without reason. If that be the case, then one rarely finds elsewhere the long formula---'they shall be my people and I will be their God and my servant shall be king over them'. Moreover, the form 'David their king' in Hos. 3:5 is far from certain in its context.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, the covenant formula always appears as a religious emphasis in the prophetic teaching, and is mostly used for confirmation of salvation. It is true that the formula always expresses the climax of the salvation (Ezek. 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:23, 27), but it is not used wholly as the ending of a unit. It can be related to the theme of salvation (cf. Ez. 6:8; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:33; 32:38). Thirdly, it is not wholly true that in vv. 24-28 the idea of unification disappears, for the proclamation of 'my servant, David shall be king' is an idea found among the people or children of Israel as a whole. Fourthly, as to the use of  $\gamma \delta \rho$  and  $\chi \psi \omega$ , the opinions of scholars diverge and the problem remains open. This will be seen later.

On this showing, we must retain v. 24a and see that vv. 24-28 are complementary and a necessary part of the interpretation, which is motivated and developed by the symbolic action of Ezekiel. It should be noted that when Ezekiel proclaims one particular theme of the restoration, he always relates the theme to other themes which have some connection with it (cf. 34:11-31; 36:22-38). In other words, he always keeps his message in the context of the restoration of the new Israel as a whole. It is evident that in vv. 21-23 the idea of unification is related to the saving acts of Yahweh,

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1. W. Rudolph, Hosea, pp. 93f.

i.e., the external and internal salvation. And in vv. 24-28 the theme of unification is related to the other themes of the restoration, i.e., the promise of the land, the promise of a Davidic ruler, the promise of peace, and the promise of the divine presence. It is striking to find that the word  $\text{D } \int \text{ } \text{Y}$  occurs not less than five times in these verses and attaches itself to the promises respectively. For that reason, one can understand that the emphasis is laid on the perpetuity of the promise in view of the new Israel as a whole. This section (vv. 24-28) ends with the expanded recognition formula after the divine announcement of the covenant formula in v. 27. This section may have been added by the prophet (or his followers). It is important to see that the language throughout vv. 24-28 is the language used in blessing. Strictly speaking, the hope offered here is not primarily the saving event, but the new condition of salvation. This co-ordination of deliverance (vv. 21-23) and blessing in a promise supports our interpretation which maintains 37:15-23 as a unity. Vv. 21-23 show how Yahweh unites the nation and vv. 24-28 show what kind of nation it will be. This co-ordination of deliverance and blessing is a promise which goes back to the very earliest time that Israel had promises made to her. In Ex. 3:7f. one finds that the deliverance has its corollary in the promise of entry into a good land. From all of this, it seems to be justifiable to divide the passage into three units: vv. 15-17 the symbolic action, vv. 18-19 the first interpretation, and vv. 20-23 the second interpretation. Vv. 18 and 20 indicate the performance of the action; while the latter is shown by the description of the performance, the former is shown by the reactive question from the people.

Therefore, the present passage, as it now stands, has more or less been expanded by some later hands, but the expansion seems, on the whole, not to contradict the main thought of the prophet. For the words, forms, and thought seem to be identical with those of the prophet. The idea of reunion of the nation goes through the passage which roughly portrays the outlines of a new Israel. The present thesis will take the passage as a unity in the general sense of the term.<sup>1</sup>

The form of the passage describing the symbolic act is that of the so-called Ich-Bericht. Here its structure consists of command, first interpretation, and second interpretation related to the other themes of the message of restoration.<sup>2</sup> The prophet reports what he is ordered to perform. Then in order to answer the question which the people might ask, Yahweh explains the meaning of the act. Lastly Yahweh explains how and what the one nation might be—by Yahweh's salvation act.<sup>3</sup> Israel as a whole will be a new nation which will have a new king, a new land, and a new relationship with God. The symbolic action begins with the introductory formula and ends with the recognition formula.

What is noticeable also is the word  $\text{ךָ אֶת}$  which occurs not less than 11 times in this passage. In order to stress the motif of unification Ezekiel employs this word so often—one stick, one king, one shepherd, and one nation. And in order to ensure what this one nation might be, he employs the word  $\text{אֶתְּךָ אֶת}$  attached

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1. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 907; Fohrer, op. cit., pp. 210f.; Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 512ff.; Davidson, op. cit., pp. 266ff. etc.

2. Cf. Ezek. 4:1f.; 9-11; 5:1f.; 12:3.

3. Cf. Ezek. 12:9; 21:12.

to the themes of restoration.

As far as symbolic action is concerned, it is one of the characteristics of the prophecy of Israel.<sup>1</sup> H. W. Robinson states that if the spoken word of a prophet was conceived to be an objective instrument of divine will, operating as it were automatically, then the prophetic symbolism was not only essentially linked to the spoken word of the prophet, but to an even greater degree was an instrument of divine will.<sup>2</sup> The actions accompanies the words of prophecy as a kind of variant, united in a prophetic act, 'These acts were clearly held to be more than merely dramatic illustrations of the prophet's spoken word, they were part of it, indeed the more intense part, and initiated the divine action in miniature, thus helping towards the fulfilment of what was foretold'.<sup>3</sup> Although the prophetic acts sprang from the widespread practice of magical action, the prophets transformed them into religious action by assimilating them to the will of God.<sup>4</sup> 'According to the belief of the prophets, their actions did not produce the symbolized events mechanically ex opere operato. For the prophets, assurance that the event would take place was grounded in the power of Yahweh and his will to realize in truth what the symbolic acts declared. Therefore, accounts of symbolic acts often include Yahweh's directive to perform them and his promise to realise what they pro-

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1. Cf. Lindblom, op. cit., pp. 165ff.

2. H. W. Robinson 'Prophetic Symbolism', Old Testament Essays, (1927), pp. 5f.

3. H. W. Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament, p. 227; cf. G. Fohrer, 'Die Symbolischen Handlungen der Propheten', (1968), pp. 10-15.

4. Robinson, loc. cit.

claim.'<sup>1</sup> Besides, the Hebrew word  $\text{דבר}$  can mean 'word' and 'event or fact'; so through the symbolic action the prophets not only proclaim God's intent but also bring about the event announced.<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say, these symbolic actions have raised persistent questions among scholars about whether they were actually carried out. Some scholars hold that they were, but others assume that they had been experienced only in dreams or in the ecstatic state of mind.<sup>3</sup> Although this may have been the case with some symbolic acts, nevertheless, it is sound to hold that most of the symbolic acts of the prophets were actually performed either in private or in public.

According to traditions, the early prophets frequently used the symbolic actions. The prophet Zedekiah made for himself horns of iron in the presence of the kings of Israel and Judah and predicted that they would defeat the enemy (1 Kgs. 22:11). Although the result was not what Zedekiah and the other prophets had prophesied, yet it is clear that the professional prophets did perform such symbolic acts. Elisha told the king of Israel, Joash, to shoot with bow and arrows in the direction of Syria in order to secure victory over Syria. Numbers of similar actions are ascribed to the later prophets too.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, p. 241;  
cf. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 172.

2. Ibid.

3. E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, pp. 243f.;  
H. W. Robinson, Two Hebrew Prophets: Studies in Hosea and Ezekiel,  
(London, 1948), pp. 13f.; Cooke, op. cit., p. xxvii; Davidson,  
op. cit., pp. xxixf.

4. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 165.

For example, in the poignant narratives of his personal experience, Hosea expresses the true relationship between God and his people by the prophetic word but also by his marriage. According to the so-called 'proleptic' view, Hosea did not interpret his action as commanded by Yahweh until he had already performed it.<sup>1</sup> This view customarily equates Hosea's marital experience with his call to be a prophet.<sup>2</sup> 'The truth in the proleptic view is the growing realization of the divine purpose for the commanded symbolic acts during their continued performance. So there is a creative movement and progress seen in the symbolic action of Hosea from the powerful judgement, messages of the children's names to the dramatizing and initiating of the divine love in the reclamation of Gomer. The transforming of the meaning of the names from doom to hope, and the oracle concerning Yahweh's renewal of the marriage covenant with his bride, Israel, are thus genuine promise, grounded and implemented within the symbolic acts of Hosea'.<sup>3</sup>

Isaiah performs a symbolic action when he gives his son the peculiar name Shear-Yashub. This contains a prediction of the destruction of the nation as a whole, but meanwhile implies that a small faithful remnant will be preserved. (Isa. 7:3). During the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis, Isaiah takes a tablet and writes

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1. Lindblom, op. cit., pp. 165-8; G. Adam Smith, The Book of the Twelve Prophets vol. I, (1929), pp. 244-57.
  2. M. Pierce Matheney, Jr. 'Interpretation of Hebrew Prophetic Symbolic Act', Encounter 29 (1968), p. 262; P. Hyatt, Prophetic Religion, (Nashville, 1961), pp. 20f., 41-3.
  3. Matheney, op. cit., p. 263.

the words: Maher-Shalal-hash-baz (Spoil hastens, Booty hurries), which words he also uses as a name for his own son, thus pointing to the fact that in a short time the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria would be carried away to Assyria (Isa. 8). During the Assyrian campaign against Ashdod 713-711, Isaiah went naked<sup>1</sup> and barefoot for three years which indicated that one day the Egyptians and the Ethiopians would be carried away naked and barefoot, so he warned Israel not to trust in the alliance with Egypt (Isa. 20).<sup>2</sup>

There are not less than eight symbolic acts which Jeremiah performs.<sup>3</sup> He is forbidden to take a wife and to have children (Jer. 16:1ff.) indicating that parents as well as children will die in Jerusalem. He is forbidden to take part in common mourning customs, because massacre will befall the city; he is also prohibited from entering a house of feasting to eat and drink because Yahweh will banish from Jerusalem the sound of merriment (16:5ff.). He breaks a bottle to symbolize Yahweh's judgement on the people and the city (Jer. 19:1ff.). In order to warn against the revolt against Babylon, Jeremiah bears a yoke on his neck to proclaim that all the peoples including Judah will be subjected to the yoke of Babylon (Jer. 27:1-3). Later the false prophet Hananiah takes the yoke from Jeremiah's neck and breaks it to predict that Yahweh will break the yoke of Babylon from the neck of all these nations (Jer. 28).

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1. Naked here means without sackcloth; barefoot means without sandals.
  2. In Ezek. 12:1ff. Ezekiel also performs a symbolic action to indicate the impending deportation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
  3. Jer. 13:1-11; 16:1-4; 16:5-9; 19:1ff.; 27:1-3 (28:10f.); 32:1-15; 43:8-13; 51:59-64; cf. Lindblom, *op. cit.*, pp. 169ff.

All but one of the symbolic acts of Jeremiah predict the message of judgement.<sup>1</sup>

Before the destruction of the city, Jeremiah purchases land from his relative to prophesy that once more houses, fields, and vineyards shall be bought in the land of Judah.

Of the 32 prophetic actions in the Old Testament there are 12 prophetic acts in the book of Ezekiel while Isaiah has only 3, Hosea 2, and Jeremiah 7. These are Ezek. 3:16a (4:1-3); 4:4-8; 4:9-17; 5:1-14; 12:1-11; 12:17-20; 21:11f.; 21:23-29; 24:1-14; 24:15-24; 3:22-27; (24:25-27; 33:21f.); 37:15-23. It is distinctive for Ezekiel that he uses symbolic action much more than his predecessors. This may be due to his priestly background,<sup>2</sup> since symbolic acts were an integral part of the cult, and due to his dramatic sensitivity.<sup>3</sup> These actions really performed by the prophet, as the occasional remarks about their performance, the astonished questions of the people, and the reply of the prophet, show.<sup>4</sup> But it was hardly possible for the prophet to lie on his left side for 190 days to represent Israel's 190 years of captivity, and 40 days on his right side to represent Judah's 40 years of captivity, while eating scanty and unclean food.<sup>5</sup> At all events

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1. Similarly all but one of the symbolic acts of Ezekiel are concerned with the message of doom.
  2. The priests used many a symbolic action in their ritual performances. Cf. H. W. Robinson, 'Hebrew Sacrifice and Prophetic Symbolism', *JES* 43 (1942), pp. 171ff.
  3. He dramatizes what the other prophets had only expressed in figurative speech, cf. Jer. 15:16=Ezek. 3:22-27; Ps. 119:103=Ezek. 5:11; Ezek. 37:11 is expressed by the vision of 37:1-14.
  4. Fohrer, *op. cit.*, p. 241.
  5. Robinson, in *Old Testament Essays*, p. 9.

the essence of Ezekiel's prophetic acts is not in these acts themselves which are expressly told, but in the words of God which are either introduced with the formula 'The words of Yahweh came to me', or simply put in direct address. Another point is that all of the symbolic actions are directed towards the fall of Jerusalem except the present passage (37:15-28) which is concerned with the restoration of the nation.

It is undeniable that the prophetic acts are symbols which point beyond themselves to something else. It may be said that the actions are 'acted similes' or 'visible words', which share in all the qualities which distinguish the divine word.<sup>1</sup> They serve not only to represent and make evident particular facts, but also to turn these facts into reality.<sup>2</sup> These acts are not only the actions of the prophets but also the life-involvement of the prophets. Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are personally the signs of the divine message and this includes even with their family life.<sup>3</sup> The most significant meaning of the prophetic act is revealed in the interpretation given by the prophet when he says: 'I am your sign' or as is said: 'You are their  $\text{נִי דָן}$ '.<sup>4</sup> All of the prophetic words and acts are to serve as means for fulfilling Yahweh's plan and purposes for his people and the world.

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1. Lindblom, loc. cit.

2. Ibid., p. 172.

3. Cf. C. A. Keller, Das Wort GTH als 'Offenbarungszeichen Gottes', (Basel, 1946), particularly, pp. 100ff.; Childs, op. cit., pp. 57ff.

4. Cf. Ezek. 24:27; Matheney, op. cit., p. 265; he also points out that even the name 'son of man', which Yahweh gives Ezekiel, has the symbolic meaning of 'humble instrument of God's will' (p. 267).

Ezekiel's idea of the unification of the nation definitely finds its basis in his idea of the people of Israel. He sees that Israel is the descendant of Jacob who is the father of the twelve tribes. This people were slaves in Egypt and delivered by Yahweh who made a particular covenant relationship with them. Thus Israel is the people of God.<sup>1</sup> But the idea of unification has its basis in the historical experience in the time of the united kingdom. It is David who unites the people of Israel into a single nation and who gives glory, peace, and prosperity to his people. One people in the Promised Land is an idea dependent on 2 Sam. 7:23 where Israel is a people unique on earth, because of her relationship with Yahweh and because of her deliverance from Egypt (cf. 1 Chr. 17:21). It must have been an ideal for the kings of both kingdoms that they could also rule the other part of the nation which broke away after the death of Solomon. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom the reunion of the separated kingdom had some new actuality in the time of Josiah. This hope for the reunion of the two nations occurs in the teaching of some other prophets (cf. Isa. 11:13; Jer. 3:18; Hos. 2:1f.), but none so dramatically portrays this hope as does Ezekiel. He presents this prophetic hope in the form of symbolic action which is a characteristic of his message. It is important to note that after the fall of the nation this hope of the reunion of the nation evokes the courage and hope of the people. Hölischer is wrong to state that this symbolic action is a literary imitation and thus 'unvorstellbar'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cf. N. Lohfink, 'Beobachtungen zur Geschichte des Ausdrucks אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל', in Probleme Biblischer Theologie, Festschrift für G. von Rad, (Munich, 1970), pp. 275-305.

2. Hölischer, op. cit., p. 176.

Vv. 15-17 The symbolic action

The description of the act appears in vv. 15-17. Like the other acts (Ezek. 4; 12) this symbolic act has interwoven with it the word of Yahweh. The introductory sentence indicates the reception of the word of Yahweh. Then comes the order of Yahweh to the prophet containing the content of the act.

The formula  $\text{וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר}$  is used in the majority of the narrative accounts in the book of Ezekiel.<sup>1</sup> This is the typical prophetic formula which announces the word-event of God's revelation to the prophet. This sentence is formally an element of the narrative style and one usually finds it appearing in many texts in Samuel and Kings in the third person in a narrative context. 'This recalls the fact that the prophetic word does not express a timeless knowledge of Yahweh but is in fact an event, an intrusion of divine reality into the prophet's life'.<sup>2</sup> Although this formula is frequently found elsewhere in the Old Testament, it is characteristic that it is used by Ezekiel in the first person and by this he shows strongly his personal encounter with Yahweh. Ezekiel subordinates everything else to the intrusion of the divine word and vision. Even here the symbolic act is considered to be the word of Yahweh, and it is thus introduced by this formula. Originally this formula is related to the function of the messenger; the prophet conveys the message of the Lord who has sent him and

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1. Zimmerli, in VT 15 (1965), p. 516.

2. Ibid.



the kingdom of the ten tribes. In the Southern kingdom Judah is the leading tribe, which accordingly gives its name to that kingdom, and includes the greater portion of Benjamin and Simeon, the tribe of Levi and the rest of the small tribes such as the Calebites, or the Kenites. With regard to 'the children of Israel' here, the phrase denotes the remaining tribes belonging to Judah, but it can be used for the whole nation (cf. 1 Sam. 13:13) and for the northern kingdom (2 Sam. 19:41).<sup>1</sup> After the fall of the northern kingdom the name was often used of Judah, the only remaining part of the old Israel. Although Joseph and Judah are the leading tribes of the kingdoms, yet, in fact, they are not equivalent to the whole people of Israel. In some cases they may represent the people of Israel. On this reasoning, we may agree that the phrases attached to 'Judah' and 'Joseph' are necessary, for they can prevent misunderstanding. The people of Israel consists of twelve tribes; for Ezekiel, the name 'Israel' always denotes the whole people of Israel.<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable that here Ezekiel does not use the name 'Israel' to denote the Northern Kingdom. In this connection, the phrase 'all the house of Israel' might be supposed to mean 'all the children or people of Israel' as G. proposes.

As far as the word  $\text{לֵבָב}$  is concerned, it may mean 'tree', 'piece of wood', 'wooden tablet', or 'stick'. It is difficult to identify exactly what it denotes here, but the last of these seems the most appropriate to the case (cf. Num. 17:2f.). We do not know what kind of sticks are intended, they may be just some ordinary

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1. In Am. 4:6, 15; 6:6; the northern kingdom is called the house of Joseph.

2. Zimmerli, Ezekiel, pp. 910f.

sticks which are easy to get. But one thing is certain, the stick symbolizes the sceptre which symbolises the kingdom. Hence the meaning of the symbolic action is to be found in the action itself and in the interpretation which follows. Therefore no matter whether the words which are written on the sticks are simply 'Judah's' and 'Joseph's', explanatory comments added, and no matter what the word  $\text{י} \text{ו}$  means, it is the nature of the action that matters.

Generally the structure of the symbolic act is similar to the earlier acts of Ezekiel in chs. 4 and 12. This can also be deduced by the use of the same words for the command of Yahweh to the prophet, i.e.,  $\text{ק} \text{ב} - \text{ק} \text{ר}$ .

The symbolic action of taking a tablet and writing a name on it can be found in the parallel in Isa. 8:1f. There the prophet is asked to write a name on a tablet. In this action, Isaiah declares to his people the coming national salvation—the destruction of her enemies. We find almost the same wording in both cases, that is, the same introductory formula (a simple one in Isaiah); same verbs,  $\text{ק} \text{ב} - \text{ק} \text{ר}$  and  $( \text{ו} \text{י} ) \text{ב} \text{ק} \text{ר}$ . But the obvious difference is that in Isaiah the meaning is shown in the word which the prophet has written, and in Ezekiel the meaning is shown not only by the words on the sticks, but more importantly by the action which the prophet performs. In Ezekiel the collecting of and writing on the sticks is only part of the symbolic action. The important element of the symbolic action is shown in the verb  $\text{ב} \text{ק} \text{ר}$ .

$\text{ב} \text{ק} \text{ר}$ , has different meanings, it can mean 'draw near', 'come near', or 'approach'; its 'piel' form means 'bring near' or

'cause to approach' (each another).<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel is ordered to join the sticks to become one stick, this apparently has its historical presupposition in the schism of the monarchy. One would recall the account of the meeting of Jeroboam and Ahijah the prophet in 1 Kgs. 11:29ff., where the prophet tore his new garment into twelve pieces, grouped them in two bundles, and asked Jeroboam to take (  $\gamma\delta - \pi\rho$  ) ten pieces. By this symbolic act the prophet promised the young man Jeroboam the kingdom of Israel; and at the same time he announced the split in the monarchy. It is striking that the verb  $\gamma\rho\rho$  and the verb  $\beta\rho\rho$  are antithetic;

$\beta\rho\rho$  shows the mercy of Yahweh who not only draws his people near to him, but also unites them together in one nation. Von Rad points out that the term  $\beta\rho\rho$  is a technical term of the priesthood,<sup>2</sup> and its use here might also have religious emphasis as is clearly seen in the interpretation.

Another parallel to this symbolic act can be found in Zech. 11 where there are two sticks—Grace and Union. It is by these two sticks that God rules his flock. But because the leaders of the people and the common people themselves desert their Lord, God breaks the two sticks to annul the covenant (Grace) and the unity of the nation(Union). Although both symbolic acts are generally concerned with the people of Israel and based on the same general tradition of shepherd and sheep, some differences between them can be seen.

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1. Koehler-Baumgartner, Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, (1958), pp. 351f.

2. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, p. 218; cf. Ezek. 37:7, the bones  $\beta\rho\rho$  to other bones, it is an action of resurrection.

The sticks in Ezekiel represent the two separated kingdoms in the past and the symbolic act is mainly to emphasize the unification of the nation in the future. But in Zechariah the two sticks represent two different relationships of the people, namely, the religious relationship between God and the people and the political relationship between the two states (Israel and Judah). The symbolic action is mainly to stress the coming judgement on the leaders of the people and on the rebellious people as well. It can be demonstrated that Zechariah has developed the idea of the stick in Ezekiel 37:15-23 to convey his own message to the people.

Also, in Num. 17:2ff. Moses asks the leaders of the twelve tribes to write their names on their own sticks or rods, the rods are left overnight within the Tent of Meeting, and in the morning Aaron's rod has sprouted, budded, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds. Levi with Aaron as his representative is the chosen tribe. This story is a demonstration of the privileged status of the Levites, and this must belong to the P tradition because P usually distinguishes Levi from the other tribes.<sup>1</sup> In this story the author has played on the word  $\eta \zeta \lambda$ ; both this word  $\eta \zeta \lambda$  and the word  $\zeta \rho \psi$  can mean both 'rod, staff', and 'tribe'. The double meaning of the word makes it likely that the story developed from this double meaning; the dead  $\eta \zeta \lambda$  (stick) sprang to life and it represents the  $\eta \zeta \lambda$  (tribe) which God chose and blessed.<sup>2</sup> In this connection, the rods are life trees that can

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1. N. H. Snaith, Leviticus and Numbers, NCB (1967), pp. 262f.

2. Ibid., p. 263.

grow, blossom, and produce fruits.

While the sticks in Num. 17 represent the tribes, the sticks in Ezekiel 37 denote the sceptres or the kingdoms. Ezekiel employs the word  $\text{קֶשֶׁט}$  which is a synonym of the word  $\text{עֵצֵי הַקֶּשֶׁט}$ . The tree symbolized as a ruler's sceptre can be found either in Ezekiel (19:11f.; 17:22-24) or outside of Ezekiel (cf. Gen. 49:9-12; Isa. 11:1f.). Therefore although there may be some affinities between the story of Aaron's rod and Ezekiel's symbolic act, their forms and purposes are different. Ezekiel employs the relationship of stick-tribe and develops it into the symbolism of stick-sceptre.

#### V. 18 The question of the people.

Symbolic action without interpretation might be ambiguous; therefore it is usually accompanied by some interpretative oracle(s). Also, symbolic action may be concerned either with some past experience or some future event. 'Since all the dramatic prophetic actions in Ezekiel are concerned with future events their accounts lost some of their relevancy after the events actually took place, and details of interpretation either in the light of events or of later history were often added. The result is sometimes bizarre'.<sup>1</sup> As with other symbolic actions (Ezek. 24:19; cf. 12:9; 21:5, 12), presumably the people will ask the meaning of the action which Ezekiel performed, because he had been questioned by the people before. This assumption leads to the promise of the unification of the nation shown in v. 19 and to the further explanation of this promise with the other messages of the restoration shown in vv. 21-28.

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1. Wevers, op. cit., p. 14.

## V. 19 The first interpretation

This verse is the first interpretation of the symbolic action. It contains a divine assurance that God himself will give effect to what his prophet performs, and will unite the sceptre of Joseph with the sceptre of Judah so as to form one sceptre in his hand. In another words, Yahweh will restore the two divided kingdoms into a single nation. This is the real meaning of the symbolic action and is a promise of Yahweh as well. This unification is not worked out by negotiation with the remainder of the two kingdoms, nor is it any politician's reconstruction, but is due to Yahweh's mighty hand. (Thus says the Lord: I will take...join...and make...).<sup>1</sup>

The interpretation begins with the command of Yahweh to the prophet to answer the question of the people. Then the messenger formula 'Thus says Lord Yahweh' and the messenger oracle, follows the command to convey the meaning of the symbolic action. The messenger formula is the most direct means of expressing the function of the prophetic message and is the most consistently used of all the many different prophetic literary categories.<sup>2</sup> It represents a self-confirmation of the messenger and his legitimation before the person(s) addressed. By means of the messenger formula, the messenger comes to deliver not his own word, but the word of the one who has sent him.<sup>3</sup> Therefore this formula is never just something

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 912; he writes, 'Ganz entschieden wird dagegen von Jahwe seiber die Verbeissung ausgesprochen, dass er persönlich das Getrennte in seiner Hand wieder zur Einheit zusammenfassen werde'.

2. Von Rad, op. cit., pp. 36f.; cf. R. Rendtorff, 'Botenformel und Botenspruch', ZAW74 (1962), pp. 165f. Rendtorff translates the messenger formula in the present tense.

3. Wagner, op. cit., pp. 339f.

external, concerned with literary style alone, but is related to the content of the particular message. It is also worth noting, the message is always conveyed in direct discourse with Yahweh as the divine 'I'.

It is necessary to note the relationship and the development between the symbolic act and the interpretation, for here it is rather unusual that the interpretation (v. 19) is still in figurative speech. In the description of the symbolic action, the sticks, the words on the sticks, and the action of joining the sticks are the symbols and the symbolic action. To explain the symbol and the symbolic action is to go beyond the symbol and the action. In the symbolic action the prophet is ordered to take the sticks and write the inscriptions on them and join them into one in his hands. The important action is the action of uniting the two sticks into one in the hands of the prophet. But surely the content of the inscriptions is also important because the act and all its intended contents are the sources of the interpretation. In the interpretation the subject of the action is no longer the prophet but Yahweh himself. Here there is no mention of the writing on the sticks but the stress is on the action of uniting which is expressed by the verbs, e.g.,  $\text{קָּבַע}$ ,  $\text{וַיִּתְּקֵם}$ , and  $\text{וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה}$ .

Some think that  $\text{אֲשֶׁר בְּיַד־אֶפְרַיִם וְשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲבֵרוֹ}$  is secondary material.<sup>1</sup> But in vv. 16f. the phrase  $\text{וַיִּתְּקֵם אֶפְרַיִם}$  is obviously a later comment which cannot find a parallel in the former part. In the same manner the clause  $\text{אֲשֶׁר בְּיַד־אֶפְרַיִם}$  is an addition and it is not justifiable to hold that the tribe of

1. May, op. cit., p. 270; Wevers, op. cit., p. 218; Carley, op. cit., p. 252; Fohrer regards this verse as a gloss except for v. 19a.

Ephraim is equivalent to the Joseph tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, while the tribal federation of the Northern Kingdom consists of the other eight tribes associated with the Joseph tribes. But 'the house of Joseph' or 'Joseph' has been used to represent the Northern Kingdom (Am. 5:15; Obad. 18; Ezek. 47:13). In addition, Ezekiel never refers to the Northern Kingdom as 'Israel' in order to distinguish it from the kingdom of Judah.<sup>1</sup> Rather he refers to it by using the name of its leading tribe. On the other hand, it is clear enough that Judah can represent the Southern Kingdom. Therefore we may conclude that the rest of the verse (v. 19) is part of the text, except the clause 'which is in the hand of Ephraim' which is generally regarded as a gloss.

But it is rather unusual that the word  $\text{יָד}$  is still in symbolic speech and the symbolic action is not fully explained in the historical sense. There may be a play on the word  $\text{יָד}$  with its synonym  $\text{עֵצ}$ , which can mean either 'stick' or 'tribe', but this is not certain, for the intention of the action is that Israel will be one nation or one people consisting of twelve tribes.

#### V. 20 The symbolic action

Some commentators treat this verse as a gloss; for it is only a variant of v. 17, the symbolic action, and is not an interpretation.<sup>2</sup> Still, some see it as an indication of the performance of the symbolism.<sup>3</sup> That which Zimmerli<sup>4</sup> has pointed out is plausible,

1. Cf. 4:5f.

2. Cf. above, p. 310.

3. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 271; Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 513. This may be supported in that the word  $\text{יָד}$  must be a legal term; it is to show what is taken place.

4. *Op. cit.*, p. 907.

namely that v. 20 introduces a new discourse. He thinks that although vv. 21ff. are closely related to the symbolic act, they are necessary supplements; they may be explanations by Ezekiel himself or by his school in a later time.<sup>1</sup>

However, the present thesis holds that vv. 21-28 are a further necessary explanation of the symbolic action in which the theme of the unification of the nation is related to the other themes of the restoration. After the first interpretation the people may not fully understand the meaning of the symbolic action, for the interpretation is still in figurative speech. Furthermore, we may assume that the audience ask—How can God unite the two kingdoms which do not now exist? In other words, how could God create a unified nation for the people when their nation had collapsed and the people were in exile? It is understandable that, to the exiles, it is not so important that they have a unified nation or any other form of nation, rather the important question is, how can they have a nation at all. In these circumstances one can understand why further explanation is needed and why Yahweh discloses the messages of salvation combined with the creation of one single nation. In fact, the message of national unity is a part of the new creation of the nation and cannot be separated from the other themes of the restoration, namely, the new exodus, new settlement, new people and new relationship with Yahweh. Restoration is not only meant to regain what went before, but also to create a new quality.

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1. Ibid., p. 912.

Vv. 21-23 The further explanation of the symbolic act

This second interpretation, like that first one, begins with the command of Yahweh to the prophet to explicate the symbolic action in its historical context. The message of Yahweh is conveyed by the messenger formula accompanied by the messenger oracle. The phrase  $\pi\rho\delta \quad \delta\lambda\chi \quad \eta\lambda\eta$  (v. 21), found also in v. 19, corresponds to the phrase  $\gamma\delta-\pi\rho$  in v. 16.

In v. 21 there are at least three elements of Yahweh's salvation work: taking his people from the nations,<sup>1</sup> gathering them from every side,<sup>2</sup> and leading them back to their land.<sup>3</sup> What is significant is that the promise of salvation which consists of these three elements can only be found to have two parallels, in 34:13 and 36:24. As suggested by Reventlow, these three elements of salvation indicate 'einem Urzusammenhang des Segenformulars'.<sup>4</sup>

'Im Unterschied zu 19 aber hat dieses hier nichts mehr mit dem "Nehmen" der Hölzer zu tun, sondern ist auf das "Herausnehmen" der Israeliten aus den Völkern gewendet. So auch schon in 36:24, einem Vers, der hier fast wörtlich unter Umsetzung in die 3. plur., wiederkehrt. Die Sammlung der Zerstreuten ist hier das eigentlich dringliche Problem geworden. Das historische Anliegen der "Wiedervereinigung" der zwei Teilreiche erfüllt unter diesem Zukunftsaspekt eine neue Gestaltung. Jahwe holt sein Volk heraus, sammelt es und bringt es in sein Land'.<sup>5</sup> However, the traditional background of

1. Cf. Ezek. 4:13; 6:9; 11:16f.; 12:16; 34:12; 36:20, 22.

2. Cf. Ezek. 34:13; 36:24.

3. Cf. Ezek. 20:42; 34:13; 36:24; 37:12; 38:16; 39:2.

4. Op. cit., p. 57.

5. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 912.



From this, one can see that Ezekiel has used the same tradition with different intentions and that he lays different emphases on the tradition.

The land, or the mountains of Israel, is the land, according to Ezekiel (37:25), which Yahweh gave to his servant Jacob. For him, Jacob was the father of the people of Israel, or the father of the twelve tribes (cf. 20:5; 28:25). Jacob was the ancestor of Israel to whom Yahweh had promised his blessings (cf. Gen. 28:10f.).<sup>1</sup> There are three elements in the promise, namely, the land, descendants, and the divine presence. With reference to Ezek. 37:21 and 25, the land in v. 22 referred to is the land of Canaan which they have possessed before. In this land the wandering people of Israel had settled down and built up their society and nation. 'The traditions of the patriarchs and the Exodus witness that the Israelites knew that their permanent identity was assured only when the land bore the name of the people'.<sup>2</sup> If rest and prosperity in the land are viewed as the national hope of Israel, the exiles must have been eager to know how they could regain it and rest in it permanently after they had lost it. On this matter Ezekiel proclaims to them the coming salvation of Yahweh in terms of both political liberation and religious liberation. On this showing, it is clear that settlement in the land was the goal of Israel's exodus. But the problem is how can they settle down and dwell peacefully and

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1. McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 139; 'Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the ancestors of historic Israel, and indeed Jacob receives the name Israel as a second name. The twelve sons of Jacob are the eponymous ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel'.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

permanently in the land? What is implied here is how can the people of Israel live as that people?

Like the event of the Exodus from Egypt by which Yahweh created the people of Israel, here in v. 22 it is stated that Yahweh will again create a new Israel in the form of one nation under one single king. There will no longer be division in the people of Israel.

The verb  $\eta\psi\upsilon$  with Yahweh as its subject shows the creative act of Yahweh by which Israel will regain her nationhood and her identity.<sup>1</sup> Not only will Yahweh make her one nation but also one king will rule over her. Although there is a difference between the title

$\eta\psi\upsilon$  and the title  $\chi'\psi\eta$  and, in addition, Ezekiel seems to prefer to use  $\chi'\psi\eta$  to designate the future leader, yet he regards political institutions, including monarchy, as instruments or means in order to maintain the internal peace and order of the people and to gain knowledge of Yahweh's lordship.<sup>2</sup> Here the emphasis is on

the unity of the coming nation so that Ezekiel employs the general

terms with  $\eta\psi\upsilon$  and  $\chi'\psi\eta$  in comparison with

$\eta\psi\upsilon$  in the past. This can be perceived in

the words  $\eta\psi\upsilon$  and  $\chi'\psi\eta$ . Generally speaking, the people will become a nation like the other nations in the political sense. But Israel is a special people, the people of

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1. The idea of Yahweh's action is shown in two ways by this verb  $\eta\psi\upsilon$  with Yahweh as its subject: 1) it is used in combination with an object, such as a historical event (Ex. 18:9; Num. 14:11, 22; Deut. 1:30; Ezek. 5:8, 10; 25:11; etc.); 2) it is used absolutely, without an explicit object (1 Kgs. 8:32; Jer. 14:17; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22).
  2. On the discussion of the terms  $\chi'\psi\eta$  and  $\eta\psi\upsilon$ , cf. below, (appendix), pp. 392-6.

God, and thus, even though the nation exists as the other nations do, nevertheless, she has characteristics in her people, her leadership, her land, and her relationship with God. What is important here is that it is Yahweh who will take the people, now exiled among the nations, as his people and give them a land, the mountains of Israel, and establish them as a nation. This is not only reconciliation of the two kingdoms but also the creation of a new nation in the historical context.

In vv. 22f. there is a natural literary connection: v. 22

-- אֲלֹהֵי יְהוָה עֹד לְשָׁנֵי גוֹיִם וְלֹא יִחְזוּ עֹד  
 לְשָׁנֵי מַמְלָכֹת עֹד; וְגַם אֲלֹהֵי אֲשׁוּרֵי עֹד

This adverbial phrase is frequently used by Ezekiel in his message of doom in order to accuse or threaten the people;<sup>1</sup> but in his message of hope it is used to confirm the promise of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup>

But form-historically, these protective statements reflect the historical experience of the people after their settlement in Canaan.

The apostasy and rebellion of the people are severely castigated by the prophet elsewhere in his message of doom, especially in ch. 20:

27-31 where some words such as אֲשׁוּרֵי, מִצְרַיִם, אֲשׁוּרֵי,

can also be found as in 37:23. However, thematically vv. 21-23

are very close to the promises of the salvation of the people from

exile and their purification in 36:24ff., except that here in v. 22

1. Cf. Ezek. 24:13; 26:13, 14, 21; 29:15; 30:13; 32:13; etc.

Von Rabenau (op. cit., pp. 75ff.) rightly finds that this form

אֲשׁוּרֵי אֲלֹהֵי has a connection with the positive covenant formula, 'They shall be....I will be....'.

2. Cf. Ezek. 24:27; 34:10, 22, 28, 29, 36:12, 14, 15, 30; 37:22f.

the prophet presents the promises of the new ruler and of the united nation within the general images of restoration. Therefore from the literary connection between v. 22 and v. 23 and from the covenant formula at the end of v. 23, one can see that Ezekiel is not mainly concerned with the political problem, but that through the political form or institutions he presents his hope for his people. His emphasis is placed on the problem of how to create a holy people of God. The existence of the people may take the form of a nation, but what is more important is that the people should be Yahweh's people.

Therefore, in order to guarantee the right relationship between Yahweh and his people, Yahweh promises that they shall never again be defiled with their idols, their loathsome ways and all their disloyal acts; they shall be saved and cleansed from all sinful backslidings; and they shall be God's people.<sup>1</sup> Here the problem of how Yahweh unites the two states of Israel is solved not by joining the two separated states into one nation but by taking his people from among the nations and making them a nation in their land under a single leadership; at the same time, saving them from all temptation and backslidings and purifying them from all sins; a new Israel will appear as a unified nation and a holy people of God.

Traditio-historically, v. 23 appears as very similar to Ezek. 11:19 and 36:25; and it seems to represent an old covenant tradition in the cultic setting.<sup>2</sup> Israel will be defiled no more by idols and

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1. Von Rabenau, *ibid.*, p. 76.

2. Cf. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 230; Reventlow, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

sinful acts, for Yahweh has indeed promised to cleanse his people from all idols (11:18; 14:11; 36:25) and to give them a faithful and obedient heart (11:19; 36:26), and to take them as his people (11:20; 36:28).

The verb  $\chi\omega\upsilon$  appears a great number of times in Leviticus, Numbers, and Ezekiel, and it seems to have a close relation to the sacral law.<sup>1</sup> In the Pentateuch, it is mostly used to prohibit people from defiling themselves, Yahweh and his name, and his holy sanctuary; and in Ezekiel it is used to accuse people of defiling themselves, Yahweh and his name, his holy Temple, and the land of Israel. Here it is used to promise Yahweh's protection of his people. This verb has a close relation to the terms  $\eta' \} \} \lambda$  and  $\eta' \} \} \psi$ . It is these detestable things and idols which defile the people. Another verb  $\chi\upsilon\pi$ , whose  $\eta\alpha\lambda$  form occurs not less than 11 times in the book of Ezekiel, should also be noticed. This verb is sometimes used in cultic contexts and has a connection with the word  $\eta\delta\omega$  (Ex. 29:36ff.; Lev. 8:15; 16:18f.).<sup>2</sup> This has been used in the 'Entsündigung' of the temple.<sup>3</sup>  $\chi\upsilon\pi$  also occurs several times in the sense of missing (e.g., a target, Judg. 20:10; a way, Prov. 8:36; 19:2). In its transferred sense it signifies all kinds of failures which occur in the relationships of men with one another (e.g., Gen. 4:22; Judg. 11:27; 1 Sam. 24:12; 2 Kgs. 18:14). But the root is used most frequently of human failures over against God; both verb and noun are part of the lan-

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1. Cf. S. Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae: Hebraicae Chaldaicae I, (Graz, 1955), pp. 443-5.

2. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, p. 263; D. Baltzer, op. cit., p. 82.

3. Ibid.

guage of the cult—including the Priestly documents in particular.

In his message of doom Ezekiel regards the idols as detestable and as rivals of Yahweh.<sup>1</sup> This pair are the favourite words for idols in Ezekiel. It is difficult to know the exact origins of these words. Probably the word  $\text{א'לילים}$  is intentionally used in pun with the word  $\text{א'לילים}$  (dung pellets) in order to cast scorn on idols. Its vocalization is on the analogy of the detestable things ( $\text{א'שׁוּפֹט}$ ).<sup>2</sup> These idols and detestable things are mainly used to denote the pagan religious idols, symbols, cultic practices; and they are used to illuminate the sin and rebellion of Israel. These things are not only abominations and a profanation in the eyes of Yahweh, they also defile the people, the land, and the temple (cf. Ezek. 6; 8-11; 20). In other words, they are the cause of Israel's rebellion. The mention of these two things in v. 23 is related to the promise of Yahweh to save and purify his people from all uncleanness and backslidings.

In Ezek. 34:22 the combination of ideas of saving and judging recalls the role of Israel's earlier Judges who saved or restored the rights of their people;<sup>3</sup> but here salvation means cleansing and inner changing by the saving act of Yahweh.  $\text{א'שׁוּפֹט}$  in niph'al ( $\text{א'שׁוּפֹטוּ}$ ) occurs elsewhere in Ezekiel only in 34:22 and 36:29. According to Zimmerli,  $\text{א'שׁוּפֹטוּ}$  originally meant to create 'room

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1. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 149ff.

2. Wevers, *op. cit.*, p. 68. Of the 48 occurrences of in the Old Testament, there are not less than 39 in Ezekiel.

3. Carley, Ezekiel, p. 232; cf. H. Cazelles, 'Siloh, the Customary Law and the Return of the Ancient King', *PP*, pp. 241ff.

or space'. 'Heil' is the space of life. Here it implies the inner changing of the people as recounted in 36:26ff.<sup>1</sup> The other word  $\gamma\pi\theta$  contains a cultic connotation. In the purification ritual the priests take pure water to sprinkle over the subject which has been profaned (Num. 19:13, 20). This word occurs not less than 15 times in Ezekiel and most of them appear in the latter half of the book.<sup>2</sup> Here this word, like 36:25 is to express Yahweh's grace and holiness, he will purify his people and claim them as his holy people.

The act of purification of the people is to be understood as concerned with the sacral law, because of the defilement of Yahweh's name, land, and temple by the sins of Israel. This has its cultic background in the part when the priests declare their decision after their observation of the patient (Lev. 13:15, 17, etc.)—'He is leprous' or 'He is clean'. This proclamation determines whether the patient will be excluded from the cult or reinstated into it.<sup>3</sup> Here in v. 23 when Yahweh rescues Israel from sin and cleanses her he promises that she will be his people. It is important to notice that the covenant always appears in a cultic context (cf. Jer. 7:23; 11:4; Ezek. 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; etc.) and it is used to emphasize the relationship between Yahweh and his people. This promise is

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1. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, p. 341; a detailed study of the word was done by J. F. A. Sawyer, *Semantics in Biblical Research*, SBT 24 (1972), especially pp. 102ff.

2. Ezek. 22:26; 24:13 (3 times); 36:25 (3 times); 44:23; 36:33; 37:23; 39:12, 14, 16; 43:26; 44:26.

3. Von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 247; on the declaratory formula cf. R. Rendtorff, *Die Gesetze in der Priesterschrift*, (1954), pp. 74ff.

the goal of Yahweh's deliverance of his people from the nations and his salvation of his people from sin. This is the promise of life by which Israel can live and look forward to the future in the present harsh reality.<sup>1</sup> A clear form and traditic-historical transmission of the conditional life-promise can be seen to belong to the priestly 'Gebotsproklamation' exercised in the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>2</sup>

Reventlow<sup>3</sup> argues that the purification of the people shows that here again Ezekiel has strong contact with the H tradition, in particular with the 'parännetische Rahmen' in Lev. 18 (v. 24; cf. v. 3). It is evident that there are many parallels, both in vocabulary and in modes of expression, between Ezekiel and the Holiness Code, but it is difficult to show clearly the direction of literary influence. Perhaps they use a common tradition of covenant law.<sup>4</sup>

Before the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel urges his people to turn away from their ways and to fulfil the ordinances and statutes of Yahweh. If the people do this, they can live and have a good relationship with Yahweh. Salvation and life depend on whether the people can fulfil the requirements of life or not. But after the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel proclaims that Yahweh will change Israel and cleanse her and grant her people a new heart and new spirit (new life), so that she can keep the עֲשֵׂה and שִׁיֵּן of Yahweh. Salvation and life are granted solely from Yahweh; in other words,

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1. Zimmerli, in GO., pp. 179ff.

2. Ibid., p. 137.

3. Op. cit., p. 58.

4. Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, pp. 62ff.





the Davidic ruler (or government), the covenant people, and the divine presence.<sup>1</sup> These themes of promise are developed from the interpretation of the symbolic action of unification; and the state which these themes describe is the final stage of Yahweh's salvation. The people hope not only to be delivered from the exile and settled in their land but also to have a peaceful and prosperous life in the future. Peace, holiness, and perpetuity will characterize the restored nation. The covenant formula is the conclusion of the description of the condition for salvation with emphasis on the divine presence and the permanent covenant relationship between Yahweh and the restored people (vv. 24-27).

V. 28 is the conclusion of the second interpretation of vv. 21ff. Yahweh's sanctification of Israel is achieved both by political and cultic salvation from the nations, and by salvation from sin and rebellion. Yahweh's sanctification of his people does not indicate that Yahweh sanctifies his people only in relation to the other peoples, but rather that he sanctifies the people of Israel by all the events which are in part past experiences and in part future happenings. Since the promise of divine presence is the climax of the salvation, it presupposes the deliverance of the people from exile, the establishment of the nation, the inner creation of the people, the blessed state of the community. If this is correct, then 'my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for ever' is the result of the process of sanctification. This result is the condition of the acknowledgement of Yahweh by the nations. This recalls the oracles in Ezek. 36:22-32; there Yahweh sanctifies his holy name also by delivering his people from the exile, giving them a new heart and a

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1. These themes will be dealt with in the next section.

new spirit, and taking them as his people again. Therefore, it seems to be justifiable to say that the sanctification of Yahweh's name and Yahweh's sanctifying of Israel are different expressions of the same thing.

5. One nation in the land.

a). One single nation

From the time of Saul, Israel was on the point of being a nation and she took over the form of the monarchical system of other nations even if Saul did not fully conform to the usual pattern of kingship. But it was in the time of David, who united the tribal alliances of Judah and Israel and fixed the boundaries of their territory, that Israel realized her national hope and that she peacefully dwelt in the promised land under the effective leadership of a king. After the schism between Israel and Judah, the people of Israel were separated into two kingdoms and the consequences of this schism were disastrous and harmful both in politics and in religion. The united monarchy, especially in the time of David, is always treated in prophecy and liturgy as the ideal towards which Israel might hope to return.<sup>1</sup> It is no wonder that the hope of unification is drawn from the experience of disunity and its result in political and religious failure.<sup>2</sup>

The motif of the unification of the nation can be found in the prophetic message of hope after the judgement. Hosea not only looks forward to the return of Israel to Yahweh but also hopes for

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1. McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

2. Lohfink, '  $\neg \Pi \chi$  ', in *TDOT* 1, p. 198.

the reunion of all Israel. In Hos. 2:1f. and 3:5, Hosea proclaims that the rupture between Yahweh and his people will be restored so that those who have been called 'Not my people' will now be called 'Sons of the Living God'; that the reproach of the divided kingdom will be removed (cf. 5:13f.; 6:4-6) and Judah and Israel will be united under a single head.<sup>1</sup> The reconciliation of the two halves of the nation will be simultaneous with the reconciliation of the nation with its God. Yahweh will be their God and David their king. From the retrospect of past history and the observation of the present condition of society, Hosea might think that the secession of the Northern Kingdom itself was a mistake, and look forward to the reunion of the two halves of the nation. 'It is not totally impossible that he should have expected this to involve the submission of the north to the house of David. During Hosea's lifetime the northern monarchy was in a chaotic state with dynasties changing rapidly and political assassination being the order of the day. Throughout all this the dynasty of David remained unperturbed. This situation could readily be interpreted as a vindication of the Davidic house against the unstable monarchy of Israel'.<sup>2</sup> The idea in Hos. 2:1f. and 3:5 is very close to that of Jer. 3:18; 30:9; and Ezek. 37:22ff.

Jeremiah's future hope is found mostly in the bulk of chs. 30-33 in which there is a famous booklet of consolation.<sup>3</sup> By his un-

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1. John Mauchline, 'Hosea', IB 6, (1956), pp. 573f.

2. H. McKeating, Amos, Hosea, Micah, CBC (1971), pp. 92f.

3. For the problem of the origin and unity of the section, cf. Eissfeldt, op. cit., pp. 361f.

ending grace and forgiveness, Yahweh the Lord of the covenant and the creator of the new relationship, will save his people from the political misfortunes and the inner backslidings that have come upon her so that a new obedient people will appear in a land at peace under a righteous and wise leader of the Davidic line. In chs. 30-31 the message of salvation is for the people of Israel and Judah as well. The motif of unification of the nation is expressed by the themes of the new covenant and the restoration of northern Israel. The covenant is made with the house of Israel and Judah, namely the people of Israel. The form and the content of this new covenant closely resembles the old covenant, and the parties to the covenant are Yahweh the God of Israel and the people of Israel. In the context of the new covenant, Israel undoubtedly includes the northern tribes.<sup>1</sup> The restoration of the northern Israel of Jeremiah may have been influenced by Josiah's programme of restoration,<sup>2</sup> which is based on the theology of Deuteronomy—one God, one people, and one temple in the land of Israel. J. Skinner suggests that 'Jeremiah living within sight of the ancient and hallowed centres of the worship of Yahweh was filled with a passionate longing and hope for the return of the disinherited and scattered sons of the north who were the rightful heirs of the promises made to the fathers'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, according to Jer. 3:15; 23:5f.; and 30:9,

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1. Cf. von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, p. 212; J. Skinner, Prophecy and Religion, p. 33.

2. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 361. Josiah had restored some territory of the northern Israel.

3. Op. cit., p. 303.

Yahweh will raise up a king from the descendants of David.<sup>1</sup>

According to these passages, this term  $\text{מֶלֶךְ מִבְּנֵי דָוִד}$  (Jer. 23: 5; cf. 33:15) has a double meaning: 1) the future king will be a legitimate scion of David, and 2) he will be a pattern of justice in his rule. Yahweh will be the God of Israel and the Davidic ruler will be king over them all.

The unification of the whole house of Israel is a recurrent theme in the restoration prophecy of Ezekiel (cf. 34:23f.; 36:10; 36:25ff.; 37:11;). In the reconstruction of the new Israel, Ezekiel expresses his criticisms of the past political failure in respect of both the secession of the nation and the leadership. To him, the political failure is one of the reasons that caused the destruction of the nation and the exile of the people. So in giving the promise of Yahweh to his people, Ezekiel assures his people that a united nation with an excellent leadership will be provided for them in the coming age. One people under one leadership, no more division within itself, is an expression of the Israelites' political and religious hope; for the motive is both political and religious. Separation is failure and weakness; and unity is power and success. Ezekiel remembers the success of the Israelite monarchy in the time of the united kingdom and also remembers the shortcomings of the kingdom after the schism. He dreams of a united people under good leadership and the time when the people can live in their land under the protection of Yahweh.

It must be pointed out that before the fall of Jerusalem

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1. Cf. Skinner, ibid., pp. 312f.; Nicholson, Preaching to the Exiles, 90f.; Seybold, op. cit., pp. 126-31.

Ezekiel was concerned with the impending judgement which would befall the people in Judah. Although undoubtedly Ezekiel himself is concerned with the whole people of Israel, yet, his message of doom is for the people who are in Judah and who have come out of Judah. What is implied is that the harsh words of judgement are of no benefit for the Northern people who lost their independence a long time ago. It is true that Ezekiel has accused the Northern kingdom of apostasy (chs. 16; 20; 23; etc.), but the aim of this denunciation is against the people who are in Judah and in Babylon. But the message of the restoration is always implicitly proclaimed within the purview of the whole house of Israel, because from the very beginning Israel was to be a single people of Yahweh. Therefore here one cannot claim that the salvation which is to include the Northern kingdom is a new thing in Ezekiel's message.

It should be recalled that Ezekiel has never thought of a religious division within the people of Israel. For him, there is one God, Yahweh, and one people of God, Israel. So without doubt, from Ezek. 4; 10; 16; 23; and 47, one can hardly deny that Ezekiel has the idea that there are two political groups within the people of Israel. At the same time, one should also remember that Ezekiel does not think of the matter entirely politically and that it is difficult to separate clearly religion and politics in Israelite thought, for they are all the time embracing each other, or more properly, they are two aspects of the same thing. Yet from Ezekiel, one may not be able to learn about the weakness and failure of the schism of the nation, or his criticism of the existence of the political separation; nevertheless, in his hope of a new Israel, he envisions a harmonious and united people. There will no longer

be a separation or schism among them. This more or less reflects his political understanding of the past failure of the schism.

The people of Israel, through the saving act of Yahweh, will return to their homeland and establish a nation under one leadership; no more will there be conflict and separation among the people. Meanwhile, the people of Israel, through the saving act of Yahweh will return to Yahweh and be accepted as the people of Yahweh; they will sin no more against Yahweh nor defile themselves with idols and detestable things. Not only will Yahweh protect them from temptation and evil, but he will also save and purify them so that they can be his people. Here Ezekiel develops national hope into religious hope. Israel will be a nation of Israelites and at the same time the people of Yahweh. These saving acts are the preliminary reconstruction of the new Israel.

What is noticeable is the word  $\text{אֶחָד}$  which occurs not less than 11 times in this present passage (37:15-28). In order to stress the motif of unification Ezekiel employs this word so often--one stick, one nation, one king, and one shepherd. Generally, as a numerical adjective and adverb  $\text{אֶחָד}$  takes on meanings such as 'only', 'alone', 'solitary', 'same, uniform', 'entire, undivided'. As an element in various expressions, its use is even wider.<sup>1</sup> It is an important word when it is used in the context of the relationship between Yahweh and his people. Yahweh is confessed as the one and only God for Israel which is the chosen people of Yahweh. This is the basic belief by which the prophets proclaim their message of

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1. Lohfink, op. cit., pp. 193f.

judgement and of salvation. It is significant that Ezekiel employs this word  $\text{גִּוּל}$  to emphasize the future condition and structure of Israel.

It should be noticed that the message of restoration from Ezekiel presupposes the collapse of the nation and the exile of the people. It is necessary to distinguish the exiles whose nation still existed from the exiles whose nation had already collapsed, for these two phenomena can be found exactly in the book of Ezekiel. The prophet portrays these two kinds of people with different manners and presents them with different messages. After the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel faces the urgent problem of how to encourage people who have no hope at all. To do this, he speaks of the new creation of the nation in the vision of dry bones. Surely he might also proclaim the other message of hope to meet the urgent needs of the exiles. Suppose that the exiles do not lose hope, or through the work of the prophet they regain hope, then the second problem Ezekiel faces is the nature of the hope of the exiles. There will be various answers to this question but we may assume that the exiles might hope to return to their hope land and establish their nation on the political level, and they might hope to be the people of Yahweh again on the religious level. For an exile, nothing is more attractive than the hope of return to his fatherland. We can trace this hope implicitly and explicitly in relation to the other themes of the restoration; for not only does this hope presuppose the destruction or withdrawal of enemies, but it is also an indispensable factor in the restoration of Israel. For an exile whose nation does not exist any more, the hope to re-establish his nation in his homeland must be most meaningful because it would promise the end of his present

humiliation and restore his former status. Re-establishing the nation means that the people will regain their identity, freedom, and faith in God. But this assertion does not mean that Ezekiel is a politician who presents a system of statecraft in his message of restoration.<sup>1</sup> No doubt, the prophet has a positive concern for politics, but he emphatically subordinates that interest to the religious motive. The whole message of restoration of Ezekiel is concerned with the creation of a new people of God. For this religious aim he employs both religious and political traditions and institutions to express his message more appealingly and meaningfully. Therefore, the unification of the nation not only indicates the return of the exiles to their homeland, but also presupposes the restoration of the nation, and it should be understood in the context of a covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

In v. 22, one can see the true interpretation of the symbolic action by which Ezekiel proclaims the salvation of Israel. In this verse one can find a national hope, that is the hope of a single nation of Israel ruled by a king. In the first Exodus, Yahweh delivered the Israelites out of Egypt, made them his people, and gave them the promised land. Here Ezekiel employs the old traditions of Exodus and Settlement to interpret the symbolic act of the two sticks showing that at the first stage Israel will be rescued and led back to the land of Israel where Yahweh will make them a nation ruled by a king. Here the new Exodus is related to the kingship; and this is a new feature. What is important to notice is

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1. On the issue of the prophet and politics, see Norman K. Gottwald, All The Kingdoms Of The Earth, pp. 350ff.



is the description of the future state or condition of the nation (hope for the ideal nation).

According to K. Galling the election of Israel can be expressed both by the Sinai covenant and the Davidic covenant.<sup>1</sup> Both von Rad<sup>2</sup> and Clements<sup>3</sup> hold that the Davidic tradition consists of two traditions, i.e., Yahweh's election of David and Yahweh's election of Zion. It is difficult to tell exactly when these two traditions were joined together. But the kernels of these twofold traditions as generally accepted are that the election of David refers to the establishment of David's dynasty to be the ruler of Israel and that the election of Zion refers to Yahweh's choosing Zion, or the Temple of Jerusalem, as his earthly dwelling place.<sup>4</sup> As Zimmerli points out, there are two strong lines of tradition in Israel, i.e., the Jerusalem-David tradition and the total-Israel perspective of the Exodus tradition. Whereas Hosea firmly stands in the latter line, and Isaiah in the former, Ezekiel does not have that kind of exclusive alternative.<sup>5</sup> This characteristic can be seen on the one hand, in his message of judgement in chs. 8-11; 16; 23 and on the other, in his message of hope in chs. 34; 37; and 40-48. This is possibly due to his past experience of being a priest and his present office of being a prophet; but it must also be due to the crucial time, a time for the people to preserve and reflect all inherited traditions. In this interpretation of the symbolic action (vv. 21-28)

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1. K. Galling, Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels, BZAW 48 (1928).

2. G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology I, p. 46.

3. Clements, Abraham and David, pp. 48ff.

4. Von Rad, op. cit., pp. 46f.; Clements, op. cit., p. 52.

5. Zimmerli, in VT 15 (1965), p. 524.

Ezekiel fuses the two traditions together so that the people of Israel will have Yahweh as their God and David as their king living peacefully and permanently in the land.

b). The Davidic leader.

The theme of the unification of the nation is naturally related to the Davidic ruler who is named as the servant of Yahweh and the shepherd of the people (37:24; 34:24). Israel understands her call from the slavery of Egypt as a call to life. Israel has experienced historical confirmation of this call in the gift of the land, in defence against her enemies in the period of the Judges, and finally in the mission of David as the definitive liberator from Philistine oppression (1 Sam. 9:16). It is David who unites the whole people of Israel, who gives peace and glory to them and who is the man whom Yahweh loves. Since Nathan's prophecy (2 Sam. 7) about the everlasting promise of a Davidic dynasty, the family of David became the hope of the people, and David's rule became an ideal mode or age which the Israelites hoped to regain. So whatever judgement one may make about the original historical circumstance of Nathan's prophecy about the house of David, it is clear that in Judah it made history and determined the concept of the monarchy which was subsequently held in Yahwistic circle. This also can be seen in the prophetic expression of the national hope, for even in the Northern kingdom the people still hope for a king like David who had his origin among Southern Judahites (Am. 9:11f. Hos. 3:5).<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cf. Seybold, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-75.

There can be no doubt that the promise about the dynasty as well as the promise that the king is to be the son of God, cannot be understood outside the context of the royal ideology of Israel's surrounding world.<sup>1</sup> Such ideas had taken root in the Canaanite city of Jerusalem long before the time of David; and they had to take a different form when adopted by a prophet of Yahweh, the God of Israel, who had prepared a people for himself and had promised it life. They had to share in that extraordinary involvement of the whole nation which was characteristic of this faith. Yahweh could not be the God of the dynasty in the narrow sense; if he were, the dynasty would not be so significant historically. He remains God of his people over whom he is Lord and through whom he wants to base his dominion on earth. The dynasty is vicegerent in the area in which Yahweh's dominion is the really decisive factor.<sup>2</sup> This can be seen in the royal psalms (cf. Pss. 2; 72; 89; 110; 118; 132; etc.).

The prophetic hope for an ideal king can be recalled in the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah 9:1-7 proclaims the new David in expressions which recall Psalm 2; the background is a mighty act of liberation by Yahweh to the advantage of the people who had been trampled on by the Assyrian military boot.<sup>3</sup> Even the view that the future king is the successor of Ahaz gains general consensus, yet, there is no other royal text in which the King Saviour has such a prominent role in the future.<sup>4</sup> Isa. 11:1ff. (which many have regarded as post-

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1. Cf. A. R. Johnson, Sacral kingship in Ancient Israel, (1955); K. H. Bernhardt, Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im Alten Testament, SVT 8 (1961).
  2. Zimmerli, The Old Testament and the World, pp. 122f.
  3. Ibid., p. 125.
  4. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 236.

exilic) predicts that a new king (a shoot from the trunk of Jesse) will arise.<sup>1</sup> He will have the charismatic spirit which was attached to the dynasty. His attributes are righteousness and fidelity. He will achieve universal peace in the earth in which there will be no more feud between man and beast (cf. Gen. 3 and 9). 'It would be completely false to see in these oracles mere Utopian dreams or wishful thinking. Just as Yahweh had not allowed the northern neighbours to wantonly set a foreigner on the throne of David in the Syro-Ephraimite war, so would he also, in accordance with the faith of Isaiah, make good his promise of a righteous king, even though it be accomplished by judgement and devastation. Isaiah and his people, whose destiny lies in the hand of "the Holy One of Israel", are conscious that they are advancing towards the future of such a righteous kingdom'.<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah also proclaims that a righteous branch from David's line, who is a wise, righteous ruler, will give peace and justice to Israel (Jer. 23:1ff.).

Now here in Ezek. 37:24f. Ezekiel presents the hope of the future state of the nation with the motif of the Davidic ruler. The name David is clearly not a reference to one particular man, nor to a David redivivus, but to a seed of David whose rule will be like David's.<sup>3</sup> The Davidic leader is described as the servant of Yahweh and the shepherd of the people. He will carry out the will of his Lord to rule his people so that they can live as a faithful people

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1. Cf. Mowinckel, He That Cometh, p. 17; also above, p. 70.

2. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 126.

3. Cf. Baltzer, op. cit., p. 138.

of Yahweh<sup>1</sup>. Here behind the promise lies the idea that Yahweh is the true king and the true shepherd of the people. However, one must not think that Ezekiel wants to wipe out the system of the monarchy, for since the promise of a Davidic ruler and a united nation appears in his promise, there is no gainsaying that he upholds the system of monarchy. There is no real tension between monarchy and theocracy. It is good to employ the monarchic form with which the people are familiar and which is within their historical knowledge in order to convey the message of hope.

The promise of a Davidic king can also be found in 34:20f. and 17:24.<sup>2</sup> Both passages presuppose faults among the leaders. In the time of affliction and exile, the people may place their hope in good leadership in the future, but where can a foundation for this hope be found? It used to be connected with the Davidic house, yet since the collapse of the nation the belief in Yahweh's promise to David has been suspected. Now Ezekiel promises a Davidic ruler, this is not only to convey a national hope for an ideal ruler, but also to affirm Yahweh's promise to David in spite of the crisis of 587 and the harsh fact of the divine judgement. Thus David is appreciated not simply as a great historical figure but also as a means of faith and hope. It is worth noting that Ezekiel uses the David-Zion tradition to describe the future condition of the new Israel (vv. 24-28) whereas he uses the Exodus-Covenant tradition to proclaim the political and religious salvation.

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1. On the shepherd as the title of king cf. H. Gottlieb, 'Die Tradition von David als Hirten', VT 17 (1967), pp. 190-200.

2. Baltzer, op. cit., p. 138.

There are several titles describing the future David in Ezekiel (X'שׁן 34:23; 37:25; ׀ׁׁן 34:23; 37:24; ׁׁן 37:24; >ׁׁן 34:23f.; 37:24f.). X'שׁן, earlier referring to leaders of tribes, is used by Ezekiel to refer to the leaders of the small nations or peoples (cf. 12:10; 19:1; 26:16; 27:21). He intends to use it for the future leader of the people and to place the Davidic ruler as a prince in second place to Yahweh. The use of ׁׁן in 37:22, 24 is not to lay stress on the sovereignty of the ruler but on the unification of the two nations into one nation under one leadership. Normally Ezekiel uses the term X'שׁן for Israel's rulers but he preserves the term ׁׁן for Jehoiachin (17:12f.). Here in 37:22ff. the use of the term ׁׁן is not only suggested by the use of the word ׁׁןׁׁןׁׁן, but also indicates the general title for the ruler of the nation.<sup>1</sup> It is important to notice that the Davidic ׁׁן (37:24) is described as Yahweh's ׁׁן.<sup>2</sup> This is a title often used to indicate the nearness of the servant to his master, and therefore it is an honourable title. The servant should carry out the will and the commission of his master. 'One can see Yahweh himself at work in this servant, and thus be assured of his effectual and saving nearness among his people. So the whole stress is laid on the way in which the other-worldly God actually approaches his own, in his real presence'.<sup>3</sup> This servant has nothing to do with the concept of suffering, but

1. Cf. Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 478; on the use of X'שׁן and ׁׁן see below, pp. 392ff.

2. The subject has been fully investigated by Curt Lindhagen, The Servant Motif in the Old Testament, (Uppsala, 1950).

3. Eichrodt, loc. cit.



In the future age the new David will exercise his office and conduct the new order by obedient observance of the divine commandment.<sup>1</sup>

The promise of the Davidic king has a close relation to the cultic life of the people. The wording of v. 24b recalls that of Ezek. 11:20; 20:19; 36:37; and Lev. 26:3. V. 24b corresponds to v. 23, for Yahweh will save his people from all sins and cleanse them that they may be able to obey his will. Although the promise has a legal background, yet, it is granted unconditionally by Yahweh. Before the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel accuses his people of rebellion and uses a new name to describe their status before God. They are not the people of Yahweh, but the people of rebellion. Not less than 13 times is Israel called the house of rebellion by Ezekiel instead of the house of Israel.<sup>2</sup> The use of the new name must have been partly because the people are no longer willing to hear the words of Yahweh, or to keep his laws and statutes, or to walk in the way of Yahweh. Therefore Yahweh has to punish this sinful people with severe judgement. He annuls the covenant relationship with his people and expels them from the land. Now here in vv. 23-24 Yahweh promises to save his people from sin and accept them once again as his people. Therefore they can obey his laws and statutes and live in the land which Yahweh had promised to their fathers. The hope of a Davidic king has close relation to the promises of the land, of everlasting covenant of peace, and of the divine presence.

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1. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

2. Ezek. 2:5, 6, 7, 8; 3:9, 26, 27; 12:2, 3, 8, 25; 17:12; etc.; cf. Wahono, *op. cit.*; pp. 150ff.

c). The promise of the land

The unification of the nation is expressly related to the land which Yahweh had promised to Jacob (37:25). In 37:21-22 the land is called 'their land' ( ארצם ) whereas in v. 25 the land is defined as 'the land of Jacob' (cf. Ezek. 28:25). To Ezekiel and his school, Jacob was the father of the nation (the twelve tribes) and here Jacob is seen as the patriarch himself not as a name for the people.<sup>1</sup> The mention of the patriarch in the message of restoration, naturally recalls the promises which Yahweh had promised to Jacob in Gen. 28-32. There are three promises which Yahweh gave to Jacob, i.e., the land of Canaan, a nation, and the presence of Yahweh. This threefold promise can also be found in Ezek. 37:24-28, even although Jacob is only directly related to the promise of the land. The national hope of the future goes no further than dwelling peacefully in this land which Yahweh had promised the fathers and given to their descendants.

The land of Canaan is an important factor in Israel's religious thought and in her historical existence; it is related to the people in many significant ways.<sup>2</sup> This thought goes back to the promises made to the patriarchs. Israel aware of the she is not native to this land, but has received it. The land is a gift of Yahweh, the Lord of the land, who has led Israel out of Egypt in order to bring her to the place of rest, as Deuteronomy 12:9 describes it. It acquires thereby something of a sacramental

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1. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

2. Cf. J. Guillet, *The Themes of the Bible*, (Notre Dame, 1960), pp. 191ff.; J. G. Plöger, ' ארצם ', *TDOT* 1 pp. 88ff.

quality. It is the sign of the confirmation of God's love for Israel and of Israel's belonging to God. In her status as 'aliens and settlers' (Lev. 25:23), Israel lives in a place which is near to God, a nearness which he confirms. As long as Israel listens to the voice of her Lord, then she is doing what on her side enables her to remain near to him. This is not only an often expressed Deuteronomic idea; it is linked in the Decalogue with the command to honour one's parents: 'Honour your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, so that you may live long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you' (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16).<sup>1</sup>

The land promised, which originally was given unconditionally, is understood conditionally in the theology of Deuteronomy. The Deuteronomist had to interpret this promise in the light of the fact that, after it had been fulfilled temporarily, Yahweh's people lost the land when they were carried into exile. They kept Israel's hope alive in the integrity of this promise by maintaining from a historico-theological perspective that the land would be restored to God's people if they would return to him.<sup>2</sup> 'The promise of the land and the gift of the land are inseparably related to obedience or disobedience to Yahweh's righteous will. Although Yahweh intends to give the land to Israel for ever (Deut. 4:40; cf. Jer. 25:5), they can actually live a long and happy life on the land only if all of them continually obey all the commandments (Lev. 26). The promise of life means that God's people will continue to dwell

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1. Cf. Zimmerli, *op. cit.*, pp. 77f.

2. Plüger, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

in the land (Deut. 30:20).<sup>1</sup>

The land is the visible certainty of Yahweh's control of history and his powerful, gracious concern for Israel.<sup>2</sup> It is also the visible sign of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel. Ezekiel was very critical of Israel's past. Israel was an unfaithful people who worshipped the gods of nations instead of the God Yahweh in the land (Ezek. 16; 20; 23). Moreover, for political advantages, the people of Israel made alliances with other nations, depended on them, and even accepted the gods of their allies. This impugned the sovereignty and holiness of Yahweh. Thus the religion and life of the people were depraved and corrupted. Justice and love, faithfulness and holiness were rare, because the religions of the nations were vicious and immoral. That was the great sin that Israel committed always in its history and it was the reason, according to Ezekiel, why they suffered in their political destiny. With the gods of the nations and their ungodly actions, the Israelites had profaned the holy land. Ezekiel also pointed out that there were many shameful ornaments and symbols in the Temple, and high places and heathen altars were plentiful in the land (Ezek. 6-7; 8-11). Due to the uncleanness and corruption, the glory of Yahweh departed from the land and the people. In brief, the sins of Israel made the land so impure and corrupt that Yahweh deserted the land (Ezek. 7).

The promised land was a blessed land, but because of the sin of the people, it became a land of blight, sterility and waste.

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1. Plüger, *ibid.*

2. Guillet, *loc. cit.*

It was cursed by the sin of the people. A land which symbolized rest, peace, and blessedness, a land flowing with milk and honey, became a land of war, blood, pestilence, and disorder. It was originally a glorious symbol of the election and covenant, it is a place of the divine presence; now it became an object of irony and insult. A land which was the gracious gift of Yahweh became a prey of the nations. Israel, like the original inhabitants, was expelled from the land. Israel lost the land, and this meant that they lost the fundamental ground of their lives. This must have been a terrible shock for Israel to lose her land at the time of the exile, and she must have been moved by the prophetic message of hope to turn again to the land.

Although Yahweh, in his unswerving love, sometimes appeared in the form of Judgement, he was always faithful to the covenant. It was most likely true that the collapse of the nation, the exile of the people and the occupation of the land, were indications that Yahweh had abandoned the land. In fact, these disasters were a part of Yahweh's whole plan to make a new Israel;<sup>1</sup> for Yahweh would remove all the obstacles in his way toward making a new Israel. Before Yahweh would lead his people back to their homeland, he would attack the enemies and expel them from the land (35:1-36:15). He also would purify the land and cut off all the people who were not fit for the new age (cf. 20:32ff.).

The land promised in the future was truly holy and peaceful, and only the pure and obedient people would inherit it and live

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1. Cf. Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, pp. 8ff.; Y. Kaufmann, The Religion of Israel, (ET, London, 1961), p. 427.

in it. Yahweh would change the heart and the spirit of the people (36:26ff.). At the same time he would change the land. 'The restoration' was the change of a land from waste and desolation into a land of peace and blessedness.<sup>1</sup> There would not be any fault in the land, and it would be a land of prosperity, a land luxuriant, beautiful and peaceful, a land like a paradise (36:9-15; 47:1-12). These signs of blessedness would assure the people of the divine presence of Yahweh (20:32ff.; 47:1-12).

It is important to note that here in 37:25 the land is not only related to the promise of Jacob but also to the promise of a Davidic ruler and the idea of  $\square \int i \text{ } \text{ } .$ <sup>2</sup> The land is promised to the people and they can live on it forever. The expression seems to presuppose that the people are able to obey the laws and the statutes of Yahweh. This is one of the main emphases of Deuteronomy, namely, if the people keep the laws of Yahweh they may live on the land and possess it (Deut. 4:40; 5:16; 11:9; etc.). According to B. T. Dahlberg there are at least two ways which lead to the renewal of the covenant. First, it is through the repentance of the people (cf. Jer. 4:4; Am. 5:15); secondly, if the requirement for the renewal of the covenant is found to lie beyond human accomplishment 'the fulfilment of the necessary condition is carried through by Yahweh himself', namely, 'by his establishing a new covenant with Israel'.<sup>3</sup> Here in 37:24 the people's observance of the statutes and ordinances of Yahweh is not to emphasize the conditions of

1. Pedersen, Israel I-II, pp. 477f.

2. Jenni, 'Das Wort  $\square \int i \text{ } \text{ } .$  im Alten Testament', ZAW 65 (1953), pp. 34-33.

3. B. T. Dahlberg, 'Wrath of God', IDB 4, pp. 905f.

the people to receive or to live on the land, but to assert or promise the ability of the people to keep the laws of Yahweh and walk in the way of Yahweh.

The land is the foundation of a nation and the basis of wealth. A land and its people are closely related and a people has often been defined in terms of a special territory. The promise of the land not only affirms the validity of Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh, but also provides the fundamental element for the new Israel. 'For Israel to be a nation meant that it enjoyed full political control over the territory which had once belonged to the people of Canaan. People and land belonged together, since the ownership of the land was the badge of their nationhood'.<sup>1</sup> 'It is quite clear in Ezekiel that it is not merely the land as such, but the land as the place where Yahweh is present. It is there that Yahweh enters into his new temple (Ezek. 43:1ff.)'.<sup>2</sup>

d). An everlasting covenant of peace

It is unique that Ezekiel uses the form

ברית עולם בריית שלום ;

this coupling of the phrases is a hapax legomenon. ם ו ל ש  
is a term denoting a condition of wholeness and 'Unversehrtheit', and belongs to the vocabulary connected with blessing; properly speaking, it denotes that all aspects of the well-being of a community are 'a direct result of the beneficent Presence of God'.<sup>3</sup>

1. Clements, God's Chosen People, (London, 1968), pp. 50f.;

cf. M. Ottosson, 'ש ר א' TDOT 1, pp. 388-405.

2. Zimmerli, op. cit., p. 78.

3. J. I. Durham, 'ם ו ל ש and the Presence of God', PP, pp. 276f.; Cf. G. von Rad, 'ם ו ל ש in the Old Testament', TDNT 2, p. 402; on the terminology of ׀ ו ל ש, cf. Pedersen, op. cit., pp. 263ff., 313ff.; W. Eisenbeis, Die Wurzel ׀ ו ל ש im Alten Testament, (Berlin, 1969).



and Isa. 54:10.<sup>1</sup> In both instances the covenant of peace is established after Yahweh's liberation of Israel from the nations and after the restoration of Israel to her own land. Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah do not treat it as the foundation of salvation, but see it as the guarantee of God concerning their future relationship. Ezekiel's covenant of peace seems to be a development of Hosea's description of the new covenant. But in Ezekiel the wild beasts are not the other party to the covenant and they are to be removed from the land. From Ezek. 34:25ff. it is quite clear that the promise in these verses closely resembles Lev. 26:4-6. Fundamentally, Hosea's and Ezekiel's ideas of the covenant are the same, but their expression is different. It seems that Hosea, Ezekiel, and the author(s) of the Holiness Code use in common a tradition of covenant blessings.

The covenant is here modified not only by  $\square \} \omega$  but also by  $\square \} \imath \imath$ . The election of Israel can be found both in the Sinai covenant and in the Davidic covenant. M. L. Newman argues that Yahweh's making of a covenant with Moses recorded in Ex. 34:27 is just the same as he made with the Davidic king, and the expression  $\square \} \imath \imath$  in Ex. 19:9a shows some relation to the Davidic dynasty which the king serves as a covenant mediator.<sup>2</sup> It might be possible that the covenant in Sinai has a lasting element in the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, for Yahweh is faithful and all acts which he has done are in the context of covenant relationship. But there are a few explicit cases where the Sinai covenant is called

1. Cf. Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, pp. 275f.

2. M. L. Newman, The People of the Covenant, (New York, 1962), pp. 50f.; cf. J. R. Porter, 'The Succession of Joshua', pp. 123f.

the everlasting covenant. The everlasting covenant is, tradition--historically, found in the Davidic covenant in which the content of the promise is defined in the words that follow, the steadfast, sure token of grace vouchsafed to David (2 Sam. 7:8-16; 23:5; Ps. 89:27-37; cf. Isa. 55:3f.). The phrase 'the everlasting covenant' appears originally in 2 Sam. 23:5; it is also important to notice that the term  $\square \int 19$  occurs not less than 8 times in 2 Sam. 7:8-28. It is because the Davidic covenant has the quality of perpetuity, that Isaiah strongly urges his people to have faith in God who will protect Zion and the royal house in the time of crisis. P describes both unconditional covenants of God with Noah (Gen. 9:16) and Abraham (Gen. 17:13, 19) as everlasting covenants. Also in Ezek. 16:60, an everlasting covenant is to be established between Yahweh and his people. Whereas  $\square \int 19$  in Ezek. 16:60 is the object of the verb  $\square \int 19$  which is a characteristic of the Priestly school of writers, in Ezek. 37:26 it is the object of verb  $\square \int 19$  which is the favourite verb of Ezekiel for  $\square \int 19$ .

If 'the covenant of peace' is a stronger expression for the covenant, 'the everlasting covenant of peace' ( $\square \int 19$   $\square \int 19$   $\square \int 19$ ) is an even stronger expression for 'the covenant'. Ezekiel is not proclaiming two covenants, but one covenant with special emphasis on quality and validity. Thus he uses it when he speaks of God's salvation as a condition of things, something permanent.<sup>1</sup> 'Strictly speaking, God's saving act on behalf of his chosen people is not the making of the covenant, but the deliverance. For God's saving action in the Old Testament, the covenant is not foundation, but confirmation.'<sup>2</sup> As stated above, Ezekiel

1. Cf. Westermann, op. cit., p. 275.

2. Ibid.

mainly uses the Davidic tradition to confirm the new condition of salvation for the new Israel. This does not mean that he does not use the traditional elements of blessing such as in Gen. 49 and Lev. 26.<sup>1</sup> The tokens of grace which the prophecy of Nathan conferred on his house are now promised to Israel. This is a radical development of the prophecy of Nathan.<sup>2</sup> It is, therefore, for all Israel that the promise made to David is to be realized.<sup>3</sup> This everlasting covenant of peace indicates the new condition of the new Israel and also confirms the salvation of Yahweh for his people. This is a unique expression of the covenant by Ezekiel.

e). The promise of the divine presence

The climax of the future promise is that Yahweh's presence will be always in the midst of his people. The sign of the eternal presence of Yahweh in the midst of the people is his sanctuary, which is detailed in the final section of the book, chs. 40-48. The temple is the sign of the divine presence and this presence is the source and guarantee of all blessings and life.<sup>4</sup> 'Yahweh was a God who had not only called Israel to be his people, and bound them to himself by a covenant, but he had promised within this covenant to dwell among them, so that the divine presence would distinguish Israel from all other nations upon the earth'.<sup>5</sup> This divine presence

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1. Ibid., p. 283.

2. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, p. 240.

3. Cf. Reventlow, op. cit., pp. 47ff.; D. Baltzer, op. cit., p. 161.

4. Cf. G. H. Davies, in Studies in History and Religion, Festschrift H. W. Robinson, (1942), pp. 11ff.; R. E. Clements, God and Temple, (Oxford, 1965).

5. Clements, ibid., p. 135.

has in effect shown the kingship of the Lord in any given situation in Israel's history. Here in the context of restoration the divine presence confirms both the saving acts of Yahweh for his people in exile and the future state of Yahweh's salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Of the 74 occurrences in the Old Testament, in the book of Ezekiel the term  $\psi\tau\rho\lambda$  occurs not less than 23 times referring to the sanctuary and in 16 of these it is explicitly designated as Yahweh's. This word is derived from the root  $\psi\tau\rho$  which means either the idea of brilliance or that of separation.<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel prefers to use  $\psi\tau\rho\lambda$  for Temple. This word may, strictly speaking, mean 'a holy place or sanctuary', and not necessarily a building which is used as a temple. In older texts, the word stands parallel with 'high places' (Isa. 16:12; Am. 7:9), and it is used for the open air sanctuary under the Oak of Shechem (Josh. 24:26).<sup>3</sup> Yahweh's sanctuary is holy and glorious, and should be separated from all uncleanness and sin. But Ezekiel also uses the term  $\gamma\delta\psi\lambda$  to denote the way in which Yahweh (who resides in heaven) dwells on earth. This term  $\gamma\delta\psi\lambda$  seems originally to have been used for the temporary dwelling of a nomad (cf. Num. 24:5; Judg. 8:11), i.e., the tent; it is used and developed by the Priestly writers to express the dwelling place of God.<sup>4</sup> In the Tent or the Tabernacle, the people of Israel can consult with Yahweh and Moses serves as the spokesman before God (Ex. 33:7ff.). Therefore

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1. Cf. Davies, Exodus, pp. 49f.

2. Cf. N. H. Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, (London, 1944), pp. 24ff.; H. Ringgren, The Prophetic conception of Holiness, (1948); Vriezen, op. cit., pp. 297ff.

3. R. de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 282.

4. Cf. ibid., p. 295.

the term  $\gamma \supset \cup \lambda$  seems to be used here to indicate intimate communion between God and his people; thus the covenant formula follows to confirm the relationship.

'Israel's earliest faith in God was a faith in Yahweh who had delivered them out of Egypt, and who had made a covenant with them on Mount Sinai. In his theophany he revealed himself as transcendent to the world of nature and men, and yet by manifesting his presence and declaring his will he had shown himself present with men'.<sup>1</sup> When Yahweh, the God of the patriarchs reveals his being and his intention for his people to Moses, he promises that he will be with him (Ex. 3:1-15) and that a sign will be given, which already anticipates the future promise of a redeemed people worshipping God in his sanctuary.<sup>2</sup> All salvation-acts of Exodus manifest Yahweh's presence as the source and foundation of deliverance. Then the covenant event on Sinai ultimately confirms the divine presence among the people. Yahweh has promised that he will send forth his presence to accompany Israel toward the promised land. This is shown in the form of his glory abiding in the Tent and Tabernacle, and through the cultic practice in the Tent or Tabernacle, the promise of his accompanying presence is believed to have been fulfilled.<sup>3</sup>

When Israel settled down in Canaan there was an inevitable tendency to resort to the local gods who were thought to bless the land and to make it fertile. 'It was most especially in Jerusalem that a reconciliation with Canaanite ideas was made, where

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1. Clements, op. cit., p. 136.

2. Childs, Exodus, p. 74.

3. Clements, op. cit., p. 137.

the idea was taken over from the cult of El-Elyon that Mount Zion was to be identified with Mount Zaphon and formed a divine abode, even though such an innovation was subordinated to the traditional Israelite belief in Yahweh as the God of Sinai'.<sup>1</sup> So tradition—historically, the promise of Yahweh's presence has also found its fundamental relation in the David-Zion tradition. The consequent tendency to regard Jerusalem as a guarantee of divine protection and blessing cannot be separated from the belief that the Temple is the dwelling place of Yahweh. The Deuteronomists abandoned 'the notion of a symbolic unity between the earthly and heavenly abodes of Yahweh, and substituted the doctrine that Yahweh sent forth his name as a mode of his presence, to dwell in the temple'.<sup>2</sup> This theological interpretation of the cult represents a separate concept of the presence of God with his people. 'In this way Israel sought to protect the doctrine of Yahweh's transcendence and to insist that his dwelling with Israel is a gift of his grace. The destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C. confirmed the prophetic criticism of a false trust in it, and led to a crisis in Israel's faith in Yahweh. But for the fact that Israel was able to reconsider the words of the prophets in the light of events, Yahwism itself might have disappeared'.<sup>3</sup>

The divine presence is one of the important themes in the book of Ezekiel. Since the encounter with God in his call, Ezekiel acknowledges Yahweh's gracious presence in the foreign land and this is confirmed in the letter of Jeremiah to the exiles (Jer.29).

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1. Clements, op. cit., p. 137.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Belief in Yahweh's presence is not necessarily related to the land and the Temple. In a foreign land Ezekiel is called to be the prophet of Yahweh and carries out his mission for the exiles. This does not mean that Ezekiel wants to destroy the institution of the temple or the nation. On the contrary, he strongly insists that the temple is the holy dwelling place where Yahweh's glory will abide (cf. Ezek. 8-11; 40-48) and it is a symbol of Yahweh's presence which is a guarantee of the coming salvation and the promise of future blessing. In 11:16 he comforts the exiles with the assurance that in exile Yahweh will be, for a little period, their sanctuary. Although they cannot practise the cult in the temple or at any sanctuary they can worship and communicate with God without cult or building. Despite the fact that this presence of God in a foreign land is not a new idea, yet in this crucial time, belief in God without cult and temple is a great development in Israelite religion.

In Ezekiel 20:32-44, Ezekiel proclaims Yahweh's deliverance to the exiles and his purifying judgement of them in the wilderness. In his promise to the delivered people, Ezekiel declares that they will worship in the holy mountain (Zion tradition) where Yahweh will accept the sacrifice of the people. This is a different way of expressing Yahweh's restoration of the relationship with his people.

Now, here in 37:26ff., the promise of the divine presence adds a new element, i.e., perpetuity (forever). This promise is not only to confirm the salvation of Israel, but also to emphasize the perpetuity of the divine protection and blessing. This divine presence is expressed in the great vision in the closing chapters

of the book in which the temple is both the visible sign of the divine presence which is the source of life and blessing, and the centre of the cultic life of the people. 'The link between the presence of God and the life of land and people--an ancient motif of Temple ideology--is made clear by the vision of the river which flows out from the shrine and, increasing in depth as it flows, brings life to the Dead Sea and fertility to the land through which it flows (47:1-12). The city itself, set apart from the Temple by the placing of the Levites between the two areas (48:8-20), is also sanctified by the presence of God that it is possible for it to be renamed (a theme to be found elsewhere in Zech. 8:3 and Trito-Isaiah (62:4) as well as in the probably equally late Isaiah 1:26), with the emphasis upon the reality of his presence, "Yahweh is there" (Yahweh--šammā--the pun on the name of Yerūšālam marks a reinterpretation of the ancient name, 48:35).'<sup>1</sup>

#### 6. Summary

In spite of the probability that 37:15-23 has been expanded by some later hands, the expansion seems on the whole, not to contradict the main thought of the prophet. For the words, forms, and thought seem with identical to those of the prophet. Not only does the idea of the unification of the nation go through the passage, but also by dealing with the idea of unification the prophet portrays the outline of a new Israel living in the land. Therefore the passage seems justly to be taken as a unity in the general sense of the term.

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1. Ackroyd, op. cit., p. 112.

The account of the symbolic action of the two sticks consists of the description of the action and the interpretation of the action. This symbolic action is dealing with unification of the nation, but Ezekiel places his emphasis on the problem of how to create a holy people, by discussing the problem he presents his message of hope for his people. However, the problem is how can God create a unified nation for the people when their nation had collapsed and they were in exile. Therefore Ezekiel does not explain how to unite the separated kingdoms, but instead he proclaims that Yahweh will lead the people out of the nations and lead them back to their land. Yahweh will make them a single nation living in the land ruled by a king. At the same time, he will protect and save them from all temptations and backslidings and purifying them from all sins, so that a new Israel will appear as a unified nation and a holy people of God.

The unification of the nation is not worked out by negotiation with the remainder of the two kingdoms, nor is it any politician's reconstruction, nor the achievement of any saviour, but is completely due to Yahweh's mighty hand. It is a new creation of Israel which is brought forth by Yahweh's saving act. This hope of a united nation finds its background in Ezekiel's idea of the people of Israel, and the historical experience of the united kingdom in David's reign, and of schism. Ezekiel understands the achievement of the united kingdom in David's reign and the shortcomings of the schism. Not only do the Israelites dream of regaining the glorious and peaceful era of the Davidic rule, but also they place their hope in David's covenant with Yahweh. Thus, hope for a unified nation goes side by side with hope for an ideal kingship.

However, hope for a unified nation is naturally involved with hope for a new Israel. There are four indispensable factors in the promise of a new Israel as a nation. These are the land of Israel, the Davidic leadership, the covenant people, and the divine presence. These four factors are emphasized by the word  $\square \int 19$  in 37:24-28. These themes of hope are developed from the interpretation of the symbolic action of the unification; and the state of the new Israel which these themes describe is the final stage of Yahweh's salvation. The people not only hope to be delivered from the exile and settled in their land, but also hope to have a peaceful life in the land in the future. Yahweh will give them the promised land where they will live forever, set up a Davidic prince to rule over them, establish an everlasting covenant of peace with them, and establish his sanctuary in their midst forever. Peace, holiness, and perpetuity will characterize the restored nation. This is Ezekiel's promise of the new Israel. He employs the Exodus-Covenant traditions to convey the coming political and religious salvation (hope for salvation) and employs the David-Zion traditions to describe the new age of the new Israel (hope for the ideal nation).

## V. Conclusion

The foregoing study of the message of hope in the book of Ezekiel has attempted to find out what are the main themes of hope and how the prophet expresses them. In order to trace how Ezekiel employs the earlier themes of hope we have given a general survey of the messages of hope which appear in the works of Ezekiel's predecessors or the earlier traditionists. This survey has shown that although there are many different expressions of hope, there is a fundamental theme underlying all hopes, that is, the persistence of the divine purpose in history. All messages of hope for Israel are associated with Yahweh, his words and deeds; therefore, hope for Israel is nothing other than a faithful expectation of that which Yahweh has promised to his people according to their faith. Yahweh is God who not only delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt, but also bound them to himself by a covenant to establish them as his chosen people. It is within this covenant relationship that Yahweh has shown his salvation to his people and further to the whole world. In this salvation context, Israel has found life with a meaning and history with a purpose.

Yahweh has always shown his salvation at particular times, in the history of Israel, especially in times of crisis. At such a time, Israel is exhorted to look forward to Yahweh's mercy and intervention, according to his promise. Hope thus usually arises in the time of crisis. The last years of the nation and the following exile were the most crucial time in the entire history of Israel. It was at this particular time that Ezekiel revealed what Yahweh was going to do for the despairing exiles.

Yahweh is the sovereign and living God who will accomplish

his saving purpose in making Israel a true people of God. Beyond the past disasters and the present humiliation Yahweh will save his people and reveal his true nature to them and the nations so that all that Yahweh has done to Israel is part of the work of salvation. In his prophecies of doom Ezekiel shows that Yahweh is the righteous and holy God who will not overlook the sins of his people. But Yahweh is also the merciful God who has no pleasure in the death of sinners, but wills that they should repent and turn to him. As a matter of fact, Ezekiel undertakes a threefold task in this connection:-1) to analyse Israel's past according to the principle of divine sovereignty and judgement; 2) to demonstrate that the present calamity is the inevitable consequence of Israel's sin; and 3) to predict the course of future events on the basis of the purpose and the nature of God, and the anticipated response of the people of Israel. Two main points stand out in his message which he maintains against the rigorous opposition of the people. He proclaims that Jerusalem will be destroyed; he also proclaims that the exiles will return and the nation restored. His contemporaries for the most part accept the idea of a return, but this is while the city still stands; when the city is destroyed, they think that it is all over and that there is no hope at all for their future. It is important to note that there are these different emphases in Ezekiel's message, before and after the fall of Jerusalem.

But before the fall of the nation Ezekiel not only proclaimed the impending judgement that Jerusalem would be destroyed, and that Yahweh would scatter the people among the nations. He also proclaimed that Yahweh would be with his people in their exile. In Ezek. 11: 14-21, the prophet affirms that although the exiles are indeed far

away from the land and the temple, Yahweh is still with them and is a sanctuary for them in the foreign land (v. 16). This important promise is not only to affirm Yahweh's presence with his people independently from any sacred building and particular land, and it also involves a new concept of the relationship between Yahweh and his people, which is expressed in the possibility of a personal religion without a visible temple and a particular land. This recalls Jeremiah's letter (Jer. 29) to the exiles, in which Jeremiah asked the exiles to settle down, not only praying for themselves but also for their captors. God was not limited to Jerusalem and its Temple, he was the Lord of the world, who had a plan and a purpose that embraced the exiles in Babylon and his plan was for good and not for evil. Similarly, Ezekiel also tells his fellow-exiles that Yahweh is still their God and that the exile does not mean the end of the relationship between Yahweh and his true people, but is a necessary stage for the creation of a true Israel in whom the true way of life will be revealed. Yahweh will gather the exiles and bring them back to their land; and he will grant them a new heart and a new spirit so that they will be the true people of Yahweh. In fact, the rest of the message of restoration is directed to this purpose. Therefore, Yahweh does not completely cut off his relationship with his people even if he seems to have destroyed most of the external signs of Israelite religion.

From the despairing words in 18:25, 29; 33:10; and 37:11, it seems quite obvious that the exiles had no hope for future. They felt that they had lost all the external expressions of their life as a people and a religious community; they also felt that they had been cut off from their life with Yahweh. The threefold complaint

of Ezek. 37:11 seems to cover every part of the exiles' despair. They are lifeless, hopeless, and powerless, for the blow is so severe that they cannot understand the true meaning of the divine acts.

As we have demonstrated above, after the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel no longer condemns the people with severe words of woe and judgement, but comforts them with courageous words about Yahweh's salvation. He is charged with the task of preparing the faithful remnant of Israel for the coming restoration. Since they have hopes, they are enabled to face the reality of their situation. Without hope, which is based solely on Yahweh's promise, they would hardly be able to face the critical reality of life. So Ezekiel proclaims Yahweh's salvation, affirming that Yahweh will deliver the people of Israel from exile and return them to their land, that he will also punish the enemies and drive them out of the land and transform the former defiled land into a good land, and finally that he will establish them a holy and peaceful nation in which Yahweh's sanctuary will stand forever. All of this is completely based on the certitude and faith that Yahweh is a living Creator and the mighty Lord of history, who has an unbreakable relationship with Israel. All experiences of the judgement and the restoration had been interpreted as providing a means by which the nature of God should be revealed, a process by which both the people on whom it was exercised and also the nations as witness of the action should come to the acknowledgement of who he is. The frequently occurring recognition formula, 'You (or they) shall know that I am Yahweh' is enough to express the purpose of Yahweh's action and is the absolute ground of all events, and so the only source of hope. Here to believe in Yahweh is to have a hopeful understanding of the world, to believe

that all that happened and will happen has some meaning and goal. Thus the people may derive strength, patience, and expectation in the aftermath of national disaster. Here Ezekiel seeks to move Israel from death to life, from destruction to restoration, from despair to a buoyant faith about the present and future. His message of hope is to reassure his people about the present and the future with Yahweh who will fulfil his purpose of good to Israel.

So the main messages of hope are to affirm that the renewal of Israel will be brought about by Yahweh, to foretell how Yahweh will create a new Israel, and what kind of Israel that will be. Ezekiel's main messages of hope contain the following themes: the national rebirth; the destruction of the enemies; the deliverance from exile and the return to the homeland; the establishment of a united nation; the inner transformation of the people; the transformation of the land; the restoration of the Davidic monarchy; an everlasting covenant of peace; and the presence of Yahweh. Here it should be noted that the prophet does not proclaim his message completely at one time, but in fact, presents it in parts whenever he faces different situations. Although his message of future hope is confined to describing a future hope for Israel, it may be understood fully under the following heads.

First of all, Ezekiel assures his people that Yahweh will renew their life. The renewal of the people can be seen from two points of view in the book. One is that, as in all Ezekiel's prophetic predecessors and in Deuteronomic teaching, the renewal of Israel's life is by repentance (i.e., by turning to Yahweh). If Israel, individual as well as the corporate community, turns away from the perfidious life of sin and rebellion and turns toward the special

life of faith and surrender to Yahweh's sovereignty and communion with him, he will be merciful and gracious to Israel (cf. Ezek. 18; 33:1-20). If Israel repents and turns to Yahweh, there is always a hope and a new beginning for her. The other point of view is that the renewal of Israel's life is by Yahweh's gracious salvation and creation of Israel with a new heart and a new spirit. The idea of salvation before repentance can be found in Hosea's message of Yahweh's steadfast love in forgiving Israel's unfaithfulness and in renewing the covenant, and also in Jeremiah's message of the new Covenant. But the crucial point in Hosea's and Jeremiah's messages is the decision of the people to accept Yahweh's offer of forgiveness and salvation and to be brought by him into a new life; Ezekiel promises that Yahweh will transform a stony heart into a new heart of flesh, or create a new heart, and also bestow the divine spirit which will form and determine Israel's new life. Further, Ezekiel lays his stress upon God's being and his nature as the sole ground of Israel's renewal, which is one of the characteristics of Ezekiel.

In the vision of the dry bones (37:1-14) Ezekiel declares that Yahweh, the living God who can and will give new life to the dead, is the hope of Israel, and has the power to create a new Israel after the death of the nation. He will deliver his people out of exile and lead them back to their land. It is perfectly true that the political deliverance and the external restoration of the nation are very important for the future life of Israel; but the creative and transforming power of life comes from the spirit of Yahweh. The seemingly impossible renewal of Israel's life will be achieved by a miracle. The despairing people will learn hope, not because there is life in it, but because Yahweh promises that he is yet at

work in it and will awaken it to life. This promise of life is a revelation of grace and also a power of life for the people. This hope might answer the despairing complaints of the people and the people will understand that the present state is not the final one; life, not death, is God's will for his people. This vision does not introduce the teaching of the individual resurrection of the dead, but promises the rebirth of the people of God and her resurrection from the death which was caused by her sins. The renewal of the people is not only the restoration of Israel as a nation but also the restoration of Israel as Yahweh's chosen people.

Secondly, Ezekiel reveals how Yahweh is going to create a new Israel from the hopeless situation. The political salvation contains at least three main themes, i.e., the defeat of the enemies, the deliverance of the exiles out of the nations, and the return of the people of Israel to their land. Obviously, the liberation of the exiles and their return presuppose the collapse of the heathen power. And if the new Israel wants her restoration so that the people can return and live on their own soil, she needs to overcome or get rid of the threat of the enemy. In his judgement on the nations Ezekiel shows that Yahweh is the Lord of the nations, and that through the punishment of the nations and the salvation of Israel, the peoples will know that Yahweh is the Lord. Doubtless, the liberation from the exile and the return to their land is the great hope of the exiles, for they live in an unclean land where they suffer humiliation and they cannot practise their rituals there. Not only do they hope to have freedom they also hope to return to their land in which they can resume their status as the citizens of their nation. This political salvation involves some aspects of Yahweh's actions such as

the gathering and leading the people out of the nations and into the promised land, and the giving of the land.

The promise of delivering of the exiles to return to their land is based on the Exodus-Wandering-Settlement traditions. It is an act of salvation in which Yahweh shows himself to all peoples his power and plan, but at the same time it is an act of judgement as described in Ezek. 20:32-44 (cf. Ezek. 34:16ff.). The act of judgement in the wilderness recalls Hosea's new Exodus (Hosea 2) in which Yahweh would chastise his unfaithful people before he accepted her again to be his wife (his covenant people). Ezekiel's message of political deliverance implies the gathering of all Israelites who are scattered among the nations and this act of gathering is a new feature which is not found in the former Exodus from Egypt. Moreover, this promise presupposes that the hope for the future lies with these exiles who will become the true people of Yahweh and are the inheritors of the promised land.

Ezekiel also announces the inner salvation of the people, alongside the political salvation. Therefore he is concerned with the purification and even the new creation of the people. He proclaims that Yahweh will transform or create a new heart and a new spirit for the people so that they can be attentive to the will of Yahweh and will be an obedient people. Moreover, he will protect them to sin again and he establishes with them an everlasting covenant. It is important to see that Ezekiel's promise of the inner creation has affinities with the Covenant tradition by which he affirms that Yahweh will accept the people of Israel to be his people.

Finally, Ezekiel portrays the coming nation of Israel, which Yahweh will bring about by his saving work, to the people. The

deliverance of the exiles and their return to their land are the preconditions of the new Israel; and the renewal of the political and the cultic life of the people are indissolubly joined with the act of bringing back the exiles. We have shown above that Ezekiel is not only concerned with the political and spiritual salvation at a particular time, it is also concerned with the validity and perpetuity of the salvation. In other words, he portrays the blessed state of Israel in the new age.

After the time of purification in the furnace of exile, Yahweh will deliver his people and lead them back to their land; he will further establish them as a single nation in the promised land in which they can live peacefully and obediently. For Yahweh will give them a new heart and a new spirit so that they can walk in his way. Therefore Yahweh will accept them again to be his people and also establish with them an everlasting covenant of peace. Yahweh will set up a new Davidic prince to take care of his people and to carry out justice and peace in the nation. Yahweh promises to grant his spirit in the midst of the people. The divine presence is the source of blessing and life. Once again Yahweh's glory will return to the new Temple which will be at the heart of the restored community and Yahweh will make his abode in Jerusalem. The defiled land will be transformed and become a good land, fertile and productive and assured of safety for those who will dwell in it. There will be a holy people living peacefully in the blessed land of Israel forever. When Ezekiel describes the blessed state of the new Israel, he uses Davidic traditions to illustrate the conditions or perpetuity of the salvation even if he also uses some other traditions such as the covenant tradition and some mythological

materials (e.g., the river of Temple).

Generally, the theological basis for Israel's hope and expectation is found in the persistence of the divine purpose in history. But characteristically, Ezekiel does not explicitly speak of the salvation due to the love or grace of God, but he expresses it implicitly in the divine self-revelation formula, 'And they (or You) may know that I am Yahweh' (cf. Ex. 3:14). The essential emphasis of the salvation of Israel is on the absolute priority of divine action and this action is due to the majesty and honour of God himself, in which Yahweh has attached his name to the people of Israel, so that through the judgement on the nations and the restoration of his people, Yahweh vindicates the honour of his name and creates new knowledge of his own nature and being. It is the honour of the divine name that provides the particular grounds for the new act of Yahweh in which he gives his people a future and a hope. Although Ezekiel's message of hope indicates that the salvation 'for the sake of Yahweh's name' overshadows the idea of repentance and the idea of election and the other reasons of salvation, the salvation is indeed an act of mercy and grace brought about by the willingness of Yahweh to create his people again to be his holy people possessing a new heart and a new spirit and to have his people again in their land as a nation. Salvation here is still motivated by the particular relationship between Yahweh and his people. But the expression of Yahweh's salvation for his name's sake is very special presentation of the prophetic hope which is also found in Deutero-Isaiah (cf. Isa. 43:25; 48:11).

Ezekiel's promise of the divine presence is also very important feature of his presentation of hope. This new knowledge of

Yahweh is illustrated not only by his affirmation of the divine presence in the foreign land which is expressed in a life without a visible temple and a particular land, but also by the proclamation that Yahweh will set his sanctuary in the new Israel. No other prophet before him lays such strong emphasis on the idea of the divine presence which is the source of life and blessing. After the destruction of the nation, the Temple has become an important object of hope which is new. The promise of the divine presence is a striking comfort and encouragement to the exiles, for they now know that the return of Yahweh's glory to the new Temple is the sign of salvation and life. And the key to the significance of Ezekiel's religious programme for the restored nation, which is also a characteristic of Ezekiel's hope, is contained in the name which is to be given to the restored city of the nation, 'Yahweh is there'.

Since the salvation of Israel is derived solely from the divine action, the Davidic leader does not play a conspicuous role in the liberation and the restoration of Israel. He appears after the political salvation and the restoration of the nation; he is referred to only as an element in the ideal future. For the restored nation in the new age will require a ruler; but the supreme ruler would undoubtedly be Yahweh himself. The new Davidic leader will exercise his rule as Yahweh's representative upon the earth. He will be a servant of Yahweh and a good shepherd of the people. He will carry out the will of Yahweh and keep justice and peace in the community. Strictly speaking, he does not bring salvation and is not a saviour, and the salvation to come is the gift of Yahweh. What makes Ezekiel's idea of Messiah differ from that of his

predecessors (Isa. 9:2-7; 11:1-9; Jer. 23:5f.) is that the human ruler of the people has a much more subordinate role in the new order which God brings about.

It is clear that when Ezekiel describes the blessed state of the new Israel he refers to the David-Zion tradition, whereas when he declares the political salvation and inner renewal of the people he refers to the Exodus-Covenant traditions. This combination of the David-Zion tradition with Exodus-Covenant traditions is one of the most important features of Ezekiel's expression of Israel's hope. It is a new and creative synthesis of contrasted elements in Israelite tradition. Ezekiel is the prophet of restoration and hope, and the central feature of this hope is that Yahweh, by means of the glory which accompanies his presence will return to Israel and once again make his abode in Jerusalem whose name will be '  $\text{יְהוָה שָׁמָּה}$ '. Here, again, we have a creative synthesis of the prophetic expectation of deliverance with the priestly emphasis on the indwelling of Yahweh in the midst of his cultic congregation.

With regard to the problem of Ezekiel's usage of X'wJ and 7bD,<sup>1</sup> we shall briefly investigate this in the book to find out his idea of the ideal ruler. 7bD occurs not less than 29 times, 20 times for foreign kings, twice for Jehoiachin (1:2; 17:12), once for a king of Judah in general (7:27), 3 times for the past kings of Judah, and 3 times for the future kings (37:22ff.).

X'wJ occurs 37 times, 8 times for foreign rulers, 4 times for the ruler of Judah, 5 times for the princes of Israel, twice for the future ruler, and 18 times for the prince in chs. 40-48. It is characteristic that in chapters 40-48 the future ruler is generally called X'wJ, not 7bD; but both terms are also used in Ezek. 1-39. Ezekiel seems to prefer the term X'wJ for the coming ruler rather than the term 7bD.

J. Herrmann stresses that Ezekiel has a strong objection to 'der bisherigen israelitischen Königswürde und Königsart'.<sup>2</sup> Bertholet<sup>3</sup> and Cooke<sup>4</sup> both demonstrate that Ezekiel prefers the term X'wJ for the ideal ruler, not 7bD, for Yahweh alone is the king of Israel--the theocratic principle. Cooke notices that Ezekiel has a tendency to lower the claims of the temporal power.<sup>5</sup> Almost in line with the above scholars, Zimmerli<sup>6</sup> shows that Ezekiel,

1. Cf. Hertrich, op. cit., pp. 122f.; Harford, op. cit., pp. 65f.; Hammershainb, in Old Testament Prophecy, (1966), pp. 51-62; E. A. Speiser, 'Background and Function of the Biblical Nasi', CBO 25 (1968), pp. 111-7.
2. Herrmann, Ezekiel, p. 134.
3. Bertholet, op. cit., p. 28.
4. Cooke, op. cit., p. 84.
5. Ibid.
6. Zimmerli, Ezekiel, pp. 916ff.

influenced by the prophetic traditions of his predecessors such as Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, and Jeremiah (who have more or less the thought that the earthly monarchy can endanger the kingship of God), likes to use the title  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  for the kings in Jerusalem, but he does not fundamentally reject the title  $\text{ך}^{\prime}\text{ר}$  (cf. 37:22ff.). He also finds that there is some difference between the  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  in chs. 1-39 and in chs. 40-48; while in the latter the  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$ , who is not described as the ideal form shown in chs. 17, 34, and 37, serves as representative of the people in sacral service; in the former the  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  has more political significance and initiation.<sup>1</sup> Davidson also finds that although the term  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  is Ezekiel's favourite term to describe the ruler, yet he uses the two terms  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  and  $\text{ך}^{\prime}\text{ר}$  indifferently.<sup>2</sup> Hammer-schaimb argues that there is no difference worth mentioning in the meaning of the two words so that Ezekiel can use both words more or less indiscriminately.<sup>3</sup>

J. Boehmer holds that Ezekiel prefers the term  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  for the prince of Israel in contradistinction to the kings of the nations.<sup>4</sup> Eichrodt on the other hand demonstrates that Ezekiel usually reserves the title  $\text{ך}^{\prime}\text{ר}$  for the great kings of Babylon, and gives the title  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  to the kings of smaller states, with the exception of the banished Jehoiachin. When Ezekiel proclaims the coming kings, he employs the word  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  and avoids

1. Ibid., pp. 1227-29.

2. Op. cit., p. 272.

3. Op. cit., p. 60.

4. J. Boehmer, '  $\text{X}'\psi\text{J}$  und  $\text{ך}^{\prime}\text{ר}$  bei Ezechiel', TSK 73 (1900), pp. 112ff.

using the word  $\text{מֶלֶךְ}$ .<sup>1</sup> Eichrodt goes on to say that the title  $\text{מֶלֶךְ}$  is derived from the Canaanites and it is related to despotism and absolute rule and therefore the prophets have some sort of prejudice against using it to denote the chosen of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Eichrodt demonstrates that the term  $\text{מְשִׁיחַ}$  in the context of salvation does not suggest anything lower in rank than king, but does suggest that the office of the ruler in the newly created fellowship of the people of God is something totally different in nature.<sup>3</sup>

Herrtrich has supposed that the term  $\text{מֶלֶךְ}$  was originally more widely used than in the present text of the book, but that the terminology in ch. 40-48, which is believed to represent another and later stratum of tradition where  $\text{מְשִׁיחַ}$  is characteristic, has influenced ch. 1-39, and superseded  $\text{מֶלֶךְ}$  in several places. This can be supported by the G. text which has a tendency to avoid  $\text{מֶלֶךְ}$  in favour of  $\text{מְשִׁיחַ}$ .<sup>4</sup>

The above survey indicates considerable difference of opinion on the point at issue. It is clear that we cannot discuss this problem without understanding Ezekiel's view of the new Israel. In his portrayal of the new Israel, Ezekiel shows that Israel will have a new, peaceful life in her home-land under a new David who is the servant of the Lord as well as the one shepherd of the house of Israel; and the God of Israel will be with his people forever. It is important to stress that all the prophecies of Ezekiel are

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1. *Op. cit.*, pp. 476f.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 477.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Herrtrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-24.

proclaimed in context of a relationship between Yahweh the God of Israel and Israel the people of God. The fundamental premise to the new Israel is that Yahweh will be the God of Israel and Israel will be Yahweh's people. This new Israel will appear as one nation under one single leadership; and the leader is to lay emphasis on his leadership and responsibility, not on his majesty and power. He is the servant of Yahweh and also the shepherd of the people. By the other nations the leader of new Israel is seen as, or called, king, but by Ezekiel and his people the future leader is called

ח'שׁן, for ח'שׁן is used to denote the political leader who has been raised either by Yahweh or by his fellow-people to a position of leadership. A prince or ח'שׁן is usually seen as of lower rank than a king, yet the term may be used to designate the leader of a nation.

Hence the prince is of lower rank than the king. In the message of judgement before the fall of Jerusalem Ezekiel employs the term מלך for the great kings such as the kings of Babylon (17:12) and of Egypt (30:21f.), and the generally recognized leaders of the nations such as the kings of Kedar, Edom, and Israel; he uses the term ח'שׁן for the rulers of the smaller nations and the princes.<sup>1</sup> In the message of salvation Ezekiel prefers to use the term ח'שׁן, not מלך, to designate the ideal ruler of the new Israel, and this is because of the unique position of Yahweh.<sup>2</sup> He is the Lord of Israel and the ruler is only the servant of Yahweh and the shepherd of the people. Ezekiel no longer

1. Cf. 19:1; 21:30; 26:16; 27:21; 32:29.

2. Cf. 34:24; 37:25; 44:3; etc.

views the expected future ruler as an independent king, but as a  $\chi' \psi J$  (prince) of lower rank, dependent on Yahweh, who will be a shepherd subordinate to the divine supreme shepherd (Ezek. 34:23-24).<sup>1</sup> But it is wrong to think that Ezekiel does not employ the term  $\gamma \delta \nu$  for the future ruler because he fundamentally objects to the monarchical institution or because the title  $\gamma \delta \nu$  is of Canaanite origin. Although Ezekiel acknowledges that the monarchy might endanger the faith of Israel, nevertheless, he seemingly does not object to the institution itself. Yahweh is the true king of Israel, but there will be a regent or servant of Yahweh to rule over the people. There is no real tension between the monarchy and the theocracy, for in Ezek. 37:22f. he proclaims that in the future Israel, under the leadership of a new David, will be one nation, not separated into two states as in the past. The use of the title  $\chi' \psi J$  for the coming ruler is to indicate the office of the ruler<sup>2</sup> and it does not substantially suggest anything lower in rank than king as such.

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1. G. Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, pp. 149f.

2. It should be conceived of in terms of the relationship between God, the ruler, and the people. The ruler in the future age is not to be valued for his political achievement and sovereignty, but for his service and sacrifice.

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