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THE LATTER PROPHETS

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

MARVIN A. SWEENEY

I. THE ROLE OF THE PROPHETIC BOOKS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

The prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel constitute some of the most theologically innovative and daring books of the Hebrew Bible, and they are also some of the Bible's most enigmatic literature due to their literary complexity and their shifting historical contexts. They play a particularly key role in the literary structure and theological outlook of all forms of the Hebrew Bible, including both the Jewish Tanakh and the various versions of the Christian Old Testament. Many assume that the Tanakh and the Old Testament constitute the same Hebrew Bible, but this is true only to a certain extent. Both the Tanakh and the Protestant versions of the Old Testament contain the same books, but the Roman Catholic version of the Old Testament also contains Deuterocanonical or Apocryphal books that are grouped separately in Protestant Bibles and do not even appear in Jewish Bibles. Other versions, such as those of the Eastern Orthodox, Syrian, and Ethiopian Churches likewise contain Pseudepigraphical works that do not appear in those of the Western churches. Each Bible has its own distinctive structure and theological agenda. Because the books of the Prophets stand at the center within the literary structure of each version, they define to a large degree the respective theological outlooks and agendas of all versions of the Hebrew Bible in Judaism and Christianity.¹

Within the Jewish Tanakh, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are grouped together with the Book of the Twelve Prophets to form the *Nevi'im Ahronim* or "Latter Prophets." Together with the *Nevi'im Rishonim* or "Former Prophets" (Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings) they form the second of the three major sections of the Tanakh. The first, *Torah* or "Instruction" (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), presents the early history of the people of Israel together with the guidelines for establishing their social and religious life in the land of Israel. The second, *Nevi'im* or "Prophets," presents the period of Israel's and Judah's life in the land—from the time of Joshua, through the times of the Judges and the monarchy, and until the exile to Babylonia. The third, *Ketuvim* or "Writings" (Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Megillot/Five Scrolls, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, 1–2 Chronicles), includes various works that pertain to the reconstitution of the Jewish community during the early Second Temple period in the land of Israel along

the guidelines laid down by Mosaic Torah. Thus, the Hebrew acronym TaNaKh is derived from the first letter of the name of each of the three major divisions: *Torah*, *Nevi'im*, and *Ketuvim*. Altogether, the Tanakh presents the ideal Jewish community in the Torah, the disruption of that ideal in the Prophets, and its restoration in the Writings. As a part of the Tanakh, the Latter Prophets complement the critical history of the Former Prophets by presenting critiques of Israel's and Judah's life in the land of Israel together with projections of the reestablishment of the ideal Jewish community.

Within most versions of the Christian Old Testament, the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are grouped together with the books of Lamentations, the Epistle of Jeremiah, Daniel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets to form the Prophets, the last of the Old Testament's four major sections. The Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) presents the earliest history of the people of Israel in the context of the creation of the universe and the origins of humankind. The Historical Books (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther, 1-2 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith) present the history of Israel from the time of the conquest of the land of Canaan under Joshua through much of the second temple period prior to the emergence of Christianity. The Wisdom and Poetic Books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon) include works that address the perennial concerns of human beings, such as the character of G-d, the nature of the world, and the meaning of human existence.* The Prophets then conclude the Old Testament and point to a future beyond the old period of Mosaic revelation (the Old Testament or Old Covenant) to a new period of divine revelation (the New Testament or New Covenant) embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Interestingly, the structure and theological outlook of the New Testament mirrors that of the Old. The Gospels present the origins of Christianity in the life of Jesus; the Acts of the Apostles presents the history of the early Christian community following the lifetime and crucifixion of Jesus; the Epistles address the perennial concerns of the life and theology of the church; and the Revelation of John points to the future when the second coming of Christ is to be realized.

The prophetic books are constitutive for understanding the theological outlook of both the Jewish Tanakh and the Christian Old Testament in that they stand at the intersection of past and future within the structure of each. With their perspectives on the past, the prophetic books confront the reality of the exile of the Israelite and Judean nations from the land of Israel by presenting a theological explanation for the exile of the people and the loss of land, namely that Israel and Judah violated their covenant with YHWH in some way and thereby brought punishment upon themselves. Likewise, the prophetic books confront the challenges of the future by positing a means by which the covenant with YHWH, and indeed Israel and Judah as a people, could continue despite the exile, viz., YHWH will act to restore the people to the land and reconstitute the covenant with them. The major prophetic books thereby constitute a form of theodicy in that they take up the question of

*Editor's note: In accordance with Jewish tradition, Prof. Sweeney shows respect for the Deity by not spelling out divine names but rendering them as G-d and L-rd.

G-d's righteousness: Why did G-d allow or cause destruction and exile to come upon the people of Israel and Judah? By arguing that the people of Israel and Judah violated their covenant with YHWH, they conclude that G-d is just in punishing the people for wrongdoing. By arguing that G-d will ultimately restore the people to the land of Israel, they assert that G-d is just in maintaining the covenant. The prophetic books thereby create theological constructions of Israel's and Judah's past and future. They choose not to assign responsibility for evil to G-d but to the people instead. Each prophetic book presents its own unique theological perspective on the relationship between the people and G-d, including the character of the covenant, the nature of its disruption, and the means by which it will be reconstituted or reestablished.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOLARLY STUDY OF THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

Before turning to individual discussion of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, it is important to understand how the scholarly study of the prophetic books has developed through the course of modern times.² Modern historical critical scholarship on the Bible can trace its origins back into the Middle Ages, following the rise of Islam and the ensuing discussion among Muslim, Jewish, and Christian thinkers concerning the validity of their respective religious traditions and their understandings of scripture.³ First Jewish and later Christian scholars began to take up philological-grammatical study of the Bible in order to establish the integrity and historicity of the biblical text as the basis for the truth claims of their respective traditions. In both traditions, prophecy and the prophetic books played a major role. The medieval philosopher Moses Maimonides argued that prophetic experience represented the highest degree of spiritual and intellectual consciousness by which human beings could come to understand G-d. In keeping with his concern to repristinize Christianity, Martin Luther saw in the prophets the means to move from the Old Testament to the New, to convert Jews to Christianity, and thereby to fulfill the church's role to redeem the world.

Because of its preoccupation with empirical reasoning and the task of humankind to employ reason in an effort to bring about a moral world order, the Age of Enlightenment prompted further historical study of the prophets and prophetic literature as the prophets were considered the moral and spiritual exemplars of the enlightened human being. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the development of the field of comparative religions and the discovery and deciphering of texts from the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world prompted even greater efforts to study the prophets in their ancient historical contexts. Such interests were not entirely historical, however, as the thinking of scholars during this period was dominated by Protestant beliefs that the prophets were key to understanding biblical religiosity and that the prophets pointed ultimately to the development of early Christianity. This is evident in the work of Julius Wellhausen, who argued that the Mosaic Torah, the foundation of Judaism's system of thought, was in fact composed largely in relatively late times by priestly figures who projected a ritualistic and spiritually stagnant form of religion.⁴ Wellhausen posited that the

earliest and truly "authentic" forms of spiritual religion in the Hebrew Bible were not to be found in the Torah but in the prophets, who in turn provided models for Christ. Later scholars have noted that Wellhausen's reconstruction of Israelite religion supported a Protestant polemic against the Roman Catholic Church and Rabbinic Judaism. In Wellhausen's view, Christ was the religious and ethical heir to the prophets. Just as Christ had been betrayed by the Roman Catholic Church, so had the prophets been betrayed by Rabbinic Judaism. Although neither of these charges was true, the prevailing intellectual climate of Western Europe during the nineteenth century focused on a progressive movement away from the traditional beliefs and institutions of the past toward an "enlightened" ethical and spiritual monotheism of the future that was styled along largely Protestant lines. Consequently, Wellhausen's work provided an appealing model for a modern progressive theology, and it thereby was foundational in motivating modern historical study of the prophets.

Whereas Wellhausen provided much of the rationale for the modern scholarly focus on prophecy, Hermann Gunkel was a pioneer in the development of form criticism or *Gattungskritik*, the study of literary forms, genres, or types as the exegetical basis for the study of prophecy and prophetic literature.⁵ Gunkel was heavily influenced by the continued development of the comparative study of religions in relation to the ancient Near East on the one hand and by the focus on the study of folklore in German culture on the other. Just as German folklorists and linguists were collecting and studying the various types and functions of Germanic folk literature in conjunction with the unification and emergence of modern Germany, Gunkel sought to identify and study the literary forms in the Hebrew Bible that conveyed early Israel's self-consciousness as a distinctive people or nation with its own concept of deity. Gunkel believed that such cultural self-consciousness emerged at the earliest preliterate stages of a nation's development, and he therefore posited that the earliest literary genres were originally oral speech forms that only later had been recorded in writing after a long period of evolution in an oral tradition. Because of the prevailing belief that preliterate peoples were relatively primitive and incapable of expressing complex ideas or well-reasoned, lengthy discourses, Gunkel theorized that early speech forms must have been short, self-contained speech units that could be easily memorized by such simple folk and transmitted orally to others in well defined social or institutional settings in the life of the people. Much of his work focused on the tribal or clan folk tales of Genesis and other narrative books and the liturgical hymns of the book of Psalms. But he was especially instrumental in pointing to the fundamental genres of prophetic speech or oracles. Chief among them was the prophetic indictment form and the prophet's oracular announcement of judgment by G-d, in which a prophet publicly identified the wrongdoings of the people and announced the punishment they could expect from G-d. Such a perspective presupposed the prophet's inexplicable psychological experience of the divine and pointed to the role of prophets as critics of Israelite society.

Gunkel's work prompted a multitude of studies through the mid-twentieth century that focused on the identification, classification, and evolution of prophetic

oracular forms. Such work presupposed that the original oral speech forms had been modified to a certain degree over time and that they had been encased in much later literary settings by writers or scribes who did not always fully understand their original forms, functions, or settings in life. This meant that the original oral forms had to be reconstructed from their later literary contexts and that a great deal of literary material that had gathered around them at later times had to be dismissed as secondary or "inauthentic" deposits that frequently distorted or reinterpreted the original oracular forms. The identification of such later "editorial" additions constituted the basis of redaction criticism, which built upon earlier source-critical study of the Pentateuchal and Gospel literature in an effort to remove later material and thereby to expose the original "authentic" words of the prophets. Such later material was frequently judged to be theologically irrelevant because it represented the "dull and uninspired ritualism and dogmatism" of later scribes, who added their comments to the "pristine" prophetic oracles, and thereby associated them with the liturgies of the temple, the nationalistic aspirations of the Jewish people, and the legal concerns of the later priests. These concerns were deemed to be contrary to the spiritual and ethical teachings of the prophets, so that this approach reinforced the view that the prophets constituted a distinctive social movement that critiqued established societal institutions such as the monarchy, the temple, and legal institutions. Likewise, early redaction criticism reinforced Gunkel's view that prophets were exclusively speakers and not writers by positing a fundamental distinction between the oral speech forms of the prophets and written literary additions of the redactors.

As the form- and redaction-critical study of the prophets continued through the course of the twentieth century, scholars began to note the difficulties involved in reconstructing "original" oral prophetic speech forms from their present literary contexts and the supposedly later social settings that those literary contexts represented. Sigmund Mowinckel, for example, noted the relationships between prophetic oracular forms and the Psalms on the one hand (e.g., Psalms 60, 65, 82, 110) and the presence of hymnic materials in the books of the prophets on the other (e.g., Isaiah 12, 33; Nahum; Habakkuk 3).⁶ This led him to posit that prophetic speech was intimately related to the liturgy of the temple in that it was performed on cultic occasions, such as the New Year festival, as a means to express the experience of YHWH and YHWH's relationship to the temple and the monarchy. He also argued that schools of the prophets' disciples transmitted and reworked this literature and employed it liturgically in the context of the temple cult. Gerhard von Rad noted the use of tradition among the prophets—particularly the Davidic covenant tradition, which posits YHWH's eternal relationship to the Davidic monarchy and the temple in Jerusalem, and the Mosaic covenant tradition, which identifies YHWH as the authority who stands behind Mosaic law—as the basis for the relationship between YHWH and the people of Israel in the various prophetic traditions.⁷ Claus Westermann noted the relationship between the prophetic judgment speech form and the speech forms and functions of the Israelite law courts.⁸ Hans Walter Wolff examined the interrelationship between prophetic speech forms and the wisdom literature.⁹ All of these studies and those

of others raised questions about the identification of prophecy as a distinctive institution within Israel that stood apart from and critiqued other elements of Israelite and Judean society. Instead, prophets frequently stood within the contexts of other Israelite institutional settings and frequently spoke out in their support.

These studies pointed out the interrelationship between posited prophetic speech forms and the literary contexts in which they appear. By the late twentieth century, scholars were increasingly viewing prophecy not simply as an oral phenomenon in ancient Israel and Judah, but as a literary phenomenon as well, in which the later editors or writers of the prophetic oracles acted as creative theologians and authors who both preserved the original prophetic speeches and reinterpreted them or rewrote them by the addition of later material that highlighted their relevance for later times as well as for those of the original prophet. This is evident, for example, in the book of Isaiah, which combines material pertinent to the eighth century prophet Isaiah ben Amoz in Isaiah 1—39 with that of an anonymous exilic prophet in Isaiah 40—55 (who spoke or wrote at the time of Cyrus's accession to the kingship of Babylon) and of various writers in Isaiah 56—66, who articulated their messages in the early Persian period. There is also considerable evidence that material from Isaiah ben Amoz in Isaiah 1—39 has been supplemented and reworked by writers from the seventh, sixth, and fifth centuries B.C.E., and that the material in Isaiah 56—66 cites texts and themes from Isaiah 1—39 and expounds on them in a much later historical and literary context.¹⁰ Altogether, the present book of Isaiah applies the original message and words of the eighth-century Isaiah ben Amoz to approximately four centuries of Israelite/Judean history.

This points to the increasing emphasis on the study of the prophetic books as literature rather than on prophecy as an oral phenomenon or event. Obviously, such an emphasis requires a literary methodology that enables the exegete to assess the literary character and form of much larger literary units than those that Gunkel first envisioned, including entire chapters or groups of chapters and even entire prophetic books. Various methodological perspectives that focus on larger text forms are currently employed in the study of prophetic literature. Rhetorical criticism was originally developed in biblical studies by Muilenburg,¹¹ who attempted to analyze the poetic and thematic interrelationship of smaller formal units in an effort to determine the coherence of a prophetic text. It has been developed further by Tribble and others to include assessment of the impact on an audience that a large text unit might have when delivered orally or read in written form.¹² Form and redaction criticism have expanded their horizons substantially in the work of Ackroyd, Clements, the present writer,¹³ and others to include assessment of the literary form of entire prophetic books and the role of redactors as creative authors and theologians who shaped the present form of the prophetic books. Reader-response criticism has been developed by Conrad and others to evaluate the impact of a coherent prophetic composition upon a reading audience far removed in time and culture from that of the original writers.¹⁴ Canonical critics such as Childs posit the final form of the prophetic book as the only authoritative basis for scriptural interpretation,¹⁵ although this is disputed by others who insist that the prior history of the text must also be established and assessed.

Many scholars now argue that it is impossible to reconstruct the redactional history of the prophetic books with any certainty.¹⁶ This is due to the difficulties that scholars face in defining reliable objective criteria for establishing the compositional stages of the text in view of the fact that a skillful redactor can successfully conceal the literary tensions that redaction critics commonly use to identify the presence of redactional layers. Despite the difficulties, such attempts at literary reconstruction must nevertheless be pursued when possible. To abandon such attempts would result in the historical decontextualization of the prophets and prophetic literature, which runs the risk of distorting a prophet's message in relation to the subjective interests of the interpreter. Redaction critics must be aware of their limits and their own subjectivity, but the recognition of these limits does not entail abandoning the attempt. It simply points to the need for the fullest assessment possible of the literary form and character of the largest possible unit of prophetic literature, the prophetic book, as the basis for redaction-critical analysis. Once such analysis is complete, attempts at reconstructing compositional stages may commence, employing evidence provided by tensions in literary form—such as grammar, syntax, and word usage; generic characteristics that point to the presence of a multilayered composition; and thematic and historical content and their relations to known historical data from outside the prophetic book. In the end, the interpreter must recognize that without independent confirmation supplied by an alternative edition of the book—and such evidence appears in the two versions of the book of Jeremiah—all such results must be considered hypothetical. Nevertheless, they are absolutely necessary to assessing the function and message of the major prophets within ancient Israelite and Judean society, both within the lifetimes of the prophets and in the centuries that followed their careers.

III. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The book of Isaiah generally stands at the head of the major prophets in both the Jewish and Christian versions of the Bible, although one Talmudic tradition places it as the third book of the prophets, following Jeremiah and Ezekiel (*b. B. Bat.* 14b). The superscription in Isa. 1:1 identifies it as "The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." This is reinforced by superscriptions in 2:1, "The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem"; in 13:1, "The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah ben Amoz saw"; and references to the prophet's words and activities "in the year that king Uzziah died" (6:1), "in the days of Ahaz son of Jotham" (7:1), "in the year that King Ahaz died" (14:28), and "in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah" (36:1). All of these references indicate that the book is identified as a presentation of the words and activities of the eighth-century prophet Isaiah ben Amoz, who lived during the reigns of Uzziah (783–742 B.C.E.), Jotham (742–735 B.C.E.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.E.), and Hezekiah (717–687 B.C.E.). This would place the prophet historically during the years that the Assyrian empire invaded the Syro-Israelite region, destroying Aram (Syria) in 734–732 and the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/1, and subjugating Judah in 701 B.C.E.

Despite the presentation of the book of Isaiah as a portrayal of the prophet Isaiah ben Amoz, there is a great deal of evidence that much of Isaiah was in fact composed by authors working during the period of the Babylonian exile and beyond.¹⁷ The most telling piece of evidence for this conclusion is the explicit reference to King Cyrus of Persia in Isa. 44:28 and 45:1, who is identified as YHWH's messiah as well as the one who will rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. King Cyrus ruled Persia from 559 B.C.E. until his death in 530 B.C.E. and was especially known for his defeat of the Babylonian empire and peaceful entry into Babylon in 539 B.C.E., as well as for his subsequent decree that allowed exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the temple. Other indications include the portrayal of Babylon as the chief oppressor of Israel and Judah beginning in Isaiah 40, whereas Isaiah 1—39 focuses on Assyria; the portrayal of Babylon as an enemy that is about to fall in Isaiah 40—55, whereas Assyria is an ominous threat in Isaiah 1—39; the portrayal of Israel's and Judah's imminent return to Jerusalem and the restoration of the city in Isaiah 40—55, whereas Israel and Judah either experience exile or are threatened with it in Isaiah 1—39; and the very different literary and poetic styles of writing in Isaiah 1—39 and 40—66. A further complicating factor is that Isaiah 56—66 appears to presuppose the presence of the people in the city of Jerusalem. These chapters lack the consistent literary style, seeming literary unity, and overall optimism of Isaiah 40—55, and instead anticipate YHWH's judgment against the wicked within the people and among the nations.

Beginning with the medieval Jewish exegete Abraham ibn Ezra (1089–1164 C.E.), scholars have long suspected that the book of Isaiah was not the work of a single author. Although any number of early modern scholars address this issue, the most influential major study to demonstrate that the book of Isaiah contained the work of several authors was the commentary on Isaiah published in German by Duhm in 1892.¹⁸ Duhm argued that Isaiah was in fact the product of three major authors who wrote in different settings at different historical times. He argued that the work of the eighth-century prophet Isaiah ben Amoz is to be found exclusively in Isaiah 1—39, so that these chapters are identified as First Isaiah. The work of a second anonymous prophet from the period of the Babylonian exile who wrote in Phoenicia is found in Isaiah 40—55 and identified as Deutero-Isaiah (or Second Isaiah). The work of a third anonymous prophet who wrote in Jerusalem shortly before the time of Nehemiah in the mid-fifth century appears in Isaiah 56—66 and is identified as Trito-Isaiah (or Third Isaiah). In keeping with his methodological focus on the short, self-contained literary unit, Duhm argued that the book originally circulated as independent collections of the sayings of the three individual prophets whose words now appear in the book. In addition to several collections of oracles by Isaiah ben Amoz, Deutero-Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah, Duhm identified several anonymous collections in Isaiah 24—27; 34; 35; 36—39; and elsewhere. There was never any intrinsic relationship between these sections; they were simply brought together over time by a relatively mechanical process, so that they eventually formed the entire book of Isaiah by the late Maccabean (Hasmonean) period, about 70 B.C.E.

Like many scholars of his time, Duhm was much more interested in recovering the words of the "authentic" prophets of the book of Isaiah and much less inter-

ested in the literary character and redactors of the book other than as a means to study the individual prophets themselves. Many scholars followed Duhm's lead through the course of the early twentieth century in attempts to reconstruct a view of the prophets Isaiah ben Amoz, Second Isaiah, and Third Isaiah. But as research continued, several problems emerged. First of all, it became clear that Isaiah 56—66 was not the work of a single prophet, but of a variety of hands. In some cases, the writings of Isaiah 56—66, especially chapters 60—62, bear a great deal of resemblance to those of Deutero-Isaiah. But others, such as the portrayal of YHWH's destruction of Edom in 63:1–6 and the scenario surrounding the destruction of the wicked in Isaiah 65—66, differ markedly. Second, it is clear that compositions such as Isaiah 24—27 and 34—35 derive from a period much later than that of Isaiah ben Amoz, and perhaps even later than that of Deutero-Isaiah. Many argue that these works represent a form of apocalyptic literature that was written during the latest stages of the composition of the book. Third, it became clear that much of the material in First Isaiah apart from these apparently independent compositions, such as the portrayal of the nations flowing to Zion in 2:2–4, the oracle against Babylon in Isaiah 13, the oracle against Tyre in Isaiah 23, and countless other texts within Isaiah 1—39, are not the product of Isaiah ben Amoz but of writers much later than the prophet. Mowinckel argues that both First Isaiah and Second Isaiah are separate traditions, but that they were assembled by schools of the original prophets' disciples who supplemented the works of First and Second Isaiah and arranged Isaiah 1—39 and 40—66 into their present forms.¹⁹ Throughout the middle of the twentieth century, scholars tended to agree that both First and Second Isaiah were heavily redacted works that had to be critically analyzed in order to strip away the contributions of later redactors and so identify the original oracles of Isaiah ben Amoz and the anonymous prophet Deutero-Isaiah.

As redaction-critical work on Isaiah has continued through the latter part of the twentieth century, scholars have begun to note some deliberate arrangement of the materials in the book that points to an overarching theological message and perhaps to some relationship between the two parts of the book. Ackroyd argues that Isaiah 1—12 is shaped with the concerns of the Babylonian exile in mind, insofar as these chapters project an ideal future in which the exiled people of Israel and Judah would return to Jerusalem, and the nations would recognize YHWH following a period of punishment in which Jerusalem, Israel/Judah, and Assyria would suffer.²⁰ He likewise notes that Isaiah 1—39 is arranged to provide a deliberate contrast between the figure of King Ahaz in 6:1–9:7 and King Hezekiah in Isaiah 36—39, insofar as Ahaz refused Isaiah's guidance and led his country into disaster, while Hezekiah turned to Isaiah and to YHWH and thereby saved his city from Babylonian destruction.²¹ To the degree that Isaiah 1—12 addresses exilic concerns, this raises the possibility that the portrayal of King Hezekiah in Isaiah 36—39 is intended to serve as a model of piety for the readers of Isaiah 40—66.

Much of Clements's work on Isaiah 1—39 focuses on its redactional formation during the period of the seventh-century Judean monarch Josiah and the positive message of deliverance for Jerusalem and Judah that is evident in the Josianic

edition of Isaiah 1—39. But he likewise notes the presence of later theological interests, in that Isaiah 2—4 is arranged to address the problems of Jerusalem's destruction during the Babylonian exile by pointing to a bright future following a period of punishment.²² Clements in turn notes that various themes and motifs of First Isaiah are carried over into Second Isaiah, including the concern with Babylon as enemy (Isa. 13:1–14:23; 39:1–8), the return of the exiles to Jerusalem (Isa. 11:12–16; 19:23; 27:12–13), and the motif of Israel's blindness and deafness in Isa. 6:9–10; 32:3; 35:5 versus the motif of Israel's open eyes and ears in Isa. 42:18–20; 43:8.²³ All of this suggests to Clements that the "former things" that Deutero-Isaiah announces as having come to pass must refer to the prophecies of Isaiah ben Amoz. The book of Isaiah must be read as a single book in that Deutero-Isaiah points to the fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah ben Amoz. Childs likewise demonstrates that such a reading is possible based upon his own assessment of "the former things" of Deutero-Isaiah and the concern in Isaiah 1—39 to point to the restoration of Israel and the deliverance of the nations in the aftermath of punishment.²⁴

As a result of this earlier discussion, a great deal of current research focuses on the final form of the book of Isaiah. Scholars now address this issue from various perspectives. Overall, it points to new readings of the book of Isaiah that have significant bearing on the interpretation of its individual themes and texts. The book is clearly arranged to focus on the role of the city of Jerusalem in YHWH's plans for the world and to address some 400 years of historical experience as though it were the single vision of the eighth-century prophet Isaiah ben Amoz.

The focus on the city of Jerusalem in the book of Isaiah is evident from the formal and literary structure of the book. Although many claim that the structure of Isaiah comprises the three basic divisions identified by Duhm, that is, Isaiah 1—39, 40—55, and 56—66, this division is based not on the literary character of these sections but on their identification with historical figures who are postulated as their respective authors. Essentially, Duhm's argument is based on historical considerations pertaining to the composition of the book rather than on an analysis of its literary character and the means by which it presents its contents and message. Duhm's model employs redaction-critical criteria to define the shape and interpretation of the present form of the book, but redaction criticism requires that one first assess the present form of the text and then employ redaction-critical tools to establish its compositional history. The literary structure of the text and the stages of its composition are not one and the same. This is evident not only from these methodological considerations, but from the identification of a great deal of exilic and postexilic literary material in Isaiah 1—39 that demonstrates that the presentation of First Isaiah is shaped by many of the same concerns that were influential in the composition of Isaiah 40—66.²⁵

When the literary structure of the book of Isaiah is assessed according to its literary and formal characteristics, a two-part structure emerges that focuses especially on the role of Jerusalem in relation to YHWH's plans for the future of the world or creation. The first part (Isaiah 1—33) projects judgment and subsequent restoration for Jerusalem, Israel/Judah, and the nations, whereas the second part

(Isaiah 34—66) presupposes that judgment has already taken place and that the time for restoration is at hand. It functions as an appeal or exhortation to its audience, identified with Jerusalem and Judah, to adhere to YHWH's covenant and thereby to play a role in YHWH's plans for the future. Based on the superscription and the overall arrangement of the book, it may be characterized generically as, "The vision of Isaiah ben Amoz: Prophetic exhortation to Jerusalem/Judah to adhere to YHWH."

Isaiah 1—33 is especially concerned with articulating YHWH's plans for worldwide sovereignty at Zion/Jerusalem. It begins with a prologue to the book in Isaiah 1 that lays out the basic themes of judgment and subsequent restoration for the repentant righteous in Jerusalem. These themes stand as the basic message throughout the book as a whole, so that Isaiah 1 serves as an introductory paraenesis to the audience of the book to identify with the righteous and thus with YHWH's plans. Isaiah 2—33 then presents prophetic instruction concerning YHWH's projected plans that centers around the theme of the "day of YHWH," that is, pointing to the day when YHWH's plans will be realized. Within this section of the book, Isaiah 2—4 announces the preparation of Zion for its role as the center of YHWH's world rule by pointing to the nations flowing to Zion for YHWH's instruction or Torah as the goal of YHWH's efforts to cleanse Jerusalem of evil by punishment. The section thereby stands as an invitation to Jacob/Israel to join in this plan. Isaiah 5—12 follows by providing instruction concerning the significance of Assyrian judgment against Israel/Jacob: righteous Davidic rule will follow after the arrogant Assyrian monarch is brought down for his blasphemy of YHWH, who sent him against Israel in the first place. Isaiah 13—27 announces the preparation of the nations for YHWH's world rule, including individual pronouncements against the nations and a portrayal of YHWH's gathering of the nations and the restoration of exiles of Israel to Zion in the aftermath of punishment. Isaiah 28—33 focuses specifically on YHWH's plans for Jerusalem and culminates in the announcement that a royal savior will emerge in the aftermath of Jerusalem's punishment and the destruction of Jerusalem's oppressor.

The second part of the book, Isaiah 34—66, focuses especially on the realization of YHWH's plans for worldwide sovereignty at Zion and presupposes that the oppressor of Jerusalem, now identified as Babylon rather than as Assyria, is about to fall. Isaiah 34—54 provides the initial instruction concerning the realization of this goal. Within this section, Isaiah 34—35 presents the scenario by which YHWH will return the redeemed exiles of Israel and Judah to Zion, emphasizing the fall of Edom as the symbol of oppression; the day of YHWH for Zion's recompense; the need to read the book of YHWH (i.e., Isaiah) to realize that this is coming about; and portrayal of the joy of all creation as the exiles return in a new exodus to Zion with open eyes and unstopped ears along the highway through the wilderness. Isaiah 36—39 presents royal narratives concerning Hezekiah and the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem that point to the faithfulness of Hezekiah to YHWH—in contrast to the earlier rejection by Ahaz of YHWH's word through Isaiah—as a model for the restored community in Zion. Isaiah 40—54 draws on traditional themes, such as Jacob's exile and return to the land, Sarah's barrenness and

subsequent childbirth, the exodus through the wilderness, and the promise of covenant to Noah, to provide a lengthy instruction concerning the premises that YHWH is maintaining the covenant and restoring Zion. Altogether, this section argues that the restoration of Zion takes place against the background of the designation of the Persian king Cyrus as YHWH's messiah and temple-builder and the role of YHWH as creator of the entire universe. The second major section of Isaiah 34—66 appears in Isaiah 55—66, which constitutes a prophetic exhortation to adhere to YHWH's covenant. The exhortation proper appears in Isaiah 55, which assigns YHWH's eternal promise to David to the people of Israel/Judah at large and calls upon the people to join in a relationship that is as secure as all creation. Isaiah 56—66 then substantiates this exhortation by pointing to the need for righteousness on the part of the people as the final stages of YHWH's plans come to pass, including the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion and the realization of YHWH's kingship in Zion.

This overarching structure and the contents of Isaiah clearly presuppose the final form of the book, which is likely the product of the postexilic period, the fifth-century B.C.E. or later, when the Jewish community in Jerusalem was restored and the temple rebuilt. It addresses the hopes and aspirations of the community that looked to YHWH as creator and G-d of human events, who would eventually manifest divine sovereignty in Zion, or the Jerusalem temple. Nevertheless, a great deal of earlier material, written over the course of some 400 years or more, may be identified within the book. Although opinion is divided, scholars generally accept at least three, and perhaps four or more, major stages or periods of composition. The first is that of Isaiah ben Amoz from the eighth century B.C.E., whose works are found throughout Isaiah 1—33. They emphasize the threat of Assyrian invasion as YHWH's punishment of both Israel and Judah and the need for righteous rule on the part of Judah's monarchs. The second, which is not accepted by all scholars, is a late-seventh-century edition of the book that is identified with the reign of King Josiah of Judah (639–609 B.C.E.) and was designed to employ the prophecy of Isaiah in support of Josiah's program of national restoration and religious reform. This material appears throughout Isaiah 1—39, especially in Isaiah 5—12, 32, and 36—37. The third is the sixth-century edition of Isaiah that is based upon the writings of the anonymous prophet of the exile. This edition encompasses Isaiah 1—55, with special emphasis on chapters 2, 13, 24—27, 35, 40—55, and 60—62, and asserts that YHWH has placed Cyrus on the throne to redeem Israel from Babylon and return the people to Jerusalem. Finally, the fifth-century edition, identified especially with Isaiah 56—66 and materials in chapters 1, 33, and 34, calls upon people to adhere to YHWH's covenant until the wicked are destroyed and YHWH's reign is realized.

The understanding of the covenant between the people of Israel/Judah and YHWH is based upon the Davidic promise tradition, including YHWH's choice of the house of David to rule eternally and YHWH's choice of Jerusalem or Zion as the center for that rule. The book thereby portrays YHWH in royal terms as the righteous monarch of all creation and the nations at large. But the character of the book of Isaiah as a theodicy that justifies YHWH's actions in a time of disaster is

evident in the means by which it employs the royal Davidic tradition to come to terms with the reality of the Babylonian exile, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the end of the Davidic dynasty. It argues that the Davidic covenant has been transformed and that this transformation was a part of YHWH's intention from the beginning. Isaiah's vision of YHWH in the temple in Isaiah 6 makes this clear when YHWH, portrayed as a monarch surrounded by the royal court of seraphim, announces plans to bring punishment upon the people until only a tenth remain to serve as the "holy seed" for restoration. This theme permeates the entire book, insofar as the book as a whole portrays the punishment and eventual restoration of the "remnant" of the people in Zion. It is especially revealing when it is applied to the royal oracles of Isaiah ben Amoz in that the various literary and historical contexts through which the book has passed provide a changing interpretative framework by which the oracles of Isaiah ben Amoz are to be read. Isaiah's oracle concerning the anticipated righteous Davidic monarch in Isa. 8:16-9:6, for example, probably looks to Hezekiah as that figure who will enable the people to move from a period of distress, darkness, and gloom into a period of light when the oppression of the Assyrians will come to an end.

When read in relation to a seventh-century Josianic edition of Isaiah, however, the parameters by which Isa. 8:16-9:6 is interpreted change. The oracle still looks forward to a period of light when Assyrian oppression will come to an end, but the righteous Davidic monarch, who will establish the throne of David and the kingdom in justice and righteousness, is now to be identified with Josiah rather than with Hezekiah. When Isa. 8:16-9:6 is read in relation to the sixth-century edition of Isaiah, the interpretative parameters change once again. The emergence from darkness into light takes place after the downfall of the Babylonian rather than the Assyrian oppressor, and the righteous monarch is Cyrus of Persia, not Josiah or Hezekiah, insofar as the Davidic covenant is applied to the people at large and not to the Davidic king. Finally, when Isa. 8:16-9:6 is read in relation to the fifth-century edition of the book, the emergence from darkness into light takes place when the wicked—both without and within the people—are destroyed, the nations stream to Zion to behold the light of Zion and the glory of YHWH, and YHWH's kingship is established in heaven and on earth.

This example may be multiplied with any number of texts that derive from Isaiah ben Amoz—and even from later writers of Isaiah—as the oracles of the book are reread, reinterpreted, and reapplied to later situations by later writers who believed that the prophet Isaiah ben Amoz was speaking, not exclusively about the eighth century B.C.E., but about their own times as well. In this regard, the expression in 40:8 points to the basic hermeneutical principle that guides later readers and writers of the book of Isaiah, "the word of our G-d will stand forever."

IV. THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

The book of Jeremiah follows Isaiah as the second of the Latter Prophets in the Tanakh, although some Rabbinic authorities place it as the first of the Latter

Prophets (*b. B. Bat.* 14b). Jeremiah stands as the second book of the Prophets following Isaiah in the Christian Old Testament. The book of Lamentations—traditionally ascribed to Jeremiah—follows, and many traditions include the apocryphal books of Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah as well. The superscription of the book in 1:1–3 identifies it as “the words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin” and further specifies that the word of YHWH first came to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of the reign of King Josiah of Judah (ca. 627–626 B.C.E.), and that it also came during the reign of Jehoiakim (609–598/7 B.C.E.) and up until the captivity of Jerusalem in the eleventh year of Zedekiah (587/6 B.C.E.). Jeremiah is thus placed historically from the reform of King Josiah (627 B.C.E.), through the Babylonian subjugation of Judah in 605, the Babylonian deportation of King Jehoiachin in 597, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587/6, and the aftermath of the assassination of Gedaliah, the Babylonian appointed governor of Judah, in 582 B.C.E.

Study of the book of Jeremiah is both complicated and enhanced by the fact that the book appears in two distinct but related versions—the Greek version of the Septuagint (LXX) and the Hebrew version of the Masoretic text (MT).²⁶ Although the two versions contain much of the same material, the LXX version of Jeremiah is approximately one-eighth shorter than the MT, and after 25:13a they differ markedly in their order and arrangement of the materials. The most noteworthy difference between them is the placement of the oracles against the nations. They appear as chapters 46–51 in the MT and thereby stand nearly at the conclusion of the book immediately prior to the narrative concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people to Babylon in Jeremiah 52. In contrast to the MT, they appear as 25:14–31:14 in the LXX and thereby constitute the center of the book, so that MT Jeremiah 25–45 appears as LXX Jeremiah 32–51. The narrative in Jeremiah 52 likewise concludes the LXX version.

Scholars generally maintain that the two versions have independent transmission histories. MT Jeremiah appears to be an expanded and reworked version of the Hebrew text that stands behind LXX Jeremiah, but there are sufficient exceptions to this rule to indicate that both have gone through an extensive editorial history from the time that each was initially composed. Most scholars believe that LXX Jeremiah is the earlier version that was composed in Egypt at some time during the period 250–150 B.C.E. The earliest Greek manuscripts of the text are the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus, both of which are Christian manuscripts written in the fourth century C.E. MT Jeremiah was likely composed in Babylonia during the late second temple period, but the earliest Masoretic Hebrew manuscripts of the book date to the ninth and tenth centuries C.E. Both versions appear to be attested in Qumran manuscripts of the book. The oldest of the Qumran manuscripts is 4QJer^a, which dates to ca. 225–175 B.C.E. It contains Jer. 7:1–2, 15–19; 7:28–9:2 (minus 7:30–8:8); 9:7–15; 10:9–23; 11:3–20; 12:3–16; 12:17–13:7; 13:27–14:8; 15:1–2; 17:8–26; 18:15–19:1; 20:15–18; 22:3–16; and 26:10, and appears to correspond well to MT Jeremiah, although it includes many corrections. 4QJer^b dates to the mid-second century B.C.E., and includes Jer. 9:22–10:18; 43:3–9; and 50:4–6. The first fragment reflects the wording and verse order of LXX

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Jeremiah. 4QJer^c dates to the Herodian period (30–1 B.C.E.) and contains a proto-MT version of Jer. 4:5, 13–16; 8:1–3; 8:20–9:5; 10:12–13; 19:8–9; 20:2–5, 7–8, 14–15; 21:6–10; 22:4–6, 10–28; 25:7–8, 15–17, 24–26; 26:10–13; 27:1–3, 14–15; 30:6–31:14; 31:16–26; and 33:16–20. Finally, 2QJer dates to the first century C.E. and contains a proto-MT version (with some variations) of Jer. 42:7–11, 14; 43:8–11; 44:1–3, 12–14; 46:27–47:7; 48:7, 25–39, 43–45; and 49:10. The Qumran manuscripts indicate that Hebrew texts of both versions of Jeremiah were in existence by the second century B.C.E., and they continued to develop after that time.

Study of the literary structure and theological outlook of the two versions is still relatively undeveloped. Many scholars accept the premise that LXX Jeremiah is arranged according to a relatively standard structure of prophetic books, such as Isaiah 1–39, Ezekiel, and Zephaniah, a structure that portrays an eschatological scenario of judgment against Israel/Judah (LXX Jeremiah 1–25), judgment against the nations (LXX Jeremiah 26–31; cf. MT Jeremiah 46–51), and salvation for both (LXX Jeremiah 32–52; cf. MT Jeremiah 25–52). But this pattern is problematic, in relation both to LXX Jeremiah and to other prophetic books. In LXX Jeremiah it does not account for the presentation of the Babylonian threat against Jerusalem and Judah in the third part of the book; oracles of restoration or salvation represent only a very limited part of this material. Likewise, although the pattern seems to hold for Ezekiel, it is not so clearly evident in other prophetic books. Isaiah 1–39 contains oracles of both punishment and restoration of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem in Isaiah 1–12; oracles of punishment against the nations as well as restoration in Isaiah 13–27; and a great quantity of judgment material directed to Jerusalem in Isaiah 28–31, followed by restoration in Isaiah 32–39. Likewise, Zephaniah contains oracles of punishment against the entire world as well as against Judah in Zeph. 1:1–2:3. The oracles against the nations in Zeph. 2:4–15 are directed only to the enemies of Judah, and Zeph. 3:1–20 combines themes of punishment and restoration for Jerusalem. Other principles underlie the structure of Isaiah 1–39 and Zephaniah that point to noneschatological concerns. This is especially clear when one realizes that the nations are not those of the entire world but are limited to specific spheres, such as the Persian empire in Isaiah 1–39 and the enemies of King Josiah in Zephaniah. In the case of Isaiah, the structure of the book points to the realization of YHWH's kingship in the world as a consequence of the emergence of Persian power; in the case of Zephaniah, it calls for adherence to Josiah's reform. The judgment against the nations points to Persian domination in the world in Isaiah, and Judean resurgence over its neighbors and enemies in Zephaniah.

Similar principles may well inform the structure and presentation of both versions of Jeremiah. In the case of LXX Jeremiah, chapters 1–25 relate the prophet's early career, in which he argues that judgment is coming upon Jerusalem and Judah for abandoning or misconstruing their relationship with YHWH. The oracles against the nations in LXX Jeremiah 26–31 (Elam, Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Kedar, and Damascus) concern nations that would have comprised the general sphere of Judah during the period of the Babylonian empire and indicate the greatest potential extent of the Babylonian empire, although

Egypt was never taken. LXX Jeremiah 32—52 then portrays the realization of Jeremiah's earlier oracles, as the Babylonian empire ultimately destroyed Judah and Jerusalem, leaving Jeremiah in Egypt at the end of his life and the people of Jerusalem and Judah in Babylonian exile. This arrangement shows an interest in validating the message of Jeremiah and in portraying the reversal of Israel/Judah to their original state at the time of the exodus, that is, a people living in exile in a foreign land.

The present arrangement of MT Jeremiah includes the various visions, oracles, and laments of Jeremiah from his early career—perhaps from the time of Josiah and through the time of Zedekiah—in chapters 1—24. This material presents a highly critical view of Jerusalem, Judah, and the monarchy that anticipates YHWH's judgment against the people, although this section also looks forward to the time when YHWH will raise "the righteous branch" (that is, the Davidic monarch), who will preside over a period of peace and security in the land (23:5—6). Jeremiah 25—45 then presents a narrative account of the prophet's speeches and activities from the time of Jehoiakim, through the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem, to the aftermath of Gedaliah's assassination, when Jeremiah was taken to Egypt against his will in order to live out his days criticizing those who abandoned Judah. Again, this material presents a largely critical view of Judah. But Jeremiah 30—33 points to the ultimate return of the people to the land and the establishment of a "new covenant" between YHWH and the people in which the Torah will be written upon their hearts and the "righteous branch" of David will rule in peace and security. The oracles against the nations in chapters 46—51 indicate that YHWH's judgment is to be equated with the rise of the Persian empire (cf. Isaiah), in that the nations listed were all subject to Persia in the early second temple period. Likewise, the nations mentioned in 25:13b—38, which are missing in LXX Jeremiah, point to Persian hegemony in a section that introduces the Jeremiah narratives as well as the oracles against the nations. Altogether, these references indicate that judgment is coming against Judah and the nations in the form of the Babylonian empire but that the Persians will see to the establishment of YHWH's punishment over Babylon as well. MT Jeremiah concludes with the notice of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile drawn from 2 Kings 24:18—25:30.

This arrangement is based largely on thematic and generic grounds, and many have argued that it reflects the compositional history of the book. The structure of MT Jeremiah appears to presuppose a chronological principle, but there are numerous repetitions, such as the presentation of Jeremiah's temple speech in Jeremiah 7 and the narrative concerning his trial for sedition that took place as a result of this speech in Jeremiah 26. The book begins with a narrative concerning his appointment by YHWH to serve as a prophet to the nations, which many associate with his birth or his youth, and it continues through the latter stages of his lifetime in Egypt in chapter 45. The oracles against the nations in Jeremiah 46—51 are to be realized only in the future or beyond the lifetime of the prophet. The narrative in chapter 52 summarizes the state of affairs for Jerusalem and Judah at the end of Jeremiah's lifetime. As in LXX Jeremiah, MT Jeremiah traces a process by which

Jeremiah and the people of Israel/Judah return to their origins in exile outside of the land of Israel.

There has been an extensive discussion throughout the twentieth century concerning the composition of Jeremiah. In keeping with the interests of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much of the debate initially focused on attempts to reconstruct a picture of the historical prophet Jeremiah ben Hilkiah. The issue is complicated, however, in that the book presents the scribe Baruch ben Neriah as the close associate of Jeremiah who wrote the prophet's words for him on various occasions, as in Jeremiah 36 (cf. chap. 45), when Jeremiah was prohibited from speaking publicly by the king. Consequently, there is a great deal of speculation that Baruch ben Neriah could be the redactor who composed an early version of the book.

The most influential study of the early twentieth century is that of Sigmund Mowinckel, who identifies four major sources within the book of Jeremiah.²⁷ Source A is the poetic material of Jeremiah 1–25, which Mowinckel identifies as the words of the prophet himself, or at least presentations of the prophet's oracles. Source B is the biographical prose material in Jer. 19:1–20:6; 26; 28–29; and 36–44, which was written by an admirer of the prophet, whom Mowinckel and others identify as Baruch ben Neriah. Source C is the sermonic prose material in Jer. 7:1–8:3; 11:1–14; 18:1–12; 21:1–10; 25:1–11a; 32:1–2, 6–16, 24–44; 34:1–35:19; and 44:1–14, which is similar to sermonic material in the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History. Source C also includes the various superscriptions that appear throughout the book and the prose material in 3:6–13; 29:1a, 3–9, 21–23; and 45. Source D comprises the oracles of consolation in Jeremiah 30–31, which must derive from the postexilic period. Including the oracles against the nations in Jeremiah 46–51 and the narrative drawn from Kings in Jeremiah 52, the entire book was edited and assembled into its final form at some point during the postexilic period.

Subsequent scholarship has struggled with the question of reconstructing the historical prophet from the later material of the book. For the most part, studies after Mowinckel note that the distinctions between his sources tend to blur under closer examination, as they seem to have a great deal in common with each other. John Bright questions the distinction between Mowinckel's sources B and C in that their vocabulary, modes of expression, and concepts appear to have a great deal in common, prompting him to argue that they represent a single literary stream by which the words of Jeremiah are passed down.²⁸ Nicholson argues that both B and C are Deuteronomistic sources that were composed by Levitical circles in Babylonia who employed the figure of the prophet as a literary mouthpiece to articulate Deuteronomistic teachings in the postexilic Jewish community.²⁹ The sermonic forms employed by these circles point to the origins of the Jewish synagogue as an outgrowth of Levitical teaching. A highly influential study published in German by Weippert argues that the prose material of Jeremiah is Deuteronomistic and that it is rooted in the poetic oracles of source A that Mowinckel identifies with the words of Jeremiah.³⁰ This of course points to Jeremiah and his followers as the authors of the prose material and recapitulates in modern form the traditional view that Jeremiah wrote both his book and the books of Kings.

Holladay also notes the affinities between the poetic and prose materials of Jeremiah, and argues that the prose sermons constitute Jeremiah's public statements that challenge the views put forward in the public reading of the book of Deuteronomy every seven years.³¹ Carroll notes the difficulties in penetrating the heavily redacted book and argues that these difficulties make it impossible to reconstruct an accurate picture of the historical prophet distinct from the redactional presentation in the current form of the book.³² Carroll maintains that Baruch is a creation of the Deuteronomic writers of the book to assist in their presentation of a largely fictional account about the prophet. McKane contends that Jeremiah 1—20 contain the "authentic" words of the prophet but that the book must be considered as a "rolling corpus" developed in a sustained but piecemeal fashion as later writers continued to add their exegetical and editorial comments to the original "kernels" of Jeremiah.³³

Scholarly discussion of Jeremiah clearly points to a great deal of difficulty in establishing the literary history of both versions of the book. Overall, both LXX Jeremiah and MT Jeremiah are heavily edited compositions that reflect the theological and historiographical perspectives of the later writers who composed them. Both versions attempt to portray Jeremiah as a sort of "second Moses,"³⁴ who served as a prophet for a forty-year period; promulgated Mosaic Torah as the basis for the relationship between YHWH and the people; suffered continuous abuse, isolation, and rebellion in carrying out his prophetic role; and ultimately died outside the land of Israel. As noted earlier, there is a sense of reversal in the presentation of Jeremiah as well, in that unlike Moses, who led the people out of Egypt to the promised land, Jeremiah presided over a period in which the people were removed from the land of Israel to exile in Egypt and Babylonia. In this regard, the book of Jeremiah constitutes a type of theodicy analogous to that of Isaiah, in that Jeremiah attempts to portray the disasters that overtake the people of Judah—the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the exile of the people—as righteous acts of YHWH. By defining adherence to YHWH's covenant expressed through Mosaic Torah as the criterion for the people's welfare, the book of Jeremiah overcomes the common perception that YHWH would protect the people, Jerusalem, and the temple by arguing that the people had violated the terms of their relationship with YHWH and earned exile from the land as a consequence of their actions. It thereby attempts to protect YHWH by portraying the deity as righteous and the people as guilty.

This portrayal of Jeremiah, YHWH, and the events of the time constitutes a theological construct developed by the composers of the book. The extent to which it represents a historically accurate portrayal of the views of the prophet is the subject of much discussion. Various features of the prophet and his thinking, especially his priestly or Levitical identity and his pro-Babylonian political stance, emerge from the book and point to the basis for reconstructing a portrait of the prophet. Jeremiah is a Levitical priest of the Elide line, which once served in the sanctuary at Shiloh during the premonarchic period (1 Samuel 1—3) but was banished to the village of Anathoth when King Solomon expelled the Elide priest Abiathar in favor of Zadok, apparently the founder of the Zadokite high priestly line.

(1 Kings 2:26–27). Jeremiah refers to the destruction of the temple at Shiloh, an event that is not portrayed elsewhere in the Bible, as part of his diatribe against those who felt that YHWH would protect the temple in Jerusalem (Jer. 7:1–8:3). He likewise refers to Samuel (who was connected with Eli) and Moses as intercessory figures who, despite their standing, would not be able to deliver Jerusalem from its fate. His vision of the almond rod (Jer. 1:11–12), the boiling pot that represented the enemy from the north (1:16), and the baskets of good and bad figs (24:10) all indicate his priestly role. The almond rod represents the Levitical staff of the priests (Num. 17:1–11); the Levitical priests supervised the boiling of meat in pots as part of the sacrificial ritual (1 Sam. 2:11–17; Ezek. 24:1–14); and the reception and evaluation of fruit offerings at the temple was part of the priestly duties (Num. 18:1–31; Deut. 14:22–29; 18:1–5). Jeremiah's use of stereotypical lamentation language in his so-called "confessions" or "laments" (Jer. 11:18–12:6; 15:10–21; 17:14–18; 18:18–23; 20:7–18) is hardly an indication of later authorship as many claim, but may be expected from a priest who was called upon to perform such ritual duties as part of the temple liturgy in times of distress. Finally, the public teaching of Mosaic Torah is also a part of the Levitical duties (Deut. 31:9–13). It would serve as a basis for Jeremiah's critique of the people and the monarchs insofar as the Levitical priests were to supervise the writing and reading of the Torah by the king (Deut. 17:18–20).

Jeremiah is portrayed as a prophet with many enemies, but this may also be a component of his Elide priestly identity and his relationship to King Josiah's reform. His enemies include King Jehoiakim as well as men from his hometown of Anathoth (Jer. 11:1–23, esp. vv. 21–23). According to 2 Kings 23:28–30 (cf. 2 Chron. 35:20–27), Josiah closed all sanctuaries outside of Jerusalem and called for the Levites to serve in Jerusalem. The Levites refused, and Jeremiah's appearance in Jerusalem about this time may well explain the hostility with which he was viewed by his colleagues in Anathoth. Furthermore, Jeremiah's consistently pro-Babylonian political message, insofar as he called for Judah's submission to Babylon (Jeremiah 27–28) reflects the policy of King Josiah, who died at Megiddo in 609 B.C.E., attempting to stop the Egyptians from advancing north to oppose the Babylonians in their fight against Assyria at Haran.³⁵ King Jehoiakim, after all, was a pro-Egyptian puppet placed on the throne by Pharaoh Necho in 609 B.C.E., following Josiah's death. This political perspective is also evident in Jeremiah's close ties with the family of Shaphan: Ahikam ben Shaphan saved Jeremiah from execution for sedition as a result of his temple sermon in Jeremiah 26; Elash ben Shaphan in Jeremiah 29 conveyed Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon advising them to build lives in Babylonian exile; Gemariah ben Shaphan provided the house in which Baruch read Jeremiah's scroll to all the people in Jeremiah 36; and Gedaliah ben Ahikam ben Shaphan was asked by the Babylonians to protect Jeremiah in the aftermath of the Babylonian victory (Jer. 39:14; 40:1–5). The father of the family, Shaphan, was a close advisor of Josiah who brought the Torah scroll found in the temple to the king; Josiah in turn subsequently employed it as the basis for his reform program (2 Kings 22:3–20). His advice to adhere to the teachings of the Ten Commandments in Jer. 7:9 (cf. 11:1–17) may well reflect his adherence to Mosaic Torah as the basis for Josiah's program.

Jeremiah's call for the return of northern Israel to YHWH and to Davidic rule in both Jeremiah 2—6 and 30—31 appears to support Josiah's program to reunify the lands of Israel and Judah under Davidic rule, with the Jerusalem temple as their religious center. Josiah's early death at Megiddo, however, apparently convinced the prophet that YHWH had determined to punish Judah as well as Israel. As understood by Jeremiah, YHWH's will was to establish Babylon as the dominant power in the world, or "enemy from the north." In addition, it called for adherence to the norms of Mosaic Torah as expressed in Deuteronomy. Jeremiah therefore calls for the just treatment of the poor and underprivileged in Judah (cf. Deut. 15; 24:17–22) and criticizes Jehoiakim for self-aggrandizement in building a sumptuous palace for himself (Jeremiah 22), contrary to the practices of his father Josiah. Jeremiah likewise condemns Hananiah as a false prophet, even though his message of deliverance for Jerusalem in two years corresponds to that of Isaiah (Jeremiah 27—28). He condemns Zedekiah for reneging on his promise to release slaves (cf. Deut. 15:1–6) when the Babylonians temporarily abandoned the siege of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 34). His redemption of family property during the lapse in the siege (Jeremiah 32; cf. Deut. 25:5–10) reflects his confidence in the future and his belief that the people must act according to Mosaic Torah to remain in the land. His warnings against flight to Egypt (Jeremiah 43—44) reflect this perspective as well as Deuteronomy's command to the king not to return the people to Egypt (Deut. 17:14–20).

Despite the emphasis on the criticism of Judah in the message of Jeremiah, the oracles in Jeremiah 30—33 point ultimately to the restoration of the people to the land under the rule of a righteous Davidic monarch when YHWH makes a new covenant with the people. The initial program of Jeremiah's commission to speak as a prophet, "to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10), is thereby reiterated in YHWH's promises for the restoration of Israel and Judah in 31:28, "And just as I have watched over them to pluck up and break down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring evil, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD."

V. THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

The book of Ezekiel appears as the third book of the Latter Prophets in the Jewish Tanakh, although some authorities place it as the second book immediately following Jeremiah (*b. B. Bat.* 14b). Ezekiel is the third of the major prophetic books in the Christian Old Testament canon, following Isaiah and Jeremiah/Lamentations and preceding Daniel. There was apparently some question in Rabbinic tradition concerning the canonical status of the book, since it frequently stands at odds with material in the Torah. According to *b. Shabb.* 13b, Rabbi Hanina ben Hezekiah burned three hundred jars of oil working at night by the light of a lamp in order to reconcile the discrepancies between Ezekiel and the Torah. Likewise, *m. Hag.* 2:1 maintains that the inaugural vision in Ezekiel 1 is not to be expounded except by one who is a sage in his own right. Ezekiel's vision provides much of the basis for the development of the Hekhalot ("palaces") mystical tradition (e.g., 3

Enoch; Hekhalot Rabbati), which portrayed attempts to ascend through the seven levels of heaven in order to experience the divine presence and thereby to comprehend G-d's actions and intentions.³⁶

The superscription in Ezek. 1:1-3 informs the reader that Ezekiel's visions of G-d came to him while he was among the exiles by the River Chebar in the land of Babylonia. The date is placed in the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah, which would be approximately 593/2 B.C.E., about five years prior to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The initial reference to the thirtieth year is somewhat enigmatic in that it could refer to the prophet's age, the thirtieth year since the beginning of Josiah's reform, the thirtieth year after the prophet's initial call, or other possibilities. Since Ezekiel ben Buzi was a Zadokite priest from the Jerusalem temple who was exiled with King Jehoiachin by the Babylonians in 597 B.C.E., it seems likely that the thirtieth year refers to his age. Numbers 4:3 defines the thirtieth year as the age for beginning priestly service (contra Num. 8:23-25, which states that the initial age is twenty-five years) and the fiftieth year as the age of retirement from priestly service. It is noteworthy that, with the exception of the reference to the twenty-seventh year in Ezek. 29:17, the dated oracles of the book of Ezekiel extend through the twenty-fifth year of the exile (Ezek. 40:1), which would have been approximately 573/2 B.C.E. This would suggest that the book was designed to correlate Ezekiel's prophetic activity with his years of active service in the temple had he remained in Jerusalem. Although Ezekiel comments on events that take place in Jerusalem, he apparently remained in Babylonian exile throughout the Babylonian invasion of Judah in 588/7 and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587/6. According to Ezek. 3:15, he lived in Tel Aviv (Hebrew, "hill of spring"), an unknown site by the River or Canal Chebar near Nippur identified with the Akkadian expression *til-abubi*, "hill of flood" (perhaps a reference to flooding from the Chebar). According to the records of the Babylonian trading and banking house run by Murashu and his sons during the fifth century B.C.E., Jewish exiles settled in this region.

The Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587/6 B.C.E. plays a key role in determining the structure of the book and the portrayal of Ezekiel's message. This concern is reinforced by the appearance of a series of dating formulas throughout the book that establish a chronological sequence from Ezekiel's initial vision in the fifth year, fourth (?) month, and fifth day of the exile of Jehoiachin (Ezek. 1:1-3; 3:16) through the twenty-fifth year, first month, tenth day, when Ezekiel reveals his vision of the new temple in Zion. With the exception of the above noted twenty-seventh year in Ezek. 29:17, other dates follow in roughly chronological sequence, including the sixth year, sixth month, fifth day (Ezek. 8:1); the seventh year, fifth month, tenth day (Ezek. 20:1); the ninth year, tenth month, tenth day (Ezek. 24:1); the eleventh year, unknown month, first day (Ezek. 26:1); the tenth year, tenth month, twelfth day (Ezek. 29:1); the twenty-seventh year, first month, first day (Ezek. 29:17); the eleventh year, first month, seventh day (Ezek. 30:20); the eleventh year, third month, first day (Ezek. 31:1); the twelfth year, twelfth month, first day (Ezek. 32:1); and the twelfth year, tenth month, fifth day (Ezek. 33:21). The ninth (588 B.C.E.) through the twelfth (585

B.C.E.) years are especially important in this sequence in that they highlight the death of Ezekiel's wife as a sign of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Ezek. 24:1).

The chronological sequence correlates with the contents of the book. Ezekiel 1—24 focuses especially on oracles concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah, beginning with Ezekiel's inaugural vision of YHWH's departure from Jerusalem and the temple and culminating with the death of his wife. Ezekiel 25—32 contains a series of oracles against the nations that Ezekiel expected would be swept up in the Babylonian advance, including Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, and Egypt, although neither Tyre nor Egypt were ever taken by the Babylonians. Ezekiel 33—39 focuses especially on the restoration of the land of Israel and the return of the people to the land, beginning with Ezekiel's appointment as the "watchman" over the restored people and culminating in the vision of YHWH's victory over the Gog and Magog figures who oppressed Israel. Ezekiel 40—48 then portrays the establishment of the new temple in Zion as YHWH returns to the temple, which then serves as the center for a new creation with the tribes of Israel arrayed around it. Altogether, the book portrays YHWH's departure from Zion and the punishment or cleansing of Jerusalem and the world prior to YHWH's return to Zion and the establishment of Zion as the holy center of Israel and all creation.

Critical scholarship on the book of Ezekiel lagged behind that on Isaiah and Jeremiah through the early twentieth century. The highly structured and well organized presentation evident in the book, combined with the relative disinterest in priestly matters during this period, apparently convinced scholars that little would be gained from critical work in Ezekiel. This began to change with the work of Gustav Hölscher,³⁷ who argued that later redactors transformed the original prophet and poet Ezekiel into a priestly legalist and ritualist who served as a model for the later Jewish community. Hölscher viewed Ezekiel as a true ecstatic, comparable to the shamanistic oracle-givers that were found in primitive cultures throughout the world, and he argued that Ezekiel's authentic oracles were first delivered orally by the prophet. He therefore removed most of the book as inauthentic to the prophet, including much of chapters 6–7; 10; 12–14; 18; 20; 25–26; and all of 33–48, and retained only about one-seventh of the book, drawn from chapters 1–32. Theological dichotomies between prophet and priest and between oral prophecy and written text are clearly evident in Hölscher's work.

Subsequent work argued that Ezekiel was largely the product of writers other than the prophet. C. C. Torrey maintained that the book was a pseudepigraph written during the Hellenistic period in the third century B.C.E. in order to establish an analogy between the Seleucid period and that of King Manasseh of Judah.³⁸ Smith proposed that the book originally was the work of a northern Israelite prophet who addressed the situation of the exiled northern kingdom of Israel during the late eighth and early seventh centuries B.C.E.³⁹ It was only later transformed into a Judean work. The years following World War II saw efforts to return Ezekiel to the period of the exile and, despite the presence of some later material, to view the book largely as the product of the prophet. Thus, both Howie⁴⁰ and Fohrer⁴¹ con-

tended that the bulk of the book must be attributed to Ezekiel, who spoke in Babylonia during the exile.

The most influential work of modern scholarship on the book of Ezekiel is the two-volume commentary by Walther Zimmerli, first published in German in 1969 and then in English translation in 1979 and 1983.⁴² Employing a thorough text-critical, traditio-historical, and form-critical analysis, Zimmerli traces the process by which the prophet's original oral statements were transformed into a written text both by the prophet himself and subsequently by his school of followers. He isolates the various oracles and speeches that lie behind the present written form of the text and demonstrates Ezekiel's interaction with a great deal of mythological, legendary, and literary material (e.g., the "Holiness Code" in Leviticus 17–26), as he developed theological insights concerning YHWH's purposes through the period of destruction and exile. The original Ezekielian "kernels" or oral texts were frequently reworked by Ezekiel and his followers through a process of *Nachinterpretation* ("later interpretation") in which the earlier *Grundtext* ("foundational text") was rewritten to address later times and concerns (e.g., Ezek. 29:17–21, which announces that Nebuchadnezzar will receive the wealth of Egypt as compensation for his labors on behalf of G-d).

Zimmerli's work in this area provides a major impetus to studies of inner-biblical exegesis in relation to the prophetic works in general and points the way to the recognition that prophecy was a literary as well as an oral phenomenon. More recent studies take the literary character of the book very seriously. Greenberg's commentary stresses the literary integrity of the book, or its "holistic" character, and argues that much of the work of revision and reapplication was carried out by Ezekiel himself.⁴³ Davis emphasizes the prophet's role as a writer who reflects theologically upon his own writings and employs the metaphor of "swallowing the scroll" as a means to convey the literary character of his prophetic work.⁴⁴ Darr argues that the metaphor of "swallowing the scroll" signals Ezekiel's dependence upon prior textual tradition and that the final form of the book engages in a polemical dialogue with the Isaiah tradition.⁴⁵

A reading of the book of Ezekiel must take account of Ezekiel's identity as a Zadokite priest as well as that of a prophet. Contrary to the assertions of many scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is no longer possible to posit a fundamental distinction between the two roles without qualification. Ancient Near Eastern prophets were frequently oracle-diviners who worked in the context of the temples dedicated to the deities of the particular culture. Israelite prophets could be connected with temples as well. An example is Samuel, who was raised as a Nazirite—that is, one dedicated for service to YHWH (Numbers 6), perhaps because he was firstborn (cf. Num. 3:11–13)—and who is portrayed as a priest. Likewise, Moses is portrayed as both Levitical priest and prophet (Exod. 2:1–10; Num. 26:58–59; Deut. 18:15; 34:10). As noted earlier, Jeremiah was a priest of the Elide line, and the prophet Zechariah is identified as a priest as well (Zech. 1:1; Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh. 12:16).

Ezekiel's role as priest is evident throughout the book and in his articulation of his prophetic message. He is fundamentally concerned with "the glory of YHWH" (*kēbōd yhw̄h*), a technical term that describes the presence of YHWH among the

people (Exod. 16:7, 10–12), in the tabernacle (Exod. 40:34–38), and in the temple (1 Kings 8:10–11; 2 Chron. 7:1–3; cf. 1 Sam. 4:21–22). The expression appears in the book of Ezekiel, where it describes the prophet's vision of YHWH mounted upon the throne chariot that transports the deity through the heavens when YHWH departs from the temple in Ezekiel 1–11 and returns to the new temple in Ezekiel 40–48 (Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; 8:4; 10:3–4, 19; 11:22–23; 43:1–5). The vision of YHWH's glory in 1:4–28 is based largely on the image of the ark in the Holy of Holies at the Jerusalem temple, which a young priest would presumably study prior to commencing his duties in the temple. The description of a cloud from the north takes up the usual imagery of cloud, perhaps portrayed with the use of incense in the temple, which generally accompanies portrayals of the glory of YHWH and the designation of the north as the home of the divine in Ugaritic mythology and in biblical literature (e.g., Isa. 14:13; Job 37:22). The imagery of gleaming bronze calls to mind the gold plating of the ark (Exod. 25:1–22; 37:1–9), which perhaps in turn conveys an ideal image of the ark prior to the times when the temple was stripped of gold and replaced with bronze (1 Kings 14:25–28; cf. 2 Kings 18:14–16). The four living creatures that bear the ark in Ezekiel's vision correspond to the two cherubim who are mounted above the mercy seat of the ark (Exod. 25:18–22) and the two built by Solomon within the Holy of Holies (1 Kings 6:23–28; 2 Chron. 3:10–14).⁴⁶ The burning coals of fire in the midst of the living creatures perhaps represents the sacrificial altar or the incense altars of the temple, and the wheel within the wheel may represent the rings by which the Levites carried the ark with poles (Exod. 25:12–15) or the wheels of the cart that conveyed the ark (2 Sam. 6:3; 1 Chron. 13:7). The firmament shining like crystal above the heads of the living creatures may represent the mercy seat (Exod. 25:17) or the clear pavement beneath the throne of G-d in the narrative concerning the banquet with YHWH shared by Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders (Exod. 24:9–11). Finally, the image of the bow in the cloud in Ezek. 1:28 derives from the bow that symbolizes YHWH's covenant with Noah in Gen. 9:8–17.

Other imagery from Ezekiel's initial vision likewise pertains to his priestly role. The portrayal of his eating the scroll given to him by YHWH (Ezek. 2:8–3:3) takes up the commands to the priests and Levites to read the Torah scroll in the temple at Sukkot every seven years (Deut. 31:9–13). Ezekiel's role as watchman over the people Israel may reflect the understanding of Levitical priests as gatekeepers (1 Chron. 9:17–27; 26:1–19) or perhaps as temple guards as portrayed in the Chronicler's account of Jehoiada's posting of guards in the temple supervised by the Levitical priests during the coup against Athaliah (2 Chronicles 23, esp. vv. 6, 18–19). In any case, the role of the priestly gatekeeper is to ensure the holiness or purity of those who enter the temple precincts. Ezekiel's role as watchman is to warn the people of YHWH's words so that they might avoid sins and their resulting punishment (Ezek. 3:16–21; 33:1–20), a role not unlike that of the temple gatekeepers.

The vision of YHWH's departure from the temple in Ezekiel 8–11 is particularly indicative of Ezekiel's priestly role in that it portrays the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem as a sacrifice made upon the altar for purification, much as an individual would bring a sacrifice to the priests at the temple altar to

atone for wrongdoing. It thereby provides the basis by which Ezekiel may be considered a theodicy in that it portrays YHWH as righteous and the people as sinful. The portrayal in Ezekiel 8 of the abominations in the temple establishes the necessity for purifying the temple, now that it has become corrupt and unclean as a result of the idolatry and weeping for the Babylonian vegetation deity Tammuz within. The process of sacrificial purification begins in Ezekiel 9 with the entry of the six men appointed for execution, each with his weapon in hand. They are supervised by a man dressed in white linen—the characteristic dress of the priests on the sacrificial altar—who is equipped with a writing case to record their actions. As the throne chariot or glory of YHWH prepares to depart from the city and temple in Ezekiel 10, the man in white linen is commanded to take coals from between the cherubim and ignite the city as a priest would ignite the sacrificial offerings on the temple altar. Following the departure of YHWH from the temple, the city is identified as the cauldron in Ezekiel 11, further establishing the analogy between the destruction of the city and temple sacrifice. Nevertheless, the prophet announces that a group of men led by Jaazaniah ben Azzur and Pelatiah ben Benaiah will form the basis of the exiled community. They are promised a return to the land of Israel, the removal of iniquity, and the replacement of their hearts of stone with hearts of flesh so that they will observe YHWH's commands. Until that time, YHWH will serve as a sanctuary or temple for them during the period of exile, thereby reinforcing the priestly imagery and laying the basis for the appearance of YHWH's glory, symbolizing YHWH's presence in the temple, in the Babylonian exile.

Various other elements point to Ezekiel's understanding of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the Babylonian exile as a sacrificial purification—of Jerusalem, the temple, the people, and the land of Israel. The discourse on individual moral responsibility in Ezekiel 18 presupposes the teachings of the priestly Holiness Code in Leviticus 17–26, including proper avoidance of idolatry, treatment of blood, sexual purity, restoration of a pledge to a debtor, giving food to the hungry, and so forth, as the basis for its understanding of moral action. Ezekiel's concern with the profanation of YHWH's name (Ezekiel 20, 33, etc.) likewise reflects the priestly concern for YHWH's holiness. The portrayal in Ezek. 24:1–14 of besieged Jerusalem as a burning sacrificial cauldron employs the imagery of the priests' duties at the altar, and the analogy drawn between the death of Ezekiel's wife and the destruction of Jerusalem in Ezek. 24:15–27 employs the traditional motif of Israel as bride to YHWH to convey the loss of Jerusalem. The imagery of the dry bones coming to life in Ezekiel 37 employs an image of impurity—priests are not allowed to come into contact with the dead (Lev. 21:1–3)—to convey the restoration of a purified Israel. Finally, the vision of the temple in Ezekiel 40–48 looks forward to the restoration of the purified temple as the holy center of both the world of creation at large and the tribes of Israel as the basis by which the glory of YHWH returns from exile among the nations. With the return of YHWH's glory to the temple, YHWH's name will no longer be defiled (Ezek. 43:1–9).

In sum, the book of Ezekiel presents the realization of YHWH's promises in Ezek. 36:22–32 (cf. Ezek. 11:14–21) to sanctify YHWH's name by sprinkling water on the people to remove their impurity, much as a priest must immerse himself

in water to become pure for temple service. It argues that the covenant with YHWH will be maintained when the people receive a new heart, one that will enable them to observe YHWH's commandments, to live in the holy land promised to their ancestors, and to restore their relationship with YHWH as their G-d.

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