Creation in the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament: An Intertextual Approach

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1. Introduction

The topic of creation in Old Testament theology for most of its recent history has been neglected and has often been relegated to the level of a subheading within the sections of soteriology, covenant, trinity, or any other possibly relevant section: "Nevertheless, creation to this day has been one of the 'proverbial step-children' in the recent discipline of Old Testament theology."[1] While Rendtorff only diagnoses the problem, Brueggemann, in looking for a rationale, refers the responsibility for the peripheral position of creation in theology to the dichotomy between the Israelite faith and Canaanite religion, or history and myth, that found its way into biblical theology during the earlier part of the last century through scholars like Gerhard von Rad in Europe who suggested that creation was

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[1] Rolf Rendtorff, "Some Reflections on Creation as a Topic of Old Testament Theology," in *Priests, Prophets and Scribes. Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp* (ed. Eugene Ulrich, John W. Wright, Robert P. Carroll and Philip R. Davies; JSOTSS 149; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 204-12.

subservient to salvation,[2] or Ernest Wright in the USA who maintained that "Israel was little interested in nature."[3]

A number of scholars moved beyond the paradigm created by von Rad[4] and recognized the prominence of creation in the theological thinking of the Old Testament, both in terms of position and content.

Claus Westermann in his work on Gen 1-11 places creation in history through its expression in myth and ritual. Thus it is the primeval event, and the stories told about and enacted upon it, are part of the universal traditions of mankind. The biblical authors–for Westermann the Yahwist and the Priestly author–adapted these stories theologically for Israel and identified them as part of God's work of blessing which for Westermann "really means the power of Fertility."[5]

In direct and intentional contrast with von Rad, the doctrine has been described as the horizon of biblical theology by Hans Heinrich Schmid. He relates creation to world-order and by comparing it with creation beliefs in other ANE cultures he arrives at the conclusion that history is the

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[2] "Our main thesis was that in genuinely Yahwistic belief the doctrine of creation never attained to the stature of a relevant, independent doctrine. We found it invariably related, and indeed subordinated, to soteriological considerations." Gerhard von Rad, "The Theological Problem of the O.T. Doctrine of Creation," in *Creation in the Old Testament* (ed. Bernhard W. Anderson; Issues in Religion and Theology 6; Philadelphia and London: Fortress and SPCK, 1984), 62. The article was originally published in 1936.

[3] G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against its Environment* (London: SCM, 1950), 71. Von Rad saw creation as a very late addition to the theological construct of the Old Testament. Brueggemann maintains that von Rad's conclusions were framed by the socio-cultural context of the 1930s with the struggle between the German Church and National Socialism which promulgated a "Blood and soil" religion that played towards Canaanite fertility religion. Concludes Brueggemann: "The work of Gerhard von Rad and G. Ernest Wright, taken up, advanced, and echoed by numerous scholars, articulated a radical either/or of history versus nature, monotheism versus polytheism, and ethical versus cultic categories." Walter Brueggemann, "The Loss and Recovery of Creation in Old Testament Theology," *Theology Today* 53 (1996): 179.

[4] "OT scholarship is nearly unanimous in regarding creation faith in ancient Israel as chronologically late and theologically secondary." Hans Heinrich Schmid, "Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation: 'Creation Theology' as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology," in *Creation in the Old Testament* (ed. Bernhard W. Anderson; Issues in Religion and Theology 6; Philadelphia and London: Fortress and SPCK, 1984), 103.

[5] Claus Westermann, "Creation and History in the Old Testament," in *The Gospel and Human Destiny* (ed. Vilmos Vajta; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1971), 32.

realization of this order.[6] "Only within this horizon could Israel understand its special experiences with God in history."[7] One wonders if Schmid is not committing the mistake of earlier biblical theologians in looking for the Mitte of the Old Testament and finding it in creation.[8]

Nevertheless, it appears that in most cases the dating of texts lies at the bottom of the question as to where to position creation within the framework of Old Testament theology. While the Bible begins with creation, biblical theologies mostly do not, since traditional critical approaches to Old Testament texts do not allow for an early dating of the Urgeschichte (Gen 1-11).[9] Most of these studies, von Rad's included, have rather taken Isaiah 40-55, the so-called Deutero-Isaiah, dated by literary criticism to post-exilic times, as a chronologically secure paradigm for creation in the Old Testament against which other texts, amongst them Gen 1-3, are then bench-marked.[10] This leads inevitably to the conclusion that creation is a late addition to the theological thinking of the Old

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[6] Schmid arrives at that conclusion by paralleling the Hebrew צְדָקָה. 'righteousness' with the Egyptian *ma'at* 'world-order'. For a critique of his position, see Stefan Paas, *Creation & Judgement: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* (Oudtestamentische Studiën 47; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 10-14.

[7] Ibid., 12.

[8] See, for example, Smend who considers the doctrine of election to be pivotal in Old Testament theology. Rudolf Smend, *Die Mitte des Alten Testaments: Gesammelte Studien, Bd. 1* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1986). Recent theologies of the Old Testament have moved away from this approach. Hasel comments: "An OT theology which recognizes God as the dynamic, unifying center provides the possibility to describe the rich and variegated theologies and to present the various longitudinal themes, motifs, and ideas. In affirming God as the dynamic, unifying center of the OT we also affirm that this center cannot be forced into a static organizing principle on the basis of which an OT theology can be constructed." Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 142.

[9] Blenkinsopp summarizes the traditional view of source criticism with regard to Gen 1-11: "According to the documentary critics this [Gen 1:1-2:3] is the first paragraph of the P source. With very few exceptions … , these critics have read the early history of humanity [Gen 1-11] as a conflation of an early J and a late P source… ." Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 60.

[10] Comments Paas: "The reason why an inquiry into creation in the Old Testament often begins with Deutero-Isaiah is obvious. About the dating of the Psalms and even the stories of the beginning there is much less agreement." Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 14.

Testament.[11] Implicit in this approach is the danger of circular reasoning, since creation texts are being dated on the basis of religious historical paradigms as late and are then used to date other creation passages accordingly:

> It is obviously somewhat paralyzing to realize that we form a picture of Israel's religious history in part on the basis of certain texts which, in turn, with the help of the picture obtained by historical research, we subsequently judge with respect to 'authenticity' and historical truth.[12]

Recognizing the unsatisfying results of such a dating scheme that is further informed by a particular school of thought with regard to Israelite religious history,[13] an approach to the topic of creation in the Old Testament should depart from a contextual reading of the texts in question in the various bodies of Old Testament literature.

The prophetic literature of the Old Testament provides a rich tapestry for such a reading, since the implicit nature of prophecy in the Old Testament is reformative in nature, i.e., referring back to the historic deeds of Yahweh in the past (creation, exodus, conquest, etc.) and thus motivating a return to him in the respective present. While there are studies that have touched on the subject of creation in individual prophetic books,[14] there is

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[11] With reference to von Rad's 1936 article, Brueggemann comments: "It was in this article … that von Rad asserted that 'the doctrine of creation' was peripheral to the Old Testament, and that the Old Testament was not, at least until very late, at all interested in creation per se." Brueggemann, "The Loss and Recovery of Creation," 178.

[12] Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 29.

[13] "But today the problems of dating the texts as well as the problem of the age of creation traditions in Israel are more controversial then ever." Rendtorff, "Some Reflections on Creation," 208.

[14] For example: Walter Brueggemann, "Jeremiah: Creatio in Extremis," in *God who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (eds. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 152-70; Richard J. Clifford, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah and its Cosmogonic Language," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55 (1993): 1-17; Stephen L. Cook, "Creation Archetypes and Mythogems in Ezekiel: Significance and Theological Ramifications," in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1999* (Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 38; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 123-46; Andrew A. da Silva, "Die funksie van die skeppingstradisie in die boek Jeremia," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 47.4 (1991): 920-9; Michael Deroche, "Zephaniah I 2-3: The 'Sweeping' of Creation," *Vetus Testamentum* 30.1 (1980): 104-9; idem, "The Reversal of Creation in Hosea," *Vetus Testamentum* 31.4 (1981): 400-9; Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered use of the Creation Pattern," *Vetus Testamentum* 21.2 (1971): 151-67; Julie Galambush, "Castles in the Air: Creation as Property in Ezekiel," in *SBL Seminar Papers,*

need for a more synthetic treatment of the issue under question.[15] The present study will therefore provide a survey of creation[16] in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, i.e., in the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Book of the Twelve, and Daniel, although the order of presentation will be rather chronological than canonical. This survey might be able to shed some light on the question if the Old Testament prophets based their understanding of creation on the model as presented in Gen 1-3 or if their cosmology allowed for alternative models of creation.

1999 (Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 38; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 147-72; Thomas W. Mann, "Stars, Sprouts, and Streams: The Creative Redeemer of Second Isaiah," in *God who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (eds. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 135-51; David L. Petersen, "Creation in Ezekiel: Methodological Perspectives and Theological Prospects," in *SBL Seminar Papers, 1999* (Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 38; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 490-526; Gerhard Pfeifer, "Jahwe als Schöpfer der Welt und Herr ihrer Mächte in der Verkündigung des Propheten Amos," *Vetus Testamentum* 41.4 (1991): 475-81; Dominic Rudman, "Creation and Fall in Jeremiah X 12-16," *Vetus Testamentum* 48.1 (1998): 63-73; Gene M. Tucker, "The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals," in *God who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (eds. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 215-25; Steven Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Genesis 2:10-14," in *God who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (eds. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 171-89; and Robert R. Wilson, "Creation and New Creation: The Role of Creation Imagery in the Book of Daniel," in *God who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (eds. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 190-203.

[15] Exceptions are: Hendrik A. Brongers, *De Scheppingstraditie bij de profeten* (Amsterdam: H J Paris, 1945); Wolfram Hermann, "Wann wurde Jahwe zum Schöpfer der Welt," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 23 (1992): 165-80; David L. Petersen, "The World of Creation in the Book of the Twelve," in *God who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (eds. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 204-14; Hans J. Zobel, "Das Schöpfungshandeln Jahwes im Zeugnis der Propheten," in *Alttestamentlicher Glaube und biblische Theologie: Festschrift für Horst Dietrich Preuss zum 65. Geburtstag* (eds. Jutta Hermann and Hans J. Zobel; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), 191-200; and most recently, Paas, *Creation & Judgement*. The present study is indebted to Paas doctoral dissertation which was originally published in 1998 and updated in 2004. The author studies creation motifs in three eighth-century prophets (Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah), leaving out Micah since, according to Paas, he is lacking creation terms (15). The strength of Pass' study lies in his methodological approach which is reflected to some extent in this paper.

[16] References to creation may appear in a variety of forms within the prophetic literature of the OT. For a delimitation of creation markers in the text, cf. our discussion below under 2.2.

2. Methodological Questions

There are two points that need attention before evaluating the evidence of creation in the Old Testament prophets. The first is the question of intertextuality, based on the above mentioned observation that much of the prophets' message is intrinsically evocative of earlier texts, creating points of reference to events in the course of Israel's history, but at the same time applying them to their present contexts.[17] The second issue grows somewhat out from the first and refers to the question of how one can identify references to creation in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament.

2.1. Intertextuality

Intertextuality has recently come into focus in biblical scholarship although it appears to be rather elusive when being subjected to an attempt at finding a universal definition of the concept.[18] A number of approaches

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[17] See for example the announcement of Ezekiel during the Babylonian exile which is reminiscent of creation, however, in the context of restoration: "I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD." (Ezek 36:11). All biblical references are taken from the New International Version if not indicated otherwise.

[18] The introduction of the term has been attributed to Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980). Some of the contributions on intertextual theory in biblical studies during the last couple of years include: Brevard S. Childs, "Critique of Recent Intertextual Canonical Interpretation," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 115.2 (2003): 173-84; Paul R. Noble, "Esau, Tamar, and Joseph: Criteria for Identifying Inner-biblical Allusions," *Vetus Testamentum* 52.2 (2002): 219-52; Gary E Schnittjer, "The Narrative Multiverse Within the Universe of the Bible: the Question of 'Borderlines' and 'Intertextuality'," *Westminster Theological Journal* 64.2 (2002): 231-52; Robert W. Wall, "The Intertextuality of Scripture: The Example of Rahab (James 2:25)," in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (ed. Peter W. Flint; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 217-36; Richard L. Schultz, "The ties that bind: intertextuality, the identification of verbal parallels, and reading strategies in the Book of the Twelve," in *Society of Biblical Literature 2001 Seminar Papers*; Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Paper 40; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 39-57; Gershon Hepner, "Verbal Resonance in the Bible and Intertextuality," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 96 (2001): 3-27; Craig C. Broyles, "Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon," in *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis* (ed. Craig C. Broyles; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2001), 157-75; Craig C. Broyles, "Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon," in *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis* (ed. Craig C. Broyles; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2001), 157-75; Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New Testament," in *The Old Testament in the New Testament. Essays in Honour of J. L. North* (ed. Steve Moyise; Journal for the Study of the New Testament

have been summarized under this umbrella term, but I would define intertextuality broadly as references between texts that can occur on multiple levels,[19] while its boundaries are often determined by the view of composition of scripture the author employing the term has. What intertextuality does to texts is networking them in a way that creates new contexts and, in this way, new meanings of old texts.[20] Intertextuality also puts various texts on an, at times, complicated timeline and thus gives rise to chronological considerations which have been out of focus to some extent from biblical studies in the vogue of literary criticism.[21]

In application to the prophets of the Old Testament I would suggest the following timeline that will serve as the chronological framework against which the usage of creation texts in the prophets has to be pitched.[22]

Supplement Series 189; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 14-41; John Barton, "Intertextuality and the 'Final Form' of the Text," in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998* (ed. André Lemaire and M. Sæbø; Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 80; Leiden; Boston; Köln: Brill, 2000), 33-7; Patricia Tull, "Intertextuality and the Hebrew Scriptures," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 8 (2000): 59-90.

[19] See below under 2.2.

[20] Nielsen differentiates between three phases for intertextual reading: (1) author's intention; (2) editorial and canonical intentions; and (3) pos-biblical traditions and reader-response. Kirsten Nielsen, "Intertexuality and Hebrew Bible," in *Congress Volume Oslo 1998* (ed. André Lemaire and M. Sæbø; Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 80; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2000), 18-9. However, for Nielsen it almost appears impossible to reconstruct phase 2, while other scholars like Labahn recognize the inner-biblical chronological dimension of intertextuality. Antje Labahn, "Metaphor and Intertextuality: 'Daughter of Zion' as a Test Case: Response to Kirsten Nielsen 'From Oracles to Canon' - and the Role of Metaphor." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 17.1 (2003): 51.

[21] Representative for this tendency is the statement by Cooper: "We are left . . . with only two sensible and productive ways of reading: 1) reading in a strictly canonical context, and 2) reading from an historical or literary-critical point of view." He then opts for the latter view: "Let the text assume a timeless existence somewhere between the author and the reader. . . . The text, severed from its historical moorings, will cooperate with us and enrich us if we allow it to." Alan M. Cooper, "The life and times of King David according to the book of Psalms," in *The Poet and the Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism* (ed. Richard E. Friedman; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 130-31.

[22] Without entering into detailed discussions of dating the individual prophetic books, I group them broadly according to centuries. If further details on the dating are necessary they will appear under the relevant sections below.

8th century BC	7th century BC	6th -5th century BC
Jonah	Nahum	Ezekiel
Amos	Habakkuk	Obadiah
Hosea	Zephaniah	Daniel
Micah	Joel	Haggai
Isaiah	Jeremiah	Zechariah
		Malachi

With the help of this rough timeline, I hope to be able to demonstrate how the theological thinking during the period reflected in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament has been progressively shaped by a continuous hermeneutic returning to this pivotal point of origin(s) which is creation.

This also implies that I regard the prophetic literature of the Old Testament as subsequent to the Urgeschichte (Gen 1-11), a point that can be argued both on a literary and historical level,[23] but that will hopefully become even more apparent when it can be demonstrated how the prophets were constantly 'looking back' at creation. Thus, Gen 1-3 becomes the

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[23] The emergence of the literary criticism attests to the increasing frustration with traditional historical-critical dating schemes, especially with regard to the Pentateuch. "The shift [from historical towards literary or narrative criticism] derived in part from a dissatisfaction with the so-called assured results of biblical criticism. On the one hand, there was a growing sense that the achievements of historical criticism were anything but 'assured.'" L. Daniel Hawk, "Literary/Narrative Criticism," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 537. This, by no means, has been the assertion of evangelical scholars only, but goes right across the board of academic orientation: "Wer in der gegenwärtigen Situation versucht, eine Aussage über den neuesten Stand der Pentateuchforschung zu machen, der kann nur Enttäuschung verbreiten: Weitgehend anerkannte Auffassungen über die Entstehung des Pentateuch gibt es nicht mehr, und die Hoffnung auf einen neuen Konsens in der Pentateuchkritik scheint es [sic] zur Zeit nur noch als 'Hoffnung wider allen Augenschein' möglich zu sein." Hans-Christoph Schmitt, "Die Hintergründe der neuesten 'Pentateuchkritik' und der literarische Befund der Josefsgeschichte Gen 37-50," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 97.2 (1985): 161. Sailhamer has been prominent in demonstrating the narrative progression and unity of the Pentateuch which in turn provides the canonical reference point for the prophets. John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992); Idem, "The Canonical Approach to the OT: Its Effect on Understanding Prophecy," *JETS* 30.3 (1987): 307-15.

point of reference to which the prophets return when they employ creation terminology and motifs.[24]

2.2. Creation markers

In order to recognize intertextual creation markers, our criteria have to be sufficiently broad in order to move beyond a purely semantic level, but also narrow enough to connect us positively with the creation account of Genesis. A broad range of devices that often belong to totally different discourses, are invoked by scholars in order identify creation in the prophets: allusion, tradition, motif, theme, imagery, metaphor, etc.[25] It is probably safe to divide these into three main groups: (1) lexical, (2) literary, and (3) conceptual. In the following I will present examples taken from the prophetic literature of the Old Testament from each group that reconnect in some way with Gen 1-3.

2.2.1. Lexical creation markers

Semantic Field: Lexical markers in the prophets depart from the semantic field that centers around the theologically most specific ברא "to create" (for example: Isa 40:26; Amos 4:13);[26] it further includes יצר, "to form, shape," (for example: Isa 45:18); the rather generic עשׂה, "to make, do," and its derivatives, (for example: Is 45:18; Jer 10:12; Jon 1:9); and the more solemn פעל "to do, produce" (for example: Isa 45:9, 11), to mention only the most prominent ones that also appear in the prophets.[27] However, all of these words also describe activities beyond creation as found in Gen 1-3 which is an indicator how the reflection on creation served as a departure point for the creation of new meanings.[28]

Word-pairs: In this connection mention should be made of word-pairs like the merismus אֶרֶץ/שָׁמַיִם, "heaven/earth"(Isa 37:16) or אוֹר/חֹשֶׁךְ,

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[24] For a discussion on the difference between creation terminology and motif, see Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 58-60.

[25] Cf. Petersen, "Creation in Ezekiel," 490-1.

[26] In the Qal and Niphal the subject of ברא is always Yahweh and thus it serves as the *terminus technicus* for divine creation, though it is used interchangeably with the roots mentioned below. Cf. Raymond C. van Leeuwen, "ברא," *NIDOTTE* 1:731-2.

[27] For a more exhaustive treatment, cf. ibid, 729-31.

[28] See for example Isa 4:5: "Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy."

"darkness/light" (Isa 42:16; 45:7) that create strong reference markers to creation.[29]

Quotes: An author usually interrupts the flow of his argument with a quote in order to authenticate, substantiate or expand his argument. Apart from direct quotes which are usually introduced by a static formula (for example: Dan 9:13), we also find inverted quotes of the creation account such as Ezek 36:11 where the order of verbs from the original Gen 1:28 is reversed, in order to call attention to the connection between the theology of creation and re-creation, i.e., restoration after the exile.[30]

Allusions: Allusions create less intense lexical reference markers, but are widely used in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. An allusion is an incomplete or fragmented reference to another text and is thus less easily recognizable and more prone to misinterpretation.[31] Nevertheless when the prophet says in Zeph 1:3: "I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea," the allusion to creation is made through reversing the order of creatures as they have been listed in Gen 1, making a theological significant statement of reversal of creation and separation from his Creator.[32]

2.2.2. Literary creation markers

Metaphors: A number of metaphors of God are employed by the prophets and some of them can be used as creation markers.[33] The usage of

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[29] According to Houtman, the word-pair 'heaven and earth' in the Old Testament usually points to Yahweh's attributes as Creator (past) and Lord of creation (present). "Man gewinnt den Eindruck, daß JAHWH's 'Schöpfer-sein' und sein 'Herr-sein' untrennbare Aspekte des Erlösungswerkes JHWH's sind, das sich in der Schöpfung des Kosmos offenbarte und sich seither in vielerlei Gestalt innerhalb des Kosmos manifestiert." Cornelius Houtman, *Der Himmel im Alten Testament: Israels Weltbild und Weltanschauung* (Oudtestamentische Studiën 30; Leiden-New York-Köln: Brill, 1993), 96.

[30] Cf. Petersen, "Creation in Ezekiel," 494.

[31] Craig C. Broyles, "Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon," in *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis* (ed. Craig C. Broyles; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 167.

[32] De Roche, "Zephaniah I 2-3," 106.

[33] For a discussion of the usage of metaphors for the divine, cf. Martin G. Klingbeil, "Metaphors that Travel and (Almost) Vanish: Mapping Diachronic Changes in the Intertextual Usage of the Heavenly Warrior Metaphor in Psalms 18 and 144." Paper read at the Annual Congress of the *European Association for Biblical Studies*. Dresden, 2005. (forthcoming)

the Qal participle of יצר in reference to Yahweh as a potter in Isa 45:9 serves as a good example for the creation connotation of this metaphor.[34]

Poetry: I have shown elsewhere that the authors of the Hebrew Bible used poetry in order to communicate important theological contents.[35] Interestingly, most of the contexts in which creation texts are found in the prophets are poetic in nature. While in itself it would not be a sufficient strong marker, the usage of poetry indicates the presence of a theologically important theme.[36]

2.2.3. Conceptual creation markers

Motifs: Although Yahweh as a king is another metaphor that could be mentioned in terms of creation,[37] in a broader sense, kingship can serve as a motif alluding to creation. Kingship in Israel had to do with building and maintaining the divinely created world-order. While Yahweh is the builder of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile (Jer 24:6), he is also the builder of Eve in Gen 2:22, whereas in both instances the lexical creation marker בנה, "to build" is used.[38]

Typologies: Typologies preserve historicity of events or personalities from the past and transcend them theologically into the presence.[39] Creation

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[34] See also Isa 29:16; 41:25; 64:8; Jer 18:4, 6; 19:1; and Zech 11:13.

[35] Martin G. Klingbeil, "Poemas en medio de la prosa: poesía insertada en el Pentateuco," in *Pentateuco: inicios, paradigmas y fundamentos: estudios teológicos y exegéticos en el Pentateuco* (ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil; River Plate Adventist University Monograph Series in Biblical and Theological Studies 1; Libertador San Martín: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2004), 61-85.

[36] For a study of poetry in prophetic literature, see for example: David N. Freedman, "Another Look at Biblical Hebrew Poetry," in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, ed. Elaine R. Follis, JSOTSup 40, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 15-6; Lawrence Boadt, "Reflections on the Study of Hebrew Poetry Today," *Concordia Journal* 24 (1998), 163. Stephen A. Geller, "Were the Prophets Poets?" in *'The Place is too Small for us': The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* (ed. Robert P. Gordon; Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 154-65.

[37] The king as builder and maintainer of the world-order is allusive to creation. Cf. Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 69-72.

[38] Kingship in Israel is also related to judgment and functions as a creation motif. When Yahweh via the prophets invite to judgment, they do so in the context of cosmological creation language (see for example: Isa 1:2; Jer 2:12). Cf. ibid., 87-8.

[39] A definition of typology understands it as the "study of persons, events, or institutions in salvation history that God specifically designed to predictively prefigure their antitypical eschatological fulfillment in Christ and the gospel realities brought about by Christ". Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*

as a historical event is used in the prophetic literature as a type for present and future restoration and the concluding chapters of Isaiah use the reference to creation as a type for the re-creation of a new heaven and earth (Isa 65:17).

It becomes apparent that there is a wide range of creation markers which the prophets employed in their writings to refer to the Urgeschichte. Some of them are easily discernable while others only establish loose links, in that way creating a certain sliding scale on which intertextual relationships can be constructed. The point that needs to be made at this stage is the frequency on which this hermeneutic procedure was invoked, indicating that the prophets build their theology around pivotal themes such as the creation motif.

3. Creation in the Prophets

In the following we will benchmark the prophetic literature of the Old Testament against the above mentioned markers. As mentioned above we will follow a rough chronological sequence, based on our intertextual considerations, since the establishment of a timeline is fundamental in evaluating the theological usage and development of creation in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. Obviously, an attempt to present an exhaustive account of creation in sixteen books of varied length which account for almost one-third of the Old Testament is destined to failure from the outset. Therefore, the only realistic approach will be a panoramic flight over the prophetic books where we will try to differentiate the intertextual creation patterns from high above.

3.1. Eighth-century Prophets

Under the eighth-century, I group Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, which in itself is an impressive mix of messengers and messages, together. Jonah, of course, directed his prophecies towards the international arena,[40] while Amos and Hosea addressed the Northern Kingdom, and Micah and Isaiah prophesied in Judah before or until after

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(Commentary Reference Series 12; ed. Raoul Dederen; Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 83.

[40] Which is an over-simplification, since the book of Jonah is also highly charged against an exclusivist Israelite nationalism which was prominent during Jeroboam II's reign (cf. 2 Kings 14:25).

the Fall of Samaria.[41] The geographic spread should give us a good indication of the pervasiveness of creation thought during this century.

3.1.1. Jonah

Jonah's message is full of ecological content[42] and as such allusive of creation. In outing himself to the sailors, Jonah defines himself as a follower of the Creator God in a language that is reminiscent of creation and the Decalogue: "Yahveh, God of heaven, I worship/fear who made the sea and the dry land."[43] (Jon 1:9) One cannot but notice the somewhat problematic but very emphatic sentence structure where the predicate (יָרֵא אָנִי) is inserted between the object (וְאֶת־יְהוָה) and its qualifying relative clause (אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה). Jonah sees himself surrounded by Yahweh the God of creation, although ironically he is not quite sure if he should worship or fear him.[44]

The progressive descent to the depths of the ocean in Jonah's psalm (Jon 2:2-9 [MT 2:3-10]) indicated by the verbal root dry, "to descend," (Jon 2:6 [MT 2:7]; cf. also Jon 1:3, 5) can be related to Gen 1-3. According to the ancient Near Eastern and also to some extend Old Testament cosmologies, there is a spatial dimension of above and below, i.e., the earth is resting on pillars in waters under which the realm of Sheol was to be found.[45] All these elements appear in Jonah's poem: he finds himself cast

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[41] The case here is made for the unity of Isaiah, a point which can be argued widely, especially on literary grounds recurring to common vocabulary, themes, and theology. See for example: J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993). Cf. also Gregory J. Polan, "Still More Signs of Unity in the Book of Isaiah: The Significance of Third Isaiah," *SBL Seminar Papers, 1997* (Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 224-33.

[42] "With a focus on human beings and their environment, ecology constitutes a prominent theological theme throughout Jonah." Phyllis Trible, "The Book of Jonah," *NIB* 7:482.

[43] My translation.

[44] Consider the double meaning of ירא, "to fear, revere". Ibid., 498.

[45] While it is important to make a differentiation between ANE and OT cosmologies, one needs to remember that the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures lived within and interacted with the broader ANE cosmology, at times even polemically criticizing and demytholigizing it. Cf. Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *Evangelical Quarterly* 46.2 (1974): 81-102. However, these texts were not written with the purpose to outline Israelite cosmology in a scientific way. Intents of describing the Israelite cosmology based on the Old Testament as well as Ancient Near Eastern literature and iconography, can be found in the following: Bernd Janowski, "Das biblische Weltbild: eine methodologische Skizze," in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (Forschungen zum

into the "heart of the sea" (Jon 2:4 [MT 2:5] // Gen 1:10) and cast out of God's presence (Jon 2:5 [MT 2:6]) as Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden (Gen 3:24); he passes through the chaotic waters (Jon 2:5 [MT 2:6] // Gen 1:2) and finally descends to Sheol (Jon 2:2 [MT 2:3]) or the pit (Jon 2:6 [MT 2:7]).[46] Jonah is sinking towards darkness and death, away from light and creation, a process that is equivalent to de-creation.[47]

In the whole book obedient creation is in juxtaposition to disobedient humanity, and the Creator is portrayed as continually being involved in his creation by throwing a storm at Jonah (Jon 1:4), appointing a fish to his double rescue by letting it swallow the disobedient prophet (Jon 1:17 [MT 2:1]) as well as vomiting him onto solid ground (Jon 2:10 [MT 2:11]). He furthermore prepares a plant (Jon 4:6), a worm (Jon 4:7), and an east wind (Jon 4:8) in order to bring his despondent servant to his senses. Creation is not just an event of the past, but reoccurs through Yahweh's permanent involvement in his creation and with his creatures. But foremost, all creation is geared toward Yahweh's salvation acts towards humanity and the question that concludes the Book of Jonah finds its answer in the book's presence in the canon, reiterating Jonah's belief in the supreme

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Alten Testament 32; eds. Beate Ego and Bernd Janowski; Tübingen: J C B Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2001), 3-26; Annette Krüger, "Himmel-Erde-Unterwelt: kosmologische Entwürfe in der poetischen Literatur Israels," in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 32; eds. Beate Ego and Bernd Janowski; Tübingen: J C B Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2001), 65-83. See also Izak Cornelius, "The Visual Representation of the World in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 20 (1994): 193-218. For a short summary on the difference between ANE and OT cosmology from an Evangelical perspective, see Ernest C. Lucas, "Cosmology," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 130-139.

[46] The understanding of the proper name *Sheol* as a poetic designation of the grave without reference to any form of continuous existence has been demonstrated by Galenieks dissertation: cf. Erics Galenieks, The Nature, Function, and Purpose of the Term שְׁאוֹל in the Torah, Prophets, and Writings. PhD dissertation; Andrews University, 2005.

[47] It is interesting to note the appearance of God's temple in this context. The cosmic symbolism connected to the temple is evident throughout the Old Testament, whereas the temple on earth serves as a reflection of its heavenly counterpart. Thus the temple serves as a creation-motif as demonstrated by Paas, *Creation & Jugdement*, 88-94. Cf. also, Bernd Janowski, "Der Himmel auf Erden: zur kosmologischen Bedeutung des Tempels in der Umwelt Israels," in *Das biblische Weltbild und seine altorientalischen Kontexte* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 32; eds. Beate Ego and Bernd Janowski; Tübingen: J C B Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2001), 229-60.

Creator-God as initially ironically stated in his confession to the heathen sailors (Jon 1:9).

3.1.2. Amos

Creation in Amos is an analogy of history, presenting Yahweh as Creator continuously interacting with its creation, and more specifically in this prophetic book, in a context of threatening judgement but also salvation. Creation terminology appears predominantly in the three hymns (Amos 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6) that have a structuring influence in the overall outlay of the book.[48]

Amos 4:13	Amos 5:8-9	Amos 9:5-6
He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth—the LORD God Almighty is his name.	… he who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns blackness into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name—he flashes destruction on the stronghold and brings the fortified city to ruin, he flashes destruction on the stronghold and brings the fortified city to ruin …	The Lord, the LORD Almighty, he who touches the earth and it melts, and all who live in it mourn—the whole land rises like the Nile, then sinks like the river of Egypt—he who builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name.

Creation language is predominant in these five verses and a number of lexical creation markers appear in the three passages: ברא, "to create" and יצר, "to form" (Amos 4:13), and עשׂה, "to make" (Amos 4:13; 5:8). Interestingly, all these markers are participles, a syntactic peculiarity which

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[48] Cf. Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 324-6. He further mentions Amos 6:14; 7:1, 4; and 9:11 as texts alluding to creation.

can be found throughout the Book of Amos.[49] Nevertheless, God's creative activity in each instance is brought into relationship with the human sphere indicating how creation touches on human life. One can perceive a certain progression between the three hymns in terms of how God's intervention impacts upon humanity. In Amos 4:13 God reveals his judgement intentions to humankind, whereas Amos 5:8-9 describes the destructive aspect of God's judgement. Amos 9:5-6 finally describes the human reaction to the divine judgement. The startling aspect of Amos' presentation of creation is that it is intrinsically linked to judgement, almost in such a way that creation forms the explanation for destruction. What starts as a hymn of praise for Yahweh the Creator, becomes a threatening description of Yahweh the Judge. This apparent contradiction has startled a number of scholars and most probably, and more deliberately, also Amos' audience. The position of inherent security based on belief in the Creator-God is challenged by Amos and what has provided a basis for a false religious auto-sufficiency becomes now the rationale for judgement,[50] reversing the original function of the hymns.

> By means of the hymns, Amos makes it clear that Yhwh is not a God who could simply be controlled. He challenged certain positions of presupposed rights–by means of which the people presumed the right of existence–from the broader perspective of God's creation.[51]

Thus creation can be contextually oriented towards both comfort and judgement, whereas in Amos it is mostly directed towards judgement. To accept Yahweh as the Creator also implies the acceptance of his power to de-create. On first sight, creation used in this way, is disassociated from salvation, but when judgement is understood as preliminary and partial to

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[49] Overall there are 74 participles to be found in Amos. This presents a further argument against the suggestion made by various scholars that the hymns have been added subsequently by a different author. Pfeifer explains the syntactic usage of these forms in Amos as follows: "Nach Aussagen über das Verhalten einer Personengruppe folgt eine mit dem Participium pluralis + Atikel beginnende Aussage darüber, wer die Betreffenden sind." Pfeifer, "Jahwe als Schöpfer der Welt," 477. Paas also comes to the conclusion that the hymns "are sufficiently interwoven with their direct context that we may safely assume that from their origin they belonged with the passages to which they are now connected." Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 324.

[50] One can test this against the structure of the oracles against the nations in Amos 1-2 all of which are located geographically around Israel, driving the final judgement message against Israel home with an extraordinary rhetoric force.

[51] Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 324.

salvation, than de-creation becomes a necessary precursor for re-creation. Amos drives this point home by the formulaic usage of the expression שְׁמוֹ יְהוָה, "the Lord is his name," (Amos 4:13; 5:8; 9:6) indicating that this is also and still God, he "is not only the God who creates, but He also destroys."[52]

The book of Amos concludes with a glorious perspective on restoration after judgement (Amos 9:11-15) introduced by the eschatological charged phrase בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, "in that day." The passages alludes to the creation theme by employing building terminology (for example: בנה, "to build," Amos 9:11, 14) and the metaphor of Yahweh as King. Thus within the theological thinking of Amos the correct understanding of creation becomes a prerequisite to the comprehension of re-creation.[53]

3.1.3. Hosea

Creation in Hosea is closely linked to the theme of the creation of Israel as a nation, again as with Amos in a context of pending judgement. Creation is not only analogous to history, but is history itself.

Hosea begins to develop his creation theology with an allusive description of de-creation in Hos 4:1-3 where an interesting reversal of the order of creation as presented in Gen 1 takes place. God is having a רִיב, "controversy, case" with or against Israel (Hos 4:1) which in the relationship focused context of Hosea could be more understood as a quarrel between husband and wife which also constitutes the underlying metaphor of the book.[54] Based on Israel's sins (Hos 4:2), Hos 4:3 invokes judgement by introducing the creation, viz. the anti-creation theme: "Therefore the land will mourn, and all who live in it will waste away; the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea will be extinguished."[55] [My own translation] The three groups of animals represent the three spheres where life is found on earth and the reversal of

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[52] Ibid., 429.

[53] Ibid., 195.

[54] Deroche adduces sufficient evidence to understand רִיב as a controversy or quarrel that could be settled in or out of court and he argues for the latter option since in the context of Hosea we have a situation of only two parties being involved (God and Israel) whereas a lawsuit would necessitate a judge. Deroche, "Creation in Hosea," 408-9.

[55] The verbal root אסף in the Niphal can be translated as "taken away, gathered," and in parallelism with the preceding cola as "extinguished." According to Deroche "the actions described by *'sp* are the complete and absolute opposite of those described by *br'*." Ibid., 405.

their order as known from creation[56] invokes the idea of judgement as de-creation where creation just shrivels up when confronted with and abused by sin.

The affinity between Hos 6:2 and Deut 32:39 can hardly be overlooked in this context and constitutes another creation motif in Hosea,[57] and the reference to Yahweh as the one who puts to death but also resurrects is pointing to the God of Creation which is a theme strongly developed in the Song of Moses. Hos 8:14 picks up on the same motif, again establishing a relationship with the Pentateuch in using the divine creation epithet עֹשֶׂה, "Maker," which also occurs repeatedly in the Song of Moses (Deut 32:6, 15, 18). However, "the notion of creation leads toward indictment and sentence, not toward praise."[58]

Possibly the strongest creation text in Hosea is found in Hos 11:1 and it synthesizes the passages mentioned above into the metaphor of Yahweh as the Creator and Procreator of Israel: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." This verse connects to Hos 1:10 [MT 2:1] ("they will be called 'sons of the living God'") and to the Exodus which is described in creation terminology. Thus the creation of Israel as a nation during the historic events connected with the Exodus from Egypt becomes part of God's creation. Who God elects, he also creates, and with that an intimate and eternal bond is created like that between a father and his son. Beyond reiterating and enhancing creation theology, the metaphor is pedagogic in its rhetoric: "By means of this theme of Israel's creation it is not so much the intention of Hosea to nuance the view that the people had of Yhwh but, rather, to confront them with their own behaviour. They are faithless sons."[59]

3.1.4. Micah

Affinities and intertextual issues between the messages of Micah and Isaiah are numerous and have been pointed out repeatedly by various

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[56] Gen 1:20 – fish; Gen 1:20 – birds; Gen 1:24 – beasts; cf. also Gen 1:28 where the same order is used to give dominion over creation to humankind.

[57] "After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence." (Hos 6:2). "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand." (Deu 32:39) Paas points to the linguistic affinity between the two texts. Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 343-4.

[58] Petersen, "World of Creation," 207.

[59] Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 431.

scholars.[60] The most often quoted passage in this context is the almost identical parallel found in Mic 4:1-3, 5 // Is 2:2-5. While the passage can be taken as an argument for a common prophetic message of the two prophets, for the purpose of this study, the focus rests on the creation imagery which is transmitted in an eschatological setting via the metaphor of Mount Zion.[61] According to Old Testament cosmology, Zion lies at the center of the created world and Micah points to the establishment of it in terms of creation terminology (כון, "to establish"–Mic 4:1). Creation in Micah is focused on destruction and consequent re-creation in the context of the 'day of the Lord' with its eschatological implications.[62] The prophet builds a theological bridge between creation in the beginning and in the end around the presence of God as symbolized by the Mount Zion metaphor.[63]

3.1.5. Isaiah

As mentioned above, Deutero-Isaiah was the point of departure for Gerhard von Rad and others in establishing an Old Testament theology of creation, based on the assumption that Isa 40-55 could be dated in the post-exilic period. Nevertheless, recent studies which focus on the literary unity of Isaiah–though few scholars would take the argument to its logical conclusion, i.e., unity of authorship– show that creation theology is present throughout the whole book. In view of the wealth of creation material in Isaiah, I will only focus on a selection of creation texts and motifs that demonstrate the main lines of the prophet's theological thinking on creation. The examples are taken deliberately from across the three divisions proposed by critical scholarship.

Taking Isaiah's temple vision as a chronological departure point, Is 6:1 describes Yahweh along the lines of the heavenly king metaphor which has been identified earlier as allusive to creation. The Song of the Vineyard in the preceding chapter presents an important aspect of creation in

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[60] Most recently: Marvin A. Sweeney, "Micah's debate with Isaiah," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 93 (2001): 111-124; Dominic Rudman, "Zechariah 8:20-22 and Isaiah 2:2-4//Micah 4:2-3: a study in intertextuality," *Biblische Notizen* 107-108 (2001): 50-4; Bernard Gosse, "Michée 4,1-5, Isaïe 2,1-5 et les rédacteurs finaux du livre d'Isaïe," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105.1 (1993): 98-102.

[61] Cf. under 3.1.4. with regard to the usage of the Mount Zion metaphor.

[62] In order for that to take place there needs to be the preceding destruction as expressed in Mic 1:3-4.

[63] For a discussion of God's mountain as creation motif, cf. Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 94-7.

demonstrating the inter-connection of God's creation and his intervention in history, placing it in the context of Israel's election.[64] Isa 5:12 provides a further insight into Isaiah's creation theology: sin is in reality not acknowledging God's deeds in creation.

In Isa 17:7 the prophet takes up the theme developed by Hosea of Yahweh as the 'Maker' of humankind. The image of Yahweh as the potter of Isa 29:16 has already been identified above as creation terminology and occurs in all three divisions of the book (Isa 41:25; 45:9; 64:8). Creation in Isaiah focuses primarily on God's sovereignty over his creation and humankind's failure to recognize his proper position within this world-order.

Isa 40-55 has been called the center of Isaiah's theology whereas Isa 36-39 fulfills a bridging role carefully linking the previous chapters to the remainder of the book.[65] It has been argued that the so-called Deutero-Isaiah introduces creation as a new theological topic to the book, but the preceding observations show that the theme is "deeply continuous with the Isaian tradition".[66] While creation terminology abounds in the whole book,[67] creation occurs in Is 40-55 in connection with the Exodus and Conquest (Isa 41:17-20; 42:13-17; 43:16-21; 49:8-12), placing creation in history. Furthermore, creation is positioned alongside redemption (Isa 44:24) pointing to the theological significance of the motif in introducing Cyrus as the agent of God's redemption. In this way, the Exodus serves as a typological guarantee for the future redemption from the Babylonian exile through Cyrus (Isa 44:28). The theocentric manifestation that God forms light and creates darkness as much as peace and evil (Isa 45:7) serves as an introduction to the God as a potter metaphor (Isa 45:9-13) which illustrates the absolute sovereignty of God within the realms of human history.[68]

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[64] The key-verb נטע, "to plant," (Is 5:2, 7) points to Yahweh as the planter of a garden reminiscent of his activity in creation where he "planted a garden in the east, in Eden" (Gen 2:8).

[65] Cf. Clifford, "Unity of the Book of Isaiah," 2.

[66] Ibid., 16.

[67] For example, ברא, "to create": Isa 4:5; 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7-8, 12, 18; 48:7; 54:16; 57:19; 65:17-18.

[68] The view of God also being responsible for the creation of evil fits well within the theocentric Hebrew worldview and forestalls any notions of dualism. Cf. George F. Knight, *Servant Theology. A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 40-55* (International Theological Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 90. See also Deroche who concludes: "Isa. xlv 7, on the other hand, is part of a prophetic oracle the purpose of which is to reassure the reader (listener?) that Yahweh is in control of the events shaping world history, in this

The final division of the book of Isaiah (Isa 56-66) focuses on the creation of Zion with Is 60-62 at the center of the section describing the glorious city. The book's grand finale in Isaiah 65-66 adds an eschatological dimension to creation theology in Isaiah describing renewal and restoration in terms of creation. But creation in these last chapters does not only refer to Zion as a place, but foremost to its inhabitants who need re-creation and transformation: "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy" (Isa 65:18).

Summarizing Isaian creation theology, the following becomes apparent. Creation in Isaiah 1-39 is focused on God's sovereignty over his creation and the establishment of a personal relationship with humanity, exemplified by the usage of the potter metaphor which points back to Gen 2. In Isaiah 40-55 the theme focuses on the creation of Israel as a nation in history by connecting creation with the Exodus and theologically with salvation. In Isaiah 56-66 creation is centered on the future re-creation of Zion and its people in response to the failure of a pre-exilic Israel. Thus, we have a sequential development of creation theology in the book of Isaiah which follows a natural progression of thought.

3.2. Seventh-century Prophets

A new century in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament is overshadowed by the sobering perspective of the fall of Samaria (722 BC) and an increasing urgency for the prophetic message to be heard as the Babylonian exile is approaching. As during the eighth-century, the prophetic word is inaugurated by an international message, issued by Nahum against the Assyrians. Habakkuk enters with God into a dialogue about his people, while Zephaniah and Joel enlarge upon the eschatological meaning of the 'day of the Lord' motif. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, finally fails in averting with his message the Babylonian exile.

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particular case the events surrounding the rise of Cyrus and the fall of the Babylonian empire. The oracle achieves its goal by reminding the reader that there is no god but Yahweh (vss 5-6), and that he is the creator (vs. 7)." Michael Daroche, "Isaiah XLV 7 and the Creation of Chaos?" *Vetus Testamentum* 42.1 (1992): 20.

3.2.1. Nahum

Creation in Nahum is connected to the 'day of the Lord' and the description of its characteristics is reminiscent of creation terminology: "He rebukes the sea and dries it up; he makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither and the blossoms of Lebanon fade. The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it" (Nah 1:4-5). Again there is a context of de-creation which is driven by cosmological imagery. In the judgement theophany the created order is impacted by its own creator in a way that is reminiscent of the Ancient Near Eastern *Chaoskampf* motif whereas there is a polemic reworking of the motif with Yahweh being depicted as sovereign over all the common Ancient Near Eastern power symbols such as the sea, the mountains and earth.[69]

3.2.2. Habakkuk

Habakkuk offers a similar perspective on creation as Nahum in using creation imagery in the context of de-creation during the theophany in the 'day of the Lord': "He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. His ways are eternal" (Hab 3:6). In the following verses Habakkuk describes the impact of Yahweh's appearance on creation (Hab 3:7-12). However, through the destructive power of de-creation, salvation is accomplished: "You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one" (Hab 3:13). Along the same lines, creation imagery also serves as a point of reference for recognition of the creator: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14).

3.2.3. Zephaniah

As observed above, Zeph 1:3 introduces a reversal of creation by listing the animals in a reversed order as they were originally mentioned in the creation account from Gen 1.[70] He furthermore uses the familiar word-play between אָדָם, "man" and אֲדָמָה, "ground" known from Gen 2:7. However,

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[69] Cf. my study of Ps 29 where I discuss the polemic nature of the *Chaoskampf* motif in the Psalms. Martin G. Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven. God as a Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 169; Fribourg and Göttingen: University Press and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 84-99.

[70] See above under 2.2.1.

the reversal of creation transmits a strong theological message: "In Gen. ii, however, the pun is used to indicate man's dependence on that from whence he came, whereas Zephaniah uses it to show man's separation from his creator, Yahweh. A situation that involves a return to the age before creation can result only in man's destruction."[71] Zephaniah is depicting the progressive loss of dominion over creation by humanity and its resulting de-creation.[72]

Aside from the obvious creation allusions, Zephaniah also refers to another event of the *Urgeschichte*, i.e., the flood, by using the phrase "from the face of the earth" as an *inclusio* for the passage in Zep 1:1-3 (cf. Gen 6:7; 7:4; 8:8). Within the prophet's message of judgement, the flood serves as an example of present impending doom.[73]

3.2.4. Joel

Within the 'day of the Lord' imagery, Joel employs creation imagery in order to describe the impact of Yahweh's theophany on creation as part of that judgement day: "The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. And the LORD shall roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the LORD will be a refuge unto His people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel" (Joel 3:15-6 [MT 4:15-6]). The mesmerism "heavens and earth" serves as a creation indicator, but again, within a negative context of judgement. The theophanic event is always connected to the experience of God in nature and the impact of his appearance on creation.[74] However, the final verses of Joel return to the topic of re-creation describing the future of Zion in paradisiacal terms: "In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house and will water the valley of acacias" (Joel 3:18 [MT 4:18]). The Garden of Eden mentioned earlier on (Joel 2:3) that has been destroyed by the locust plague is thus being re-

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[71] Deroche, "Zephaniah I 2-3," 106.

[72] Deroche adds an interesting afterthought: "If Zephaniah knew and used both creation accounts of Genesis (i 1-ii 4a and ii 4b-iii 24), does this not imply that the so-called P account of creation (i 1-ii 4a) is earlier that usually thought, and that Gen. i-iii (and probably all Gen. i-xi) came together as a unit before the seventh century B.C." Ibid., 108.

[73] Cf. Petersen, "World of Creation," 209.

[74] "The employment of theophanic material in prophetic texts is intended to show, in a drastic manner, the motivation for the prophet's message of judgement." Paas, *Creation & Judgement*, 218.

created. Again, a linear motion from creation to de-creation and finally re-creation can be observed with creation being the overall paradigm that underlies history.

3.2.5. Jeremiah

Creation in Jeremiah is so extensively present[75] that we again will have to limit ourselves to a number of key passages. The book begins with reference to the creation of the prophet in his mother's womb (Jer 1:5) using the lexical creation marker יצר, "to form, fashion" which can be found in Gen 2:7. The creation of mankind as part of the creation week is repeated in each new creation of new human life.[76]

A survey of creation in Jeremiah has to include Jer 4:23-26 which connects with strong linguistic markers to the creation account as found in Gen 1. The doom-oracle presents possibly the most faithful account of de-creation, or the reversal of creation, when compared to Gen 1:2-2:4a. The following table adapted from Fishbane shows the progression:[77]

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[75] Perdue provides a useful summary of creation theology in Jeremiah, suggesting the following three categories: (1) dialectic of creation and history; (2) creation and destiny of humanity; and (3) wisdom and creation. He comes to the conclusion that a reshaping of Old Testament theology has to take place if creation receives its adequate attention in biblical theology. Leo G. Perdue, *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 141-50.

[76] "Göttliche Handlungen, die im jahwistischen Schöpfungsbericht den Beginn der Menschheitsgeschichte markieren, wiederholen sich nach beiden Zeugnissen aus dem Jeremiabuch beim Entstehen eines jeden neuen menschlichen Lebens; denn Jahwe ist der 'Gott allen Fleisches'. . . wie Jer 32,37a formuliert." Helga Weippert, *Schöpfer des Himmels und der Erde: ein Beitrag zur Theologie des Jeremiabuches* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 102; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981), 13.

[77] Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26," 152.

Detail	Jeremiah	Genesis
Pre-Creation	*formless and empty* (תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ Jer 4:23)	*formless and empty* (וָבֹהוּ תֹהוּ Gen 1:2)
First day	*there was no light* (אוֹר Jer 4:23)	*there was light* (אוֹר Gen 1:3)
Second day	*heavens* (שָׁמַיִם Jer 4:23)	*heavens* (שָׁמַיִם Gen 1:8)
Third day	*earth: mountains quaking and hills swaying* (אֶרֶץ Jer 4:23-24)	*earth: dry land* (אֶרֶץ Gen 1:9-10)
Fourth day		*lights* (מְאֹרֹת Gen 1:14)
Fifth day	*birds had fled* (עוֹף Jer 4:25)	*let birds fly* (עוֹף Gen 1:20)
Sixth day	*there were no people* (אָדָם Jer 4:25)	*let us make man* (אָדָם Gen 1:26)
Seventh day	*cities destroyed before his fierce anger* (חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ Jer 4:26)	*Sabbath* (שַׁבָּת Gen 2:2-3)

While the Genesis account ends with a day of rest, the Sabbath, Jeremiah's de-creation account ends with a day of fury. The deconstruction of creation is taking place and one can be sure that the listeners (and subsequent readers) of the prophet's message recognized the creation pattern. Creation becomes the paradigm for destruction and serves as the primeval point of departure for contemporary theology. "What acts and words could be more invested with power than those of creation?"[78]

The antithesis to the doom-oracle is provided in Jer 31:35-37 where two short sayings conclude the Book of Comfort (Jer 30-31) and in creation-language point to the impossibility of Yahweh destroying Israel. Yet it is expressed along the lines of remnant theology with reference to the "seed of Israel" and its future hope. Both apparent opposite expressions, Jer 4:23-26 and Jer 31:35-37 show the range of possible applications of creation theology within Jeremiah, but beyond that show that Israel needs to acknowledge Yahweh with regard to their present future: "Thus both extremes of expression bear witness the theological claim that finally Israel must come to terms with Yahweh upon whom its future well-being solely depends."[79]

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[78] Ibid., 153. Brueggemann provides an answer to Fishbane's rhetoric question: "Creation theology here functions to voice a complete, unreserved, elemental negation of all that makes life livable, a negation that could hardly be uttered without such large language." Brueggemann, "Jeremiah," 156.

[79] Ibid., 159.

Jer 10:12-16 is a hymn that celebrates Yahweh's creative power and it is replenished with creation imagery:

> But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses. Everyone is senseless and without knowledge; every goldsmith is shamed by his idols. His images are a fraud; they have no breath in them. They are worthless, the objects of mockery; when their judgment comes, they will perish. He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including Israel, the tribe of his inheritance—the LORD Almighty is his name (Jer 10:12-16).

Although most commentators point to the contrast between the true God and the idols, the emphasis is rather on a contrast between Yahweh as the creator of life (Jer 10:13) and humankind as (false) creator of life (Jer 10:14). The focus is not on the idol but on its maker who is "shamed" by his inanimate image, since he is not able to provide the creature with the necessary breath of life which is the distinguishing characteristic of Yahweh's creation.

> Idolatry is therefore a double sin. The worship of idols denies the reality of God's complete control over the cosmos because it involves the acknowledgement of other divine powers…. Worse still is the pretence of creating life. In doing so, humankind lays claim to divine knowledge.[80]

3.3. Sixth- and fifth-century Prophets

The Babylonian exile and post-exilic period brought with it a change in the prophetic message, shifting its contents towards restoration or, speaking within the terminology of the present article, to re-creation. While Ezekiel and Obadiah witness the downfall of Jerusalem, and as such the ultimate fulfillment of the long-prophesied de-creation, Daniel brings an apocalyptic dimension to the topic. Re-creation becomes the prominent topic for post-exilic Haggai and Zechariah, and Malachi finalizes the canonical prophetic chorus of the Old Testament with the restorative message around the Second Eliah.

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[80] Rudman, "Creation and Fall," 68.

3.3.1. Ezekiel

Petersen comes to the conclusion that "creation traditions are not important for Ezekiel's theological argument."[81] However, his argument appears to be on the assumption of an exclusive positive reading of the creation account which, as has been seen, forms only one part of the theological panorama for which creation motifs were invoked. If understood in this way, Ezekiel "is not concerned with how the world itself came into existence…, but rather with re-forming a world gone awry".[82] In order to illustrate this, I will focus on three passages that outline Ezekiel's theological usage of creation.

Eze 28:11-19 is a prophetic oracle that centers on a description of the king of Tyre as a type for the anarchic Cherub which has been interpreted since patristic times as pointing to the fall of Lucifer.[83] A number of indicative creation linguistic markers are present,[84] yet the context of the passage is focused on the description of the hubris of a fallen angel that is staining a perfect world. As with Jeremiah, creation language is employed as a powerful paradigm to describe the origin of sin.

Ezek 31:1-18 transfers the same scenario into the realm of human history. The cosmic tree representing human kingship, a motif well-known from ANE iconography,[85] is used as a metaphor for the downfall of the king of Assyria which in turn serves as a warning for Egypt's future judgement. The chapter describes the glory of the tree within creation terminology and cosmology (for example: תְּהוֹם Ezek 31:4 // Gen 7:11) and connects it with paradise (Ezek 31:8-9, 16, 18). Creation terminology is employed to describe the downfall of two prominent nations, Assyria and Egypt. Thus not only paradise has been spoilt but also human history.

Re-creation in Ezekiel and the reversal of de-creation as exemplified by the two previous passages can be found in Ezek 47:1-12 within the context of the vision of the future glory of the temple which in itself serves

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[81] Petersen, "Creation in Ezekiel," 499.

[82] Galambush, "Castles in the Air," 147.

[83] See for example: Jean-Marc Vercruysse, "Les pères de l'église et la chute de l'ange (Lucifer d'après Is 14 et Ez 28)," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 75.2 (2001): 147-74.

[84] For example: ברא, "to create" (Gen 1:1 // Ezek 28:13, 15); עֵדֶן, "Eden" (Gen 2:8, 10, 15 // Ezek 28:13); various gemstones (Gen 2:11-12 // Ezek 28:13); כְּרוּב, "Cherub" (Gen 3:24 // Ezek 28:14, 16).

[85] Othmar Keel, *Goddesses and Trees, New Moon and Yahweh. Ancient Near Eastern Art and the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 261; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

as a creation motif.[86] This time the trees are growing again, not in rebellion against but under Yahweh's power and provision of fertility (Ezek 47:12).[87] The sustaining agents of God's power are the rivers of paradise which connect Ezekiel to the creation account in Gen 2:10-14.[88] Ezekiel deliberately merges temple/Zion with paradise imagery, because the destruction of the earthly temple in Jerusalem and his own exile in Babylon has caused the place of God's presence to transcend to a heavenly realm, indicating that Yahweh's presence is continuous and does not depend on human realities.

> As the connections between Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Genesis 2:10-14 reveal, Ezekiel understood the symbol of Zion in a new way. Cut free from explicit reference to the temporal, political realities of kingship, priesthood, and the earthly temple, the temple-mountain and river of Ezekiel's last great vision stand as timeless symbols of divine presence. For Ezekiel, the earthly Zion, with its city and temple, was a bitter disappointment.[89]

Creation in Ezekiel is used to express his (and the divine) disappointment over angelic rebellion and consequent human history which replays that rebellion again and again, but he moves beyond that in stating that God is able to recreate something new and eternal from the shreds of human history. However, one should be cautious not to attribute an exclusive other-worldliness to the Ezekiel's prophecies.[90]

3.3.2. Obadiah

There is no apparent creation terminology employed in the book of Obadiah except for the usage of the Mount Zion motif (Obad 1:17, 21) which is in juxtaposition to the mountains of Edom (Obad 1:3-4, 8-9). The one who has made his "nest among the stars" (Obad 1:4) will be brought

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[86] Cf. footnote 47.

[87] "Ezekiel's emphasis on trees as signifiers indicating acceptance of or rebellion against divine authority stands in striking contrast with the symbolism of trees elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible." Galambush, "Castles in the Air," 155.

[88] There are significant linguistic creation markers in the text; for example: נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, "living creature" (Ezek 47:9 // Gen 1:20, 21, 24, 30); שׁרץ, "to swarm" (Ezek 47:9 // Gen 1:20-21)

[89] Steven Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise," 189.

[90] One should not forget the prophet's vision of the dry bones in Ezek 37 which employs creation terminology in the re-creation of the house of Israel.

low because of human wisdom and understanding (Obad 1:8). Instead, the mountains of Esau will be governed from Mount Zion (Obad 1:21).[91]

3.3.3. Daniel

There are few studies that engage the book of Daniel with creation theology, and those who take up the task usually focus on the mythological *Chaoskampf* motif and its ANE counterparts as found in the description of the waters in Dan 7:2-3.[92] According to Wilson, in contrast to Gen 1, the waters described in Dan 7 are presented as returning to chaos and the animals that surface from the waters, are composite creatures that do not correspond to the order of creation in Gen 1. "The world has reverted to its pre-creation state and is clearly in need of re-creation."[93] This re-creation is achieved in the vision of the Ancient One that constitutes the second part of the vision (Dan 7:9-14) with the word שָׁלְטָן, "dominion" being the key word appearing 8 times in this chapter.[94] The failure of human dominion over the earth in history as ordained in creation is replaced by God's dominion over the universe through an everlasting kingdom.

But aside from Dan 7 there is more on creation in the prophetic book as Doukhan has shown. He approaches the issue from a linguistic perspective and arrives at the conclusion that "les allusions à la creation foisonnent tout au long du livre et sont attestées d'une manière ou d'une autre dans chacun de ses chapitres."[95] In the following I select the most outstanding allusions mentioned by Doukhan.

In Dan 1:12 the four young men opt for a menu which is echoing the pre-fall diet found in Gen 1:29 and the description of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2:38 invokes creation terminology applying the same attribute of dominion over the earth and all his creatures to the Babylonian king as Adam received in Gen 1:28. Clay which is part of the stature's feet is used

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[91] Cf. under 3.1.4. with regard to the usage of the Mount Zion metaphor.

[92] See for example: André Lacocque, "Allusions to creation in Daniel 7," in *The book of Daniel: composition and reception. Volume one* (ed. John Joseph Collins and Peter W. Flint; Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83.1; Formation and interpretation of Old Testament literature 2.1; Leiden ; Boston : Brill, 2001), 114-31.

[93] Wilson, "Creation and New Creation," 201-2.

[94] Dan 7:6, 12, 14 (3x), 26, 27 (2x).

[95] Jacques B. Doukhan, "Allusions à la creation dans le livre de Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings* (ed. Adam S. van der Woude; Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 106; Leuven: University Press and Peeters, 1993), 289.

throughout the Bible within contexts alluding to creation, indicating the religious aspect of the spiritual Rome (cf. Isa 29:16; Jer 18:2; Lam 4:2). The word-pair אוֹר/חֹשֶׁךְ, "darkness/light" in Daniel's benediction (Dan 2:22) is resounding the creation account of Gen 1:4-5. Another creation word-pair (אֶרֶץ/שָׁמַיִם, "heaven/earth") is found in Nebuchadnezzar's prayer after he returns to his senses in Dan 4:35. Furthermore, the usage of the cosmic tree motif in Dan 4 points to the creation account (cf. Gen 2:9). The association of the two segolates עֶרֶב בֹקֶר, "evening-morning" in Dan 8:14 is found in this sequence and meaning only in the creation story (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). In the concluding chapter of the book, Daniel evokes creation terminology by describing re-creation which is taking place after the de-creation scenario of the previous chapter (Dan 11). For the righteous ones there is a passage from sleeping in the dust (Dan 12:2) to shining like the stars (Dan 12:3) and for Daniel in particular from resting to standing up in the final day to receive his inheritance (Dan 12:13).[96]

The apocalyptic themes of transformation of history and final return to an Edenic state that are so recurrent in the book of Daniel, are theologically grouped along a process from creation to de-creation and finally re-creation, a topic which we have encountered repeatedly in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, whereas the time-lines in Daniel are broader and informed by his apocalyptic perspective. Eschatology which moves towards an end imperatively necessitates a beginning, and the theme of creation provides the theological rationale against which eschatology can take place.[97]

3.3.4. Haggai

In Hag 1:10 the prophet invokes the heaven/earth mesmerism, demonstrating how the post-exilic community's lack of faithfulness is causing nature's or creation's blessings to be interrupted. Further on Haggai employs the same word-pair in order to describe how the created order is affected by the 'day of the Lord', but this time from a Messianic

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[96] Ibid., 286-89.

[97]"L'idée de commencement est conséquente avec celle de 'fin'. L'idée de transformation est contenue dans celle de résurrection. L'idée de déterminisme rejoint celle de contrôle de l'histoire par Dieu. L'idée d'universalisme est impliquée dans la conception cosmique du salut. En fin et surtout, l'idée de souveraineté et de royaume de Dieu qui est centrale dans tout le livre de Daniel, relève de la même pensée que celle du Dieu créateur (Ps 24,1-2, 7-10; cf. Ps 95,3-6)." Ibid., 290-1.

perspective: "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty" (Hag 2:6-7; cf. Hag 2:21-22).

3.3.5. Zechariah

God as the continuous sustainer of creation is described by Zechariah: "Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime; it is the LORD who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone" (Zech 10:1). The עֵשֶׂב בַּשָּׂדֶה, "vegetation in the field" connects with the עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה, "vegetation of the field" of Gen 2:5. Springtime and fertility are caused by the ongoing process of 'creating' (עשׂה) the rain clouds. Zechariah's second oracle (מַשָּׂא, "utterance, oracle"; cf. 9:1) is introduced by using a distinct creation terminology, however, with a significant rearranging of the various elements: "This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares…" (Zech 12:1). While the 'stretching out of the heavens' is not a direct linguistic creation marker it nevertheless recaptures the action of Gen 1:6-7 and is found throughout the Old Testament (cf. Ps 104:2; Job 9:8; Is 44:24). It is also interesting to note that the object of יצר, "to form" in Zech 12:1 is not man himself as in Gen 2:7, but רוּחַ־אָדָם, "the spirit of man."

> One has the sense that there is a traditional set of creation vocabulary, but that it could be arranged in various acceptable patterns. Heavens, earth, humanity, and spirit provide the crucial building blocks. Zechariah 12:1 combines them into an innovative and adroit manner.[98]

Interestingly, Zech 12:1 serves within the given literary genre as a validation for the following oracle which is a description of Israel's new and victorious role amongst the nations, a new creation of the nation on the day of the Lord.

3.4.1. Malachi

Malachi concludes the cycle of Old Testament prophets with a rhetorical question which parallels God as the creator with the metaphor of

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[98] Petersen, "World of Creation," 210.

God as a father: "Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another" (Mal 2:10)? Creation is here being transformed to the intimate level of a father-son relationship, viz. husband-wife (cf. Mal 2:14-15) which echoes the intimate creation account of Gen 2. Creation in the final book of the Old Testament and in its final analysis is not centered on cosmogony but on a personal relationship between God and humankind as exemplified in the order of creation.

5. Summary and Conclusions

In the following synopsis I will mention the most prominent points of each prophet's usage of creation in his writings.

▸8th century prophets				
Jonah	Amos	Hosea	Micah	Isaiah
▸ Ecological content ▸ Jonah's progressive descent reflects a movement away from creation, from life towards death ▸ Obedient creation against disobedient humanity ▸ Reoccurring creation is geared towards salvation	▸ Creation is analogous to history ▸ Creation becomes a paradigm for judgment (de-creation) and salvation (re-creation) ▸ Correct understanding of creation is prerequisite for re-creation	▸ Creation is history ▸ Reversal of creation order in order to portray anti-creation ▸ Creation of Israel as a nation during the Exodus forms part of original creation ▸ Election amounts to creation	▸ Creation focuses on de- and subsequent eschatological re-creation ▸ Mount Zion metaphor as a theological bridge between creation and re-creation	▸ Creation is present throughout the whole book ▸ Creation metaphors like 'maker,' 'potter,' establish a personal relationship ▸ Creation in history serves as a guarantee for redemption ▸ Future re-creation flows out from redemption

In trying to establish the broader lines of creation in the prophetic literature of the 8th century, it becomes apparent that creation is progressively anchored in history, theologically made relevant in salvation, and paradigmatically centered in the introduction of the triad of creation–de-creation–re-creation.

7th century prophets				
Nahum	Habakkuk	Zephaniah	Joel	Jeremiah
‣ Creation terminology is used to describe the 'day of the Lord' ‣ God's sovereignty as Creator over ANE power symbols	‣ Creation as de-creation during the 'day of the Lord' ‣ De-creation is intended to accomplish salvation and recognition of the Creator	‣ Reversal of creation indicates separation between Creator and creature ‣ Progressive de-creation results in loss of dominion over creation ‣ Flood as a type for de-creation	‣ Eschatological de-creation, but redemption for His poeple ‣ Re-creation in paradisiacal terms ‣ Triad: creation – de-creation – re-creation	‣ Strongest account of reversal of creation in prophetic literature ‣ Creation becomes the paradigm for destruction ‣ Remnant theology connects to creation ‣ Contrast between true Creator (Yahweh) and false Creator (idolater)

Creation in the prophetic literature of the 7th century is historically contextualized by the impending Babylonian Exile whereas the triad of creation–de-creation–re-creation becomes more and more prominent with the prophets beginning to look beyond the inevitable judgment towards restoration.

6th - 5th century prophets					
Ezekiel	Obadiah	Daniel	Haggai	Zechariah	Malachi
Focus on reforming a de-created world. De-creation is foreshadowed in the fall of Lucifer. Paradise and human history is stained by the primeval event. Ezekiel's future temple serves in itself as a creation motif. The idealistic character of the future temple transcends the shortcomings of human (Israelite) history.	No explicit creation theology, except for the Mt. Zion motif.	Creation terminology present throughout the book Apocalyptic transforma-tion of history in terms of creation. Eschatology (re-creation) is dependent on protology (creation).	'Day of the Lord' motif with Messianic perspective along creation termino-logy.	Ongoing creation by sustaining of life through fertility and rain. Creative re-arranging of creation termino-logy building blocks in order to describe the re-creation of the nation.	Creation trans-formed onto an intimate personal relation-ship-level. Creation not based on cos-mogony but relation-ship.

The usage of creation during the final two centuries of Old Testament prophetic literature is clearly future-oriented whereas a theological abstraction has taken place that can be related to the disappearance of the physical temple and monarchy. While creation is still the overarching paradigm that spans human history, the focus has moved towards the end

of that arch which, as in the case of the book of Daniel, takes on apocalyptic and also Messianic notions.

Creation in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament is employed as a constant literary and theological reference which connects to a historical past, motivates the interpretation of the present, and moves towards a perspective for the future by means of a continuous contextualization of the topic via the triad creation–de-creation– re-creation. This reference point is anchored in the creation account as presented in Gen 1-3.

> The final authors of the Hebrew Bible understood creation not as one topic among others or even one of lower significance. For them creation was the starting point, because everything human beings can think and say about God and his relation to the world and to humankind depends on the fact that he created all this.[99]

The intertextual markers that refer to creation in the prophets indicate that they saw creation as a literal and historical given whereas reference is made indiscriminately to the creation account as presented in both Genesis 1 and 2. The movement of intertextuality indicates clearly that as much as creation forms the starting point of much of the prophetic theological discourse, all markers of creation as discussed in this paper point back to the creation model as presented in Gen 1-3. While it has not been the purpose of the present paper to reconstruct the cosmology of the Old Testament prophets, it has become apparent that their world-view departed from creation and explained and interpreted the world from this perspective. Any discussion of whether the prophets considered creation other than a historical event or even only used it for literary or theological purposes, cannot be sustained from the textual data and would be projecting a 19th century AD rationalist debate into a first millennium BC context in which it would have not existed otherwise.

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[99] Rendtorff, "Some Reflections on Creation," 207.

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