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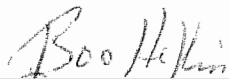
אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה

IN EZEKIEL

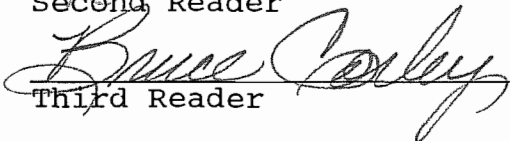
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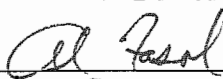
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THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DIVINE TITLE אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה  
IN EZEKIEL

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An Abstract  
of a Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the School of Theology  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Fort Worth, Texas

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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Department of Old Testament

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by  
Peter Craig Hamilton

September 1990

The purpose of this dissertation was to ascertain the theological implications of Ezekiel's frequent use of the divine title, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה. He has the most occurrences of the divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי, in the Old Testament (222 out of 439), and the greatest number of אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה forms (217 out of 301). This title is found almost exclusively in two prophetic formulas in Ezekiel's prophecy, the introductory messenger formula and the formula for a divine saying, which either introduce or highlight his prophetic oracles.

Chapter one contains an overview of the meaning of אֲדֹנָי in the Old Testament, and a discussion of the rendering of the divine name in the Greek versions of Ezekiel. Based on the LXX translation of the book, which often reads a single *κύριος* where MT has אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, many have assumed that אֲדֹנָי was a late addition to the text.

Chapter two investigates the occurrences of the divine title אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה outside the book of Ezekiel. Of particular interest are the associations of אֲדֹנָי with the ideology of Yahweh's kingship in the Old Testament, and the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה in prophetic formulas in the prophecies of Isaiah, Amos, and Jeremiah.

Chapter three is an exegetical and thematic survey of the book of Ezekiel itself, which seeks to place the frequent occurrences of אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה within the overall framework of the prophet's theology.

Chapter four summarizes the conclusions of the study, which include the following. The divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי,

definitely belongs to the Old Testament ideology of Yahweh's kingship. The frequency and location of the divine title, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, in what can rightly be called the "royal edicts" of the divine Lord, Yahweh, further demonstrate that אֱלֹהֵי is a key element in Ezekiel's theology. Far from being a late addition to the text, it serves as an appropriate designation of Yahweh's sovereign rule over Israel and the nations, and complements the prophet's magnificent visions of the divine glory which had such a profound effect on his consciousness.

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September 1990

To Joyce, Rebecca, and John

## PREFACE

The Old Testament concept of the kingship of Yahweh has provided a fertile field of inquiry for biblical research in recent decades. Most studies of this ancient concept, however, have focused on its liturgical preservation in the Psalter or its relationship to similar ideas in other ancient Near Eastern cultures, leaving relatively untouched its proclamation by various prophets in concrete historical situations. Those studies which have included the prophets have by and large considered the prophetic presentation of this idea a secondary development which relied on earlier liturgical constructions.

There is evidence within the Old Testament, however, that the concept of Yahweh's kingship was first explicitly proclaimed by the prophet, Samuel, and again came into prominence through prophetic figures just prior to and during the Babylonian exile. The prophetic proclamation of the universal dominion of Yahweh became increasingly important for the faith of Israel as the nation approached the political and theological crisis brought about by the exile.

The prophet Ezekiel presented the most comprehensive picture of the sovereign rule of Yahweh found in the Old Testament. Through his encounter with God by the river

Kebar in the land of exile, he came to the conviction that Yahweh still reigned as divine Lord over Israel, and that he was also in control of human history in general. Like the prophets who preceded him, Ezekiel proclaimed this conviction of the divine rule in terms of both judgment and salvation. As sovereign Lord, Yahweh had to judge his people because they persistently rebelled against his covenant demands. And as sovereign Lord, Yahweh called the exiles to repentance, in order that he might construct from them a new community of faith.

The divine encounter determined not only the content of Ezekiel's proclamation, but also its form. Because he had experienced Yahweh as the exalted Lord, he almost always introduced his prophetic oracles by means of the messenger formula, "Thus says Lord Yahweh" (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יְהוּדָה). The basic form of this formula, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, which was used by prophets who both preceded and followed Ezekiel, was modeled on a speech form commonly used in the ancient Near East to introduce royal proclamations and decrees. Ezekiel thus declared the "royal edicts" of the divine Lord, Yahweh, to the rebellious subject, Israel. Ezekiel's addition of אֱלֹהֵי to this basic formula as a modifier of יְהוָה has its own significance, in that it draws attention to the sovereign lordship of Yahweh.

Ezekiel's use of the messenger formula to introduce the words of Yahweh to his people highlights another aspect



of his prophecy, which is directly related to the historical event of the exile. He intentionally contrasted the sovereign rule of Yahweh with the ephemeral reigns of Judah's last kings, who through their unfaithfulness to the covenant and pursuit of selfish ambition led Judah to her ruin. Like Samuel before him, Ezekiel sought to emphasize the kingship or sovereign rule of Yahweh as over against human kingship, but he did so precisely at the time when the institution of the monarchy was coming to an end.

On an even higher level, Ezekiel proclaimed the sovereignty of his God in the face of Babylonian claims of political and military supremacy over the world of nations. This is implied rather than explicitly stated in the book of Ezekiel, but it is clearly indicated by the prophet's belief that the military might of Babylon was the instrument of Yahweh's judgment upon Israel. The oracles against the nations also show that Yahweh reigns above all earthly powers, and that he will enter into judgment with every one of them for their arrogant defiance of his majesty and their crimes against Israel.

Because of lingering questions in the scholarly community concerning the originality of the divine epithet אֱלֹהֵי in Ezekiel, chapter one contains an overview of the meaning and usage of אֱלֹהֵי and its derivatives in the Old Testament. The frequency and location of the occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי in Ezekiel argue strongly for its originality, despite

formidable scholarly opinion to the contrary.

Chapter two investigates the occurrences of the divine title **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה** outside the book of Ezekiel, in order to determine what effect, if any, earlier conceptions and usage may have had on the exilic prophet. Particular attention is given in this chapter to the development of the ideology of Yahweh's kingship in different parts of the Old Testament canon, the tension that always existed in Israel between divine Lord and human monarch, and the prophetic usage of the messenger formula in the construction of prophetic oracles.

Chapter three is devoted to an exegesis of selected passages in the prophecy of Ezekiel which were deemed most relevant in relation to the divine title, **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה**. While this chapter was originally intended to be an exegetical survey of the book, it became to a significant extent thematic, since the repetition of certain themes throughout the book were considered crucial to the overall argument.

Chapter four summarizes the conclusions that can be reasonably drawn from the evidence presented, and also offers a few suggestions for further research along the same or similar lines.

This dissertation was composed on an IBM-compatible personal computer manufactured by Corona (now Cordata) Corporation of California. The software package used is called Megawriter, which is published by Paraclete Software,

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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of the kingship or reign of God has been the subject of a number of important studies in this century.<sup>1</sup> It has even been suggested that the kingship of Yahweh is the central theme of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> Mowinckel and others have focused their attention on the "psalms of Yahweh's enthronement," which are thought to reflect the complex of ideas common to all ancient Near Eastern cultures, in which God struggles with and eventually triumphs over

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<sup>1</sup>H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948); C. J. Gadd, Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East (London: Published by the British Academy for Oxford University Press, 1948); S. H. Hooke, ed., Myth, Ritual, and Kingship: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958); W. H. Schmidt, Koenigtums Gottes in Ugarit und Israel (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1961); S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israelite Worship, 2 vols., trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon, 1962); I. Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East, 2d ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967); J. Gray, The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979).

<sup>2</sup>J. Gray, "The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms," Vetus Testamentum 11 (1961): 1; L. Köhler, Old Testament Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), 30; G. Fohrer, "Der Mittelpunkt einer Theologie des Alten Testaments," Theologische Zeitschrift 24 (1968): 71. For a contrary view, see R. Ficker, "Kingship of God in the Psalms," Bangalore Theological Forum 12, no. 1 (1980): 50.

cosmic forces of evil and chaos, and is subsequently manifested as king.<sup>3</sup> Those who envision a strong Canaanite influence on Israelite religious concepts find this idea easy to accept, while others prefer to grant a greater degree of independence and uniqueness to the Old Testament writings.

Von Rad observed that the term מֶלֶךְ is applied to the Godhead "in all the ancient Orient," and concluded that this phenomenon was pre-Semitic.<sup>4</sup> It is only natural that the ancients described their gods in terms of the structure of their own culture, in which the king was often the highest human authority.<sup>5</sup> This concept transferred quite easily to the realm of the gods and made the idea of divine authority readily understandable. In the Old Testament, the designation of Yahweh as King is found fairly often in the Psalms and somewhat less often in the prophets. Both bodies of literature emphasize the work of Yahweh in creation and his majestic rule in the heavens, but in different ways.

Most studies of Yahweh's kingship have concentrated

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<sup>3</sup>Gray, "Kingship of God," 1.

<sup>4</sup>G. von Rad, "מֶלֶךְ and מְלָכִית in the OT," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. 1, ed. G. Kittel, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 568. Hereafter cited as TDNT.

<sup>5</sup>G. V. Smith, "The Concept of God/The Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible," Trinity Journal 3, no. 1 (1982): 18.

on the Psalms, especially the phrase, יהוה מֶלֶךְ.<sup>6</sup> In addition to this important phrase, מֶלֶךְ appears rather frequently in the Psalms as an epithet of Yahweh.<sup>7</sup> The Psalms also contain frequent references to Yahweh's throne (כִּסֵּא)<sup>8</sup> and the fact that he "sits enthroned" (יָשָׁב)<sup>9</sup> in the heavens. The study of the reign of God can be expanded to include other terms as well, such as מִשְׁלַל<sup>10</sup> and a number of other possibilities, which help fill out the ideology of God's reign as it is found in the Psalms.

What is not so clear, however, is the significance of the affirmation of Yahweh's kingship as it is found in other parts of the Old Testament, especially the prophets. The prophetic proclamation of Yahweh's kingship uses similar

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<sup>6</sup>Pss. 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1. Cf. Pss. 47:9; 146:10. The debate surrounding this biblical phrase cannot be settled here, but the present writer favors Kraus's view that it is an affirmation of Yahweh's eternal rule rather than a cultic rehearsal of his enthronement. See H.-J. Kraus, Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament, trans. G. Buswell (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966), 205-8.

<sup>7</sup>Pss. 5:3; 10:16; 24:7-10; 29:10; 44:5; 47:3,7-8; 48:3; 68:25; 74:12; 84:4; 95:3; 98:6; 99:4; 145:1; 149:2.

<sup>8</sup>Pss. 9:5,8; 11:4; 47:9; 89:15; 93:2; 97:2; 103:19.

<sup>9</sup>Pss. 2:4; 9:5,12; 22:4; 29:10; 47:9; 55:20; 68:17; 80:2; 99:1; 113:5; 123:1.

<sup>10</sup>See Pss. 22:29; 59:14; 66:7; 103:19.



terminology.<sup>11</sup> It is difficult, however, to determine any kind of literary or chronological relationship between the prophets and the Psalms, since a good number of the Psalms cannot be dated with certainty. Nevertheless, some have concluded that the ideology of Yahweh's kingship originated in a religious festival which celebrated the "enthronement" of Yahweh, and that the prophetic ideology is a later reflection of a liturgical ceremony which is preserved for us in the Psalms.<sup>12</sup>

For example, Gray begins with the Psalms and then proceeds to the prophets. He acknowledges that the prophets approach the concept of Yahweh's kingship somewhat differently than do the psalm-writers, i.e., through their concern with the Heilsgeschichte as opposed to the liturgy of the cult. He nevertheless concludes that both types of Old Testament literature present basically the same picture, i.e., that of the triumph of Yahweh over chaos, which is a reflection and adaptation of the Baal-myth.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>E.g., מְלִיךָ is used of Yahweh in Isa. 24:23; 52:7; Ezek. 20:33; Mic. 4:7; he is designated מְלִיךָ in Isa. 6:5; 33:22; 43:15; 44:6; Jer. 10:7,10; 46:18; 48:15; 51:57; Zeph. 3:15; Zech. 14:9,16-17; Mal. 1:14; his throne, כִּסֵּא, is mentioned in Isa. 6:1; 66:1; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 1:26; 10:1; 43:7.

<sup>12</sup>Gray, "Kingship of God," 2.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 24-28.

It is highly unlikely, however, that Israel ever officially adopted very much, if anything, from Canaanite religious practices, except when forced to do so by one of her kings. The Israelites were, no doubt, often influenced by the native culture and often succumbed to idolatrous ways, but the religion of Baal never attained the approval of those who truly represented the religion of Yahweh, i.e., the canonical prophets. The fact that there are similarities between the Israelite conception of Yahweh and the Canaanite conception of Baal is probably due to the fact that ancient man was generally impressed by the powers of nature and tended to worship natural phenomena, such as thunderstorms, as embodiments or extensions of the deity. The difference between the two conceptions is that Baal was identified with the storm itself or the cycles of nature, while Yahweh transcended the natural order, although he did at times manifest his power through such phenomena.<sup>14</sup>

Gray seems to operate on the assumption that the prophetic ideology of Yahweh's kingship is derivative and secondary to that of the cult, having been adapted by each prophet to the specific historical situation which he addressed. But it is more likely that the concept of

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<sup>14</sup>W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, vol. 2, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 19-20.

Yahweh's kingship originated with Samuel,<sup>15</sup> and that both prophetic literature and the Psalms represent a further elaboration of this theme. Eichrodt points to evidence of Samuel's role in the development of this concept, suggesting the existence of a tradition connected with the ark of the covenant in Samuel's day, which may go back to an even earlier time in Israel's history.<sup>16</sup> This will be taken up again in chapter two, in connection with the role of the ark in the historical development of the ideology of Yahweh's kingship.

It is possible to see a certain continuity between Samuel's early protestations of Yahweh's kingship and the proclamation of this same ideology by subsequent prophets. On the one hand, Samuel's warnings concerning the potential abuses of a human מֶלֶךְ went unheeded,<sup>17</sup> and Israel's request for a king was granted. The historical books place the kings

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. 1 Sam. 8:4-22; 12:6-25. See L. Eslinger, Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12 (Decatur, GA: Almond Press, 1985), 15f.

<sup>16</sup>Eichrodt, Theology, vol. 1, 107-8. Note the occurrences of the word מֶלֶךְ in relation to Yahweh in 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kgs. 19:14; Ps. 99:1. These verses state that Yahweh "is enthroned between" the cherubim which were placed on top of the ark, and witness to an early form of kingship ideology.

<sup>17</sup>1 Sam. 8:19.

of Israel on center stage during the monarchical period, and their descriptions of the abuses of these kings prove that Samuel's warnings were valid. Yahweh was no longer acknowledged as Israel's true sovereign, and the kings hastened the process of defection from the divine Lord. On the other hand, the proclamation of Yahweh's kingship or sovereign rule by prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah can be seen as an attempt to remind the Israelites of Yahweh's continuing desire to lead his people, even though they were gradually being led away from him by unfaithful monarchs. This proclamation became more fervent and extensive because of the threats posed by foreign powers such as Assyria and Babylon.

This renewed emphasis on Yahweh's kingship becomes even more apparent as the crisis of the exile approaches. In fact, a number of biblical texts in both prophets and Psalms, which can be dated either near or during the exile, contain references to the kingship of Yahweh,<sup>18</sup> indicating perhaps a renewed interest in this theme during this difficult period in Israel's history. In Plöger's words,

The monarchical period of Israel brings with it a large number of prophetic figures. The more the two kingdoms, Ephraim and Judah, threaten to fall prey to ancient Oriental powers, the more the prophets proclaim the universal dominion of their God.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Isa. 52:7; Ezek. 20:33; Lam. 5:19; Pss. 74:12; 102:12. Cf. R. W. Klein, "A Theology for Exiles: The Kingship of Yahweh," Dialog 17 (1978): 128-34.

<sup>19</sup>O. Plöger, Theocracy and Eschatology, trans. S.

The concept of Yahweh's kingship, or more precisely, the prophetic belief in the universal dominion of Yahweh, became increasingly important for the faith of Israel as the nation approached the political and theological crisis brought about by the exile.

Ezekiel stands out among the prophets as a preacher of Yahweh's sovereign rule over Israel and the nations for several reasons, which will be outlined in more detail in the following pages. But more than anything else, it is through his frequent use of the divine title, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, with which he frames his prophetic oracles, that Ezekiel proclaims the universal dominion of Yahweh. In Ezekiel, the sovereign rule of Yahweh is contrasted with the ephemeral reigns of Judah's last kings and the powerful but limited dominion of foreign rulers. Through a study of the meaning of אֱלֹהֵי in the Old Testament and its use in the prophetic ideology of Yahweh's kingship, an attempt will be made to demonstrate that Ezekiel sought to emphasize the rule of Israel's God precisely at the time when the institution of the monarchy was coming to an end.

#### Hypothesis

The aim of the present study is to establish the hypothesis that אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה in Ezekiel is a divine title which

clearly belongs to the Old Testament ideology of the reign of Yahweh over Israel and the nations. While Ezekiel avoids the designation of Yahweh as מֶלֶךְ, he nevertheless asserts the universal dominion of Yahweh consistently and pervasively through his use of this title. He does this by means of two specific formulas, כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה and נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, which he uses throughout his prophecy to introduce or highlight the oracles of Yahweh. These prophetic oracles, which Ezekiel delivers to the exiles following his reception of them from Yahweh, are actually "royal edicts" of the divine Lord.

#### Overview

Prior research on the subject of God's kingship has raised a number of significant questions which have a definite bearing on the present study of אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה in Ezekiel. To begin with, a few studies have attempted to determine the relationship between Israel's conception of the reign of God and similar conceptions found in other ancient Near Eastern cultures. This question is dealt with briefly in Chapter One, where the primary concern is the meaning and usage of the divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי, in the Old Testament. The usage of this epithet in other cultures sheds important light on its usage in Israel, and helps to establish the fact that it was an appropriate designation of both human and divine rulers.

While the question of cross-cultural borrowing or influence cannot be settled conclusively, it is apparent that

Israel made use of a number of concepts that were commonly used by other ancient cultures. But Israel's prophets and psalmists always used these concepts in ways that emphasized the uniqueness of their God.

Consider, for example, the three basic ways in which the Israelite metaphor of God as King resembles such concepts in other religions: Yahweh is Lord and King of the world, Yahweh is a mighty warrior who destroys his enemies, and Yahweh is a righteous judge.<sup>20</sup> The Old Testament goes beyond this basic similarity, however, in its assertion of Yahweh's exclusive rights to universal dominion. The gods of other nations are mere idols made by human hands; Yahweh is the only true God.<sup>21</sup> Of particular interest here are the different ways in which the prophet Ezekiel declares that his God is sovereign ruler of all the earth, through his designation of Yahweh as Lord (אֲדֹנָי).

A number of biblical scholars have questioned the originality of אֲדֹנָי in the Hebrew text of Ezekiel, primarily because the Greek translations of the prophecy often read a single κύριος in place of the double appellation, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה. Since the above hypothesis cannot be maintained unless it can be shown that Ezekiel did in fact use the divine epithet,

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<sup>20</sup>Smith, 33.

<sup>21</sup>See, for example, Isa. 44:6,8; 45:5-6,14,18,21-22; 46:5-9.

אֲדֹנָי, in his prophetic oracles, a portion of chapter one has been devoted this critical matter.

A second important question concerns the relationship between Ezekiel's proclamation of the reign of Yahweh and that which is found in the rest of the Old Testament. Chapter two deals primarily with the usage of אֲדֹנָי and אֲדֹנָי in the Old Testament outside the book of Ezekiel, especially as these terms relate to the ideology of Yahweh's kingship. While many investigations of this important concept have focused on the Hebrew root, מֶלֶךְ, the present study seeks to broaden the scope to include other terms which assert the sovereign rule of Yahweh just as strongly, if not more so. The most important such term, in this writer's judgment, is the divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי, and its derivative, אֲדֹנָי.

One of the most interesting aspects of the present study is the occurrence of these words in prophetic formulas outside the book of Ezekiel, especially in the prophecies of Isaiah, Amos, and Jeremiah. These occurrences reveal a usage that strongly resembles what is found in Ezekiel, and they also illustrate how each of these prophets is unique in the construction of his own prophetic oracles. While literary dependence is impossible to prove, the similarities involved in these different prophecies seem to indicate the likelihood that each prophet was influenced to a certain extent by those who preceded him, while he exhibited his own unique shaping of the tradition he received. This is especially true of



Ezekiel, who is clearly similar to and different from his predecessors in his use of key prophetic formulas.

### Scope of the Study

The focus of the present study is on Ezekiel, since the divine title  $\text{אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה}$  occurs there with the highest frequency.<sup>22</sup> Some attention will also be given, however, to the other instances of this combination in the rest of the Old Testament, since they may shed some light on its meaning in Ezekiel.<sup>23</sup> Within the book of Ezekiel itself, particular attention will be given to the role this title plays in the overall structure of Ezekiel's prophetic oracles. Emphasis will also be placed on those passages which indicate in one way or another that the kingship or sovereign rule of Yahweh is being emphasized, either in and of itself or in contrast with earthly rulers, e.g., the kings of Judah or the king of

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<sup>22</sup>Some 222 of the 439 occurrences of  $\text{אֲדֹנָי}$  in the Old Testament are found in Ezekiel, 217 of which occur in the title  $\text{אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה}$ . This particular combination occurs a total of 301 times in the Old Testament, and five times in reverse order:  $\text{יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי}$ . See appendix A, "Occurrences of  $\text{אֲדֹנָי}$  in the Old Testament."

<sup>23</sup>The divine title,  $\text{אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה}$ , occurs four times in the Pentateuch, twelve times in the historical books, and four times in the Psalms in the order  $\text{אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה}$ . The majority of the occurrences are in the prophets: Ezekiel (217), Isaiah (25), Amos (21), Jeremiah (14), and once each in Obadiah, Micah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah.

Babylon.

### Methodology

The present study is primarily concerned with Ezekiel's theology of the sovereign rule of Yahweh, although an attempt has been made to relate that theology to its historical foundations in the ideology of Yahweh's kingship as it is found in other parts of the Old Testament. This has been done, first of all, through a study of the development of אֲדֹנָי from a title of respect or personal address in prayer, to the divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי, as it is used in Ezekiel and elsewhere. A key element in this development which relates specifically to the monarchy is the frequent address, אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ, "my lord, the king," in the historical books. The designation of Yahweh as מֶלֶךְ by certain prophets during the period of the monarchy contributed significantly to the ideology of Yahweh's sovereign rule. This in turn facilitated the transition from the use of אֲדֹנָי as polite form of address to royalty, to the employment of אֲדֹנָי as a divine epithet which emphasized the exalted position and kingly rule of Yahweh. This development was both linguistic and theological, laying the foundation for Ezekiel's supreme use of אֲדֹנָי to express his theology of Yahweh's transcendent nature and universal dominion.

In order to gain a better understanding of the significance of the divine title, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, in the book of Ezekiel, it is necessary first of all to determine the

significance of the divine epithet, אֱלֹהֵי, in the ancient world. As chapters one and two will endeavor to show, there is ample evidence from the ancient Near East and in the pages of the Old Testament itself, to support the hypothesis that this divine epithet was a suitable designation of the divine sovereignty long before Ezekiel proclaimed the words of Yahweh to the exiles.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE MEANING OF אֲדֹנָי IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי, which is found only in the Old Testament and in literature influenced by it,<sup>1</sup> is derived from Hebrew אָדָן, meaning "lord" or "master".<sup>2</sup> The word אָדָן and its cognates are attested in a number of ancient Near Eastern dialects, including "Amoritic," Canaanite, Phoenician, Punic, and Palmyrenian.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that the word 'DN in the Mari texts is a cognate of the Hebrew אָדָן, but this is not certain.<sup>4</sup> A more convincing case can be made for

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<sup>1</sup>O. Eissfeldt, "אָדָן," in Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, vol. 1, rev. ed., ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, trans. J. T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 59.

<sup>2</sup>F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, A Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 11.

<sup>3</sup>Eissfeldt, "אָדָן," 59.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. I. J. Gelb, "The Early History of the West Semitic Peoples," Journal of Cuneiform Studies 15 (1961): 43; M. Noth, "Mari und Israel: Eine Personennamenstudie," in Geschichte und Altes Testament, aufsätze von W. F. Albright, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie, 16 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953), 140, n. 5; W. F. Albright, "Northwest-Semitic Names in a List of Egyptian Slaves from the Eighteenth Century B.C.," Journal of the American Oriental Society 74 (1954): 228.

Ugaritic 'dn, meaning "lord" or "father," which is found in poetic parallelism opposite both mlk, "king," and um, "mother," and which is also used in reference to the Canaanite god Baal, who is designated "lord ('dn) of yrqb,"<sup>5</sup> the latter term being a place-name. The name aduni-baal is found in Assyrian texts, referring to a prince of Slana.<sup>6</sup> In Phoenician inscriptions dating to the time of the Seleucids, אדן is found in construct with מלכם, as well as in connection with לבעל חמן, the "divine lord" or solar Baal.<sup>7</sup> Thus it is clear that for the Phoenicians as well as the inhabitants of Ras Shamra, the word אדן served as a suitable designation for both kings and gods.

The origin of אדון is unknown,<sup>8</sup> although Albright supported the hypothesis of Yeivin in 1936 that it derives from the Egyptian 'dnw, meaning "agent, representative,

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<sup>5</sup>C. H. Gordon, Ugaritic Handbook (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947), 147,153.

<sup>6</sup>W. W. von Baudissin, Kyrios als Gottesname im Judentum und seine Stelle in der Religionsgeschichte, vol. 3, herausgegeben von O. Eissfeldt (Giessen: Verlag von Alfred Töpelmann, 1929), 53.

<sup>7</sup>Z. Harris, A Grammar of the Phoenician Language, reprint ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1959), 74,88: in the expressions אדן חמן and לבעל חמן אדן. Cf. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 329.

<sup>8</sup>Baudissin, vol. 3, 54; R. J. Wyatt, "God, Names of," in International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 2, rev. ed., ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 504.

gerent."<sup>9</sup> A more likely suggestion is that it is related to the Ugaritic words for father and mother, 'adh ('adhan) and 'adhath, since it is not difficult to imagine a development in meaning from the realm of the family to that of the court.<sup>10</sup> Whatever the origin of the word may have been, however, it is clear that the ancient Semites used אֲדֹנָי both as a simple honorific title and, more importantly for the purposes of the present study, as a respectful form of address to their rulers and to their gods.<sup>11</sup>

#### Earthly Lords and the Divine Lord

As in extrabiblical literature, Old Testament occurrences of אֲדֹנָי relate to both human and divine lords, referring 306 times to human lords and 464 times to the divine Lord, Yahweh.<sup>12</sup> A detailed examination of the

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<sup>9</sup>W. F. Albright, review of Ugaritic Handbook, by C. H. Gordon, in Journal of Biblical Literature 69 (1950): 389.

<sup>10</sup>Eissfeldt, "אֲדֹנָי," 59-60.

<sup>11</sup>L. Cerfaux, "Adonai et Kyrios," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques 20 (1931): 439.

<sup>12</sup>These figures, which are based on the present writer's own calculations, account for all forms of אֲדֹנָי in the Old Testament, including אֲדֹנָי, which other authors treat separately (cf. Eissfeldt, "אֲדֹנָי," 61). The 464 forms of אֲדֹנָי which obviously refer to Yahweh can be grouped as follows: אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (301); יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי (5); solitary אֲדֹנָי (134); other forms (24).

occurrences of אֱלֹהִים and its derivatives in the Old Testament necessitates the establishment of some method which accounts for all forms of the word as it is found there. Unfortunately, the divine epithet, אֱלֹהֵי, is often treated separately from its root, אֱלֹהִים,<sup>13</sup> partly because of the difference in spelling between the two forms, but mostly because אֱלֹהֵי came to refer only to Yahweh, while אֱלֹהִים was used of both God and man.<sup>14</sup> The danger inherent in such a separate treatment, however, is that the development of the term from a polite form of address to a divine epithet is obscured, a development which may shed important light on the meaning of the word when it is used as a divine epithet. The purpose of the present study is to trace this development within the Old Testament from the earliest usage of אֱלֹהִים to its culmination in Ezekiel's theology of the sovereign rule of Yahweh.

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<sup>13</sup>See G. Lisowsky, Konkordanz zum Hebraeischen Alten Testament (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1958), 17-20, 26-28.

<sup>14</sup>Eissfeldt, "אֱלֹהִים," 61. The twenty-four occurrences of אֱלֹהִים which clearly refer to Yahweh and therefore qualify as divine epithets, are found in the following verses: Exod. 23:17; 34:23; Deut. 10:17; Josh. 3:11,13; Isa. 1:24; 3:1; 10:16,33; 19:4b; 51:22; Hos. 12:15; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14; 6:5; Mal. 3:1; Pss. 8:2,10; 114:7; 135:5; 136:3; 147:5; Neh. 8:10; 10:30. The occurrences of this form of the word in Isaiah are especially important in regard to the eventual transition from אֱלֹהִים to אֱלֹהֵי as the preferred form of this divine epithet in the prophetic literature, since they both appear in Isaiah's prophecy in the same prophetic formulas. See chapter two.

The earliest Old Testament usage reveals that אֲדֹנָי could be applied by a wife to her husband, by a child to his or her father, by a slave to his master, by a subordinate to his leader, or by a subject to the king. It was customarily used as a title of courtesy or respect when addressing a superior.<sup>15</sup> The fact that this title refers to a superior's position of authority and prestige makes its eventual application to Yahweh understandable, since he is the one "to whom, in the highest sense, honor and dominion belong."<sup>16</sup>

Following the order of Old Testament books in the Hebrew canon, the word אֲדֹנָי in its various forms occurs with the greatest frequency in the books of Genesis (80 times), Samuel (97 times), Kings (78 times), Isaiah (64 times), Ezekiel (222 times), and Psalms (65 times). Furthermore, there is a noticeable shift from the Pentateuch and the historical books to the prophets and the Psalms, in that אֲדֹנָי refers mainly to human lords in the former, and mainly to the divine Lord in the latter. In the following table, which shows the distribution of references to human and divine lords in these books, it is easy to see how Ezekiel tips the scales heavily in favor of the divine Lord, but the same

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<sup>15</sup>B. W. Anderson, "God, Names of," in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 2, ed. G. A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 414.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.



tendency is apparent in Isaiah and the Psalms:

	<u>Human lord</u>	<u>Divine Lord</u>	<u>Total</u>
Historical Books			
Genesis	71	8	79 <sup>17</sup>
Samuel	90	7	97
Kings	71	7	78
Prophets, Psalms			
Isaiah	10	54	64
Ezekiel	0	222	222
Psalms	5	60	65

In the Pentateuch as a whole, the ratio of human to divine referents for אֲדֹנָי is 88/21, or about four to one; in the historical books (Joshua to Kings), it is 169/22, or about eight to one. But in the prophets taken as a whole, the exact opposite occurs: in 21 instances, אֲדֹנָי refers to a human lord, while it designates the divine Lord, Yahweh, a total of 354 times, which is a ratio of one to seventeen. This comparison suggests that the prophets and psalm-writers took a concept that was initially used on a human level to refer to human rulers, and applied it to Yahweh.

The book of Genesis reveals the usage of אֲדֹנָי in a variety of ways: Sarah speaking of her husband, Abraham (18:12); Rachel speaking to her father, Laban (31:35); Jacob addressing his brother, Esau, in a gesture of friendship

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<sup>17</sup>In Gen. 18:3, Abraham refers to an angelic messenger as אֲדֹנָי, but since the messenger is neither human nor divine, this reference was omitted from the total of eighty occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in Genesis.

(32:5f.); Abraham's servant speaking of his master as he goes about the task of finding a bride for Abraham's son, Isaac (24:9f.). The last example illustrates an important aspect of biblical terminology relating to אָדוֹן, which is found throughout the Old Testament, i.e., the relationship of a servant (עֶבֶד) to his master (אָדוֹן).<sup>18</sup>

But it is in the Joseph story that אָדוֹן takes on a new significance, that of designating the ruler of a land or country, in this case the land of Egypt. Joseph refers to both Potiphar and the Pharaoh as אָדוֹן (39:2f.; 40:7). Then, following his rise to prominence in Egypt and the first meeting with his brothers there, he is described by them to Isaac as אֲדֹנֵי הָאָרֶץ, "lord of the land" (42:30,33), before they realize who he is. When Joseph finally reveals his identity to his brothers, he states that God had made him "father to Pharaoh, lord [אָדוֹן] of all his house, and ruler [מִשָּׁל] of all the land of Egypt" (45:8); indeed, he had been made "לְאָדוֹן לְכָל-מִצְרָיִם" (45:9). This usage of אָדוֹן as a designation of the ruler of a country has important ramifications for an understanding of its later application to

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<sup>18</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 9, states: "The natural correlative of אָדוֹן is עֶבֶד, 'slave,' and the very frequent use of the verb עָבַד of the Israelites' relation to Jehovah fits the conception of Him as their 'Lord'." See also G. V. Smith, "The Concept of God/The Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible," Trinity Journal 3, no. 1 (1982): 34.

yahweh, in the light of prophetic statements concerning his kingship in general, and as it relates to Ezekiel's theology of Yahweh's sovereign rule over Israel and the nations in particular.

#### The King as מֶלֶךְ

The word מֶלֶךְ is linked with human kingship quite often in the historical books through the respectful address, אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ, "my lord, the king."<sup>19</sup> The frequent connection of this title with the monarchy in these books indicates that it had taken on a specialized meaning.<sup>20</sup> This shows that at least by this period of Israel's history it was customarily used to designate the ruler of a country, in addition to being a polite form of address. It is worth noting that this new meaning did not eliminate an important dimension inherent in this form of address, namely, the dimension of personal relationship that existed between the speaker and the person addressed. This was present whether it was a wife speaking

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<sup>19</sup>Lisowsky, 18-20, lists over fifty occurrences of this phrase in Samuel-Kings: 1 Sam. 24:9; 26:17,19; 2 Sam. 3:21; 9:11; 13:33; 14:9,12,17,18,19<sup>2</sup>,22; 15:15,21<sup>2</sup>, 16:4,9; 18:31, 32; 19:20<sup>2</sup>,27,28,29,31,36,38; 24:3,21,22; 1 Kgs. 1:2<sup>2</sup>,13,18, 20<sup>2</sup>,21,24,27<sup>2</sup>,31,36,37<sup>2</sup>; 2:38; 20:4,9; 2 Kgs. 6:12,26; 8:5. The phrase also occurs in 1 Sam. 29:8, twice in Jeremiah (37:20; 38:9), and once in Daniel (1:10). Variations of it include אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ (2 Sam. 14:15), אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ (both in 1 Sam. 26:15), and אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ (1 Kgs. 1:43,47).

<sup>20</sup>Smith, 34.

to her husband, a servant speaking to his master, or a subject speaking to his king. But unlike other words which could have been used to describe the authority and position of the king, אָדוֹן seemed especially suited to the office of kingship.

Consider, for example, the root בעל, which in many ways comes close to the meaning of אָדוֹן. While אָדוֹן is a word that is peculiar to the Hebrews and Phoenicians, בעל is spread over almost the entire Semitic world. The primary difference between the two words seems to be that אָדוֹן indicates a forceful subjugation or dominion by a superior power, while בעל refers to a quiet subjugation serving a definite purpose.<sup>21</sup> While a wide range of overlapping meaning can be admitted for both, אָדוֹן is more suited to the realm of human government, since בעל is never used of a ruler of a country or state.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, in the development of Israelite religion, בעל came to refer almost exclusively to the Canaanite god, Baal,<sup>23</sup> while אָדוֹן became the chosen designation of the king and, through its derivative, אֲדוֹנָי, of

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<sup>21</sup>G. H. Dalman, Der Gottesname Adonaj und seine Geschichte (Berlin: H. Reuther's Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1889), 10.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 11. A possible exception to this is the phrase, בְּעֵלֵי גוֹיִם, in Isa. 16:8; cf. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 127.

<sup>23</sup>Anderson, 414.

the divine Lord, Yahweh.

God as ׀׀׀׀

The notion of the sovereignty of the gods is strongly attested in the ancient Babylonian, Egyptian, and Persian civilizations. Among the Semites in particular, it defines and governs the entire religious development. This is in sharp contrast with the Greeks and Romans in the West, whose gods served as protectors of the cities, but who were not absolute masters of the inhabitants' destinies, as were the oriental divinities such as Ahura-Mazda.<sup>24</sup>

According to Albright, the high gods of the great civilizations of the ancient Near East were "internationalized" during the Late Bronze Age, so that the worship of Baal was found not only in Canaan but also in Egypt. These universalizing tendencies reached their climax in the thirteenth century B.C., during which "Egyptian gods are freely identified with the leading deities of western Asia, and . . . the patron deity of the Egyptian king is also the chief god of Canaanites, Hittites, and Mesopotamians."<sup>25</sup> In Canaanite mythology, the primary gods of the epics are found throughout the region, while certain deities are further

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<sup>24</sup>Cerfaux, "Adonai et Kyrios," 417.

<sup>25</sup>W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, 2d ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), 224.

characterized by local pantheons,<sup>26</sup> or identified with a specific location, e.g., בַּעַל זְבוּן.<sup>27</sup> An understanding of this background is crucial for an appreciation of the prophets' depiction of the universal dominion of Yahweh in the Old Testament, which is often contrasted with that of foreign rulers and foreign gods, especially Baal.

The Semites used kingship terminology quite often in their descriptions of their gods. Thus at Ugarit, Baal, who is the great active figure of the Canaanite pantheon, is called "king of heaven and earth"<sup>28</sup> and בַּעַל שָׁמַם, or "lord of heaven."<sup>29</sup> This is in line with what Robertson Smith pointed out in his lectures on the Semitic religion in 1889, that "among the Semitic peoples which got beyond the mere tribal stage and developed a tolerably organized state, the supreme deity was habitually thought of as king."<sup>30</sup> In such a context, it was quite natural, therefore, for the Semitic

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<sup>26</sup>W. F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1968), 118.

<sup>27</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 128.

<sup>28</sup>Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan, 124.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. O. Eissfeldt, "Baalshamem und Jahve," Zeitschrift fuer die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 57 (1939): 1.

<sup>30</sup>W. R. Smith, The Religion of the Semites (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 66.

worshipper to address his god as אֲדֹנָי, "lord," and to consider himself the עֶבֶד, "servant," of his god.<sup>31</sup> In fact, phoenician inscriptions bear witness to this tendency in relation to Baal, who is designated both אֲדֹנֵי בַעַל שִׁמְשֵׁם and לְאֲדֹנֵי לְבַעַל הַמָּוֶן.<sup>32</sup>

#### אֲדֹנָי vs. בַּעַל as an Epithet of Yahweh

In the Old Testament, when the prophets referred to the lordship or sovereign rule of Yahweh, אֲדֹנָי was their word of choice rather than בַּעַל, since worship of the foreign god, Baal, who was perceived as a rival to Yahweh, was forbidden.<sup>33</sup> Albright raised the question of the appropriateness of using Baal as an appellation of Yahweh or one of his worshippers, based on the name, יְרֵבֶעַל, which was given to Gideon after he destroyed Baal's altar.<sup>34</sup> But since this name means "let Baal contend"<sup>35</sup> and should be understood as a challenge to Baal

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid. Cf. Dodd, 10: "The use of אֲדֹנָי as a divine title corresponds to a Semitic conception of the relation of the worshipper to the deity."

<sup>32</sup>Dalman, 13.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. 1 Kgs. 18:21; Hos. 2:18-19. A more positive use of בַּעַל is apparent in Isa. 54:5, where Isaiah, speaking to Israel, designates Yahweh as בַּעַלְיָךְ, "your husband."

<sup>34</sup>Jdgs. 6:32. Cf. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan, 200: "Gideon bore a name formed with 'Baal'."

<sup>35</sup>Brown, Driver and Briggs, 937.

worship rather than an acceptance of it, Albright's conjecture that it may indicate acceptance of בעל as a proper designation of a worshipper of Yahweh seems unfounded. The facile observation that Gideon bore a name formed with Baal misses the real point of the story.

The existence within the same family of proper names containing forms of both Yahweh and Baal poses a similar problem,<sup>36</sup> but not if it is kept in mind that the Israelites had a tendency to import foreign influences into their religion. Still, the distinctiveness of Israelite religion must be maintained against its Canaanite counterpart, which was characterized by fertility rites and a pantheon of rival gods and goddesses. Unlike the gods of the Canaanite pantheon, Yahweh does not require the assistance of other beings. Thus biblical anthropomorphism stops short of ancient anthropomorphism in general, in which the primary god is not only associated with an attendant goddess or consort, but is also surrounded by "an entire court of equal or inferior personages like a human family."<sup>37</sup> Although such ideas surfaced from time to time in Israel, they were imported from foreign religions and were never considered by

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<sup>36</sup>Cf. E. Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (New York: Harper, 1958), 57, on the names Eshbaal, Meribaal, and Baalyada (1 Chr. 8:33-34; 14:7), who were descendants of Saul and David.

<sup>37</sup>Jacob, 41.



the great prophets to be normative expressions of Israelite religion. The kings of Israel were often guilty of such importation, and they were continually confronted by the prophets as a result. But the Old Testament consistently affirms that Yahweh's only "consort" was the people of Israel, and the union thus formed was an act of pure grace rather than a necessity brought about by the forces of nature.<sup>38</sup> And although the name of the Canaanite god, **בַּעַל**, means "lord," his lordship is contested, even forfeited for a time in the ancient myth,<sup>39</sup> while the prophets declare the everlasting dominion of Yahweh, who is designated **יְהוָה**.

The prophetic belief in the universal dominion of Yahweh in contrast with the gods of the surrounding nations is clearly portrayed in the account of Sennacherib's threatened invasion of Jerusalem during the reign of king Hezekiah, recorded in Isaiah 36-37.<sup>40</sup> The confrontation between the Assyrian army and Jerusalem becomes a confrontation between the gods of the Assyrians and Yahweh. The Assyrian field commander boasts that no one has yet been able to stand against his great army because his gods are too powerful. He believes that Yahweh will be no more effective against his

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Albright, Stone Age, 232.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. 1 Kgs. 18:13,17-37; 2 Chr. 32:9-19.

army than were the gods of the nations he had defeated. The field commander taunts the Israelites:

Do not let Hezekiah mislead you when he says, "יהוה will deliver us." Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can יהוה deliver Jerusalem from my hand? (Isa. 36:18-20)

Troubled by this taunt, Hezekiah sends messengers to the prophet Isaiah, who sends word back that he should not be afraid. Isaiah assures the king that Yahweh has heard this taunt, and because his own name has been blasphemed, Yahweh intends to deal with the Assyrian king himself by luring him back to his own country and appointing an assassin to kill him (Isa. 37:6-7). The Assyrian army then withdraws from Jerusalem temporarily.

When a new threat comes to Hezekiah from Sennacherib, which includes a longer list of conquered nations, he goes up to the temple to pray, in the following manner:

יהוה of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim,<sup>41</sup> you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, יהוה, and hear; open your eyes, יהוה, and see; listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God.

It is true, יהוה, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste all these peoples and their lands. They have

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<sup>41</sup>Hezekiah addresses Yahweh as אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים יְהוה צְבָאוֹת. As the next chapter will endeavor to show, this is kingship terminology which was first connected with the ark of the covenant, and goes back to an earlier tradition which connected Yahweh with the armies of Israel.

thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. Now, יהוה our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, יהוה, are God. (Isa. 37:16-20)

Following this prayer, Isaiah sends another message to Hezekiah, which consists of Yahweh's words to Sennacherib:

The Virgin Daughter of Zion  
 despises and mocks you.  
 The Daughter of Jerusalem  
 tosses her head as you flee.  
 Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed?  
 Against whom have you raised your voice  
 and lifted your eyes in pride?  
 Against the Holy One of Israel!  
 By your messengers  
 you have heaped insults on אֱלֹהֵי.<sup>42</sup>  
 And you have said,  
 "With my many chariots  
 I have ascended the heights of the mountains,  
 the utmost heights of Lebanon.  
 I have cut down its tallest cedars,  
 the choicest of its pines.  
 I have reached its remotest heights,  
 the finest of its forests.  
 I have dug wells in foreign lands  
 and drunk the water there.  
 With the soles of my feet  
 I have dried up all the streams of Egypt."  
 Have you not heard?  
 Long ago I ordained it.  
 In days of old I planned it;  
 Now I have brought it to pass,  
 that you have turned fortified cities  
 into piles of stone.  
 Their people, drained of power,  
 are dismayed and put to shame.  
 They are like plants in the field,  
 like tender green shoots,  
 like grass sprouting on the roof,  
 scorched before it grows up.

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<sup>42</sup>This is one of twenty-three occurrences of solitary אֱלֹהֵי in Isaiah.

But I know where you stay  
 and when you come and go  
 and how you rage against me.  
 Because you rage against me  
 and because your insolence  
 has reached my ears,  
 I will put my hook in your nose,  
 and my bit in your mouth,  
 and I will make you return  
 by the way you came. (Isa. 37:22-29)

Then Yahweh assures Hezekiah that the city of Jerusalem will be spared, and that the Assyrian army will not even "shoot an arrow" there. The account concludes with the slaying of 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp by the "angel of the Lord," the withdrawal of Sennacherib and the rest of his army to Nineveh, and the assassination of Sennacherib there, just as Yahweh had promised.

This account illustrates several things concerning the ideology of Yahweh's kingship in the prophecy of Isaiah, which are also found in other Old Testament books. First of all, the prophet asserts the superiority of Yahweh over the gods of Assyria, for whom the Assyrian commander had claimed universal dominion. Since Assyria was the dominant world power at the time, this in effect claims universal dominion for the God of Israel instead, over against the man-made idols of all foreign nations. Yahweh, addressed by Hezekiah as creator of heaven and earth (Isa. 37:16), stands above all earthly powers. This is a common theme in the Old Testament presentation of Yahweh's kingship, which is found frequently in the Psalms.

Second, it shows that Yahweh acts both for the sake

of his chosen people, and on a higher level, for the sake of his own name, which the Assyrian commander had blasphemed. Third, this passage contains a variety of divine names which became associated with the ideology of Yahweh's kingship, including  $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  and  $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ . These will be dealt with in more detail in chapter two. And fourth, it shows that Yahweh's kingship is of a different sort than that of Sennacherib, since Yahweh states that the exploits of the Assyrian king were part of his eternal plan, and since his defeat of the Assyrian army is accomplished by supernatural means rather than by the implements of war. What is more, Sennacherib's personal demise happens just as Yahweh said it would.

All of these aspects of the prophetic portrayal of Yahweh's kingship or sovereign rule are also found in the prophecy of Ezekiel: Yahweh's superiority to other gods, his intention to act for the sake of his own name, the use of divine epithets (especially  $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ ) that were traditionally connected with this ideology, and an emphasis on the transcendent nature of Yahweh's universal dominion. Ezekiel represents the culmination of the transition in the usage of  $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  as a form of respectful address to the usage of its derivative,  $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ , as a divine epithet.

#### From Respectful Address to Divine Title

As noted above, there is within the Old Testament a discernible development in the usage of  $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  from references

to human lords or masters, to references to the divine Lord, Yahweh. This development is seemingly apparent in the transition from the polite form of address to a human lord, i.e., אֲדֹנָי, "my lord," or אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ, "my lord, the king," to a similar form in which the speaker addresses God as אֲדֹנָי, "my Lord."<sup>43</sup> The recognition of the possibility of a relationship between these two forms sparked a century of debate which has still failed to produce a scholarly consensus as to how the development actually took place.<sup>44</sup>

It has been suggested, for example, by a number of different scholars and in a number of different ways, that the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in the Masoretic Text (MT) were originally pointed as vocatives, i.e., אֲדֹנָי, "my Lord," or אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, "my lord, Yahweh," and that the Masoretes were responsible for the lengthening of the final vowel.<sup>45</sup> Quell, influenced by Baudissin, stated that this lengthening could be traced to "the concern of the Massoretes to mark the word

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<sup>43</sup>G. Quell, "The Old Testament Name for God," in TDNT, vol. 3, 1060, proposed that the divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי, may have originated as an address in private prayer.

<sup>44</sup>See L. J. McGregor, The Greek Text of Ezekiel: An Examination of Its Homogeneity (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 57-74.

<sup>45</sup>Cf. Dalman, 33; Baudissin, vol. 1, 482f.; J. Lust, "'Mon Seigneur Jahweh' dans le Texte Hébreu d'Ézéchiél," Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses 44 (1968): 482.

as sacred by a small external sign."<sup>46</sup> The course of the scholarly debate on this issue was complicated, however, by the suggestion that scribal emendation may have gone far beyond this simple vowel change to the wholesale introduction of the form אֲדֹנָי into the MT, especially in the book of Ezekiel, where it occurs most often. Thus while Dalman accepted as genuine most of the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in the MT, but opted for an original vocative even in those places where such an interpretation is artificial and unnatural,<sup>47</sup> Baudissin concluded that only those occurrences of אֲדֹנָי which are true vocatives, i.e., appearing in an address to God, were part of the original Hebrew text, and that the others were added at a much later date.<sup>48</sup> The work of Baudissin has been extremely influential, especially in terms of the debate concerning the originality of אֲדֹנָי in the Hebrew text of Ezekiel, an issue which must be dealt with in the course of the present discussion. But for the moment, suffice it to say that the idea that an original vocative form was altered to the אֲדֹנָי of the MT has gained the acceptance of a large

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<sup>46</sup>Quell, 1060. He went on to say, "The difference between אֲדֹנָי and אֲדֹנָי is that the form distinguished by the affirmative is reserved for sacral use whereas the simple אֲדֹנָי may be used of human lordship too."

<sup>47</sup>Cf. Dalman, 26; Eissfeldt, "אֲדֹנָי," 64.

<sup>48</sup>Baudissin, vol. 1, 482f.

segment of the scholarly community.

As attractive as the vocative theory may be, however, it does not adequately account for all occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in the Old Testament. In the first place, אֲדֹנָי sometimes occurs in narrative or discourse in such a way that the reading "my Lord" would not make sense.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, in the prophets and in the Psalms, אֲדֹנָי sometimes occurs in synonymous parallelism with יהוה<sup>50</sup> or אֱלֹהִים,<sup>51</sup> indicating that at some point in Israel's history it had attained the status of a divine name.<sup>52</sup>

Isaiah shows most clearly in another way that אֲדֹנָי was used to refer to the majesty of the divine Lord, Yahweh, long before it was used as an oral substitute for יהוה in the liturgy of the synagogue. Isaiah's usage of the various forms of אֲדֹנָי may even be seen as a serious challenge to the theories of scribal emendation mentioned above. This great prophet of the eighth century B.C., who exhibits more variety in his use of different forms of the divine name than any

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<sup>49</sup>Cf. 1 Kgs. 3:10; 22:6; 2 Kgs. 7:6; 19:23; Neh. 4:8.

<sup>50</sup>E.g., Isa. 3:17; 49:14; Mic. 1:2; Pss. 30:9; 35:22; 38:16; 130:1-3.

<sup>51</sup>E.g., Pss. 54:4; 62:12b-13a.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Ps. 35:22-23, where יהוה, אֱלֹהִים, and אֲדֹנָי all occur together.



other prophet, refers to Yahweh as both יהוה צבאות<sup>53</sup> and יהוה צבאות.<sup>54</sup> This makes it clear that יהוה צבאות and יהוה צבאות were equivalent expressions for him, and he thus demonstrates that יהוה צבאות could and did mean "the Lord" in an absolute sense. It is not likely that יהוה צבאות used in this context replaces an original vocative, and its usage in parallel with יהוה צבאות in these passages is further evidence that its employment as a divine epithet dates at least to the eighth century B.C. This has significant implications not only for Ezekiel's use of יהוה צבאות, but also for the entire question of the original form and usage of יהוה צבאות in the earliest Hebrew manuscripts.

The root, יהוה צבאות, was used as a divine epithet even earlier than this, although biblical references which attest such usage are few and far between. These references are important, however, since they provide evidence that the belief in the universal dominion of Yahweh was not altogether a late development in the history of Israel.<sup>55</sup> This epithet was used in connection with three covenant festivals in Exod.

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<sup>53</sup>Isa. 1:24; 3:1; 10:16,33; 19:4.

<sup>54</sup>Isa. 3:15; 10:23-24; 22:5,12,14-15; 28:22.

<sup>55</sup>Of course, the dating of these texts has been a matter of considerable debate. The argument here is simply that these occurrences of יהוה צבאות reveal early hints of concepts that were gradually developed over a period of time, concepts which came to play important roles in the developing ideology of Yahweh's sovereign rule.

23:17 and 34:23.<sup>56</sup> Its connection with the covenant at this early stage has important ramifications for the initial form of the ideology of Yahweh's kingship. In Deut. 10:17, Yahweh is called "God of gods and Lord of lords," a designation that emphasizes his superiority over both human and divine lords. And in Josh. 3:11,13, Yahweh is called "Lord of all the earth."<sup>57</sup> Each of these concepts, the idea of the covenant, the idea of Yahweh's superiority to other gods and human rulers, and the idea of Yahweh's lordship over all the earth, played an important part in the development of the ideology of Yahweh's kingship. These ideas will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

From a grammatical standpoint, an understanding of the meaning of the ך suffix is essential to an understanding

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<sup>56</sup>It appears in a unique form (יְהוָה) in these two Old Testament passages, designating Yahweh as "the Lord."

<sup>57</sup>This particular designation appears again in Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14; 6:5; and Ps. 97:5. Other statements parallel this one and confirm its appropriateness as kingship terminology, such as Isa. 54:5, which states that Yahweh of hosts (צְבָאוֹת) is "God of all the earth"; Ps. 47:2,7, which state that Yahweh is "a great King over all the earth"; and Pss. 83:18 and 97:9a, which state that Yahweh is "the Most High (עֲלִיוֹן) over all the earth." These various epithets of Yahweh, אֲדוֹן, צְבָאוֹת, מְלִיךְ, and עֲלִיוֹן, linked in these passages with the phrase, "all the earth," are clearly part of the ideology of Yahweh's universal dominion. This is also apparent in the latter half of Ps. 97:9, which states that Yahweh is "exalted far above all gods."

of the meaning of אֱלֹהֵי.<sup>58</sup> One possibility is that this suffix signifies a "plural of majesty," and that the lengthening of the final vowel is due to the solemn pronunciation of the divine name or title, "the Lord."<sup>59</sup> The most widely accepted hypothesis is that it is the possessive pronominal suffix.<sup>60</sup> But if it is to be understood as a vocative form, Old Testament usage, especially in the prophets, indicates that it was used to function as other cases, as in the late Hebrew rabbi, Syriac mari, and Akkadian belti.<sup>61</sup> Grammatical considerations alone cannot dictate the meaning of אֱלֹהֵי or its suffix; the contexts of those passages in which it is used must also be considered. This examination of context is one of the primary purposes of the next chapter, in which an attempt will be made to determine whether or not אֱלֹהֵי was used primarily as a vocative or otherwise.

Ezekiel has been the focus of many discussions of the

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<sup>58</sup>Eissfeldt, "אֱלֹהֵי," 63.

<sup>59</sup>H. Bauer and P. Leander, Historische Grammatik der Hebraeischen Sprache des Alten Testaments (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962), 253, 469.

<sup>60</sup>Eissfeldt, "אֱלֹהֵי," 63. Thus Jacob, 59, can say, "Therefore this title speaks less of what the deity is in himself than of what he represents to someone who addresses him," and that the title אֱלֹהֵי was "a reminder that in spite of his transcendence God entered into relation with the faithful and heard their prayer."

<sup>61</sup>Baudissin, vol. 2, 35f.

divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי, simply because it occurs there with the most frequency in the MT.<sup>62</sup> In the book of Ezekiel, אֲדֹנָי does occur in direct address to Yahweh,<sup>63</sup> and in these five places it could be interpreted as a vocative, but it generally has the sense of a divine name or epithet.<sup>64</sup> It therefore may signify the prophet's personal relationship with Yahweh as his servant,<sup>65</sup> but much more frequently its usage in Ezekiel suggests an emphasis on the sovereign majesty of Yahweh, who is "Lord of all."<sup>66</sup> In fact, the prophets who employ אֲדֹנָי the most, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, emphasize the majesty of Yahweh more than the others, and by the time of Ezekiel, if not earlier, the significance of the suffix was on the verge of disappearing. In other words, Ezekiel did not intend to refer so much to his Lord as to the Lord.<sup>67</sup> Baudissin made a keen observation when he said that in the prophets and the Psalms, "אֲדֹנָי in the sense of 'my Lord' fits

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<sup>62</sup>Some 217 of these 222 occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in Ezekiel occur in the combination, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה.

<sup>63</sup>Ezek. 4:14; 9:8; 11:13; 21:5; 37:3.

<sup>64</sup>Th.C. Vriezen, Outline of Old Testament Theology (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), 196.

<sup>65</sup>Dalman, 34.

<sup>66</sup>Eissfeldt, "אֲדֹנָי," 65-66.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 66.

only in individual passages, but in the sense of a proper name with the meaning 'the Lord' it fits everywhere."<sup>68</sup>

### יְהוָה and the Original Text of Ezekiel

One of the key questions that has been raised in regard to the composition of the book of Ezekiel has to do with the frequent occurrences of יְהוָה in the prophecy, which have been viewed both as additions to the original Hebrew text and as revisions of an original יְהוָה. Recent discussions of the forms of the divine name in Ezekiel have focused on the number of translators involved in the LXX version of the book,<sup>69</sup> but the question of the original form of the divine name was raised long before the translator issue arose.<sup>70</sup>

The Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament raised the initial doubts about the original form of the divine name in the book of Ezekiel. Cornill, the first scholar of the modern era to deal specifically with this issue,<sup>71</sup> found 228

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<sup>68</sup>Baudissin, vol. 2, 22.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. McGregor, 57.

<sup>70</sup>Cf. A.C. Johnson, H.S. Gehman, and E.H. Kase, Jr., eds., The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri: Ezekiel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), 48: "It has long been observed that the principal [Greek] manuscripts show no consistency of their rendering of יְהוָה of the Massoretic text."

<sup>71</sup>C. H. Cornill, Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1886), Appendix, "Der Gottesname bei

occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה in the MT of Ezekiel and 218 occurrences of יְהוָה standing alone, but he did not list any references. He attributed the existence of the two forms of the divine name to scribal error or distortion and first suggested that LXX-B was the Greek version of the Old Testament closest to the original Hebrew in its rendering of the divine name.<sup>72</sup> Later commentators, such as Bertholet<sup>73</sup> and Kraetzschmar,<sup>74</sup> accepted Cornill's conclusion that scribal distortion played a significant role in the final distribution of the divine names in Ezekiel.

Dalman, focusing on the history and meaning of the Hebrew word אֱלֹהֵי, found 227 occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה in the MT of Ezekiel and 5 instances of אֱלֹהֵי standing alone, again without listing any references.<sup>75</sup> As mentioned above, he

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Ezechiel," 172-75.

<sup>72</sup>McGregor, 57-58.

<sup>73</sup>A. Bertholet, Das Buch Hesekiel (Freiburg: Mohr, 1897), 14.

<sup>74</sup>R. Kraetzschmar, Das Buch Ezechiel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), 24.

<sup>75</sup>Dalman, 91. Cornill's and Dalman's figures of 228 and 227 cannot be verified because they failed to list any verse references, but since Baudissin and others who do list references cite 217 as the correct figure, it can only be surmised that these higher figures resulted from textual variants, misprints, or miscalculations. Cf. McGregor, 205-6.

emphasized the pronominal nature of the suffix, which implied Ezekiel's personal relationship with God, and he observed that this is a phenomenon that is particularly prominent in those prophets who claimed a personal commissioning from God, i.e., Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.<sup>76</sup>

The English scholar Redpath first put forth the idea that אֱלֹהֵי was placed in the margin of the Hebrew manuscript as a substitute for the "unutterable" name in the liturgy of the synagogue, "and then afterwards incorporated into the text."<sup>77</sup> Coupled with earlier suggestions that called into question the work of the scribes in the preservation and transmission of the biblical text, this proposal had a lasting impact on subsequent scholarship.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, both *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) and Ziegler's 1977 edition of LXX-Ezekiel question the authenticity of אֱלֹהֵי in

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<sup>76</sup>Dalman, 34.

<sup>77</sup>H. A. Redpath, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel (London: Methuen, 1907), 9.

<sup>78</sup>Cf. H. St. J. Thackeray, The Septuagint and Jewish Worship (London: Oxford University Press, 1921); Baudissin, Kyrios als Gottesname; G. A. Cooke, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936); J. Ziegler, "Die Bedeutung des Chester Beatty-Scheide Papyrus 967 für die Textüberlieferung der Ezechiel-Septuaginta," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 61 (1945): 76-94; idem, Septuaginta xvi, 1, Ezechiel, 2. Auflage, mit einem Nachtrag von Detlef Fraenkel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977); J. Wevers, Ezekiel (London: Nelson, 1969); W. Eichrodt, Ezekiel: A Commentary, trans. C. Quin (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970).

the original text of Ezekiel,<sup>79</sup> indicating how powerful this suggestion became.

If, however, אֲדָנִי is to be seen as a late addition to the text of Ezekiel, replacing an original יְהוָה, then at least two things would be expected: (1) textual evidence that אֲדָנִי was to be substituted for every occurrence of יְהוָה, not just some of them, and (2) an actual substitution of אֲדָנִי for יְהוָה, rather than a combination of אֲדָנִי with יְהוָה. But neither of these phenomena can be demonstrated in the text of Ezekiel. In the first place, אֲדָנִי occurs in combination with almost exactly half of the occurrences of יְהוָה, 217 out of 435, and there is no textual evidence that it belongs either in combination with or in place of the 218 instances in which יְהוָה stands alone. In the second place, in the verses where אֲדָנִי occurs in combination with יְהוָה, there is nothing to indicate that יְהוָה should be deleted or considered a variant reading. On the other hand, a case can be made for the substitution of אֲדָנִי for יְהוָה in the four of the five places where the former occurs alone,<sup>80</sup> indicating that Ezekiel may

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<sup>79</sup>The textual apparatus of BHS (1967) implies that אֲדָנִי was a late addition to the text in every instance, and while Rahlfs' *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935), which follows LXX-B for the most part, has 72 double forms out of a possible 217 in Ezekiel, Ziegler (1977) has single κύριος in each instance, having relegated all double forms to the textual apparatus.

<sup>80</sup>Ezek. 18:25,29; 33:17,20. Cf. Ezek. 21:14.



contain some evidence of this tendency to substitute אֲדֹנָי for יהוה, but not on a widespread basis.

The fascinating thing about this double form of the divine name, אֲדֹנָי יהוה, is that it occurs almost exclusively in two of Ezekiel's prophetic formulas: כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יהוה (122 times) and נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יהוה (81 times).<sup>81</sup> If the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in direct address to Yahweh<sup>82</sup> are added to these two formulas, it is possible to account for 208 out of 217 occurrences of this double form in the prophecy. Thus both the frequency and the location of אֲדֹנָי in Ezekiel strongly suggest its originality in the message of the prophet, rather than a haphazard attempt at scribal emendation. As McGregor points out,

This is most definitely a non-random distribution and should lay to rest a view that ought to have died years ago, namely, that אֲדֹנָי was added gradually here and there as a reminder to pronounce יהוה as "Adonay".<sup>83</sup>

Unfortunately, the idea that אֲדֹנָי was a late addition to the text of Ezekiel persists, for a variety of reasons which are outlined below.

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<sup>81</sup>Cf. J. Herrmann, "Die Gottesnamen im Ezechieltexte. Eine Studie zur Ezechielkritik und zur Septuagintawertung," in Alttestamentliche Studien Rudolf Kittel zum 60. Geburtstag, Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament, 13 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1913), 76-77.

<sup>82</sup>Ezek. 4:14; 9:8; 11:13; 21:5; 37:3.

<sup>83</sup>McGregor, 77.

Lawrence Boadt maintains that none of the main arguments advanced against the originality of אֲדֹנָי in Ezekiel is sufficient reason to deny systematically the occurrences of this divine epithet in the prophetic formulas mentioned above. He cites the translation of the divine name in the Greek versions; he cites pious history, in which the gere perpetuum, אֲדֹנָי, came to be pronounced in place of the Tetragrammaton; and he cites the orthography of the word, particularly the ך suffix, which has generally been understood as a derived form of the first person pronominal suffix:

The inconsistencies in the LXX do not affect the Hebrew text but are solely an inner-Greek problem; the latter ascendance of the gere perpetuum hardly accounts for Ezekiel's unique use of 'adonay yhwh'; even orthographically, the derivation of titular usage from the pronominal suffix fails to cover all the diversity of situations in which 'adonay occurs, especially in those discussed below where it is parallel to Yahweh.<sup>84</sup>

Boadt goes on to make two rather significant observations concerning the ך suffix of אֲדֹנָי, prior to explaining his theory of Hebrew parallelism as it relates to the use of this divine epithet in the Old Testament and Ezekiel. In the first place, if the yodh ending represents a nominal affix rather than a pronominal one, as Eissfeldt suggests, this strengthens the conviction that אֲדֹנָי was a special title from

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<sup>84</sup>L. Boadt, "Textual Problems in Ezekiel and Poetic Analysis of Paired Words," Journal of Biblical Literature 97, no. 4 (1978): 495.

the beginning.<sup>85</sup> Second, if the yodh ending can be understood as a device used to fortify the basic meaning of the root, אָדָן, then אֲדָנִי reflects "a reverential title of long-standing and not a later scribal piety, and we would expect to find it used in traditions still earlier than Ezekiel."<sup>86</sup>

Boadt suggests that the most convincing evidence for the traditional solemnity of אֲדָנִי as a title for Yahweh exists outside the book of Ezekiel, in a number of places where אֲדָנִי and יהוה occur together in poetic parallelism.<sup>87</sup> According to Boadt's argument, the prime text, and probably the most archaic one, is Exod. 15:17:

A place for your rule you made, O Yahweh;  
A sanctuary, O Adonay, your hands fashioned.<sup>88</sup>

Other examples of this kind of parallelism are available, mostly in the Psalms: Pss. 30:9; 35:22; 38:16; 130:1-3; Isa.

<sup>85</sup>Eissfeldt, "אָדָן," 67-68.

<sup>86</sup>Boadt, "Textual Problems," 495. He cites the following texts as likely examples of such earlier usage: the covenant traditions of Gen. 15:2; 2 Sam. 7:18-25, 28-29; and the stereotyped cry, אֲדָנִי יְהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, found in Josh. 7:7; Jdgs. 6:22; Jer. 1:6; 4:10; 14:13; 32:17.

<sup>87</sup>Boadt, "Textual Problems," 496.

<sup>88</sup>Although MT attests יהוה as a variant reading for אֲדָנִי in this verse, Boadt's argument that it represents Hebrew parallelism is rather compelling.

49:14; Amos 7:8; and in reverse order: Pss. 71:5; 86:5-8; Isa. 3:17. Boadt believes the terms יהוה and אֲדֹנָי represent the breakup of a composite divine title, and that the number of examples listed above is sufficient to warrant the conclusion that they were a well-known combination. He concludes with the following statement:

Whatever the ultimate pre-history of the phrase 'adonay yhwh turns out to be, its scarce occurrence in the centuries preceding Ezekiel does not prove that the rich overtones of 'adonay as a proper title for Yahweh's lordship had been lost. On the contrary, the continued use of the pair 'adonay and yhwh shows a powerful liturgical expressiveness. Ezekiel thus hearkens back to a recognized effectiveness in the union of the two terms when he joins them in a compound title. In this case, the identification of a poetic pair elsewhere in the OT gives a guideline for understanding a particularly disputed phrase in the prophet. It indirectly reveals Ezekiel's sensitivity to such poetic combinations that he could revive and even transform older usage so readily.<sup>89</sup>

Whether or not one accepts Boadt's argument concerning poetic parallelism and the breakup of a composite title which was then reunited by Ezekiel, he has identified some intriguing features of the combination of אֲדֹנָי with יהוה in the Old Testament. Especially important for the purposes of the present study is his conviction that this combination was well-known prior to the time of Ezekiel.

Baudissin was one of the main proponents of the idea that אֲדֹנָי was a late addition to text of Ezekiel. Basing his

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid. Cf. Boadt, Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29-32 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 23-26.

argument primarily on the limited witness of the LXX to the double forms of the divine name in Ezekiel, Baudissin proposed that the word אֱלֹהֵי had occurred in the original Hebrew text of Ezekiel only as a vocative, and that most of the occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי in MT were added by the Masoretes at a much later date.<sup>90</sup> But the biggest problem with Baudissin's hypothesis of a revision of the Hebrew text subsequent to the Greek translation of Ezekiel, is what the purpose of such a revision would be.<sup>91</sup> Baudissin attributed it to "a stylistic preference or some manner of religio-aesthetic feeling of the presumed redactors,"<sup>92</sup> but this does not account for the fact that אֱלֹהֵי is linked with only half of the occurrences of יְהוָה in Ezekiel, or that the revision was not carried out in the rest of the Old Testament.<sup>93</sup>

The handling of the divine name in the Greek versions of Ezekiel bears out the general conclusion that the LXX is

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<sup>90</sup>Cf. Baudissin, vol. 2, 58f.

<sup>91</sup>McGregor, 77.

<sup>92</sup>Baudissin, vol. 1, 587.

<sup>93</sup>McGregor, 78. Cf. W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48, trans. J. D. Martin, ed. P. D. Hanson with L. J. Greenspoon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 560-61, who questions both the value of the LXX tradition for deciding the matter of the divine name in Ezekiel, and the likelihood of an "adonistic" redaction of a simple יְהוָה to אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה.

of "decidedly uneven quality"<sup>94</sup> as a source for the determination of the original form of the divine name in Ezekiel; hence Boadt's observation that the rendering of the divine name is essentially an inner-Greek problem. Rahlfs, following LXX-B, attests only six double forms of the divine name in the first twenty chapters of the book, in contrast with seventy-eight in the MT. After an initial *κύριε θεέ τοῦ Ισραήλ* at Ezek. 4:14, Rahlfs has *κύριος κύριος* at 12:10; 13:20; 14:6; 20:39-40. The frequency of double forms increases, however, between chapters 21 and 39, amounting to a total of 50 out of 122, in the forms *κύριος κύριος*<sup>95</sup> or *κύριε κύριε* (21:5). Finally, in chapters 43 to 48, all but one (43:27) of MT's seventeen remaining double forms are matched by a double form in Greek, but of differing kinds: *κύριος ὁ θεός Ισραήλ* (43:18), *κύριος ὁ θεός* (43:19; 44:6, 9, 12, 15, 27), and *κύριος θεός* (45:9<sup>2</sup>, 15, 18; 46:1, 16; 47:13, 23; 48:29). This gives the distinct impression, assuming the originality of the double appellation in MT, that the translator began his work on Ezekiel by rendering יהוה יהוה as a single *κύριος*, and that he used the double *κύριος* more often in the

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<sup>94</sup>R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 233.

<sup>95</sup>Ezek. 21:3, 12, 18; 22:3, 31; 23:28, 46; 26:15, 19, 21; 28:12, 25; 29:19-20; 30:10, 13, 22; 31:15, 18; 32:8, 16, 31-32; 33:25, 27; 34:2, 8, 10, 15, 17, 20, 31; 35:3, 6; 36:2-3, 5, 13-15, 32; 37:21; 38:3, 10, 17-18; 39:8, 25, 29.

latter portion of the book as he began to notice the frequency of the double form. A number of theories involving multiple translators have also been advanced to account for this uneven treatment of the combined form, אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, in the Greek text of Ezekiel.<sup>96</sup>

In 1961, Friedrich Baumgärtel set forth the idea that the LXX rendered this combination by a single κύριος because it was designed to meet the needs of the synagogue, and therefore had to supply a reading that made sense to its hearers.<sup>97</sup> Since both אֲדֹנָי and יְהוִה were typically rendered κύριος, a single κύριος would suffice as over against the more cumbersome κύριος κύριος. This still does not explain why there are double forms of the divine name as well as single ones in the Greek text of Ezekiel, unless one is willing to grant that the double forms represent a more accurate rendering of the original text. But it does point to the possibility that the Greek translators chose a single κύριος more often than the more redundant double forms, simply for the sake of intelligibility. It is also possible, when considering the process of manuscript transmission, to understand the logic of going from a more complex form to a

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<sup>96</sup>Cf. McGregor, 57f., for an excellent survey of the relevant materials.

<sup>97</sup>F. Baumgärtel, "Zu den Gottesnamen in den Büchern Jeremia und Ezechiel," in Verbannung und Heimkehr, ed. A. Kuschke (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), 15.

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simpler one, rather than vice versa:

What is more probable than that a scribe with many instances of *κύριος κύριος* before him should in many cases drop one *κύριος* either through inadvertence or by deliberate emendation? The opposite error of writing a double *κύριος* where a single one lay before the scribe would likely occur much more rarely, if at all.<sup>98</sup>

Be that as it may, it is still necessary to conclude that the evidence of the Greek manuscripts creates more problems than it solves, as far as determining the original form of the divine name in Ezekiel is concerned.

Since the main question here is whether or not *אֲדֹנָי* was part of the original text of Ezekiel, two possible lines of inquiry are indicated. First, evidence of the use of *אֲדֹנָי* in both biblical and extrabiblical materials near the time of Ezekiel would help to establish the likelihood that it was indeed original with Ezekiel's prophecy. Second, an examination of Ezekiel's own usage of the word, coupled with similar usage in other Old Testament books, would also shed light on whether it was an important part of his theology, or whether it was a redactional device used for some other purpose.

Mention has already been made of Isaiah's usage of *הָאֲדֹנָי* and *אֲדֹנָי* as equivalent expressions prior to the time of Ezekiel, and other pertinent Old Testament texts which shed further light on this question will be examined in the next

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<sup>98</sup>W. E. Barnes, "On Ezekiel ii.4," Journal of Theological Studies 34, no. 136 (1933): 374.

chapter. But extrabiblical evidence is also available at Qumran, especially in the Isaiah scroll, which contains a considerable number of אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה forms.<sup>99</sup> The fact that אֱלֹהֵי is found in biblical manuscripts from Qumran, very near the date of the LXX translation, deals a severe blow to the hypothesis of Baudissin that it was a late revision of the Hebrew text. McGregor offers the following comments on the usage of אֱלֹהֵי at Qumran:

Indeed, it seems that <<'dny>> had already gained some of the status attributed to a proper name of God. . . . It might be inferred that the Qumran community was already long familiar with the use of the word <<'dny>> in biblical texts. There is no reason to suppose that this familiarity was restricted to Qumran Jews.<sup>100</sup>

Unfortunately, the Dead Sea Scrolls do not offer any help in regard to the text of Ezekiel, since only fragments have been preserved. But the evidence from the Isaiah scroll still has important ramifications in regard to Ezekiel's use of אֱלֹהֵי.

The Qumran discoveries have confirmed the general tradition concerning the great care exercised in the transmission of the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>101</sup> The evidence set forth above indicates the possibility that there was more than one

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<sup>99</sup>McGregor, 75. Cf. J. Ziegler, "Die Vorlage der Isaias-LXX und die erste Isaias-Rolle von Qumran 1QIs/a," Journal of Biblical Literature 78 (1959): 57-58.

<sup>100</sup>McGregor, 76.

<sup>101</sup>Harrison, 217.

textual tradition in circulation among the Jews of the Second Commonwealth, and that the Qumran community made use of the tradition handed down to the Masoretes rather than that used by the LXX translators.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, variations from the MT are not to be seen merely as the result of the theology or methodology of the translator; some allowance must also be made for the nature of the Hebrew manuscripts that were available to him.

Leaving behind for a moment the question of manuscript evidence, some attention must be given to the function of the divine epithet, אֱלֹהֵי, and with it the combination, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, in the message of Ezekiel. Assuming that אֱלֹהֵי was part of the prophet's original message, what did his frequent usage of this divine epithet convey to his hearers? It has already been pointed out that אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה occurs almost exclusively in two oracular formulas in Ezekiel, כֹּה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, and בְּנָאֵם אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה. In each of these formulas, the general sense would remain the same if אֱלֹהֵי were omitted, so its inclusion must indicate a certain emphasis in the mind of the prophet. In Barnes's words,

An emphatic term to express the Divine name is appropriate in the mouth of Ezekiel the prophet of God in a heathen land. For his countrymen the simple name Jehovah was sufficient; He was the God of their race. But in

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<sup>102</sup>Cf. F. M. Cross, Jr., "A New Qumran Biblical Fragment Related to the Original Hebrew Underlying the Septuagint," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 132 (1953): 25.

Babylon his character as Lord must be asserted against the claim of universal lordship made for Marduk, "the king of the gods."<sup>103</sup>

This is in line with both the meaning of אֲדֹנָי when used as a divine epithet and the context of Ezekiel's ministry. It is further supported by the largely-ignored suggestion of Herrmann in 1913 that these two prophetic formulas are none other than "royal edicts," taken from the realm of the court and applied to Yahweh, who is the sovereign Lord.<sup>104</sup>

After examining the scholarly debate concerning the authenticity of אֲדֹנָי in Ezekiel as well as its function in the prophecy, Zimmerli came to the following conclusion:

However much in this last discussion a great deal must of necessity remain hypothetical, we must nevertheless take seriously, in spite of the initially confusing rendering of the double divine name in 5, the possibility that אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה in the formulaic groups of the complaint to Yahweh, the introductory messenger formula and the formula for a divine saying could have its original home in the prophet's own word.<sup>105</sup>

The position taken by the present writer is that אֲדֹנָי was indeed part of Ezekiel's own thought, and that he employed it in order to emphasize the sovereign rule of the divine Lord, Yahweh, over Israel and the nations.

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<sup>103</sup>Barnes, 373.

<sup>104</sup>Herrmann, "Die Gottesname im Ezechieltexte," 81.

<sup>105</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 561-62.

### Conclusion

The usage of אֲדָנָי and its cognates in the Old Testament and among Israel's neighbors in the ancient Near East indicates that it was a customary designation of both human and divine lords. Its frequent connection with the institution of kingship illustrates its suitability as a designation of the ruler of a country, and it was used to refer to the reign of the gods as well. Its use as a polite form of address to a superior highlights the speaker's role as servant, which was applicable in relation to either human or divine lords.

The word אֲדָנָי was used as an epithet of Yahweh at a fairly early date in the history of Israel and constituted an early form of kingship ideology in relation to the God of Israel. Its association with the covenant in the book of Exodus, the declaration in Deuteronomy that Yahweh is "God of gods and Lord of lords," and the designation of Yahweh as "Lord of all the earth" in Joshua, all bear witness to this early understanding of Yahweh's universal dominion. Similar terminology in the prophets and Psalms shows how important these concepts became for the ideology of Yahweh's kingship. One of the most significant aspects of the Old Testament occurrences of אֲדָנָי, traced in more detail in the next chapter, is the development in its usage from respectful address to divine epithet.

The derived form, אֲדֹנָי, which is found only in the

Old Testament and in literature influenced by it, may have originated as a respectful form of address to the deity, but by the time of Ezekiel it had assumed the status of a divine epithet. An examination of its usage in a key passage in Isaiah showed that it had become an important part of the ideology of Yahweh's kingship by that time in Israel's history. This ideology included the assertion of Yahweh's superiority over other gods, a statement concerning Yahweh's intention to act on behalf of his people and for the sake of his own name, and an emphasis on the unique aspects of Yahweh's transcendent rule as over against gods and human rulers. The same ideas are found in other Old Testament books, especially Ezekiel.

Because of the inconsistent witness of the Greek translations to the presence of double forms of the divine name in the book of Ezekiel, serious doubt has been cast on the originality of אֲדֹנָי in Ezekiel's message. The first century practice of pronouncing this divine epithet in place of Yahweh when the Scriptures were read out loud was once considered the reason for its high frequency in the book of Ezekiel. But its distribution within the prophecy, i.e., its almost exclusive appearance in two prophetic formulas which either introduce or highlight divine sayings, strongly suggests its originality in the prophecy. This usage further indicates the significance of אֲדֹנָי as a royal title, and elucidates Ezekiel's employment of it to introduce the "royal

edicts" of the divine Lord, Yahweh.

On this basis, the Chapter Two is devoted to an analysis of the occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה in the Old Testament outside the book of Ezekiel, prior to a consideration of its usage in the prophet's own message.

## CHAPTER TWO

### אֵלֹהֵי יְהוָה OUTSIDE EZEKIEL

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the occurrences of אֵלֹהֵי יְהוָה in the Old Testament outside the book of Ezekiel, in order to determine how Ezekiel may have been influenced by prior usage of this divine title, and to highlight the ways in which Ezekiel's use of it is unique. Through a study of the various contexts in which the title occurs outside Ezekiel, an attempt will be made to answer three primary questions. First, what do these occurrences reveal concerning the vocative character of אֵלֹהֵי as opposed to its use as a divine epithet? Second, should אֵלֹהֵי be included in the complex of ideas associated in the Old Testament with the kingship of Yahweh? And third, what light does the prophetic usage of the messenger formula<sup>1</sup> outside Ezekiel shed on Ezekiel's use of it, especially in regard to the various forms of the divine name that are found in it in different prophetic books? These three questions are based in part on the development of the usage of אֵלֹהֵי in the Old

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<sup>1</sup>In its most basic form, the messenger formula appears in the Old Testament as כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה.



Testament from the Pentateuch to the historical books to the prophets, as outlined in the previous chapter.

Vocative vs. Divine Epithet

Generally speaking, there is a development within the Old Testament canonical literature from historical accounts to prophetic speeches to utterances directed from man to God, corresponding to the traditional divisions of the Hebrew Bible: Law, Prophets, and Writings.<sup>2</sup> When the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי are considered, however, it becomes apparent that its use as a vocative, i.e., in address to Yahweh, is found throughout the Old Testament, rather than being confined to the latter portion of the canon.<sup>3</sup> There is, in fact, a noticeable shift in the Old Testament from the vocative use of אֲדֹנָי in the Pentateuch and the historical books, to its employment as a divine epithet in the prophets.

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<sup>2</sup>C. Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, trans. H. C. White (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 92.

<sup>3</sup>It is true that the vocative use of אֲדֹנָי is more characteristic of the Psalter than of any other book, but it also occurs both alone and in combination with יְהוָה in the oldest portions of the Pentateuch (cf. L. Cerfaux, "Adonai et Kyrios," 439), showing that it was not strictly a late development in the religion of Israel. Its frequent appearance in the prophetic books, primarily as a divine epithet, also supports its employment at a fairly early date. The earliest occurrences, when understood as vocatives, fit quite naturally into their respective contexts, and therefore do not have to be construed as editorial revisions.

To illustrate, every occurrence of אֱלֹהֵי in the pentateuch occurs in address to God, whether it stands alone or is found in combination with יְהוָה. In the historical books as well, almost every occurrence of אֱלֹהֵי is in address to God.<sup>4</sup> But in the prophets, only 16 out of a total of 314 occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי are vocatives.<sup>5</sup>

It would be a mistake, however, to draw too sharp a distinction between the use of אֱלֹהֵי as a vocative and its use as an epithet of Yahweh. For there is not necessarily a great deal of difference between the manner in which figures like Moses, David, and Jeremiah addressed Yahweh as אֱלֹהֵי, to name just three examples, considering that each of these men was impressed by the divine majesty of the Lord he was addressing.<sup>6</sup> Admittedly, each individual had a unique

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<sup>4</sup>In one important instance, 1 Kgs. 2:26, אֱלֹהֵי is used in the sense of a divine epithet. While this is also true of 1 Kgs. 3:10,15; 22:6; 2 Kgs. 7:6; 19:23, BHS has יְהוָה as a variant reading for each of these occurrences, which may indicate subsequent editing. On the significance of the mention of the ark in connection with אֱלֹהֵי in 1 Kgs. 2:26 and 3:15, see below.

<sup>5</sup>Amos 7:2,5; Isa. 6:11; 21:8; 38:14,16; Jer. 1:6; 4:10; 14:13; 32:17,25; Ezek. 4:14; 9:8; 11:13; 21:5; 37:3. Interestingly enough, 12 of these 16 occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי are found in combination with יְהוָה, those in Isaiah being the only exceptions.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Gen. 15:2,8 (Abraham); Deut. 3:24; 9:26 (Moses); Josh. 7:7 (Joshua); Jdgs. 6:22 (Gideon); 16:28 (Samson); 2 Sam. 7:18,19<sup>2</sup>,20,22,28,29 (David); and the passages cited in the previous note from Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The common element in all of these passages is the combined form,

experience with God and expressed his own experience in a unique way. But the point being made here is that this use of אֲדֹנָי, in the context of personal encounter with the living God by which the individual acknowledged both Yahweh's exaltedness and his own lowliness, must have contributed to its eventual use as a divine epithet in the speeches and writings of the prophets.

One very instructive occurrence of אֲדֹנָי in the Pentateuch follows Yahweh's revelation of himself to Moses as יְהוָה, who is

the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. (Exod. 34:6b-7)

This self-revelation of Yahweh, in which he uttered his name as he "passed in front of" Moses (34:6a), was in response to Moses's request that Yahweh show him his glory (33:18-19). Immediately after this event, Moses addresses God not as יְהוָה but as אֲדֹנָי, as he bows down before him (34:8-9). Thus Moses reveals both his awe of the divine majesty and his willing submission to the divine will through his use of אֲדֹנָי, which in the Old Testament consistently indicates the sovereignty

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אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, used in personal address to Yahweh. Moses also addresses Yahweh as (solitary) אֲדֹנָי in Exod. 4:10,13; 5:22; and 34:9; cf. also Isa. 6:11. For a complete listing of the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in the Old Testament, see appendix A.

of God when referring to Yahweh.<sup>7</sup>

### The Kingship of Yahweh

The passage cited above is interesting for another reason, namely, the possibility of a connection between the word אֲדֹנָי, the establishment of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, and the ideology of Yahweh's kingship in the Old Testament. The language of Deut. 34:7 strongly resembles the second commandment of the Decalogue, which also speaks of God punishing the children "for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" and "showing love to a thousand generations" (Exod. 20:5-6). Even more to the point, in Exod. 34:10-24, Yahweh reaffirms his covenant with Israel by promising to drive out the nations before them, by prohibiting the making of covenants with those who live in the promised land, and by forbidding the worship of their gods. Furthermore, Israel is to honor the covenant through the keeping of three annual festivals: Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Ingathering, during which all the men are to appear before הָאֲדֹנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (34:23).<sup>8</sup> The explicit mention of בְּרִית in relation to both Yahweh and foreign nations, the

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<sup>7</sup>L. Cerfaux, "Le Nom Divin <<Kyrios>> dans la Bible Grecque," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques 20 (1931): 38. This is true whether it is used in address to God, as in this instance, or as a divine epithet, as in the prophets.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Exod. 23:14-17.

designation of Israel's God as "the Lord Yahweh," and the promise of military victory over Israel's enemies, all strongly suggest a similarity between ancient treaty forms and Israel's conception of her relationship to the divine Lord, Yahweh.

The concept of Yahweh's kingship may indeed have been based originally on Israel's understanding of the covenant established with Yahweh on Mount Sinai.<sup>9</sup> Numerous parallels between the Sinai covenant and other ancient treaties have been identified, including the preamble, historical prologue, and covenant stipulations, although there are striking differences as well.<sup>10</sup> The most important difference between Israel's covenant with Yahweh and the ancient treaties of her neighbors is the absence of a list of gods as witnesses to the transaction. Foreign alliances were to be avoided, because such an alliance would call upon the gods of the foreign nation to serve as guarantors of the covenant.<sup>11</sup> This would violate the most basic stipulation of

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<sup>9</sup>J. Bright, A History of Israel, 3d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 150-56. Cf. M. Buber, Kingship of God, 3d ed., trans. R. Scheimann (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 136; R. Schnackenburg, God's Rule and Kingdom, 2d ed., trans. J. Murray (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 13.

<sup>10</sup>G. E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), 31-41.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 38.

Israel's covenant with Yahweh, i.e., the prohibition against the worship or service of any god besides him.

It is perhaps significant that the first occurrence of אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה in the Old Testament canon is in a passage that is concerned with covenant, namely, the covenant between Yahweh and Abraham (Gen. 15:2,8), although the emphasis here is undoubtedly on the element of Abraham's personal encounter with Yahweh rather than any developed covenant theology. In Deut. 3:24, however, there is a hint of something more:

אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do?

The comparison of Yahweh with other gods and the reference to his "mighty works" are covenant concepts which arose in connection with the exodus and the ensuing Sinai covenant.

The relation of the Sinai covenant to the exodus is an important facet of covenant theology in the Old Testament and has implications for the separate but perhaps related question of the kingship of Yahweh as it came to be expressed in the prophets and the Psalms. Yahweh did not introduce himself to Israel as a King per se, but his actions on behalf of Israel in the exodus, and his promise of further success in the conquest of Canaan, indicated that he had both the power and the willingness to give kingly leadership to his chosen people. As Schnackenburg puts it:

Israel experienced Yahweh's kingship in the historical action of its God. This is no "kingdom" and no "sphere

of dominion" but a kingly leadership and reign which develops from Yahweh's absolute power and shows itself in the guidance of Israel. . . . God's kingship in the Bible is characterized not by latent authority but by the exercise of power, not by an office but a function; it is not a title but a deed.<sup>12</sup>

So while Yahweh was not designated "King" in the Pentateuch, he nevertheless exercised the beneficent rule of a powerful "sovereign" which far exceeded any expectations Israel might have envisioned for a human leader, at least at this point in her history.

In fact, the exodus was accomplished without the benefit of military might on a human level; the armies of Pharaoh were overthrown by the power of Yahweh. Thus in the "Song of the Sea" in Exod. 15:1-18, Yahweh is designated a warrior<sup>13</sup> who singlehandedly hurled Pharaoh's chariots and army into the sea. The hymn celebrates the uniqueness of Yahweh among the gods and his leadership and deliverance of his people, Israel:

Who among the gods is like you, יְהוָה?  
 Who is like you,  
     majestic in holiness,  
     awesome in glory,  
     working wonders?  
 You stretched out your right hand  
     and the earth swallowed them.  
 In your unfailing love you will lead  
     the people you have redeemed.  
 In your strength you will guide them

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<sup>12</sup>Schnackenburg, 13.

<sup>13</sup>Literally, אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה, "man of war" (Exod. 15:3).

to your holy dwelling.

The nations will hear and tremble. (Exod. 15:11-14a)

The song concludes, *יְהוָה יִמְלֵךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד* (v. 18). This is at least a primitive form of kingship ideology which links *מֶלֶךְ* with *יְהוָה*, and the hymn emphasizes both his uniqueness, in contrast with the gods of the nations, and his leadership of Israel.<sup>14</sup> Later elaborations on this theme make it clear that Yahweh's dominion encompasses the whole world from the moment of its creation, but only after Israel asks for a ruler "like the nations," i.e., a human king, is the substantive *מֶלֶךְ* ever applied to him.<sup>15</sup>

#### The Ark of the Covenant as Yahweh's Throne

In Exod. 25:17-22, Yahweh promised to meet with Moses between the cherubim that were placed on top of the ark. In Num. 10:33-36, the function of the ark in the guidance of Israel is described, as well as Yahweh's role as leader of the armies of Israel.<sup>16</sup> When Israel asked for a human mon-

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<sup>14</sup>Schnackenburg, 12.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 18. Cf. Jacob, 60, on Deut. 33:5 as a possible exception to this statement, in which *יְהוָה* is designated *מֶלֶךְ* over Jeshurun, "the upright one," or Israel.

<sup>16</sup>The entreaty, "Rise up, O Lord! May your enemies be scattered; may your foes flee before you" (Num. 10:35), led to the description of the ark as the "unoccupied throne of the deity." Cf. Eichrodt, *Theology*, vol. 1, 110: "The Ark is the medium through which the deity leads his people in their wanderings and in war."



arch, the role of the king in battle was strongly stressed,<sup>17</sup> so this linking of Yahweh with war again suggests at least an implicit belief in the kingly rule of Yahweh even prior to the conquest.

But it must be emphasized that this early conception of the "kingly rule" of Yahweh was more than a provincial idea, i.e., it did not limit Yahweh's dominion to Israel alone, but encompassed the entire world.<sup>18</sup> This is evident in the designation of Yahweh as  $\text{אֲדֹנָי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ}$  in Josh. 3:11,13. It is significant that this designation is connected with the ark on the occasion of the crossing of the Jordan, for this marked the fulfillment of Yahweh's promise to "drive out the nations" before the Israelites (Josh. 3:10), and again reflects the ideology of Yahweh's kingly rule. In Samuel, the ark is associated with another divine epithet which figures prominently in the prophetic books,  $\text{יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת}$ ,<sup>19</sup> and

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<sup>17</sup>1 Sam. 8:19-20.

<sup>18</sup>Quell, 1061, says: "Used of Yahweh,  $\text{אֲדֹנָי}$ , like  $\text{מְלִיךָ}$ , denotes His sovereign power . . . In the main, . . . Old Testament statements concerning Yahweh as Lord already go far beyond the idea that He is just the lord of the land or people and more or less clearly presuppose the prophetic belief in Yahweh as Lord of all."

<sup>19</sup>1 Sam. 4:4. On the prophetic use of this title, Eichrodt, Theology, vol. 1, 193, states that it connotes the "transcendant omnipotence and exaltedness" of Yahweh and definitely refers to his sovereign rule over all the nations. The development in the usage of this title from a military setting to the realm of Yahweh's universal dominion might be explained on the basis of the connection in the Old Testament

in this instance reference is also made to Yahweh's "enthronement" between the cherubim.<sup>20</sup>

In Israel, because the covenant which bound the people to their God antedated the monarchy, the institution of kingship never attained the significance it enjoyed in other ancient Near Eastern cultures such as Egypt and Mesopotamia.<sup>21</sup> Coupled with the theology of Yahweh's absolute transcendence over everything, including the forces of nature, this singular fact formed the basis of the proclamation that "Yahweh is king" in a way that no nature god or human monarch could ever be. Thus Yahweh can be called "God of gods and Lord of lords,"<sup>22</sup> "a great King above

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between war and kingship. Just as the kings of Israel led forth their armies into battle, the divine sovereign presses a far more extensive and powerful "host" into service as he carries out his purposes. Indeed, the "hosts" indicated in the prophetic use of this title came to include even the military might of Israel's enemies, who have now become Yahweh's agents of judgment on his own people (cf. Isa. 5:8-30). Jacob, 55, states that the prophets have transposed the term from the terrestrial to the celestial plane; more precisely, the divine title יהוה צְבָאוֹת "refers to the totality of forces over which Yahweh asserts his rule."

<sup>20</sup> יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִים. Cf. 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kgs. 19:14; Ps. 99:1.

<sup>21</sup> Frankfort, 343.

<sup>22</sup> אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים (Deut. 10:17).

all gods,"<sup>23</sup> "Most High above all the earth,"<sup>24</sup> and "God of gods and Lord of kings."<sup>25</sup>

Israel's conception of the kingship of God differed from similar ideas in other ancient cultures in at least two important respects. First, Yahweh was not merely the "high god" of a local pantheon who was surrounded by a council of lesser gods; he was the only true God.<sup>26</sup> Second, the kings of Israel were not considered divine; their reigns were evaluated on the basis of their devotion to Yahweh, the heavenly King. This devotion to Yahweh was most often measured in one of two ways, which were really two sides of the same coin: negatively, in terms of the king's attitude toward foreign gods and religions, and positively, in terms of his faithfulness to the covenant with Yahweh.

#### Human King vs. Divine Lord

The institution of kingship in Israel remained a

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<sup>23</sup>מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים (Ps. 95:3).

<sup>24</sup>עֲלִיוֹן עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ (Ps. 97:9).

<sup>25</sup>אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהִים וַיִּמְרָא מִלְּבַיִן (Dan. 2:47).

<sup>26</sup>The supposed sovereignty of a given god within a pantheon is necessarily limited by the rival claims of other gods within the same pantheon. The monotheistic character of Israelite religion buttressed the assertion of Yahweh's absolute sovereignty. Cf. G. R. Berry, The Old Testament Among the Semitic Religions (Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1910), 35f.

problematic one from the time of its establishment onward. While some came to view the monarchy as divinely ordained and deserving of perpetual existence on its own merits, others never forgot that "it ruled by the sufferance of Israel's covenant God and was subject to criticism in the light of an older tradition."<sup>27</sup> The word מַלְאֲכֵי, meaning "leader," which was applied first to Saul, then to David, and subsequently to a number of their successors,<sup>28</sup> illustrates the tension that existed between the aspirations of the human monarch and Yahweh's continuing desire to lead his people. Coming from the root מָלַךְ, meaning "to be conspicuous,"<sup>29</sup> this designation emphasizes the king's position of visibility while leaving room for the invisible rule of Yahweh. As in the making of the golden calf at the base of Mount Sinai, the request for a king "like the nations" shows in another way how difficult it was for the Israelites to follow a leader whom they could not see.

The monarchy eventually failed in Israel because it could not keep the demands of the seen and the unseen in proper perspective. When a conflict arose between the wishes

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<sup>27</sup>Bright, 228.

<sup>28</sup>E.g., 1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1; 13:14; 25:30; 2 Sam. 5:2; 6:21; 7:8; 1 Kgs. 1:35; 14:7; 16:2; 2 Kgs. 20:5.

<sup>29</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 616.

of the king and the counsel of those who opposed him in the name of Yahweh, the king usually won out, often at the expense of God's covenant and favor. One example of such a conflict is the apparent desirability of establishing alliances with foreign nations either for the sake of economic gain or national security, which nevertheless constituted a violation of the covenant with Yahweh.<sup>30</sup> The kings of Israel often erred by deciding in favor of political expediency rather than covenant demands.

But the kings often engaged in outright rebellion against the religion of Yahweh by introducing pagan religious concepts and objects into local worship centers. For example, in order to secure religious legitimacy for the northern tribes, Jeroboam I made two golden calves and erected one at Bethel and the other at Dan. He invited the people to worship them as "your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt,"<sup>31</sup> thereby forsaking the worship of Yahweh. He further instituted an annual feast in the eighth month to rival that of the seventh month in Jerusalem.<sup>32</sup> The

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<sup>30</sup>Mendenhall, 17.

<sup>31</sup>1 Kgs. 12:26-29. The bull symbol had strong associations with pagan fertility cults, and its usage here opened the way for a confusion of Yahweh and Baal, as well as the importation of pagan features into the cult of the former. Cf. Bright, 238.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. 1 Kgs. 8:2; 12:32.

successors of Jeroboam were no more faithful to the covenant with Yahweh than he was. 2 Kgs. 17:15 and 18:12 make explicit the fact that covenant disobedience was the main factor in the demise of the northern kingdom.<sup>33</sup>

The only king who seems to have succeeded in balancing the demands of kingship with the rule of Yahweh was king David. This is evident in his prayer in 2 Sam. 7:18-29, following Yahweh's refusal of his request to build a permanent structure to house the sacred ark. The prayer is introduced with the statement that the Lord had given David rest from all his enemies. In other words, his leadership of the armies of Israel had been so successful that war was no longer necessary. But instead of giving David permission to construct a "house," i.e., a temple, for his God, Yahweh promises to establish David's "house," i.e., his posterity, on the throne of the kingdom. Out of gratitude for this promise, David voices his prayer.

In this prayer, David addresses God as אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה seven times (vv. 18-20, 22, 28-29), more than any other Old Testament figure, and he also refers to him as יְהוָה זָבָאוֹת twice (vv. 26-27).<sup>34</sup> The middle portion of the prayer makes

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<sup>33</sup>H. N. Wallace, "Oracles Against the Israelite Dynasties in 1 and 2 Kings," Biblica 67, no. 1 (1986): 39.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. 1 Sam. 17:45, in which David himself explained to Goliath that the latter title designated Yahweh as "God of the armies of Israel."

it clear that David regarded Yahweh as divine Lord:

How great you are, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. And who is like your people Israel--the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, יְהוָה, have become their God. (2 Sam. 7:22-24, adapted from NIV)

Here David emphasizes the exaltedness and uniqueness of Yahweh, the themes of exodus and conquest, and the establishment of the relationship with Israel through the covenant at Sinai, through which Yahweh became Israel's God. No less important is the fact that he gives Yahweh credit for his own military exploits and the present peace. Like no other Israelite king, David combined effective national leadership with a proper reverence for Yahweh, the divine Lord.

It is interesting to note the occurrences of the divine titles אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה and יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת in this passage.<sup>35</sup> It has already been pointed out that both אֱדוֹן and צְבָאוֹת were linked with the ark prior to the reign of David.<sup>36</sup> While אֱדוֹן refers to the divine majesty of Yahweh, צְבָאוֹת initially

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<sup>35</sup> יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת also occurs in v. 8, in Nathan's answer to David concerning his desire to build a house for Yahweh.

<sup>36</sup> Josh. 3:11,13; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2. This last reference involves the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, in which David took a leading role.

connected Yahweh with the armies of Israel.<sup>37</sup> From the time of its institution, the monarchy was intimately connected with war; Saul's entire reign was spent at war with the Philistines,<sup>38</sup> and much of David's was also spent in armed conflict. Therefore David, by using these two titles in address to Yahweh, acknowledges in yet another way the dominion of Yahweh, who reigns as exalted Lord in the heavens and leads the armies of Israel to victory over all their enemies.

Another reference in the historical books, 1 Kgs. 2:26, also links the divine epithet אֱלֹהֵי with the ark.<sup>39</sup> In this case it is Solomon speaking to Abiathar the priest, informing him that he is going to spare the priest's life because of his involvement with the ark during David's reign.

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<sup>37</sup>P. C. Craigie, The Problem of War in the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 36. Cf. P. D. Miller, The Divine Warrior in Early Israel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 145-55; Eichrodt, Theology, vol. 1, 192-94.

<sup>38</sup>1 Sam. 14:52.

<sup>39</sup>This is the only undisputed use of אֱלֹהֵי as a divine epithet in the historical books, and one of the few times that it occurs in combination with יְהוָה. All other occurrences of the word in the historical books are either vocatives or are shown in BHS as having יְהוָה as a variant reading, including 1 Kgs. 3:15, which also connects אֱלֹהֵי with the ark. Note also that the use of אֱלֹהֵי in this context rather than אֱלֹהֵי, as in Josh. 3:11,13, suggests the interchangeable nature of the two forms.



The Kingship of Yahweh in the Psalms

Before moving on to the prophets, mention must be made of the Psalms, since so much of the recent scholarly discussion of Yahweh's kingship has concentrated on them. The uncertainties involved in the dating and authorship of many of the Psalms make it difficult to place them chronologically in relation to other portions of the Old Testament canon. This is especially true of the so-called "enthronement psalms," which explicitly affirm Yahweh's kingship. But the composition of a number of Psalms which designate Yahweh as יְהוָה during or shortly after the reign of king David,<sup>40</sup> probably justifies the assumption that the ideology of Yahweh's kingship was firmly established in Israel at least by that time.

The work of Mowinckel on the Psalms has commanded considerable attention in the scholarly community. He concentrated mainly on the "Psalms of Yahweh's Enthronement," which he designated as Psalms 47, 93, 96-99,<sup>41</sup> following Gunkel's classification system. He suggested that other psalms, such as 95 and 81, might also be included in the larger category of the liturgical celebration of Yahweh's

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<sup>40</sup>E.g., Psalms 5, 24, 29, 68.

<sup>41</sup>S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, vol. 1, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 106.

kingship, even though they are not technically enthronement psalms. This is an important observation, because it calls attention to the fact that no single classification is sufficient to describe all that the Psalms have to say about the reign of Yahweh over Israel and the nations.

Mowinckel's basic thesis is that these six Psalms provide evidence of a cultic festival in Israel which celebrated Yahweh's acquisition of his heavenly throne. In the following quote he gives his rationale for choosing this designation for this collection of Psalms:

Characteristic of this group is that they salute Yahweh as the king, who has just ascended his royal throne to wield his royal power. The situation envisaged in the poet's imagination, is Yahweh's ascent to the throne and the acclamation of Yahweh as king; the psalm is meant as the song of praise which is to meet Yahweh on his "epiphany", his appearance as the new, victorious king. Hence the name: enthronement psalms.<sup>42</sup>

In an effort to reconcile Old Testament statements that Yahweh is King with the phrase, יהוה מלך, which for him means that Yahweh has become King, Mowinckel insists that this acquisition of the throne by Yahweh is to be interpreted neither historically nor eschatologically, but as an event which is experienced by the worshipper in the actual present. "In the cultic festival, past, present, and future are welded into one."<sup>43</sup> In other words, in the experience of worship,

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 113.

the individual Israelite enters into the actual event of Yahweh's enthronement, which took place after he had conquered the hostile cosmic forces. The model for this conception of Yahweh's triumph is the Canaanite Baal-myth, and the worshipper's experience of this "enthronement" takes place in the form of a cultic re-enactment of the primeval event of creation, in which Yahweh subdues the turbulent waters.

Brueggemann, following Mowickel, explains the meaning of the phrase, יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ, in the following manner:

It could be taken to refer to an ongoing reality of the God who already reigns. But if we take this formula as a proclamation at coronation, to say "Yahweh reigns" means that he has just now become king. That is, the liturgical enactment is not just a recollection, but it is a making so, just as at Easter we understand the resurrection to be "today," and we understand ourselves to have been present. Now such a formula as "were you there?" is not chronological affirmation but liturgical experience. And that is how this psalm formula might best be taken. This psalm marks the beginning of a new reign. Liturgy is not play-acting, but it is the evocation of an alternative reality that comes into play in the very moment of the liturgy. So this moment is when God's rule is visible and effective.<sup>44</sup>

While this interpretation of these psalms has gained a degree of acceptance, it has also come under sharp attack from certain segments of the scholarly community.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>W. Brueggemann, The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 144.

<sup>45</sup>For an introduction to the scholarly debate on this issue which is sympathetic to Mowinckel's view, see J. Gray, The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 7-38.

One of the more severe critics of Mowinckel's hypothesis is Hans-Joachim Kraus, who accused the Scandinavian scholar of viewing the Jerusalem cult in a one-sided manner and reducing it to uniformity through the phenomenological approach. The main problem with Mowinckel's view, says Kraus, is that it passed over the way the cultic traditions of the Old Testament were related to history, and forced everything into an artificial scheme which was modeled on the cultic practices of Israel's neighbors. Since the Psalms do not contain any accounts of cultic ceremonies on the order of Mowinckel's fanciful reconstructions, but only fragments and poetic reflections of various experiences of worship, the only way to arrive at such a picture is by indulging one's imagination.<sup>46</sup> It is much wiser to interpret the significant phrase, יהוה מלך, in terms of the eternal reign of Yahweh than it is to fabricate a cultic tradition which has no firm foundation in the canonical materials of the Old Testament.

Kraus's emphasis on the historical foundations of Israel's cultic tradition is a needed reminder to the biblical scholar that the canonical materials arose in concrete, historical situations. This is certainly true of Psalm 68, which contains a considerable amount of kingship ideology and is almost certainly connected with the occasion of David's

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<sup>46</sup>H.-J. Kraus, Theology of the Psalms, trans. K. Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 84-85.

bringing of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem.<sup>47</sup> Psalm 68 is not an enthronement psalm, but it employs מְלִיךָ as an epithet of Yahweh in verse 25. There are also seven occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in this Psalm (vv. 12, 18, 20-21, 23, 27, 33), all of which are used as epithets of Yahweh as well.<sup>48</sup> One other divine epithet worth noting is שֶׁפָּרַי (v. 15), which means "almighty".

This Psalm begins with the affirmation, "God will arise, his enemies will be scattered; his foes will flee before him," which is a clear allusion to Num. 10:35, although there are several grammatical differences between the two passages.<sup>49</sup> The Psalm is replete with references to Yahweh's sovereign power and kingly rule, which was manifested in his guidance of Israel in the wilderness (v. 8), his overpowering of the kings of the earth and his enemies (vv. 13, 15, 22-24), and his activity in the heavens (vv.

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<sup>47</sup>Ficker, 53.

<sup>48</sup>This is somewhat unusual for the Psalms, in which over half of the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי are used in address to God. Ps. 68:21 is one of four places in the Psalms where the reverse combination, יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי, occurs.

<sup>49</sup>D. Kidner, Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 238. The psalmist has turned the prayer of Num. 10:35 into praise, which fits the historical context of the triumphal transport of the ark to Jerusalem following David's successful military exploits. The NIV translates the verbs of v. 1 as jussives: "May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him."

5,19,34-35). The procession of the ark into Jerusalem is described as "the procession of my God and King" (vv. 25-28). The Psalm concludes with an invitation to sing praise to אֱלֹהֵינוּ, "to him who rides the ancient skies above, who thunders with mighty voice, . . . whose majesty is over Israel, whose power is in the skies" (vv. 33-35). The divine epithet, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, is linked here with the reign of Yahweh, based on the ancient concept of the ark as his portable throne.

Psalm 68 illustrates several important aspects of the ideology of Yahweh's kingship in the Old Testament. First of all, its connection with the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem shows that it was linked with a definite historical event. Second, even though it is not an enthronement psalm, it clearly belongs with other Old Testament materials which affirm the kingship of Yahweh. Third, it shows that the ark may indeed have played a significant role in the development of the ideology of Yahweh's kingship. Fourth, getting back to the primary focus of this particular research project, the seven occurrences of אֱלֹהֵינוּ as a divine epithet in this Psalm would seem to indicate that אֱלֹהֵינוּ also played an important part in that ideology.

Therefore, the concept of Yahweh's kingship obviously goes far beyond those Old Testament verses which contain the word מֶלֶךְ. Consider, for example, Ps. 24:7-10, which may also reflect the procession of the ark into Jerusalem. Notice that Yahweh is designated "King of (the) glory" (מֶלֶךְ הַכְבוֹד)

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four times and "Lord of hosts" (יהוה צבאות) once:

Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
 be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
 that the King of glory may come in.  
 Who is the King of glory?  
 יהוה, strong and mighty  
 יהוה, mighty in battle.  
 Lift up your heads, O you gates;  
 lift them up, you ancient doors,  
 that the King of glory may come in.  
 Who is he, this King of glory?  
 יהוה of hosts,  
 he is the King of glory. (Ps. 24:7-10)

The divine epithet, צבאות, is also linked with מֶלֶךְ in Pss. 84:4 and 48:9,<sup>50</sup> indicating that it was also used in the Psalms in relation to Yahweh's kingship. Its connection with the ark in the above passage further indicates that both this epithet and the ark were important elements of this ancient ideology.

One more phrase that bears mentioning in relation to the ark of the covenant and the ideology of Yahweh's kingship is יָשָׁב (ה)פְּרוּבִים. On the basis of Yahweh's promise to Moses in Exod. 25:22 that he would meet with him "between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony," and the usage of יָשָׁב in relation to human judges and kings,<sup>51</sup> this phrase should probably be translated "enthroned between (or above) the cherubim." The phrase occurs in connection with the ark in 1 Sam. 4:4, 2 Sam. 6:2, and 2 Kgs. 19:14, and also

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<sup>50</sup>Ficker, 54.

<sup>51</sup>See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 442.



appears in Pss. 99:1 and 80:2. Psalm 80 is of further interest in this regard, because the divine epithet, **צְבָאוֹת**, occurs there four times in connection with Yahweh.

Many other examples could be cited to demonstrate that the Psalms contain a wealth of material on Yahweh's kingship in addition to the relatively small number of "enthronement psalms." The passages cited above show that a number of divine epithets, including **מֶלֶךְ**, **צְבָאוֹת**, and **אֲדֹנָי**, to name only three, are important elements in a much larger picture of the reign of Yahweh that is presented in the Psalms. The allusions to the ark of the covenant, and the occurrences of one or more of these epithets in conjunction with the ark in various passages in the Psalms, tend to corroborate earlier conceptions of Yahweh's kingly rule that are detectable in the Pentateuch and historical books.

One of the surprising things about the appearance of the three divine epithets mentioned above, however, is that they rarely occur together in the Psalter. In fact, neither **אֲדֹנָי** nor **צְבָאוֹת** occurs in any of Mowinckel's enthronement psalms, and they hardly ever appear together anywhere else in the Psalms.<sup>52</sup> **מֶלֶךְ** and **אֲדֹנָי** appear together only in Psalms 68 and 44, and **מֶלֶךְ** and **צְבָאוֹת** appear together only in Psalms 24, 48, and 84. While it would be difficult to draw any firm

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<sup>52</sup> **אֲדֹנָי** and **צְבָאוֹת** appear together only in Psalms 59, 69, and 89.

conclusions from this, the evidence seems to suggest that the ideology of Yahweh's kingship or sovereign rule is spread out over a much wider area than the distribution of מֶלֶךְ initially suggests.

In addition to the fifty-five occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי in the Psalms, the root, אֱלֹהִים, occurs eleven times.<sup>53</sup> In seven of these instances,<sup>54</sup> it is clearly used as a divine epithet. As אֱלֹהִים, the God of Israel is "the Lord and master in unlimited sovereignty and freedom."<sup>55</sup> As in Deut. 10:17, Yahweh is called "Lord of lords" (Ps. 136:3). He is Lord over the entire earth (Ps. 97:5), which trembles in his presence (Ps. 114:7). He is superior to all other gods (Ps. 135:5); he is great and mighty in power, and his understanding (תְּבוּנָה) knows no limit (Ps. 147:5). "Accordingly the Psalms proclaim and laud the lordship of Yahweh. As the Lord of Israel Yahweh is also the Lord of the peoples and of all the world. For the theology of the Psalms this is a basic premise which colors the borrowed epithets עֲלִיּוֹן . . . and מֶלֶךְ . . ., and includes above all the designation of Yahweh as judge."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Pss. 8:2,10; 12:5; 45:12; 97:5; 105:21; 110:1; 123:2; 135:5; 136:3; 147:5.

<sup>54</sup>Pss. 8:2,10; 97:5; 123:2; 135:5; 136:3; 147:5.

<sup>55</sup>Kraus, Theology of the Psalms, 30.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 30-31.

Again, it is not possible to label every aspect of this theology as preexilic because of difficulties concerning the date and authorship of some of the Psalms. It is beyond the scope of the present study to try to isolate which features of this theology may be early and which ones are likely to be late. But it is not at all beyond the realm of possibility that its main features, particularly those which can be identified as belonging in some way to the ideology of Yahweh's kingship, applied not only to the divine epithet, אֱלֹהִים, but also to its derived form, אֱלֹהֵי, prior to the time of Ezekiel.

One of the simplest yet most eloquent statements in the Old Testament concerning the majesty of the divine Lord, Yahweh, is found in Psalm 8:

O LORD, our Lord (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ),  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory  
above the heavens.  
From the lips of children and infants  
you have ordained praise<sup>57</sup>  
because of your enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.  
When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
what is man that you are mindful of him,  
the son of man that you care for him?  
You made him a little lower  
than the heavenly beings

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<sup>57</sup>Some translations read "strength" here for the Hebrew word, עֹז.

and crowned him with glory and honor.

You made him ruler  
 over the works of your hands;  
 you put everything  
 under his feet:  
 all flocks and herds,  
 and the beasts of the field,  
 the birds of the air,  
 and the fish of the sea,  
 all that swim  
 the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord (יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ),  
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!

In this Psalm, אֱלֹהֵינוּ serves to set the creator apart from the creature and to emphasize the power and majesty of Yahweh, the divine Lord. It also accentuates man's role as servant, in that he has been entrusted with care and administration of the created order. The psalmist is amazed that such a great and powerful Lord would have the time or the interest to take notice of him in his feeble, earthly state. Once again, the phrase "all the earth" appears in conjunction with אֱלֹהֵינוּ, calling attention to the majesty of Yahweh's name. This divine epithet sheds a considerable amount of light on the theology of Yahweh's universal dominion, at least as it is presented in the Psalms.

But the most significant occurrences of אֱלֹהֵינוּ relating to the Old Testament doctrine of the reign of God are found in the writings of the prophets, to which we now turn. While the prophets build on earlier conceptions of Yahweh's kingship, their unique contributions to this ideology lie primarily in their adaptation of these conceptions to their

own historical circumstances, and their development of distinct literary forms which serve as vehicles for the expression of their ideas.

### Prophet vs. King

One way to view the prophetic movement in Israel is as "a divinely authorized check or control on the human king by the divine king."<sup>58</sup> The king remained a primary focus of the prophetic word throughout the period of the monarchy, and it is almost possible to say that prophecy begins with the monarchy and also ends with it.

According to a recent article, the books of Samuel contain a theological endorsement of the kingship of Yahweh, corresponding to the emergence of prophecy and kingship on a human level, both of which were intended to give Israel a correct understanding of her relationship with Yahweh.<sup>59</sup> From its beginning as an ongoing institution (1 Samuel 9), prophecy functioned, in the face of Israel's request for a human monarch, as the interpreter to Israel of the "basic and more fundamental theological premise of Yahweh's kingship over Israel." Samuel's role as "kingmaker and kingbreaker"

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<sup>58</sup>P. D. Miller, Jr., "The Prophetic Critique of Kings," Ex Auditu 2 (1986): 82.

<sup>59</sup>Wm. J. Dumbrell, "The Content and Significance of the Books of Samuel: Their Place and Purpose within the Former Prophets," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 33, no. 1 (1990): 50.

highlights the fact that prophecy, rather than kingship, was destined to preserve the sacral traditions relating to the leadership of Israel. Prophecy was meant to "channel emerging Israelite kingship in a direction that properly recognized the scope and fact of Yahweh's suzerainty exercised over Israel."<sup>60</sup>

After the establishment of the monarchy in Israel, מלך was applied to Yahweh on a limited basis, in both verbal and substantival forms. This may have happened partly as a negative reaction to the institution of kingship on the human level, which was considered an act of infidelity to Yahweh, but it also contributed positively to the theology of Yahweh's transcendence.

But the prophetic usage of מלך in relation to Yahweh is not as frequent as might be expected, for perhaps two reasons. First, the prophets may have deliberately avoided associating with Yahweh a title that was "overmuch tainted by humanity."<sup>61</sup> Second, the foreign god, מלך, to whom devotees offered their children as sacrifices, was particularly abhorrent to them. After the collapse of the monarchy, however, the title was applied to Yahweh more freely in an eschatological sense, in anticipation of the demise of

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 53-54.

<sup>61</sup>Jacob, 60. This is especially true of Ezekiel, as the next chapter will demonstrate.

foreign gods before the splendor of Yahweh's majesty.<sup>62</sup>

As mentioned above, the institution of kingship in Israel created a conflict between the conception of a covenant people serving the divine king, Yahweh, and that of a nation-state led by a human monarch. The prophets who criticized individual kings emphasized the obligation of the covenant people to obey the will of Yahweh. But a number of Israel's kings interpreted their role to be leader of a nation among nations whose primary purpose was to vie for power, wealth, and security, often at the expense of covenant faithfulness.<sup>63</sup> Quoting Miller, "The prophets seem to have understood what the kings forgot . . . that the monarchy was a political instrument of the divine rule."<sup>64</sup> The prophets criticized those kings who either (1) failed to hear or respond in obedience and trust to the word of Yahweh, or (2) turned to other gods or foreign alliances, thus encouraging rebellion against Yahweh and his covenant.

There is a noticeable heightening of the prophetic critique of Israel's kings during and just prior to the exile, and with the fall of Judah and the collapse of the monarchy, prophetic voices began to be raised which

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>63</sup>Miller, "Prophetic Critique," 84.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 93.

anticipated a future under Yahweh's rule but without king or state.<sup>65</sup> One of the important ways in which this kingly rule of Yahweh is expressed in the prophets, as over against the claims of human rulers, is through the prophetic use of the messenger formula, which introduces the "royal edicts" of the divine Lord.

#### The Prophetic Use of the Messenger Formula

One way in which prophetic speeches can be more clearly understood is through the identification of who is speaking.<sup>66</sup> The word of the prophet is often identified as none other than the word of Yahweh through the use of the formula, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה. Through this basic formula and a variety of expansions or modifications of it in the prophets, the prophetic word is authorized as the word of God. This "message formula" or "messenger formula" resembles and is perhaps modeled on the introductory portion of the royal edict, "Thus says the king," through which the king's

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 94-95. Cf. especially Ezekiel, who stresses the sovereign rule of Yahweh, but not as a מֶלֶךְ; he is rather אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, "Lord Yahweh," reigning in the heavens over Israel and the nations. What is more, in Ezekiel 40-48, which contains Ezekiel's vision of the future Israel, the human מֶלֶךְ is replaced by a נְשִׂיא, a ruler with diminished political power. See the discussion of the latter term in the next chapter.

<sup>66</sup>Westermann, 93.



messenger authenticated his message or emphasized its importance.<sup>67</sup>

Lindblom traced the oracular formula, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, to

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<sup>67</sup>Examples of the early use of the message formula can be found in Gen. 32:3-4; 45:9; and Num. 22:16. 1 and 2 Kings contain numerous examples of the royal edict, כֹּה אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ:

1 Kgs. 2:30; 22:27; 2 Kgs. 1:11; 9:18,19; 18:19,29,31; 19:3,6,20,32.

In 2 Kings 18 and 19, there is an interesting exchange between the field commander of the Assyrian army and Hezekiah, king of Judah, which illustrates the use of the messenger formula in relation to both human rulers and Yahweh. The Assyrian commander delivers a message to Hezekiah from "the great king, the king of Assyria," to the effect that Judah cannot stand against his powerful army. Note the use of the messenger formula in 18:19,29,31. The next use of the formula is in 19:3, as a delegation from king Hezekiah delivers his message of concern and anguish to the prophet, Isaiah. But the three remaining uses of the formula (19:6,20,32) introduce the word of Yahweh, climaxing in v. 32f.:

Therefore thus says Yahweh (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה) to the king of Assyria:

"He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here.  
He will not come before it with shield  
or build a siege ramp against it.  
By the way that he came he will return;  
he will not enter this city,"

declares the Lord (נְאֻם יְהוָה).

Thus Yahweh asserts his superiority over "the great king." Note how the first formula, כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, introduces the divine saying, and the second one, נְאֻם יְהוָה, concludes it.

The two formulas are thereby designated (1) the introductory messenger formula and (2) the formula for a divine saying. Cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24, trans. R. E. Clements, eds. F. M. Cross and K. Baltzer, with the assistance of L. J. Greenspoon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 26.

two sources in the ancient world: (1) the proclamation formula of ancient Oriental declarations and decrees, and (2) the formula with which the message was always introduced.<sup>68</sup>

He concluded that the message style was normative in early prophecy, and that the ceremonial proclamation style came strongly to the forefront later, especially in Ezekiel.

Köhler, at approximately the same time, and independently of Lindblom, also studied the prophet's role as a messenger of God. By examining the framework of prophetic speeches, i.e., the introductory and concluding formulas, he determined that the framework cannot be isolated from the body of the speech, i.e., the message itself. Therefore, both form and content reveal the role of the prophet as a messenger.<sup>69</sup>

The development of the messenger formula within Old Testament prophetic materials may contain important clues to the history and development of the prophetic movement as a whole.<sup>70</sup> While von Rad does not consider this formula to be the most basic form of prophecy or its original starting

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<sup>68</sup>J. Lindblom, Die Literarische Gattung der Prophetische Literatur (Uppsala: A.-b. Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1924), 102.

<sup>69</sup>L. Köhler, Deuterojesaja (Jes. 40-55) Stilkritisch Untersucht, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 37 (Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1923), 102-5; idem, Kleine Lichten (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1945), 13-17. Cf. Westermann, 82.

<sup>70</sup>Westermann, 82.

point, it is nevertheless "a constant factor in all Old Testament prophecy from Elisha to Malachi" and "the form which the prophets used more frequently than any other to deliver their messages."<sup>71</sup>

The question of development is an interesting one, especially when the forms of the divine name within the formula itself, as employed in widely diverging ways by individual prophets, are considered.<sup>72</sup> The prophetic use of this formula seems to defy any simple theory of chronological development from the simplest form to the most complex one. Those prophets showing the greatest expansion or variety in their use of the introductory messenger formula are Isaiah (fourteen forms), Jeremiah (seven forms), and Amos (three forms). If the formula for a divine saying<sup>73</sup> is included, Isaiah's total increases to thirty-six, Jeremiah's to fifteen, and Amos's to eleven. Ezekiel, on the other hand, limits himself to only one form of each of these two types of prophetic formulas, expanding each one by the simple addition of *יְהוָה* prior to *יְהוָה*, yielding *יְהוָה אֶמַר* and *יְהוָה אֶמַר יְהוָה*

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<sup>71</sup>G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, vol. 2, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), 36-37.

<sup>72</sup>See appendix B, "The Forms of the Divine Name in the Introductory Messenger Formula (IMF) and the Formula for a Divine Saying (FDS) in Individual Prophetic Books."

<sup>73</sup>In its most basic form, this formula appears in the Old Testament as either *יְהוָה אֶמַר* or *יְהוָה אֶמַר יְהוָה*, and occurs most often in the middle or at the end of a prophetic oracle.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ.<sup>74</sup> The significance of Ezekiel's usage of these two formulas becomes more readily apparent when examined in the light of the three prophets mentioned above, who either preceded him (Isaiah,<sup>75</sup> Amos) or were roughly contemporaneous with him (Jeremiah).<sup>76</sup>

### Isaiah

While Isaiah exhibits incredible variety in his use of these prophetic formulas, his prophecy contains only ninety-two formulas in all. The most common forms are יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (used nineteen times), יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (fourteen times), and יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (twelve times). The most significant expansions for the purpose of the present study involve the addition of הַאֲדֹנָי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, and מֶלֶךְ as epithets of יְהוָה. Examples of

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<sup>74</sup>The basic forms of these two formulas do occur in Ezekiel (11:5b; 13:6a,7; 16:58; 21:8; 30:6a; 37:14b). But in two of these instances (13:6a,7) they are found in the mouths of "false" prophets, and in one instance (21:8) BHS attests אֱלֹהֵינוּ as a variant reading, which may indicate the originality of the expanded form. This leaves only four occurrences of the basic forms out of a total of over two hundred.

<sup>75</sup>As the following examples show, Isaiah's usage of the formulas in question is sufficiently demonstrated in chapters 1-39 of his prophecy, and therefore prior to Ezekiel, even if the latter portion of his book is considered to be later than Ezekiel.

<sup>76</sup>These three prophets also have in common the most frequent occurrences of the divine title אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה outside Ezekiel: Isaiah with twenty-five, Amos with twenty-one, and Jeremiah with fourteen.

these expansions are given below, along with the verses in which they occur. Note the occurrence of מְלִךְ in Isa. 44:6, as well as the frequency of the title יהוה אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה:

1. Basic Form: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

Expanded Form:

כֹּה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (Isa. 7:7; 28:16;  
49:22; 52:4; 65:13)

כֹּה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (10:24; 22:15)

כֹּה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל (30:15)

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה מְלִיֵךְ-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגַאֲלוֹ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (44:6)

2a. Basic Form: נְאֻם יְהוָה

Expanded Form:

נְאֻם הָאֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (19:4)

נְאֻם אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (3:15)

נְאֻם הָאֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל (1:24)

נְאֻם אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מִמְּבַרְכֵי נְדָחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (56:8)

2b. Basic Form: אָמַר יְהוָה

Expanded Form:

אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (22:14)

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Isaiah's usage of both הָאֲדֹנָי and אֱלֹהֵי as epithets of Yahweh indicates their equivalence, a fact which is made even more obvious by their appearance in the same prophetic formula, נְאֻם . . . יְהוָה. Furthermore, Isaiah's combining of אֲדֹנָי/אֱלֹהֵי, צְבָאוֹת, and מְלִיֵךְ, with יְהוָה in these formulas, which introduce or frame the

solemn decrees of Yahweh, is further evidence that he viewed Yahweh as both divine Lord and reigning King of Israel.<sup>77</sup>

Indeed, Isaiah provides additional clues to his theology of Yahweh's kingly rule as signified by his use of the divine epithet אֲדֹנָי, none clearer than the account of his vision/encounter with Yahweh in the temple in Isa. 6:1-13. He states that he saw אֲדֹנָי seated on a throne, high and exalted (v. 1), and that he heard the seraphim declaring the holiness of הַמְּלִאָּה יְהוָה זְבָאוֹת (v. 5), whose glory fills the whole earth (v. 3).<sup>78</sup>

Yahweh's kingly rule is also depicted in various ways in Isa. 40, where it is stated that אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה "comes with power" (v. 10) and gently "tends his flock like a shepherd" (v. 11).<sup>79</sup> To Yahweh, says Isaiah, the nations are "like a drop in a bucket" (v. 15), "worthless and less than nothing" (v. 17). Yahweh is described as the one who "sits enthroned

<sup>77</sup>Of the forty-eight occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in Isaiah, twenty-five occur in combination with יְהוָה, eleven of which are in turn found in these three prophetic formulas. Remarkably, אֲדֹנָי occurs in a prophetic formula of this type only once apart from יְהוָה, at Isa. 29:13.

<sup>78</sup>Note the use of אֲדֹנָי three times (vv. 1, 8, 11), זְבָאוֹת twice (vv. 3, 5), and הַמְּלִאָּה once (v. 5).

<sup>79</sup>This is one of twenty-five occurrences of אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה in Isaiah, which are evenly divided between chapters 1-39 and 40-66.

above the circle of the earth," "stretches out the heavens like a canopy," and "brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing" (vv. 22-23). Thus Isaiah contrasts the nations and rulers of this world with the incomparable reign of Yahweh in the heavens.

### Amos

Like Isaiah, Amos uses the basic forms of the introductory messenger formula (IMF) and the formula for a divine saying (FDS) most often: **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה** (eleven times), **נְאֻם יְהוָה** (fourteen times), and **אָמַר יְהוָה** (five times). In contrast with Isaiah, however, Amos has only eleven variations of the divine name in these formulas (cf. Isaiah's thirty-six) in forty-four total occurrences (cf. Isaiah's ninety-two). Amos expands each of the three prophetic formulas listed above by the addition of **אֲדַנִּי** prior to **יְהוָה**, yielding the following:

1. Basic Form: **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה**

Expanded Form:

**כֹּה אָמַר אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה** (Amos 3:11; 5:3)

- 2a. Basic Form: **נְאֻם יְהוָה**

Expanded Form:

**נְאֻם אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה** (4:5; 8:3, 9, 11)

**נְאֻם אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת** (3:13)

- 2b. Basic Form: **אָמַר יְהוָה**

Expanded Form:

**אָמַר אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה** (1:8; 7:6)

While Amos does not exhibit the variety that Isaiah does in his expansions of these prophetic formulas, the fact that he also has a significant number of אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה forms in this literary or speech complex is added confirmation of the hypothesis that אֱלֹהֵי had a definite significance in the minds of those prophets who used it.

In Amos, the divine title אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה is directly connected with Yahweh's plans to judge the nation of Israel and the role of his prophets in proclaiming that judgment:

Surely Lord Yahweh (אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה) does nothing  
 without revealing his plan  
 to his servants the prophets.  
 The lion has roared --  
 who will not fear?  
 Lord Yahweh (אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה) has spoken --  
 who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:7-8)

Three announcements of judgment follow this passage, which are introduced by the prophetic formulas פֶּה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (v. 11), פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה (v. 12), and נְאֻם אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה תִּצְבְּאוֹת (v. 13). The third announcement of judgment is then concluded with the formula, נְאֻם יְהוָה (v. 14). Amos's use of these different formulas illustrates the fact that the expanded forms of the divine name are more or less equivalent to the basic form of the name, יְהוָה, while at the same time they emphasize the lordly aspects of his authority to rule over his people in judgment.

It is probably no accident that the chapter in Amos which contains the most occurrences of אֱלֹהֵי in the book,



chapter 7, is the same chapter that describes the confrontation between the prophet and the representative of Jeroboam's regime, Amaziah. In fact, it is Amos's statement that the high places and sanctuaries of Israel are going to be destroyed, and that Yahweh is going to raise "his" sword against the house of Jeroboam (v. 9), that causes Amaziah to become concerned about the shepherd of Tekoa. Amaziah represents the corrupt leadership of Jeroboam, who had polluted the nation with idolatry, while Amos represents Israel's true Lord, Yahweh.

In chapters 8 and 9, Amos continues to proclaim the certainty of Yahweh's judgment upon Israel, as well as his sovereign rule over the nations. Yahweh is described as **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה הַמְצַבְאוֹת**, the one "who touches the earth and it melts" (9:5), "who builds his lofty palace in the heavens and sets its foundation on the earth" (9:6). Then Amos concludes this prophecy of judgment on Israel by declaring that Lord Yahweh will "shake" the house of Israel among the nations:

"Surely the eyes of **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה**  
 are on the sinful kingdom.  
 I will destroy it from the face of the earth --  
 yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,"  
 declares **יְהוָה**.  
 "For I will give the command,  
 and I will shake the house of Israel  
 among all the nations  
 as grain is shaken in a sieve,  
 and not a pebble will reach the ground.  
 All the sinners among my people  
 will die by the sword,  
 all those who say,  
 'Disaster will not overtake or meet us.'" (9:8-10)

As sovereign Lord, Yahweh has the authority to judge his own people and to scatter them among the nations. He "gives the command," carrying out his judgment as though he were a military commander ordering his troops into battle, and he uses "the sword" as his primary instrument of judgment. Both divine epithets used here, אֲדֹנָי and צְבָאוֹת, belong to earlier conceptions of Yahweh's kingship which were connected with the ark and battle, which confirms the validity of their employment in this context.

#### Jeremiah

The prophecy of Jeremiah, which stands closest to that of Ezekiel in a number of ways, is characterized by a heightened emphasis on the word of Yahweh, as Jeremiah's use of the messenger formula indicates. Like Isaiah and Amos, Jeremiah shows considerable variety in his expansions of prophetic formulas (fifteen forms in all), but he goes far beyond his predecessors in terms of the frequency with which he uses these formulas, employing the IMF 152 times and the FDS 183 times, for a total of 335 instances. While the majority of these formulas are found in their most basic forms here,<sup>80</sup> Jeremiah's expansions are again interesting because of the epithets of Yahweh contained in them which belong to the ideology of Yahweh's kingship, namely אֲדֹנָי,

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<sup>80</sup> (8) אָמַר יְהוָה, (162) נְאֻם יְהוָה, (82) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה.

צְבָאוֹת, and מֶלֶךְ.

Jeremiah seems especially fond of the latter term, using it a total of eighty times in his prophecy, sixty-five of which are found in prophetic formulas. So it is apparent that צְבָאוֹת figures prominently in Jeremiah's theology of the sovereign rule of Yahweh, just as אֲדֹנָי figures prominently in the theology of Ezekiel. Jeremiah's most significant expansions of the formulas in question are shown below:

1. Basic Form: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

Expanded Form:

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (fourteen times)<sup>81</sup>

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (thirty-two times)

כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (Jer. 7:20)

2a. Basic Form: נְאֻם יְהוָה

Expanded Form:

נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (8:3; 25:29; 30:8; 49:26)

נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה (2:22)

נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (2:19; 49:5; 50:31)

נְאֻם הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ (46:18; 48:15; 51:57)

Although there are only five אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה forms in Jeremiah's prophetic formulas, their presence in this literary complex again indicates that אֲדֹנָי was used prior to Ezekiel to designate the lordly rule of Yahweh.

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<sup>81</sup>See appendix B, PART TWO, for a list of specific verse references in Jeremiah.

In Jeremiah, this is most evident in two passages in particular. In Jer. 32:17, the prophet addresses his God as *אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה*, who made the heavens and the earth by his great power and outstretched arm. He continues in the next verse to refer to Yahweh as a "great and powerful God, whose name is *יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת*," and recites Yahweh's mighty deeds of exodus and conquest, which were followed by Israel's disobedience and rebellion. Yahweh, "the God of all mankind" (v. 26), rules over both Israel and the nations, and by virtue of his sovereign control of human history, he carries out his judgment upon Israel by "handing Jerusalem over" to the Babylonians (v. 28).

Then, in Jer. 46:10, the prophet describes a day of vengeance that belongs to *אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת*, in which Yahweh will execute judgment on "the land of the north by the river Euphrates." In v. 18 of the same chapter, he pronounces judgment upon Israel's neighbor to the south, Egypt, and designates Yahweh as *הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת*. Thus the nations which once oppressed the people of Israel will in turn be judged by Israel's Lord and King, Yahweh of hosts. Through the use of this terminology, Jeremiah makes it clear that he thought of *אֱלֹהֵי* and *הַמֶּלֶךְ* as equivalent expressions, and thereby declared his belief that Yahweh was greater than the two most powerful kingdoms of the time, Babylonia and Egypt. His predilection for the epithet *צְבָאוֹת* may indicate his anticipation of bloody conflict, as well as his conviction of Yahweh's sovereign

rule.

The use of the IMF and FDS by these three prophets sheds important light on their use in Ezekiel. While it is impossible to prove literary dependence, the similarity of usage indicates the probable existence of a common stock of prophetic terminology used by the prophets from generation to generation. The following comparison shows how Ezekiel is both similar to and different from his predecessors in terms of the form and frequency of these prophetic formulas:

<u>Prophet</u>	<u>Number of Forms</u>	<u>Total Occurrences</u>
Isaiah	36	92
Amos	11	44
Jeremiah	15	335
Ezekiel	2	203

Ezekiel is unlike any of his three predecessors in that he limits himself to only two forms of the formulas in question, expanding the IMF and the FDS from their basic forms by the simple addition of  $\text{יְהוָה}$  to each. He is similar to Jeremiah, however, in that he emphasizes through the frequent use of these formulas the importance of the word of Yahweh. A more important similarity to all three of the preceding prophets is Ezekiel's use of  $\text{יְהוָה}$  as an epithet of Yahweh within the framework of these prophetic formulas. On the basis of the comparison with the use of other divine epithets by these prophets in the same formulas,  $\text{יְהוָה}$  is marked as an epithet of Yahweh that definitely belongs to the prophetic ideology of the reign of God.

One more observation needs to be made concerning the prophetic use of אֲדֹנָי and other divine epithets in the messenger formula. An examination of the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in the IMF and FDS in all of the "latter prophets" reveals a rather startling fact: in all but two instances, which contain their own peculiarities,<sup>82</sup> יהוה appears along with אֲדֹנָי and is preceded by it.<sup>83</sup> This evidence indicates that the prophets deemed the divine epithet אֲדֹנָי particularly suitable for introducing the "royal edicts" of the divine Lord, along with הַמֶּלֶךְ, which was used much less frequently, and צְבָאוֹת.<sup>84</sup>

The preceding survey shows that Isaiah and Jeremiah employ all three of these divine epithets in the IMF and FDS. Outside Ezekiel, אֲדֹנָי is used in this context most often by Isaiah (twelve times), Amos (ten times), and Jeremiah (five times). צְבָאוֹת is most often employed by Isaiah (twelve times), Jeremiah (sixty-three times), Haggai (thirteen

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<sup>82</sup>Isa. 29:13; Amos 5:16.

<sup>83</sup>Thus almost every occurrence of אֲדֹנָי in these prophetic formulas occurs in the form אֲדֹנָי יהוה, 203 in Ezekiel and 26 outside Ezekiel, for a total of 229. This is significant, considering the fact that there are only 301 אֲדֹנָי יהוה forms in all the Old Testament. This fact is, of course, due primarily to Ezekiel's usage, but the position taken here is that Ezekiel was most likely influenced by the prophets who preceded him.

<sup>84</sup>Cf. Baumgärtel, 20-24.

times), Zechariah (twenty-nine times), and Malachi (twenty-one times). The only prophets who use the combined expression, **אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת**, are Isaiah (eight times), Amos (four times), and Jeremiah (four times). In the light of these phenomena, one of the most puzzling features of Ezekiel is the total absence of **צְבָאוֹת** in his prophecy,<sup>85</sup> since it is used quite frequently by prophets who both preceded him and came after him.<sup>86</sup> An attempt will be made to explain this absence in the next chapter.

### Conclusion

The earliest use of **אֲדֹנָי** in the Old Testament, in the form of personal address to God, laid the foundation for its

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<sup>85</sup>Cf. Z. Talshir, "The Representation of the Divine Epithet **צְבָאוֹת** in the Septuagint and the Accepted Division of the Books of Kingdoms," Jewish Quarterly Review 78, no. 1 (1987): 58.

<sup>86</sup>Eichrodt, Theology, vol. 1, 194, points out that **צְבָאוֹת** gradually lost its appellative sense and became a proper name, which is especially evident in the postexilic prophets. Like **אֲדֹנָי**, it emphasizes the sovereign lordship of Yahweh, but it is more directly connected with the city of Jerusalem (Zion) and the terminology of warfare. It is possible to detect different shades of emphasis in the employment of this epithet by various prophets. For example, in Isaiah it is associated with the defense of Jerusalem against the Assyrians (Isa. 10:24), in Jeremiah it is used to announce Yahweh's judgment upon the city because it is filled with oppression (Jer. 6:6), and in Zechariah it accompanies prophetic oracles which announce the return of Yahweh's favor to the city and the reconstruction of its temple (Zech. 1:14-17). It thus reflects Yahweh's attitude toward his people before, during, and after the exile.

later use as a divine epithet. When an individual addressed Yahweh as "my Lord," he was acknowledging both his awe of the divine majesty, and his awareness of his own frailty. The vocative use of אֲדֹנָי continued throughout the Old Testament era, as can be seen in such prophecies as Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as well as the Psalms. But by the time of the prophets, אֲדֹנָי was used predominantly in an absolute sense as an epithet of Yahweh.

While אֲדֹנָי is not often used as an epithet of Yahweh in the Pentateuch and the historical books, there is ample evidence that this word was associated with the ideology of the kingship of Yahweh at a fairly early date through its connection with the covenant and the ark which housed its tablets. On the occasion of the crossing of the Jordan river into the promised land, the designation of Yahweh as "Lord of all the earth" (אֲדֹנָי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ) served as an assurance to Israel that they would be victorious over all who opposed them. In its earliest usage as a divine epithet, אֲדֹנָי thus referred to the kingly rule of Yahweh which preceded the institution of human kingship in Israel and extended beyond the chosen people to encompass the entire world. This was a divine sovereignty which initially manifested itself in Yahweh's guidance of his people through the wilderness and on the field of battle, through the instrumentality of the sacred ark, which was his earthly throne. In the latter prophets, Yahweh's governance is affirmed even more explicit-



ly in terms of his total dominion over all the nations, not just Israel. In fact, Yahweh even marshalls the military might of Israel's enemies as instruments of his judgment on his own rebellious people.

In the canonical materials of the Old Testament, especially the prophets, the Israelite monarchy was often viewed as a threat to the rule of Yahweh, especially when the kings neglected the covenant or flaunted its requirements through the formation of alliances with foreign nations and the importation of foreign religions. As Israel sank further into religious and moral decline, the prophets became ever more critical of her kings, and at the same time proclaimed ever more earnestly the more durable kingship of Yahweh. This is increasingly evident as the crisis of the exile approaches, and reaches a climax in Ezekiel, who envisions a new Israel under the rule of Yahweh but without king or state. Through their distinctive uses of the messenger formula, Ezekiel and his predecessors proclaim the "royal edicts" of the divine Lord, Yahweh, who is variously designated *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ*, *יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת*, *יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת*, and a number of other titles which emphasize the kingly rule of Yahweh over Israel and the nations.

The present investigation has led ultimately to three prophets who either preceded or were roughly contemporaneous with Ezekiel: Isaiah, Amos, and Jeremiah. All three of these prophets exhibit a usage of the divine epithet, *אֱלֹהֵינוּ*, and the

divine title associated with it, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, that is similar to what is found in the prophecies of Ezekiel himself. Two features that all four of these prophets have in common may help explain why this similarity exists: (1) they all contain a section of oracles against foreign nations (Isa. 13-23; Amos 1-2; Jer. 46-51; Ezek. 25-32) and (2) they all claim to have a special mandate from God (Isa. 6:9; Amos 7:15; Jer. 1:10; Ezek. 2:3). This may explain why they also have the highest concentration of אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה forms, since (1) they were particularly concerned with asserting Yahweh's sovereign rule over the entire earth in the face of foreign threats, and (2) the divine mandate gave them added courage to proclaim the word of Yahweh during difficult times. Although the meaning of אֱלֹהֵי, particularly its suffix, has been long debated, it is in the final analysis suited to both features of these prophecies: the proclamation of the divine sovereignty and the prophet's personal relationship with Yahweh.

It is the task of the next chapter to illustrate how Ezekiel proclaims the sovereign rule of Yahweh over Israel and the nations by means of the divine title, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה.

## CHAPTER THREE

### אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה IN EZEKIEL

Ezekiel's use of the divine title אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה must now be placed within the overall framework of his theology. This will be accomplished initially by a consideration of the structure and organization of the book of Ezekiel, secondly by a brief overview of the book's dominant themes, thirdly by a look at the formulaic material that is characteristic of Ezekiel's prophetic oracles, and finally by an exegesis of selected passages. It is not possible to cover the contents of the entire book in detail; only those themes and passages deemed most significant for the purposes of the present discussion have been included here.

#### Structure and Organization

In contrast to other prophetic books, Ezekiel has a very orderly structure. Whether this is the result of Ezekiel's own design or the work of subsequent editors is a matter of debate,<sup>1</sup> but the orderliness of the book cannot be

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 3-8, for a brief survey of the critical debate. Although a few scholars have seriously questioned the authorship and authenticity of the book of Ezekiel, the present writer agrees with Harrison's assessment that the book is a substantial unity bearing "the decided

denied. The prophetic formulas in which the divine title  $\text{אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה}$  occurs throughout Ezekiel contribute to this orderliness in a significant way, in that they either introduce or highlight the prophet's oracles of judgment and salvation.

The book of Ezekiel can be roughly divided into three main sections:

1. Oracles of judgment against Israel (1-24)
2. Oracles of judgment against the Nations (25-32)
3. Oracles of salvation for Israel (33-48)

Thus in Ezekiel, as in other Old Testament prophets, there is a "mighty forward march from judgment to salvation."<sup>2</sup> From this basic outline, smaller segments of the book can be identified as distinct literary units, such as the prophet's inaugural vision of the glory of Yahweh (chap. 1), the account of Ezekiel's call (chaps. 2-3),<sup>3</sup> the vision of the

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imprint of a singly personality" (Harrison, 838). Even Zimmerli, who allows for a certain amount of editorial revision, states that behind the book in its present form and even the composition of its individual parts, "there stands a definite plan which itself points back to a particular hand," and that "Ezekiel's own hand has given his message this characteristic stamp" (Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 25).

<sup>2</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 21-22. Although a few of Ezekiel's oracles of judgment conclude with a promise of salvation (11:14-21; 16:53-61; 17:22-24; 20:32-44), and the reverse is also evident in a couple of places (33:23-33; 34:1-10), the first part of the book is concerned primarily with judgment, while the last part is concerned primarily with salvation.

<sup>3</sup>The call narrative immediately follows the inaugural vision and should probably be linked with it. Cf. R. Wilson,

departure of Yahweh's glory from the temple (chaps. 8-11), the vision of the valley of dry bones (chap. 37), the elaborate vision of a new temple and theocratic community (chaps. 40-48), and others.<sup>4</sup>

### Dominant Themes

The vision accounts in Ezekiel are important elements in the overall scheme and theology of the prophet's work, since they not only introduce and conclude the book, but also highlight the central theme of Yahweh's presence and rule in the midst of his people, both in conjunction with and apart from the temple. Faced with the crisis of the exile and the destruction of Israel's primary institutions, Ezekiel clung to his vision of the divine majesty as the only remaining anchor of hope. In Eichrodt's words,

The one fixed point in a world torn apart by centrifugal forces remained the divine majesty high above all human reach, with its claim of lordship which demanded that all life should undergo radical reorganization.<sup>5</sup>

By referring to Yahweh throughout his book as אֱלֹהֵי, the

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"Prophecy in Crisis: The Call of Ezekiel," Interpretation 38, no. 2 (1984): 120.

<sup>4</sup>Chapters 38 and 39 seem to belong to the section of prophecies concerning foreign nations, but since the nations are not explicitly identified and the prophecies have a decidedly eschatological coloring, they can appropriately be assigned to the latter portion of the book, which concerns the time of salvation.

<sup>5</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 24.

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<sup>5</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 24.

prophet emphasized his lordship over Israel and the nations.

The divine title, **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה**, which Ezekiel uses more than any other Old Testament author, is in a sense "an elucidation of the name as an expression of the divine majesty."<sup>6</sup> For Quell, Ezekiel's usage reveals an unmistakable shift of emphasis from the name, **יְהוָה**, to the title, **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה**. However, since **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה** is found in combination with **יְהוָה** only 217 times out of a total of 435 occurrences of **יְהוָה** in Ezekiel, and since the double appellation is found almost exclusively in formulas which introduce or highlight the "royal edicts" of Yahweh, it is more likely that Ezekiel's motivation was an emphasis on the sovereign rule of Yahweh rather than a backing away from the use of his proper name. In other words, the divine majesty is indeed elucidated by the use of the title, but the proper name does not fade into the background as a result. On the contrary, Ezekiel pleads with his hearers/readers to take the name of his God more seriously than they have in the past.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Quell, 1061.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Dalman, 13. Dalman points out that, through the use of **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה** or one of its derivatives, the speaker emphasizes his own awe of and submission to the deity, as over against the name of the God so worshipped. But while it may be appropriate to draw a distinction between the attitude of the worshipper and the identity of the God who is worshipped, it is clear that **אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה**, when it is used as a divine epithet, also contains an objective element, in that it refers to the rule of Yahweh over the kingdoms of the earth. It must at least be acknowledged that both subjective and objective elements

This emphasis on the name of God reveals two primary concerns of Ezekiel. First, he is concerned with the holiness of God, which has been profaned by the sinfulness of the people of Israel.<sup>8</sup> Second, he is concerned with Yahweh's intention to act for the sake of his own name, rather than on the basis of Israel's response to him, which has consistently taken the form of rebellion instead of obedience.<sup>9</sup> Both of these themes, the character of God and the nature of his action on behalf of the chosen people, are directly related to a third significant concept in Ezekiel, namely, the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. That covenant had been continually flaunted by Israel's leaders and by the people as a whole, and divine judgment had become inevitable.<sup>10</sup> As the section on exegesis of key passages will endeavor to show, Ezekiel depicts Yahweh as the divine suzerain who is finally forced to take action against those who have insisted on rebelling against his laws and decrees.

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are present in the title, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה. For Ezekiel especially, it is not merely the prophet's reverence for Yahweh that is indicated by his frequent use of this divine title; the absolute sovereignty of Yahweh, who reigns as divine Lord, is also very much in view.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Ezek. 20:39-44; 36:22-23.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Ezek. 20:4-29.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. J. Mayo, "Covenant Theology in Ezekiel," Restoration Quarterly 16, no. 1 (1973): 24.



Ezekiel sets forth a program for reform and renewal that has been carefully and consciously produced, "a worked out theological position necessitated by the crisis in faith caused by the Exile."<sup>11</sup> He interprets the national disaster as Yahweh's just judgment on Israel's sin. Yahweh, as sovereign God and Lord of the nations, was himself the architect of the disaster, which he brought about in order to vindicate his own name and righteousness.<sup>12</sup> This affirmation of Yahweh's sovereignty, which is what gives the Old Testament its force and unity,<sup>13</sup> is repeatedly expressed in Ezekiel by means of the divine title, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה. Ezekiel proclaims the sovereign rule of Yahweh over Judah, her heathen allies (Tyre and Egypt), and even Babylon. Yahweh is "the mighty one who alone rules the world,"<sup>14</sup> who has in fact chosen Nebuchadnezzar to carry out his plans. Ezekiel affirmed "the unlimited control exercised by his God over the powers of the world."<sup>15</sup> Faced with the loss of the

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<sup>11</sup>L. Boadt, "Rhetorical Strategies in Ezekiel's Oracles of Judgment," in Ezekiel and His Book: Textual and Literary Criticism and Their Interrelation, ed. J. Lust (Leuven: University Press, 1986), 186.

<sup>12</sup>Bright, 337-38. Cf. Ezek. 14:21-23.

<sup>13</sup>Jacob, 37.

<sup>14</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 6.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 7.

monarchy and national security, Ezekiel called the people of Israel back to the acknowledgment of their true sovereign, Yahweh.

Even though Ezekiel avoids applying the title "king" to Yahweh, he experiences him as "the one who is enthroned in majesty."<sup>16</sup> It is likely that Ezekiel avoided referring to Yahweh as מֶלֶךְ as part of a polemic against the kings of Israel, who had broken Yahweh's covenant by making foreign alliances and by promoting the worship of foreign gods. Yahweh stands above the kings of the earth as אֱלֹהֵי; more than a מֶלֶךְ, he is Lord of all.<sup>17</sup> Ezekiel's critique of Israel's corrupt rulers is even more apparent in his use of the term נְשִׂיא rather than מֶלֶךְ to designate the ideal ruler of the

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<sup>16</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 53. The nominal form of מֶלֶךְ is never used as a predicate of Yahweh in Ezekiel, although the verbal form is used to describe Yahweh's intention to rule over Israel in the "new exodus" of Ezek. 20:33. Zimmerli thinks the reason for this is that Ezekiel is not concerned so much with proclaiming Yahweh's kingship as he is with drawing attention to Yahweh's sovereign rule through his acts in history.

<sup>17</sup>Note how the prophet's use of the terms "throne" and "glory" in chapters 1, 8-11, and 43, highlight the themes of divine sovereignty, judgment, and salvation. In chapter 1, the glory of Yahweh appears to Ezekiel in a foreign land, thus demonstrating Yahweh's universal sovereignty. Then, in chapters 9-11, the glory of Yahweh departs from the Jerusalem temple as a prelude to judgment. Finally, in chapter 43, the glory of Yahweh returns to a new temple with a new offer of salvation. Through Ezekiel, Yahweh offers Israel something that her human monarchs were never able to provide: hope of a secure future, which is based on the covenant promises of the exalted Lord rather than political intrigue or military might.

restored theocratic community.<sup>18</sup>

These are some of the dominant themes found in the book of Ezekiel which shed important light on the prophet's use of the divine title, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה. Prior to a consideration of individual passages, however, mention must be made of Ezekiel's use of formulaic material, which provides the framework for his prophetic oracles.

#### Formulaic Material in Ezekiel

Zimmerli has focused attention on the formulaic material in Ezekiel's prophecies. The most important formulas for the purposes of the current study are the introductory messenger formula (IMF), the formula for a divine saying (FDS), the affirmatory oath formula (AOF),<sup>19</sup> the recognition formula (RF),<sup>20</sup> and the formula for the conclusion of a divine saying (FCDS).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>See the discussion of Ezekiel 34 below.

<sup>19</sup>"As surely as I live, . . ." (הִי־אֲנִי). In Ezekiel, this formula occurs 16 times, and in 14 of these cases it is followed by the FDS (נִאֲמַם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה). Jacob, 39, states: "When Yahweh himself wishes to confirm by an oath the dependability of his threats or promises he introduces it by the affirmation of his life."

<sup>20</sup>"You/They will know that I (am) Yahweh . . ." (יָדַעַ + כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה). Cf. Zimmerli, I Am Yahweh, ed. and with an Introduction by W. Brueggemann, trans. D.W. Stott (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 5.

<sup>21</sup>"I, Yahweh, have spoken" (דַּבַּרְתִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה). These

Zimmerli has shown that the words and actions of Yahweh dominate the activities that are described in the book of Ezekiel. In his words, "Everything that is narrated . . . is experienced within the overall framework of Yahweh's control. . . . Everything is subsumed in the word of Yahweh."<sup>22</sup> Through his use of אֲדַבְרֵי in the "royal edicts" of Yahweh, the IMF and FDS, Ezekiel emphasizes the divine authority exercised by Yahweh over Israel and the nations. And through the use of these prophetic formulas in combination with the recognition formula, it is evident that Ezekiel sees the objective of Yahweh's action as the bestowal of a new knowledge of himself to his people, and beyond them to the wider world of nations.<sup>23</sup> This new knowledge would result in a new recognition on the part of Israel and the nations of "the all-prevailing mighty power and the exclusive rights of the divine Lord."<sup>24</sup>

An examination of the definable speech units in the book of Ezekiel reveals some interesting aspects of the

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designations of the different formulas are found in Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 26, 37. While the FCDS usually occurs at the end of prophetic oracles, there are exceptions (e.g., Ezek. 24:14), which may indicate that the designation "formula for the conclusion of a divine saying" is a misnomer. It is used here for lack of a better term.

<sup>22</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 24.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>24</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 15.

prophet's use of the various formulas. On the one hand, Ezekiel's prophetic oracles are consistently introduced with the IMF, with very few exceptions.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, these oracles end most often with some form of the RF (thirty-five times), but they also conclude with the FDS (twenty-five times) and, less often, the FCDS (eight times). Several oracles contain a combination of the IMF, FDS, and RF.<sup>26</sup> Also, various combinations of the different formulas are sometimes found at the conclusion of an oracle.<sup>27</sup> Thus it can be shown that these formulas, which more or less "frame" Ezekiel's prophetic oracles, play a significant role in the

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<sup>25</sup>The speech units which contain these oracles often begin with the formula for the reception of a divine saying, "The word of the Lord came to me" (וַיְהִי רַב־יְהוָה אֵלַי), which is often accompanied by other material, such as instructions to the prophet or an account of his performance of a symbolic action. The IMF then introduces the words of Yahweh which have been entrusted to the prophet to pass on to the people.

<sup>26</sup>E.g., the oracle concerning the prophets of Israel in Ezek. 13:3-16, which contains the IMF three times (vv. 3, 8, 13), the FDS twice (vv. 8, 16), and the RF twice (vv. 9, 14). Interestingly enough, these prophets denounced by Ezekiel used their own form of the FDS, נְאֻם יְהוָה (vv. 6, 7), even though, according to Ezekiel, Yahweh had neither sent them nor spoken through them.

<sup>27</sup>E.g., Ezek. 17:21 contains a combination of the RF and the FCDS: "Then you will know that I, יְהוָה, have spoken." Similarly, in Ezek. 28:10 and 39:5, a modified form of the FCDS has been combined with the FDS: "'I have spoken,' declares אֲדַבְּרֵי יְהוָה." And in Ezek. 37:14, the RF, an expanded form of the FCDS, and the FDS have all been blended into a single phrase: "'Then you will know that I, יְהוָה, have spoken, and I have done it,' declares אֲדַבְּרֵי יְהוָה."

structure and theology of the book as a whole, in that they emphasize the divine origin of Ezekiel's message, the identity of the Lord who rules over Israel and the nations, and Yahweh's desire to reveal himself in a new way to the world.

The three most common formulas in Ezekiel, the IMF, FDS, and RF, often signal the beginning and end of speech units, making it possible to break certain passages into smaller segments. Thus in Ezekiel 7, which contains predictions of a coming disaster, it is possible to identify three distinct oracles, which are nevertheless bound together by a common subject: vv. 2-4, which contains the IMF (v. 2) and RF (v. 4); vv. 5-9, which also has the IMF (v. 5) and RF (v. 9); and vv. 10-27, which has no introductory formula but concludes with the RF (v. 27). Likewise, Ezek. 14:12-23 consists of three parts: vv. 12-14 (an announcement of judgment which ends with the FDS), vv. 15-20 (a continuation of v. 14 which contains three instances of the AOF coupled with the FDS), and vv. 21-23 (a conclusion which shifts to the theme of salvation and is heightened by the use of the IMF, FDS, and RF).

At times the formulas in question, especially the IMF and FDS, are used repeatedly within a given passage for the sake of emphasis. This is true of Ezek. 36:2-15, where the IMF occurs seven times (vv. 2-7,13), the RF once (v. 11), and the FDS twice (vv. 14-15), for a total of ten formulas in the space of fourteen verses.

At other times these formulas mark off smaller sections which, though they are closely related, convey different emphases. Consider, for example, Ezek. 12:21-28, which contains two distinct but related thoughts. The first one, found in vv. 21-25, concerns the prophet's response to a common proverb which questioned the validity of prophetic visions which called for judgment on the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. The proverb is quoted in v. 22, and Ezekiel's response in vv. 23-25 is introduced with the IMF and concluded with the FDS. The second one, found in vv. 26-28, questions not the validity of the prophetic visions, but the timing of their fulfillment, expressing the people's belief that Ezekiel's predictions of destruction referred to the distant future. The people are again quoted in vv. 26-27, and the prophet's response in v. 28 is again framed by the IMF and FDS.

In the exegesis of individual passages that follows, these formulas will again come into view at certain points as key features of Ezekiel's presentation.

#### Exegesis of Pertinent Passages

While the following examination of Ezekiel's book is intended to be an exegetical survey of key passages relating to the theme of Yahweh's sovereign rule over Israel and the nations, it is also to a certain extent thematic. This is necessary in part because of the limitations of space, but

also because the full impact of Ezekiel's theology of the rule of the divine Lord cannot be grasped on a verse-by-verse basis, apart from a consideration of the book as a whole. So although individual passages are taken as starting points, related passages and themes have been incorporated into the discussion as well, in order to present the most complete picture possible.

#### The Inaugural Vision (1:4-28)

The introductory vision reveals "the Lord of the universe in his sovereignty over against and apart from Israel and his own temple,"<sup>28</sup> and therefore sets the stage for Yahweh's judgment upon Israel. In this vision, Ezekiel is impressed by the splendor and incomparable power of Yahweh, and Yahweh's freedom to move about as he pleases.<sup>29</sup> Ezekiel's vision of God's moving throne "is rich in symbolic references to the universal and yet wholly transcendent kingship of God."<sup>30</sup>

The "living creatures" of Ezekiel 1 are identified as

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<sup>28</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 19.

<sup>29</sup>D.M.G. Stalker, Ezekiel (London: SCM Press, 1968), 49. On page 44 of his commentary Stalker states, "In 1 Kings 22:19 Micaiah ben Imlah saw Yahweh sitting on his throne in heaven, while Isaiah (6.1) saw him enthroned in the Temple. But Ezekiel sees the throne appearing in a foreign land."

<sup>30</sup>Schnackenburg, 18. Cf. Eichrodt, Theology, vol. 2, 193-94.



cherubim in Ezek. 10:15, and their association with the chariot-like vehicle in chapter 1, as well as the ark of the covenant in Exod. 25:22,<sup>31</sup> completes the picture of the divine Lord, Yahweh, ruling over his people in kingly majesty from a heavenly throne.<sup>32</sup> The ark of the covenant, which once served as Yahweh's "portable throne" on earth, as well as a reminder to Israel that their God was in their midst wherever they went, eventually came to rest in the Jerusalem temple. It is perhaps in anticipation of the destruction of that city and its temple that Yahweh comes to Ezekiel, among the exiles in Babylon, in imagery that is reminiscent of the sacred ark, but no longer limited to physical objects or geographical locations.<sup>33</sup>

Brownlee warns that the vision of the chariot-throne was not necessarily a comforting one for Ezekiel, based on the statement in Ezek. 3:15 that the prophet was "overwhelmed" by what he saw, and the statement in Ezek. 43:3

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<sup>31</sup>The ark itself is called a "chariot" in 1 Chr. 28:18.

<sup>32</sup>P. C. Craigie, Ezekiel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 11.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 13. Cf. M. Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20: A New Translation (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1983), 59: "Ezekiel rebuts a Jerusalemite claim that the exiles are removed from God, i.e., from his gift of possession of the land [11:15f.] . . . Ezekiel's vision 'revolutionized' a notion that YHWH's revelation could not occur outside the land of Israel."

that the vision of Yahweh's glory was linked with the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>34</sup> The verb **אָשַׁם**, which means "to be desolated, appalled,"<sup>35</sup> is used several times in Ezekiel and usually refers to the attitude of the exiles to Yahweh's judgment, but in Ezek. 3:15 it may refer to the prophet's awe of the divine majesty, or to his feelings of responsibility and dread in the aftermath of the divine commissioning.

Ezekiel's statements concerning the majesty and absolute transcendence of Yahweh strongly resemble descriptions of the divine nature found in the Pentateuch, especially the book of Exodus. This is particularly true in regard to the glory (**כְּבוֹד**) of Yahweh, which shines forth only now and then in connection with the ark and the tabernacle in the wilderness. In Ezekiel, however, the appearance of the glory in connection with the heavenly chariot-throne indicates the departure of Yahweh from the temple in judgment (10:4,18,23). Only after the promised purification and restoration of the people of Israel does Ezekiel envision the return of the glory to Jerusalem, to a new temple (43:1-5). Indeed, Yahweh's heavenly throne overshadows the earthly temple as the vehicle of his presence, which again contrasts the transcendent sovereignty of Yahweh with the corrupt political

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<sup>34</sup>W. H. Brownlee, Ezekiel 1-19 (Waco: Word Books, 1986), 18.

<sup>35</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 1030.

and religious institutions associated with the Jerusalem temple.<sup>36</sup>

Ezekiel makes it abundantly clear that God is not irrevocably committed to the temple priesthood, the monarchy, or any other historical form. He asserts the freedom of God's sovereignty separate from, even over against, such institutions. A God who is bound to their preservation would be a patron, not a sovereign. Israel's only hope is that the sovereign Lord, who resists every human attempt to control or confine him, will perform a new work of purification apart from Israel's failed institutions. And this he will do for the sake of his own name, whether or not Israel returns to him in repentance. Ezekiel thus proclaims the "unfettered sovereignty" of Yahweh.<sup>37</sup>

#### The Divine Commissioning (2:1-3:27)

The form of address, "son of man," which occurs for the first time in Ezek. 2:1 and introduces the account of the prophet's commissioning by Yahweh, indicates "the weakness and lowliness of the creature over against the world-filling glory of the God of Israel."<sup>38</sup> Ezekiel's regular use of this

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<sup>36</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 28-30.

<sup>37</sup>W. Brueggemann, Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 85.

<sup>38</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 14.

term, which occurs a total of ninety-three times in his book, is another feature which gives his prophecy a unique stamp, and which complements his consistent designation of Yahweh as אֱלֹהֵי. In Eichrodt's words, Ezekiel is

the anonymous messenger, divested of all earthly claims, who stands in profoundest lowliness before the only exalted one. . . . It is by virtue of his very weakness that he is to act as the instrument of the Lord, whose will it is to reveal through him the unlimited divine power.<sup>39</sup>

Yahweh's address to Ezekiel as "son of man" often introduces a new speech unit, and it is usually accompanied by a divine command to perform a symbolic action or to prophesy (e.g., Ezek. 4:1; 5:1; 6:2-3). Less often, it is immediately followed by the IMF (e.g., Ezek. 7:2).

A second important feature of the call narrative is the frequent occurrence of words which refer to the rebellion of the Israelites against Yahweh. In Ezek. 2:3-4, Yahweh tells Ezekiel that he is sending him to a rebellious nation (גוֹיִם הַמּוֹרְדִים אֲשֶׁר מְרִדוּ בִי) that is in revolt (פָּשַׁע) against him. The verb פָּשַׁע, used here of Israel's "revolt" against Yahweh, primarily denotes the defection of a vassal in the political sphere.<sup>40</sup> The verb מָרַד is also used of rebellion against a human king in Ezek. 17:15,<sup>41</sup> although other Old

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>40</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 133. Cf. 2 Kgs. 1:1; 3:5,7.

<sup>41</sup>In this context it implies armed insurrection.

Testament usage indicates that it is used almost exclusively of rebellion against God.<sup>42</sup> The people of Israel are also described as "obstinate" and "stubborn," literally "hard of faces and strong of heart" in their refusal to obey God. Although the word "covenant" is never used in the call narrative, it is more than mere conjecture to see in this terminology an indirect reference to the covenant demands imposed upon Israel by Yahweh. The "rebellious house," Israel, has continually disobeyed her divine overlord, and she must now face his wrath.

Israel's disobedience to the covenant is also in view in other passages in Ezekiel such as Ezek. 5:6 and 11:12, in which the Israelites are accused of rejecting Yahweh's laws (מִשְׁפָּטִים) and refusing to follow his decrees (חֻקֹּת). That these words refer to the covenant at Sinai is clear from the usage of the same terminology in Ezek. 20:11f., which places Yahweh's bestowal of them in the wilderness, following the

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<sup>42</sup>Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 597-98. Ezekiel employs the adjective מָרִי, "rebellious," seven times in the call narrative (Ezek. 2:5,6,7,8; 3:9,26,27) and eight times in the rest of the book (12:2<sup>2</sup>,3,9,25; 17:12; 24:3; 44:6), referring to Israel as a "rebellious house." The verb מָרָה, "to be contentious, refractory, rebellious," is also used three times in Ezekiel 20 to describe Israel's behavior. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 57, declares, "The call-narrative already makes clear how harsh is the accusation which Yahweh has to raise against his people by the mouth of the prophet, where the very name 'house of Israel' can be immediately replaced by 'house of rebellion'."

exodus from Egypt.<sup>43</sup> Other passages, which explicitly mention Yahweh's covenant with Israel, such as Ezekiel 16, show that Ezekiel was convinced that Israel's misfortunes were due to covenant unfaithfulness. God's judgment upon Israel was "the inevitable result of her own rejection of the covenant."<sup>44</sup>

In spite of Ezekiel's frequent use of בְּרִית, <sup>45</sup> however, and his numerous indirect references to the Sinai covenant, some scholars protest that Ezekiel lacks a well-defined covenant theology.<sup>46</sup> Begg suggests that this might be explained on the basis that

the "contractual" overtones of reciprocal claims and commitments which the term evidences in various OT contexts (see e.g., Exod 19:4-5; Deut 7:12, cf. Deut 26:17-18; 28) militated against its more pervasive use in a book dominated by an emphasis on YHWH's total freedom to act for his own purposes.<sup>47</sup>

In other words, while Ezekiel is concerned about Israel's disregard for the covenant, he is more concerned with proclaiming the sovereign rule of Yahweh, which is in no way

<sup>43</sup>Cf. also Ezek. 33:15; 36:27; 37:24; 44:24.

<sup>44</sup>Mayo, 24.

<sup>45</sup>Ezek. 16:8, 59, 60<sup>2</sup>, 61, 62; 17:13-16, 18-19; 20:37; 30:5; 34:25; 37:26<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>46</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 46; C.T. Begg, "BERIT in Ezekiel," in Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, eds. R. Giv'eon, M. Anbar, et al. (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 81.

<sup>47</sup>Begg, 81.

compromised by Israel's performance of her covenant obligations.

It has been suggested that Ezekiel's awe of the divine majesty and emphasis on the divine anger prevented him from appreciating Yahweh's covenant love for his people.<sup>48</sup> He did not weep over the plight of Israel, as did Jeremiah, nor did he protest Yahweh's love, as did Hosea. His emphasis was on the holiness and wrath of Yahweh, who was constrained by his own character to judge his people for their sins. But Ezekiel did know something of the compassion of God and his willingness to forgive sin, for he declared that Yahweh takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but desires that they "turn from their ways and live" (Ezek. 33:11). Furthermore, he portrayed Yahweh at one point as a shepherd who searches for his sheep and looks after their needs (Ezek. 34:11-16). While it is true that Ezekiel emphasized the judgment of God on rebellious Israel, this was more a function of the times in which he lived<sup>49</sup> than a defect of character, as some would suggest. Ezekiel, the priest turned prophet, was appalled at the depths of sin to which his countrymen had sunk, but his prophecy also offered hope to those who had none. The surest foundation of hope for the

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<sup>48</sup>Stalker, 39.

<sup>49</sup>W. Lemke, "Life in the Present and Hope for the Future," Interpretation 38, no. 2 (1984): 176.

exiles was, in fact, the sovereign lordship of Yahweh, who alone was able to build a new theocratic community out of the ashes of the old Israel.

In light of the fact that Ezekiel denounced the idolatrous practices of the Israelites as breach of covenant,<sup>50</sup> and spoke out against the high places on the mountains of Israel which were often associated with Baal worship,<sup>51</sup> it is remarkable that the word בעל is not found in his prophecy at all.<sup>52</sup> Jeremiah had a good deal to say about this rival deity imported from Canaanite religion into Israelite religious practices, but while Ezekiel alludes to such practices, he never mentions the deity's name. This may be due to the fact that he was so concerned with the proclamation of Yahweh's universal dominion that he did not consider the mention of this god worth the effort. Or it may be that his priestly sensibilities were so outraged by the prevalence of this form of unfaithfulness to the covenant in Israel that he could not even bring himself to pronounce the name of the foreign god. Whatever the reason, Baal does not receive the attention in Ezekiel that he does in other books.

One last feature of the call narrative, but by no

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<sup>50</sup>Ezek. 16:36; 20:7f; 22:3; 23:7f.

<sup>51</sup>Ezek. 6:4f.; 20:28-29.

<sup>52</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 23.



means the least, must be mentioned before moving on to other passages in Ezekiel. That feature is the introduction of the messenger formula in Ezek. 2:4, 3:11, and 3:27. The interesting thing about these three occurrences of the IMF is that the formula itself is all that appears. That is, Ezekiel is simply told to declare, *כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה*, but he is not told anything else at this point concerning the specific content of the messages he will be conveying to the Israelites from their God. This indicates the prophet's total dependence upon Yahweh for the specific content of his message,<sup>53</sup> but it also indicates that the IMF is to be a characteristic feature of every oracle of Yahweh that the prophet delivers.

Greenberg believes this choice of the "empty" messenger formula has its own significance, since an alternative wording for the charge to speak to the people was available, as in Ezek. 2:7 and 3:4, in which Ezekiel was told, "You must speak my words to them."<sup>54</sup> The significance is indicated by the immediate context of Ezek. 2:4, in which the rebelliousness of Israel is emphasized. The use of the divine title *אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה* serves to make the people aware of their true state at the time of exile, which is "subjection to a Lord whom

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<sup>53</sup>Ezekiel is instructed to listen to the words which Yahweh speaks to him, and then to deliver them to the people (Ezek. 2:7-8; 3:10-11,17,27).

<sup>54</sup>Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, 64-65.

they refuse to acknowledge."<sup>55</sup> In other words, Ezekiel's message to Israel is that Yahweh is still her true sovereign, and that she must suffer his discipline in spite of the fact that she has turned her back on him in every conceivable way.

Greenberg comments further on the significance of this appearance of the messenger formula in the account of the divine commissioning of Ezekiel:

The imprint of this initial experience of a message formula with a double appellation (chosen here for its specific contextual value) became normative for the rest of Ezekiel's experience. He continued to use the double appellation virtually without variation in the openings of all his messages, and in a common closing formula (see at 5:11) as a kind of divine signature.<sup>56</sup>

The "common closing formula" is, of course, the FDS. Ezekiel's experience of this commissioning, which immediately followed his vision of the divine glory, left an indelible impression on his consciousness. The essence of this impression is preserved for us in the prophetic formulas which play such an important role in his prophecy, in that they emphasize the sovereign lordship of Yahweh on the one hand, and the importance of his words to Israel on the other.

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid. Greenberg corroborates the evidence cited in Chapter One of the present study concerning the originality of אֱלֹהֵי in the text of Ezekiel: "The nearly systematic, limited use of the double appellation in MT itself argues strongly against the widespread older assumption (still maintained by Elliger in BHS) that it is a secondary development."

## Oracles of Judgment against Israel (4-24)

The oracles of judgment in Ezekiel figure prominently in the overall scheme, or program, of the book.<sup>57</sup> These judgment oracles are directed against both Israel and the nations, but it is those directed against Israel that are dealt with here. While promises of restoration are sometimes included in the oracles of these chapters (e.g., 16:60-62), the overwhelming emphasis throughout is on judgment.<sup>58</sup>

This section begins with an account of a series of symbolic actions which Ezekiel is commanded to perform in anticipation of the siege of Jerusalem (4:1-5:4).<sup>59</sup> After this, Ezekiel proclaims his first prophetic oracle (5:5-17), which sets the tone for the rest of the oracles in this section.<sup>60</sup> The accusation is in vv. 5-7, in which Jerusalem is denounced for rebelling against Yahweh's laws and decrees (vv. 6-7), and is accused of failing to conform even to the

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<sup>57</sup>Boadt, "Rhetorical Strategies," 187.

<sup>58</sup>M. Fishbane, "Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel," Interpretation 38, no. 2 (1984): 131.

<sup>59</sup>According to Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 29, the purpose of these sign-actions is "to set forth in a visible action the event announced by Yahweh as something already begun." Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 81, states that the close connection in Hebrew language and thought between word and deed (דבר) makes these symbolic actions "a powerful means of proclamation."

<sup>60</sup>Note in this passage the use of the IMF (vv. 5,7,8), AOF + FDS (v. 11), RF + FCDS (v. 13), and FCDS (vv. 15,17).

standards of the nations around her (v. 7). Then comes the announcement of judgment in vv. 8-17. Yahweh must withdraw his favor from the city because of the "vile images and detestable practices" with which the Israelites had defiled his sanctuary (v. 11). This sounds like a preview of Ezekiel 8-11, in which the prophet is shown in detail the idolatrous practices being carried on within the walls of the temple,<sup>61</sup> and the ominous departure of the glory of Yahweh. It is Yahweh himself who will inflict punishment on the city by means of plague, famine, and sword (v. 12).

The sword is a key symbol in Ezekiel of Yahweh's judgment upon Israel and the nations.<sup>62</sup> Frequently, the drawing of the sword is an action ascribed to Yahweh himself,<sup>63</sup> or one that is carried out with Yahweh's approval and supervision. For Eichrodt, the "sword of Yahweh" is an image which preserves the ancient concept of God as a warrior.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>The depths to which this idolatry has gone is made clear by Ezekiel's mention of the Tammuz/Adonis cult in 8:14 and the Canaanite Astarte, the "Queen of Heaven," in 8:16. The description of the "women weeping for Tammuz" is an authentic picture of the most characteristic feature of that cult, in which the dead fertility god is mourned by female devotees. See Leslie, 220-21.

<sup>62</sup>The word **חֶרֶב**, "sword," occurs over eighty times in the book of Ezekiel.

<sup>63</sup>Ezek. 5:2,12,17; 6:3; 11:8; 12:14; 14:17,21; 21:3,4,5; 29:8; 38:21.

<sup>64</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 289. Cf. Isa. 27:1; 31:8; 34:6;

This highlights at least two things concerning the usage of this concept in Ezekiel: "the sword (of Yahweh)" in Ezekiel reflects the ideology of the kingship of Yahweh found elsewhere in the Old Testament, and along with that, it illustrates the absolute sovereignty of God over all the affairs of men and nations. For Yahweh, who once led the armies of Israel against her enemies in connection with the sacred ark, has now turned the sword against his own people by means of the dreaded aggressor, Babylon, which has become his agent of judgment.<sup>65</sup> Yahweh is supreme Lord and Judge; Babylon prevails over Israel and other nations not because of her superior military might, but because Yahweh "hands them over" to him.<sup>66</sup>

The bleakness of the picture of Yahweh's judgment

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66:16; Jer. 12:12; 47:6; Zeph. 2:12.

<sup>65</sup>This is clear from the use of **חֶרֶב** in Ezekiel 21, and also from the statements in Ezek. 30:24-25 that Yahweh will "strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon" and place "his" sword into the hand of the king of Babylon.

<sup>66</sup>Ezek. 29:19-20. If it is correct to see in Ezekiel's frequent use of "the sword" a connection with the concept of Yahweh as a warrior, it is somewhat remarkable that he never uses the divine epithet **צְבָאוֹת**, and that he also avoids the designation of Jerusalem as **צִיּוֹן**. But this is more understandable in the light of Ezekiel's allusions to Yahweh's use of the sword against Jerusalem and its inhabitants rather than in their defense, since the old Zion theology tended to view Yahweh as the guarantor of Jerusalem's inviolability. Cf. Jer. 26:1-11.

painted by Ezekiel has occasioned a discussion of whether Israel was capable of repentance at this point in her history, or whether Yahweh had concluded that judgment was his only recourse. According to Westermann, the most important prophetic speech form is the prophet's announcement of judgment to his own nation, along with the reason given in the accusation.<sup>67</sup> God does not merely "threaten" judgment; he "announces" it. In the first place, this assumes an unwillingness to repent on the part of the people who are facing judgment, despite repeated warnings given by the prophets. In the second place, it implies the sovereign ability of Yahweh to carry out that judgment. In the words of Westermann,

The announcement of judgment in prophecy presupposes the unqualified Lordship of God in history and over history. It is an expression of this sovereignty that God causes a judgment which he has concluded to be announced. A mere threat could certainly have adversely affected this sovereignty.<sup>68</sup>

That is to say, Yahweh has already decided what needs to be done; Ezekiel's role is simply to announce to the people what has been decided.

It is at this very point that Ezekiel's doctrine of individual responsibility, as set forth in detail in chapter 18 of his prophecy, becomes extremely important. Even though

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<sup>67</sup>Westermann, 26-27.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 66.

the nation as a whole is destined for judgment, there is hope for the individual who turns to Yahweh in repentance.

"Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways," נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה.

"Repent! Turn away from all of your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone," נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה.

"Repent and live!" (Ezek. 18:30-32)<sup>69</sup>

Eichrodt points out that it is precisely those who have already experienced God's judgment, the exiles, who are here offered the opportunity to repent of their own sins.<sup>70</sup> The proverb to which Ezekiel responds in this chapter, "The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (18:2), is a misapplication by the people of the principle of inherited guilt, which was derived from Exod. 20:5f. (cf. Deut. 5:9f.). They were complaining that Yahweh was punishing them for the sins of their fathers. But Ezekiel's generation was judged because they willfully continued in the sinful ways of their fathers.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>The Hebrew word translated "your offenses" is פְּשָׁעֵיכֶם, which literally means "your acts of rebellion."

<sup>70</sup>Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 246: "Finally we come to see in judgment the means of a new creation."

<sup>71</sup>Cf. Ezek. 20:31, in which the Israelites are accused of practicing idolatry עַד-הַיּוֹם, "to this very day." Against Fishbane, 142-46, there is no real contradiction between chapters 18 and 20, for while chapter 18 emphasizes individual responsibility for sin, chapter 20 focuses on the historical reality that each succeeding generation refused to

The most devastating feature of Yahweh's judgment on Jerusalem is his departure from it, which is foreshadowed in the announcement of Ezek. 5:11 that he intends to withdraw his favor from the city. This withdrawal is then depicted in visionary form in Ezekiel 10-11. The Israelites literally drove him from the city through their persistent practice of idolatry. Yahweh would no longer protect the city or its temple from foreign invasion. As Craigie points out, however, the withdrawal of Yahweh from Jerusalem and the temple means that he is available to the exiles.<sup>72</sup> So the ominous theme of judgment signified by Yahweh's departure from temple and city becomes in another sense an indicator of hope. The city and its temple may be lost, but Yahweh's presence is still available to those among the exiles who hope in him.

### Ezekiel 16

In chapter 16, Ezekiel describes the relationship between Yahweh and Israel in the form of an extended parable or allegory.<sup>73</sup> Israel is described as a newborn baby who is

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repudiate the sins of the preceding one, until Yahweh finally concluded that judgment was necessary. While Ezekiel's generation learned their sinful practices from their fathers, they were still responsible for the sins they themselves committed.

<sup>72</sup>Craigie, Ezekiel, 73.

<sup>73</sup>Cf. Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 202; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1,



abandoned by its parents and left to die in an open field. Yahweh passes by, sees the child writhing in its own blood, cleans her up and nurtures her until she is of age, then enters into a covenant with her (vv. 4-8). The language is that of a marriage relationship in which the husband lavishes expensive gifts, beautiful clothing, and fine food upon his wife to make her attractive (vv. 10-14). But Israel then violated the covenant by becoming a prostitute, going after every approaching lover (v. 15). The marriage analogy is interwoven with a description of the idolatrous practices of the Israelites, which culminated in the sacrifice of their own children to foreign gods (vv. 20-21).

Israel's "lovers" were the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians (vv. 26-29). She became like an adulterous wife who prefers strangers to her own husband (v. 32). As a result of these illicit alliances with foreign nations, Yahweh declares that Israel will once again be exposed as in her infancy, but this time he will not come to her rescue (vv. 35-37). She will be handed over to her "lovers," who will attack her savagely and destroy all that she has built up for herself (vv. 38-42).

In the conclusion of chapter 16, which is introduced by the IMF and concluded by the FDS, Yahweh states that the

reason for his sentence of judgment upon Israel is her breaking of the covenant (v. 59). But along with the condemnation is the promise of an "everlasting" covenant which Yahweh will establish with Israel following her humiliation, at which time she will remember her ways and be ashamed (vv. 60-62). The purpose of this humiliation and the subsequent everlasting covenant is summed up in v. 62, which concludes with the RF: "So I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am Yahweh."

#### Ezekiel 17

In chapter 17, which immediately follows the description of Israel's unfaithfulness as a nation to the covenant with Yahweh, Ezekiel describes another kind of covenant unfaithfulness practiced by the nation's leadership. This chapter outlines the treachery of Israel's last monarch, Zedekiah, who rebelled against the covenant he was forced to make with Nebuchadnezzar, by appealing to Egypt for military aid.<sup>74</sup> This breach of covenant was not only a bad political decision, but it was also interpreted by Ezekiel to be an indication of rebellion against Yahweh himself. Note that Zedekiah's disregard of the oath and covenant of the king of Babylon (vv. 11-18) is tantamount to disregard of Yahweh's oath and covenant (vv. 19-21). Several interpretations have

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<sup>74</sup>Stalker, 150.

been offered as to what this terminology actually signifies.

According to one author, Ezekiel regards the dependent relationship imposed by the Babylonian king upon Zedekiah as a solemn covenant which the vassal breaks only at his peril.<sup>75</sup> But surely the breaking of such an agreement, which was imposed on Israel by force, cannot be considered as important or as binding as Yahweh's covenant with Israel, so Ezekiel must have had something more in mind than the mere defection of a vassal from his overlord.

It has been suggested that Zedekiah's sin was that of going back on his word, that he violated an oath made between himself and another human being, which according to Old Testament law amounted to a sin against God.<sup>76</sup> On this view, Zedekiah was a covenant-breaker who could not be trusted and therefore must be punished. This most likely plays a part in Ezekiel's condemnation of Israel's king, but it does not seem serious enough to merit the accusation that he broke Yahweh's covenant as well.

Another suggestion is that Yahweh was called as a

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<sup>75</sup>J. B. Taylor, Ezekiel: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1969), 145.

<sup>76</sup>Stalker, 154. Cf. M. Tsevat, "The Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Vassal Oaths and the Prophet Ezekiel," Journal of Biblical Literature 78 (1959): 199-204, who believes Ezekiel's only concern is the political perjury of vassals, and that he has elevated a levitical law concerning individual vows (Lev. 5:4) to the level of international relations.

witness to the covenant with Nebuchadnezzar, and therefore the breaking of this covenant besmirched Yahweh's name and made him appear as a weak or untrustworthy God.<sup>77</sup> This interpretation has some validity, since the invocation of Yahweh's name is not something to be taken lightly. It also raises the question of Yahweh's role in the making of this particular covenant, as well as his sovereign involvement in the affairs of both Israel and Babylon, which gets closer to the heart of the matter.

On the surface, the only thing with which Ezekiel finds fault is the simple fact that Zedekiah went back on his word. But there is much more to it than that. While it is obvious that Ezekiel is totally disgusted with the kings of Israel, who practice deceit and treachery in their political dealings, his critique of Zedekiah's action goes far beyond the matter of individual treachery to the realm of Yahweh's sovereign rule over Israel and the nations. Ezekiel saw Babylon as Yahweh's agent of judgment, so the breaking of the covenant with the king of Babylon was equivalent to rebellion against Yahweh himself.

This becomes even more evident when chapter 17 is considered in conjunction with Ezek. 16:59-63, which immediately precedes it. In 16:59, the nation of Israel is charged

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<sup>77</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 226-27.

with despising Yahweh's oath by breaking the covenant; in 17:18, which uses the same terminology, Zedekiah is the one who despised "the oath" by breaking the covenant. Clearly, the oath mentioned in chapter 17 is the one sworn to Nebuchadnezzar, but on a higher level, it is an oath made simultaneously with Yahweh, because Nebuchadnezzar is his agent. Through the use of this terminology, Ezekiel shows that Zedekiah's disregard for the covenant he made with the king of Babylon amounted to rebellion against Yahweh.

Looking at the same situation from a different angle provides another interesting perspective. Nebuchadnezzar had his own reasons for wanting to punish Zedekiah, but Yahweh worked through him to carry out his own judgment against the wicked king and his nation of rebels. Ezekiel is thus drawing a theological analogy from a political transaction, beginning in the political sphere but ending up on a much higher plane, in order to emphasize Yahweh's control of history. Greenberg summarizes the relationship between the two covenants in this manner:

Events on the two planes are indeed parallel and simultaneous: for his own reasons Nebuchadnezzar will punish the Judahite rebel, but in so doing he will (all unknown to him) be executing the design of the divine architect of history upon the king responsible for violation of his covenant with Judah.<sup>78</sup>

The refusal of the kings of Israel to uphold the covenant

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<sup>78</sup>Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, 323.

with Yahweh is illustrated conclusively in the ill-fated reign of Zedekiah. The failure of the nation's leadership became the nation's downfall.

The conclusion of Ezekiel's interpretation of the parable (17:22-24) highlights the fact that, in the future, Yahweh will set up the ruler of his own choosing. He has already done so at this juncture by pressing Nebuchadnezzar into service as the executor of his judgment on rebellious Israel. But there will come a time when even this mighty ruler will bow down before the majesty of the divine Lord, Yahweh. As Lord of all, Yahweh has the ability to "bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall," to "dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish" (v. 24). That is, the king of Babylon is now the "tall, green tree," while Israel's ruler is like a tree that is "stunted and withered." But Yahweh will one day bring about a reversal.

### Ezekiel 20

Chapter 20 is a key thematic statement of Ezekiel's program and plays an important part in the book as a whole.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Boadt, "Rhetorical Strategies," 195. In the English translations, Ezekiel 20 has 49 verses, but in the MT, the chapter ends at v. 44. These 44 verses form a distinct literary unit, in which, after an introduction (vv. 1-5a), Yahweh through the prophet recites the history of his dealings with Israel (vv. 5b-29), then outlines the consequences of Israel's present behavior (vv. 30-38), and finally promises a future restoration (vv. 39-44).

In this chapter, Ezekiel sets forth the theme of Yahweh's sovereign rule over his own people, Israel. He does this, first of all, by referring to Yahweh's mighty deeds of exodus (v. 10), covenant (vv. 11-12), and conquest (v. 28). Second, he emphasizes the divine origin and authority of the prophetic message through numerous references to the words of the divine Lord, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, and through the frequent use of various prophetic formulas.<sup>80</sup> Third, he declares Yahweh's intention to rule over Israel in a "new exodus" (vv. 33-44),<sup>81</sup> during which he will purge the nation of rebels before returning a purified people to their homeland.

While Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah portray the early history of Israel in a positive light, prior to subsequent decline and corruption, Ezekiel sees the entire history as corrupted by rebellion against Yahweh.<sup>82</sup> Even in Egypt, the

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<sup>80</sup>Note the use of the formula for the reception of the divine word (נִיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי לְאמֹר) in v. 2; the IMF in vv. 3, 5, 27, 30, 33, 39; and the FDS in vv. 3, 31, 36, 40, 44. The solemnity of the divine word is further emphasized through the threefold use of the affirmatory oath formula (הִי אֲנִי), by means of which Yahweh denies a hearing to the elders of Israel (vv. 3, 31) and asserts his authority to rule over his people (v. 33).

<sup>81</sup>Note in this context that v. 33 is the only place in the entire book in which the word מֶלֶךְ is applied to Yahweh.

<sup>82</sup>Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 58. Note how often Ezekiel states in this chapter that Israel rebelled against Yahweh by either refusing to forsake her idols or by failing to obey his laws and decrees.

Israelites refused to forsake idolatrous practices (v. 8), and their rebellion continued in the desert for two generations (vv. 13,21), persisted throughout the period of conquest and settlement in the promised land (v. 28), right up to the present (v. 31). The history of Israel is depicted as a history of sin.<sup>83</sup>

The occasion which elicited this prophetic oracle was the coming of the elders of Israel to Ezekiel in order to inquire of the Lord (v. 1). Yahweh declares through the prophet that the elders are to be denied a hearing (vv. 3,31). Although the true intention of the elders is a matter of debate, the reason for this denial is probably the fact that the elders have not yet repudiated the idolatrous practices which have characterized Israel's history. Israel's fascination with foreign religious practices is summed up in Ezek. 20:32, in which the elders are quoted as saying, "We want to be like the nations, like the people of the world, who serve wood and stone." While Eichrodt sees behind this statement the desire of the exiles to construct a religious sanctuary in the land of Babylon but denies a willing assimilation on the part of the elders to the idolatrous practices of the Babylonians,<sup>84</sup> Zimmerli interprets it as a cry of despair, reflecting the exiles' resignation to

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<sup>83</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 280.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 277-78.



being permanently dispersed throughout the nations.<sup>85</sup> In view of the entire context, however, it is most likely that the elders were at this point still representing their rebellious constituency, who were seeking divine approval for their idolatrous ways.

The terminology of v. 32 recalls the earlier account in 1 Samuel 8 of Israel's desire to be "like the nations" through the acquisition of a human monarch. There are, in fact, several points of linguistic and theological contact between Ezekiel 20 and 1 Sam. 8:7-8.<sup>86</sup> First, the kingly rule of Yahweh is emphasized in both passages, though in different ways. In Samuel, human kingship is seen as a threat to Yahweh's rule; in Ezekiel, Yahweh's rule is reemphasized with the demise of the monarchy. Second, while the Samuel passage warns against the despotic and exploitative tendencies of human rulers, the Ezekiel passage implies that Israel's leaders played a key part in promoting or at least allowing the defection from Yahweh throughout Israel's history. Third, the validity of Samuel's warning that the people would forsake Yahweh to serve other gods is borne out in Ezekiel's summary of the nation's history. Ezekiel's choice of this

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<sup>85</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 414.

<sup>86</sup>J. Pons, "Le vocabulaire d'Ez 20. Le prophète s'oppose à la vision deuteronomiste de l'histoire," in Ezekiel and His Book, ed. J. Lust, 226-27.

terminology may have been intentional, since Samuel was an early spokesman for the idea of Yahweh's kingship, and since one of Ezekiel's primary purposes was to call the Israelites back to their true sovereign.

The prophetic oracle which announces Yahweh's judgment in Ezek. 20:33-38, is introduced with the AOF and FDS: "As surely as I live, declares Lord Yahweh, . . ." (v. 33). In language reminiscent of the exodus, Yahweh asserts his intention to rule (מִלְכָּד) over Israel "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm." But this time, instead of experiencing Yahweh's deliverance from their enemies, the exiles will have to face his wrath in the "desert of the nations" (v. 35).<sup>87</sup> The destination is once again the promised land, as Yahweh gathers the exiles out of the countries where they have been scattered (v. 34), but not all of the returning captives will arrive in Israel (v. 38), for Yahweh will purge out those who revolt and rebel against him (תְּפֹרְדִים וְתַפְּוֹשְׁעִים). Just as in the exodus from Egypt, when the unbelieving were judged in the wilderness and failed to enter the promised land, so also in this "new exodus," those who remain in rebellion will be denied entrance to Israel on the return trip.<sup>88</sup>

The final segment of this chapter completes the

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<sup>87</sup>Cf. Stalker, 175; Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, 372.

<sup>88</sup>Cf. Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 279-81.

picture of Yahweh's sovereign rule over Israel. Having gathered the exiles out of the surrounding nations, and having purged Israel of rebels, Yahweh will accept the worship of his purified people in the land of Israel (vv. 39-44). Throughout this chapter, Ezekiel repeatedly stresses the fact that Yahweh accomplishes his work of salvation for the sake of his own name, rather than on the basis of any merit on the part of the Israelites.<sup>89</sup>

The ultimate goal of both the judgment of the rebels and the restoration of the exiles to the land of Israel, is revealed by means of the recognition formula, which occurs six times in this passage.<sup>90</sup> Yahweh desires to make himself known to his people, in spite of their persistent rebellion against him. In the words of Zimmerli,

The whole direction of the prophetic preaching is a summons to a knowledge and recognition of him who, in his action announced by the prophet, shows himself to be who he is in the free sovereignty of his person.<sup>91</sup>

Therefore, while Yahweh must rule over his exiled people in

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<sup>89</sup>Stalker, 38. Cf. the phrases "for the sake of my name" in Ezek. 20:9,14,22,39, and "in the sight of the nations" in Ezek. 20:9,14,22,41. This action of Yahweh for the sake of his name is reiterated and amplified in the salvation oracle of Ezek. 36:16-38. Cf. A. Luc, "A Theology of Ezekiel: God's Name and Israel's History," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 26, no. 2 (1983): 142-43.

<sup>90</sup>Ezek. 20:12,20,26,38,42,44.

<sup>91</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, 40.

judgment before he can restore them to a proper relationship with himself, Ezekiel affirms that God always has in mind this goal of showing the Israelites, and beyond them the world of nations, who he really is. Again, Zimmerli captures well the essence of the prophet's message:

What undoubtedly permeates all his preaching is above all a knowledge of the majesty of the God of Israel, who has been so humiliated by the actions of his people that his harsh judgment for the sake of the holiness of his divine name becomes unavoidable.<sup>92</sup>

The sovereign God, Yahweh, must vindicate himself in the sight of the nations, even if it means destroying Israel in the process. Thus Ezekiel's concept of divine retribution goes beyond the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the exiles to encompass a third type of judgment, i.e., the purging out of the rebels from among the survivors of the first two. The dark picture of the "history of sin" makes the light of God's holiness shine even brighter. And the purgative judgment proves that Yahweh still stands by his people and will have his way with them in the end.<sup>93</sup>

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Oracles of Judgment against the Nations (25-32)

The oracles against foreign nations in Ezekiel 25-32

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>93</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 281.

<sup>94</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 3, recommends the inclusion of Ezek. 21:31-37 (MT) and 35:1-15 in this section.

are no mere appendage to the prophecy as a whole, but form a part of the program of reconstruction envisioned by Ezekiel.<sup>95</sup> The connecting link between these chapters and those which immediately precede them is the theme of the sovereign rule of Yahweh over all the earth. He judges Israel for her sins, but he will also bring judgment upon the nations which have defied him in their arrogance and have committed acts of aggression against Israel.

Ezekiel directs the oracles in this section of his book against seven nations: Ammon (25:1-7), Moab (25:8-11), Edom (25:12-14), Philistia (25:15-17), Tyre (26:1-28:19), Sidon (28:20-23), and Egypt (29:1-32:32).<sup>96</sup> Each of the shorter oracles begins with the messenger formula and ends with some form of the recognition formula,<sup>97</sup> while the longer oracles against Tyre and Egypt are broken down into a number of shorter oracles or laments.

The omission of Babylon from this list is intriguing,

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<sup>95</sup>Boadt, "Rhetorical Strategies," 196.

<sup>96</sup>Ezek. 28:24-26, which occurs between the oracle against Sidon and the long series of oracles against Egypt, broadens the scope of the preceding oracles of judgment to include all of Israel's enemies (v. 24) and contains a brief oracle of salvation for Israel (vv. 25-26).

<sup>97</sup>Ezek. 25:14, which concludes the oracle against Edom, actually combines a truncated form of the recognition formula with the formula for a divine saying: "they will know my vengeance, declares יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל."

and has been explained in different ways.<sup>98</sup> The most likely reason for this omission, based on the text of Ezekiel itself, is that Babylon was Yahweh's agent of judgment on the foreign nations as well as on Israel.<sup>99</sup> While Yahweh is frequently portrayed as the one who "stretches out his hand" in judgment upon the offending nations,<sup>100</sup> he also employs the military might of Babylon in carrying out his judgments.<sup>101</sup> Thus the sovereign rule of Yahweh is emphasized once again, but now on an international scale.

In these oracles, Ezekiel makes it clear that Yahweh's judgment on the nations will convince them that he is supreme in power.<sup>102</sup> The divine title, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, plays an important part in this segment of the book, occurring forty-five times in these seven chapters.<sup>103</sup> As in his oracles of

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<sup>98</sup>See Taylor, 185.

<sup>99</sup>According to Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 354, "the main concern is Yahweh's order for the subjection of the whole world to the king of Babylon, who has been entrusted by him with the duty of carrying out his judgment upon the nations."

<sup>100</sup>E.g., Ezek. 25:7,13,16.

<sup>101</sup>Ezek. 26:7-14; 30:10-12,24-25; 32:11-14. Notice in this last oracle that Yahweh takes credit for the destruction of Egypt, even though it was "the sword of the king of Babylon" that carried it out.

<sup>102</sup>Mayo, 26.

<sup>103</sup>In these chapters, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה is found in the IMF twenty-nine times, the FDS thirteen times, and the RF twice.

judgment against Israel, Ezekiel announces the "royal edicts" of Yahweh to the nations. It may be significant in this regard that when the prophet announces the result of Yahweh's judgment on the enemies of Israel, i.e., that Israel will finally be safe from foreign threats, he refers to the Lord as אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה: "No longer will the people of Israel have malicious neighbors who are painful briars and sharp thorns. Then they will know that I am אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה."<sup>104</sup>

As in other prophetic books which contain such material (cf. Isa. 13-23; Amos 1-2; Jer. 46-51), the oracles against foreign nations that are found in Ezekiel contain "a pervasive assumption of Yahweh's governance."<sup>105</sup> Like the prophets who preceded him, Ezekiel asserts the general obligation that all nations have to serve the Lord of the world, and condemns them for divinizing their own strength and despising the majesty of Yahweh.<sup>106</sup>

Boadt has focused his attention on the oracles against Egypt in Ezekiel 29-32,<sup>107</sup> which comprise the bulk of

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<sup>104</sup>Ezek. 28:24. This is one of only five times in the entire book that this double appellation occurs in the RF. Cf. Ezek. 13:9; 23:49; 24:24; 29:16.

<sup>105</sup>W. Brueggemann, "2 Kings 18-19: The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic," Horizons in Biblical Theology 7, no. 1 (1985): 26.

<sup>106</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 39.

<sup>107</sup>Boadt, Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt, 15f.

this section of the prophecy. One reason given for the length of this section of the prophecy is that Egypt represents for the prophets of Israel the stereotype of opposition to God's rule.<sup>108</sup> The memory of Egyptian tyranny during the Israelite captivity made the idea of alliance with Judah's neighbor to the south that much more deplorable in the mind of Ezekiel. Thus the lengthy section of judgment oracles directed against Egypt.

The complex judgment oracle directed against Egypt in Ezek. 29:3-16 is representative of the oracles found in these chapters. From the standpoint of form criticism, this oracle is a unity of three shorter oracles: 3-6a, 6b-9a, 9b-16, each of which ends with the recognition formula.<sup>109</sup> In the second of these three oracles (29:6b-9a), Ezekiel denounces Pharaoh, king of Egypt, for failing to provide adequate aid to Israel during the Babylonian onslaught (vv. 6-7), and for claiming that he created the Nile river and possessed it as his own (vv. 3,9). Thus the accusation is twofold, mentioning both the sins that have been committed against Israel and the self-exaltation of Pharaoh in defiance of Yahweh, who is the

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<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>109</sup>The messenger formula is also present in all three oracles, but only in the first oracle does it occur at the beginning. In the second and third oracles it is preceded by the accusation (vv. 6b-7,9b), and in the third oracle it is preceded by both accusation and announcement of judgment (vv. 9b-12).



sovereign Lord and Creator of heaven and earth.<sup>110</sup>

In regard to the sins committed by Egypt against Israel, it seems strange that Egypt would be condemned for failing to provide adequate support to Israel, when in chapter 17 king Zedekiah is criticized for seeking her aid.<sup>111</sup> But Ezekiel has in mind here the fact that Egypt at this point in history posed the biggest threat to Babylonian hegemony, and therefore appeared on the horizon as a great temptress to Israel in her moment of distress.<sup>112</sup> What is more, when the call for help came, Egypt was able to do little more than bring about a temporary lull in the siege of Jerusalem.<sup>113</sup> So Ezekiel condemns Egypt for not being equal to her boasts, since she was in the final analysis unreliable and full of internal weakness.<sup>114</sup> Over against this weakness of Egypt stands the sovereign dominion of Yahweh, who not

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<sup>110</sup>Ezekiel's designation of Egypt as the "great monster" (29:3) is perhaps a mythological concept which he uses to depict the hybris of the nation's Pharaohs. Cf. Boadt, Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt, 27.

<sup>111</sup>Ezekiel's statement in 29:15-16 shows that there is no contradiction between the two passages, for after her humiliation by Yahweh, Egypt will be a "reminder" to Israel of the sin she committed when she turned to the evil empire for help.

<sup>112</sup>Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 103.

<sup>113</sup>Taylor, 199.

<sup>114</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 405.

only has the ability to carry out what he has promised, but also uses the might of the greatest world power, Babylon, to accomplish his own purposes.

Oracles of Salvation for Israel (33-48)

This segment of the prophecy opens with an expanded version of Ezekiel's call to be a "watchman for the house of Israel," which also contains a partial reiteration of the prophet's teaching in chapter 18 on individual responsibility.<sup>115</sup> There is an important difference, however, in this new segment, because the exiles show for the first time that they are conscious of their own sins (33:10). The terminology of this verse suggests "both a deep conviction of sin and an overwhelming feeling of despair."<sup>116</sup> The oracle of Yahweh which follows reveals the ultimate purpose of the prophet's proclamation of judgment, i.e., to bring about repentance:<sup>117</sup>

"As surely as I live," declares Lord Yahweh, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?" (33:11)

The use of the AOF and FDS here indicates the importance of what is being communicated, and highlights Yahweh's desire that the exiles turn to him in repentance.

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<sup>115</sup>Cf. Ezek. 3:16-21; 18:19-32; 33:1-20.

<sup>116</sup>Taylor, 215.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

This occasion, in which the exiles expressed their feelings of despair, provided Ezekiel with an opportunity to offer them new hope on the basis of individual repentance. Judgment is still pending for those who refuse to repent of their sins, and the majority of the exiles are still skeptical of Ezekiel's message (33:25-32). But Yahweh assures him that news of the fall of Jerusalem, which confirms his predictions of judgment, will bring about the realization that "a prophet has been among them" (v. 33), and possibly a new attitude concerning what has happened.

#### Ezekiel 34

Ezekiel's complaint against the leaders of Israel is taken up again in chapter 34. In metaphorical language, he denounces the "shepherds" of Israel, who only take care of themselves when they should be taking care of their "flock." He accuses them of ruling harshly and brutally and failing to meet the needs of those who looked to them for leadership and support. The expression, *רָדָה בְּכֹרֶךְ*, "to rule with harshness" (v. 4), is used only two other places in the Old Testament. In Exod. 1:13-14, it refers to the Egyptians' treatment of their Hebrew slaves, and in Lev. 25:43, the Israelites are forbidden to treat each other in this manner.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Lemke, 173, states: "Ezekiel's polemic is thus quite pointed: He accuses Israel's rulers of doing what their own history should have taught them to abhor and what the law of Moses expressly forbade!"

By way of contrast, Ezekiel provides two examples of shepherds who will rule over the restored community in a more benevolent way. In the oracle of Ezek. 34:11-16, Yahweh himself promises to look after his people "as a shepherd looks after his scattered flock" (v. 12). At this point the metaphor takes on a literal meaning in Yahweh's promise to bring the Israelites out from the nations, bring them to their own land (v. 13), and to "shepherd the flock with justice" (v. 16), which the human rulers of Israel had failed to do.

The second example of a benevolent shepherd is, however, to be a human ruler. Yahweh promises to place over his sheep "my servant David" (vv. 23-24). Opinions differ widely in regard to the identity of this promised ruler. Some of the older commentators, such as Keil, accepted the idea that Ezekiel expected the former king David to be resurrected from the dead.<sup>119</sup> This literal interpretation is preserved by more recent scholars like Pentecost, who is of the dispensational school, and envisions an important role for the resurrected David during the millennial reign of Christ.<sup>120</sup> Such an interpretation raises questions, however,

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<sup>119</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. 9, Ezekiel, Daniel, by C. F. Keil (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 90.

<sup>120</sup>J. D. Pentecost, Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology, with an Introduction by J. F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 500.

concerning the time frame in which this promise is to be fulfilled, i.e., whether it refers to the era immediately following the exile, or to the future, eschatological age. Such questions go beyond the scope of this study.

It does seem, however, that it is more in line with Ezekiel's overall theology to see this "David" as a future, ideal ruler who is of the family of David, rather than David himself.<sup>121</sup> The biggest problem in this passage, as Eichrodt points out, is that this promise of a human shepherd, of the kind which David represents, immediately follows the description of Yahweh's role as Shepherd of Israel.<sup>122</sup> But according to the theology of Yahweh's kingship articulated in the prophets, the king was meant to be an extension of the divine rule, not a threat to it.<sup>123</sup> And David was viewed as the one king who was able to keep the office of kingship in proper relationship to the rule of Yahweh, so it is no wonder that he serves here as a model of the future ideal ruler.

But Ezekiel's polemic against the kings of Israel would have prevented him from envisioning a future ruler who in any way resembled the last kings of Israel, whether he was of the line of David or not. So he applies to this new ruler

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<sup>121</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 476.

<sup>122</sup>Cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 218.

<sup>123</sup>Lemke, 174.

the title **נְשִׂיא**, by means of which he not only avoids the designation **מֶלֶךְ**, which represented for him the wicked kings who led Israel to destruction, but also emphasizes the fact that this new office in the restored community is totally different in nature.<sup>124</sup>

There is, in fact, a noticeable shift of emphasis from **מֶלֶךְ** in the earlier chapters of Ezekiel, which refers primarily to Israel's kings or the kings of the foreign nations, to **נְשִׂיא** in the later chapters. Both words occur thirty-seven times in Ezekiel, but their distributions throughout the book are very different:

Chapters	מֶלֶךְ	נְשִׂיא
1-24	10	6
25-32	21	5
33-39	3	5
40-48	3	21

In Ezekiel 1-39, **מֶלֶךְ** and **נְשִׂיא** are used more or less interchangeably, although **מֶלֶךְ** seems to be the word of choice, especially as a reference to foreign rulers.<sup>125</sup> In chapters 40-48, however, **נְשִׂיא** is the word of choice, while **מֶלֶךְ** is used only in a negative sense, referring to the kings of Israel

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<sup>124</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 475,477.

<sup>125</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 476-77, states that Ezekiel uses **מֶלֶךְ** most often to designate the king of Babylon, while he uses **נְשִׂיא** to refer to the rulers of smaller states. However, **מֶלֶךְ** refers to the kings of Israel in Ezek. 1:2; 7:27; 17:12; 37:22<sup>2</sup>,24; 43:7<sup>2</sup>,9.

who defiled Yahweh's holy name through their lifeless idols.<sup>126</sup> The word נָשִׂיא is used in these chapters to refer to the future prince or princes of the new theocratic community envisioned by Ezekiel.<sup>127</sup> The emphasis on נָשִׂיא rather than מֶלֶךְ reveals the author's desire to define and restrict the powers of monarchy in order to prevent the abuse of power. "The נָשִׂיא is a vassal of Yahweh, a shepherd who serves under the divine shepherd . . . a king with diminished political and religious power."<sup>128</sup>

Ezekiel revived a term which had fallen into total disuse during the period of the monarchy to designate the future ideal ruler of Israel. Originally meaning simply "leader" or "chieftain," נָשִׂיא was first used to designate the heads of families or clans, then came to be applied to the leader of the assembly of elders, during the period preceding the institution of the monarchy. In this earlier usage, the emphasis seems to be on the elevation or election of the

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<sup>126</sup>Ezek. 43:7,9. It is extremely significant that this passage is one of the places in Ezekiel that mentions the throne of Yahweh throne, which is set over against the rule of Israel's kings.

<sup>127</sup>The only exception to this is an exhortation to the present rulers of Israel to give up their violence and oppression and "do what is just and right" (Ezek. 45:9).

<sup>128</sup>F. Raurell, "The Polemical Role of the *APXONTES* and *AΦΗΛΟΥΜΕΝΟΙ* in Ez LXX," in Ezekiel and His Book, ed. J. Lust, 85-86.

individual by the assembly based on the individual's character rather than his lineage, with the concomitant approval of God himself. In the prophecy of Ezekiel, therefore, it aptly describes the difference between dynastic kingship and divine election. Speiser summarizes the significance of Ezekiel's usage of this term in the following manner:

Thus in Ezekiel's view, great temporal power does not appear conducive to spiritual excellence, hence the prophet's personal preference for a modest principality as opposed to an ambitious empire.<sup>129</sup>

More to the point of the present study, however, is the fact that Ezekiel is concerned to give Yahweh his rightful place as sovereign Lord and ruler of Israel, which was temporarily usurped by a succession of corrupt monarchs.

### Ezekiel 37

The account of Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (vv. 1-14) presents a picture of utter despair, which is used by Yahweh to demonstrate his sovereign ability to restore the fortunes of the exiled community. The remainder of the chapter (vv. 15-28) portrays a new Israel, no longer divided, no longer practicing idolatry. This new Israel will be governed by one king, who again is called "my servant David" (vv. 24-25), and who is designated מֶלֶךְ, רוּעָה, and אֲשִׁיא. The new Israel will also be characterized by a new

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<sup>129</sup>E. A. Speiser, "Background and Function of the Biblical Nasi'," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 25 (1963): 111.



obedience: "They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees" (v. 24), in contrast with the preexilic Israel, which was characterized as a "house of rebellion." A "covenant of peace," which is to be "everlasting," will be made between Yahweh and his people (v. 26). And finally, Yahweh will once again dwell in the midst of his people (vv. 26-28). Thus the picture of restoration given here by Ezekiel deals with all the major features of Israel's preexilic condition: corrupt leadership, refusal to obey the covenant evidenced by widespread idolatry, and the resulting departure of Yahweh from the temple. The prophet's vision of the return of the glory to a new temple in Ezekiel 43 completes the picture of restoration presented in this chapter.

#### Ezekiel 38-39

Before discussing the elaborate vision of the new temple in Ezekiel 40-48, however, it is necessary to mention the prophecy against Gog found in chapters 38 and 39. This prophecy seems to be out of place here, interrupting as it does Yahweh's promise to once again dwell in the midst of his people (Ezek. 37:27-28), and the temple vision of chapters 40 to 48. On this basis, chapters 38 and 39 are often treated as a separate composition added as a kind of postscript to the text of Ezekiel, prior to the even later addition of

chapters 40-48.<sup>130</sup>

While the issue of authorship cannot be decided here, it is obvious that the presence of the IMF<sup>131</sup> and FDS<sup>132</sup> in these chapters, as well as other formulaic material which is characteristic of the rest of the book,<sup>133</sup> suggest at least the possibility that Ezekiel wrote them. They resemble the prophecies against the nations in chapters 25 to 32, but they are different in that they refer to a future, eschatological battle between the forces of evil from the north<sup>134</sup> and the remnant of Israel, which is now resettled and living peacefully in the land of Palestine (Ezek. 38:14-16). While the identity of Gog remains obscure, the main point of contact between these chapters and the rest of the prophecy is the unqualified assertion of the sovereign rule of Yahweh, expressed here in terms of his protection of Israel and decisive defeat of the dreaded enemy from the north.

As in the prophecies against the nations, Yahweh's

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<sup>130</sup>E.g., Taylor, 242. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 296-302, suggests a much more complex literary development of this material.

<sup>131</sup>Ezek. 38:3,10,14,17; 39:1,17,25.

<sup>132</sup>Ezek. 38:18,21; 39:5,8,10,13,20,29.

<sup>133</sup>E.g., the occurrence of the RF in Ezek. 38:16,23; 39:6,7,22,23,28.

<sup>134</sup>Taylor, 243; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 302.

sovereignty is again indicated by his control of human history, since he is the one who will cause Gog and his allies to war against Israel: "In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land, . . ." (Ezek. 38:16b, italics mine). But unlike the period of the exile, in which Yahweh's judgment was executed upon Israel through the agency of the king of Babylon, in this future battle the judgment will be upon Israel's enemies alone. The stated purpose of this final battle is the hallowing of Yahweh's own name in the sight of all nations.<sup>135</sup> This will be accomplished by the miraculous intervention of Yahweh in the destruction of the aggressor's armies (Ezek. 38:18-23).

This battle is to take place in the distant future, but this segment of the prophecy ends with Yahweh's promise to gather Israel from the land of captivity, return her to her own land, and pour out his spirit on her (Ezek. 39:25-29). Israel had to experience the humiliation of exile because of her sins, but in the future confrontation, Yahweh will be pledged to her protection. Now that the prophet has returned to the historical setting of the exile, he concludes his prophecy with a magnificent vision of a new temple and a new theocratic community, which completes the picture of salvation begun in chapter 33.

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<sup>135</sup>Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 519.

Ezekiel 40-48

Although many have questioned Ezekiel's authorship of this segment of the prophecy, there is good reason to believe that it came from his hand.<sup>136</sup> From the standpoint of form, the most common of Ezekiel's prophetic formulas, the "royal edicts" of Yahweh (the IMF and FDS), occur here a combined total of seventeen times, even though the material in these chapters is very different from the rest of the book. In terms of content, there are strong links between the previously stated themes of Yahweh's presence in connection with the temple,<sup>137</sup> the corruption of Israel's former leadership (especially the kings), and the promises of restoration found at the end of chapters 20 and 37.<sup>138</sup> These themes are articulated most clearly in Ezek. 43:1-9, a summary of which follows.

Having been given a tour of the new temple (Ezek. 40:1-42:20), the prophet is brought to the east gate, where

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<sup>136</sup>Cf. M. Greenberg, "The Design and Themes of Ezekiel's Program of Restoration," Interpretation 38, no. 2 (1984): 181.

<sup>137</sup>No attempt is made here to analyze the different theories concerning the ultimate significance of the temple vision; the primary concern here is the relationship between the departure of the glory of Yahweh from the temple in Ezekiel 9-11, and the return of the same in Ezekiel 43. For a good overview of some of the prevailing theories, as well as a summary of the main themes of these chapters, see Taylor, 251f.

<sup>138</sup>Greenberg, "Design and Themes," 181-82.

he witnesses the return of the glory of Yahweh to the temple from the east (43:1-5). Ezekiel himself states that this new vision of the glory reminds him of two previous visions, thus establishing a connecting link between three key events: the appearance of Yahweh in Babylon (chapter 1), Yahweh's departure from the Jerusalem temple (chapters 9-11), and the present experience of the prophet.

Ezekiel now hears the voice of Yahweh speaking to him from inside the temple:

Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever. The house of Israel will never again defile my holy name--neither they nor their kings--by their prostitution and the lifeless idols of their kings at their high places. When they placed their threshold next to my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them, they defiled my holy name by their detestable practices. Now let them put away from me their prostitution and the lifeless idols of their kings, and I will live among them forever. (Ezek. 43:7-9)

The idea that the temple is Yahweh's throne and footstool is not new with Ezekiel.<sup>139</sup> This goes back to the ideology of Yahweh's kingship that was first connected with the ark of the covenant, and later transferred to the temple that was built to house it. As in the instructions to Moses concerning the tabernacle in the wilderness, the stated purpose of this temple is that Yahweh may dwell in the midst of his

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<sup>139</sup>Cf. Jer. 3:17; 17:12; Lam. 2:1; Pss. 99:5; 132:7.

people.<sup>140</sup> But in the light of Israel's past history as well as earlier statements in the Old Testament concerning the relationship between Yahweh's presence and Israel's obedience to the covenant,<sup>141</sup> the prophet is given a guarantee that the house of Israel will "never again" defile Yahweh's holy name by worshipping idols (v. 7). Ezekiel is reminded of the terrible price that Israel had to pay for their idolatrous practices (v. 8), as well as the role of Israel's kings in the nation's demise (vv. 7,9).<sup>142</sup> The kings placed their trust in military preparation and foreign alliances rather than in Yahweh,<sup>143</sup> and led the Israelites away from their God by promoting the religions of their foreign neighbors. Now that the monarchy is no more, the survivors of the exile are exhorted to put away their idolatrous practices and renew their allegiance to Yahweh, in order that he may dwell in

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<sup>140</sup>Exod. 25:8. Cf. Exod. 29:45; Lev. 26:11-12; Num. 5:3; Deut. 12:5,11; 1 Kgs. 6:13.

<sup>141</sup>Cf. Lev. 26:1-12; 1 Kgs. 6:11-13.

<sup>142</sup>The mention of "threshold" and "doorpost" in v. 8 refers either to the close proximity of the Solomonic temple to the royal palace (Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 418), or to the idolatrous practices that were carried on inside the walls of the temple itself, as described by the prophet in chapter 8 (Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 126-27). While it cannot be established with certainty from the wording of these texts, it is possible that the idolatry practiced in the temple approached the very holy of holies where Yahweh dwelt.

<sup>143</sup>Mayo, 28.

their midst forever (v. 9).

The remainder of the prophecy consists of regulations for the worship of Yahweh in the new temple, which shed no new light on the themes of Ezekiel's book which have been outlined here.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSIONS

Ezekiel's theology of the transcendent God came to fruition as he sat among the exiles in a foreign land. His vision of the divine glory by the river Kebar became a determinative factor in his theology, for he came to understand that Yahweh was not bound to the land of Israel or to Jerusalem's failed institutions. His commissioning by Yahweh in the aftermath of that vision was likewise determinative for the form of his proclamation, for he was commanded to declare to rebellious Israel, "Thus says Lord Yahweh." By proclaiming the words of Yahweh to the exiles, Ezekiel prepared them for the judgment that was to come, but he also offered them hope for the future.

Ezekiel drew upon both priestly and prophetic traditions as he developed his theology. He was concerned about the holiness of God's name, which had been profaned by the sins of the Israelites. He was concerned about the covenant initiated by Yahweh at Sinai, which had been continually flaunted by the Israelites through their persistent practice of idolatry. And he was concerned about the failure of the nation's leaders, who used their high office to pursue their



own selfish aims, rather than the promotion of justice and righteousness.

The divine epithet  $\text{יְהוָה}$ , which was connected with the ideology of Yahweh's kingship as early as the time of Joshua, became a key element in Ezekiel's theology. Its derivative,  $\text{יְהוָה}$ , was for him a suitable designation of Yahweh's sovereignty over both Israel and the nations, since it was at one time associated with the ark of the covenant and Yahweh's kingly leadership of his people in the conquest of the promised land. It also served as a needed contrast between the corrupt leadership of the nation's kings and the more durable rulership of Yahweh, who reigns far above any human monarch in the heavens.

Ezekiel proclaimed the royal edicts of the divine Lord, Yahweh, whose word must surely come to pass. Through his consistent employment of two prophetic formulas in particular, he made use of earlier prophetic tradition, but modified that tradition to suit his own purposes. While other prophets could refer to Yahweh as "King" or "God of hosts," Ezekiel chose to refer to him almost exclusively as the divine Lord who rules over all.

For Ezekiel, Yahweh was a mighty warrior, but not one who was committed to the preservation of Israel's sacred institutions, as the old Zion theology had taught. On the contrary, Yahweh turned his mighty hand and outstretched arm against his own people in judgment. The king of Babylon was

his agent of judgment, serving at the behest of the One who shapes the destiny of nations with his own hand. He also vowed to judge the nations for their arrogant defiance of his majesty and acts of aggression against Israel, again by means of the might of Babylon. Only after the fall of Jerusalem, when the full impact of his judgment had at last been felt, did the God of Israel promise to come to the defense of his people once more.

This will occur in a final, eschatological battle, which is to take place between Israel and the forces of evil from the north. In this battle, Yahweh will prove decisively that he is indeed the sovereign Lord of all the earth. Following the exile and a period of peace during which the Israelites will live in cities without walls or fortifications, the northern aggressor will take up arms against them. As in the Babylonian conquest, Yahweh is the one who engineers this final act of aggression, summoning Gog to the field of battle, in order to "show himself holy" in the sight of the nations. But this time, instead of giving his defenseless people over to the enemy, Yahweh will intervene on their behalf and destroy the aggressor by both natural and supernatural means. As a result of this final demonstration of the divine wrath, Israel and the nations will know that Yahweh is sovereign Lord.

Far from being a late addition to the text of Ezekiel, **יְהוָה** lies at the heart of the prophet's theology.

The divine title, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה, which is an extension and amplification of Ezekiel's understanding of the identity of the sovereign Lord, is likewise a central feature of his theology. The regular occurrence of this title in the introductory messenger formula and the formula for a divine saying preserve Ezekiel's conception of the divine majesty, his experience of the divine commissioning, and his conviction concerning the importance of Yahweh's words to his people.

Ezekiel's conception of the divine majesty and sovereign rule of Yahweh enabled him to bridge the gap between preexilic and postexilic Israel. On the one hand, he proclaimed this rule as Yahweh's right to judge his wayward people. The outpoured wrath of the divine Lord was a frightful thing for both Ezekiel and the exiles, but it was the only way to bring the nation to its senses. On the other hand, Ezekiel proclaimed this rule as Yahweh's continuing desire to lead his flock like a shepherd. To the exiles, who were the first recipients of his judgment, Yahweh extended a fresh offer of forgiveness and restoration, and demonstrated his intention to honor the ancient covenant promises. Therefore, in regard to Israel's hope for continued existence, the sovereign rule of Yahweh was both her greatest threat and her greatest hope.

So in the discontinuity brought about by the exile, in which Israel lost so much that was considered inviolable,

there remained an abiding continuity, namely, Yahweh's sovereign rule over his people. Ezekiel was not the architect of a new Israel which was founded upon new legislation; he was the interpreter to Israel of the ancient traditions that had been forgotten. This was an Israel that desperately needed to see once again that Yahweh alone was Lord of heaven and earth, that Yahweh alone was worthy of her worship, and that Yahweh alone was able to form a new community of faith out of the survivors of the exile.

Like Moses before him, Ezekiel sought to remind the Israelites that disregard for the covenant with Yahweh leads only to ruin. In the "new exodus," Yahweh will lead a purified people, purged of rebels, back to the promised land. Like Samuel before him, Ezekiel sought to remind the Israelites that Yahweh was, and always had been, their true ruler, and that human monarchs who pursued only their own interests could never carry out the wishes of the divine Lord. The last kings of Israel had, in fact, led their nation headlong into the jaws of disaster. But the future ruler appointed by Yahweh to lead the restored community will be denied the exercise of unlimited power. He will be a faithful shepherd and will lead the people with equity under the supervisory rule of the sovereign Lord.

Ezekiel's frequent use of the recognition formula shows in yet another way his desire to reveal Yahweh's purposes to Israel. But perhaps more importantly, he empha-

sizes by means of this formula Yahweh's own desire to make himself known anew to his people. In spite of the fact that Israel has turned what should have been a history of salvation into a history of sin, Yahweh in his patience and faithfulness still longs to reveal himself to his rebellious people. He extends his offer of salvation to those who are willing to repent and pleads with those who are not. Even when Israel is determined to remain unfaithful and refuses to heed his commands, he continues to act on her behalf for the sake of his own name.

Finally, having demonstrated to Israel that he cannot remain in a city that is thoroughly polluted with idolatry, and having abandoned that city and its inhabitants to judgment, Yahweh promises to return to his people and to dwell in their midst forever. The sovereign God, who made good his threats in judgment, now calls upon his people to trust in his promise to make all things new. In a fitting conclusion to his prophecy, Ezekiel declares that the name of the newly-constructed city, which replaces the Jerusalem that was destroyed, will be called, "Yahweh is there."

Based on the findings set forth here, additional research in the following areas might be profitable. One area of continuing investigation could be the relationship between the prophetic ideology of the kingship of Yahweh and that which is found in the Psalms. While the dating of various segments of the Old Testament is still a matter of

debate, it might be profitable to look more closely at the unique ways in which both the Psalter and the prophetic writings depict the kingship of Yahweh, apart from the question of chronology or influence. Thus far, researchers have tended to identify only the similarities between the two bodies of literature, and have consequently ignored the ways in which the different forms of this ideology fit into the schemes of the various canonical writings.

A second possible area of further research could be the use of the divine epithet, **יְבִאוֹת**, by different prophets, especially Jeremiah, in prophetic formulas such as the IMF and FDS. While the frequency of this divine epithet in Jeremiah does not match the frequency of **אֲדֹנָי** in Ezekiel, it would be interesting to find out if **יְבִאוֹת** has a theological significance in Jeremiah's prophecy that resembles that of **אֲדֹנָי** in Ezekiel's prophecy. Given the fact that both of these divine epithets were connected with the ideology of Yahweh's kingship at a relatively early stage in Israel's history, it is intriguing that Jeremiah emphasized one and Ezekiel the other in their prophetic oracles.

Another topic of some interest is the relationship between covenant theology and legislation in Ezekiel and that which is found in the Pentateuch, especially the book of Exodus. Ezekiel has been compared with Moses on numerous occasions, and for good reason. But the precise nature of the relationship between these two Old Testament books

requires further clarification.

And there is certainly room for further detailed investigation of formulaic material both in and outside of Ezekiel, especially in regard to its place in the theologies of various Old Testament writings.

APPENDIX A

OCCURRENCES OF אֲדֹנָי IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The purpose of this Appendix is to list all the occurrences of אֲדֹנָי in the MT, as found in BHS. The table below gives the verse reference (col. 1), and shows if the particular occurrence of אֲדֹנָי is found in address to God (col. 2), or in combination with יהוה (col. 3), if any variant readings are attested in any of the manuscripts (col. 4), and if it is found in any of the following prophetic formulas (col. 5): introductory messenger formula (IMF), formula for a divine saying (FDS), recognition formula (RF).

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Gen. 15:2	x	x		
15:8	x	x		
18:3				
18:27	x		יהוה	
18:30	x			
18:31	x		יהוה	
18:32	x			
19:18				
20:4	x		יהוה	
Exod. 4:10	x			
4:13	x			
5:22	x			
15:17			יהוה	
34:9a	x			
34:9b	x		אֲדֹנָי	
Num. 14:17	x		יהוה	



Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Deut. 3:24	x	x		
9:26	x	x		
Josh. 7:7	x	x		
7:8	x			
Jdgs. 6:15	x		אֱלֹהֵי <sup>1</sup>	
6:22	x	x		
13:8 <sup>2</sup>	x			
16:28	x	x		
2 Sam. 7:18	x	x		
7:19a	x	x		
7:19b	x	x <sup>3</sup>		
7:20	x	x <sup>4</sup>		
7:22	x	x <sup>4</sup>		
7:28	x	x <sup>4</sup>		
7:29	x	x <sup>4</sup>		
1 Kgs. 2:26		x <sup>5</sup>		
3:10			יהוה	
3:15			יהוה	
8:53	x	x		
22:6			יהוה	
2 Kgs. 7:6			יהוה	
19:23			יהוה	

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Jdgs. 6:13.

<sup>2</sup>The form of the word here, אֱלֹהֵי, is unique in the Old Testament, and marks a transition from the root, אֱלֹהִים, to the derived form, אֱלֹהֵי, in which the ך has dropped out.

<sup>3</sup>Some mss. read אֱלֹהִים as a variant for יהוה.

<sup>4</sup>Some mss. read אֱלֹהִים יהוה instead of אֱלֹהֵי יהוה.

<sup>5</sup>Some mss. read אֱלֹהִים for יהוה.

Verse	Address to God	+ יְהוָה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Isa. 3:15		x		FDS
3:17				
3:18				
4:4				
6:1				
6:8				
6:11	x			
7:7		x		IMF
7:14				
7:20				
8:7				
9:7				
9:16				
10:12				
10:23		x		
10:24		x		IMF
11:11				
21:6				
21:8	x			
21:16				
22:5		x		
22:12		x		
22:14		x		FDS
22:15		x		IMF
25:8		x		
28:2				
28:16		x		IMF
28:22		x		
29:13 <sup>6</sup>				FDS
30:15		x		IMF
30:20				
37:24				
38:14	x			
38:16	x			
40:10		x		
48:16		x		
49:14				
49:22		x		IMF
50:4		x		
50:5		x		
50:7		x		
50:9		x		
52:4		x		IMF
56:8		x		FDS

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Isa.	61:1	x		
	61:11	x		
	65:13	x		IMF
	65:15	x		
Amos	1:8	x		FDS
	3:7	x		
	3:8	x		
	3:11	x		IMF
	3:13	x		FDS
	4:2	x		
	4:5	x		FDS
	5:3	x		IMF
	5:16 <sup>7</sup>			IMF
	6:8	x		
	7:1	x		
	7:2	x		
	7:4a	x		
	7:4b	x		
	7:5	x		
	7:6	x		FDS
	7:7		יהוה	
	7:8		יהוה	
	8:1	x		
	8:3	x		FDS
	8:9	x		FDS
	8:11	x		FDS
	9:1			
	9:5	x		
	9:8	x		
Obad.	1	x		IMF
Mic.	1:2a	x		
	1:2b			
Hab.	3:19 <sup>8</sup>	x		
Zeph.	1:7	x		

<sup>7</sup>כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֲדֹנָי.

<sup>8</sup>The word order here is יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי.

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Jer. 1:6	x	x		
2:19		x		FDS
2:22		x		FDS
4:10	x	x		
7:20		x		IMF
14:13	x	x		
32:17	x	x		
32:25	x	x		
44:26		x		
46:10a		x		
46:10b		x		
49:5		x		FDS
50:25		x		
50:31		x		FDS
Ezek. 2:4		x		IMF
3:11		x		IMF
3:27		x		IMF
4:14	x	x		
5:5		x		IMF
5:7		x		IMF
5:8		x		IMF
5:11		x		FDS
6:3a <sup>9</sup>		x		
6:3b		x		IMF
6:11		x		IMF
7:2		x		IMF
7:5		x		IMF
8:1 <sup>10</sup>		x		
9:8	x	x		
11:7		x		IMF
11:8		x		FDS
11:13	x	x		
11:16		x		IMF
11:17		x		IMF
11:21		x		FDS
12:10		x		IMF
12:19		x		IMF
12:23		x		IMF
12:25		x		FDS

שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר-אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה<sup>9</sup>.

עָלַי שָׁם נָד אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה<sup>10</sup>.

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Ezek. 12:28a		x		IMF
12:28b		x		FDS
13:3		x		IMF
13:8a		x		IMF
13:8b		x		FDS
13:9		x		RF
13:13		x		IMF
13:16		x		FDS
13:18		x		IMF
13:20		x		IMF
14:4		x		IMF
14:6		x		IMF
14:11		x		FDS
14:14		x		FDS
14:16		x		FDS
14:18		x		FDS
14:20		x		FDS
14:21		x		IMF
14:23		x		FDS
15:6		x		IMF
15:8		x		FDS
16:3		x		IMF
16:8		x		FDS
16:14		x		FDS
16:19		x		FDS
16:23		x		FDS
16:30		x		FDS
16:36		x		IMF
16:43		x		FDS
16:48		x		FDS
16:59		x		IMF
16:63		x		FDS
17:3		x		IMF
17:9		x		IMF
17:16		x		FDS
17:19		x		IMF
17:22		x		IMF
18:3		x		FDS
18:9		x		FDS
18:23		x		FDS
18:25			יהוה	
18:29			יהוה	
18:30		x		FDS
18:32		x		FDS
20:3a		x		IMF
20:3b		x		FDS
20:5		x		IMF
20:27		x		IMF

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Ezek. 20:30		x		IMF
20:31		x		FDS
20:33		x		FDS
20:36		x		FDS
20:39		x		IMF
20:40		x		FDS
20:44		x		FDS
21:3		x		IMF
21:5	x	x		
21:12		x		FDS
21:14 <sup>11</sup>				IMF
21:18		x		FDS
21:29		x		IMF
21:31		x		IMF
21:33		x		IMF
22:3		x		IMF
22:12		x		FDS
22:19		x		IMF
22:28		x		IMF
22:31		x		FDS
23:22		x		IMF
23:28		x		IMF
23:32		x		IMF
23:34		x		FDS
23:35		x		IMF
23:46		x		IMF
23:49		x		RF
24:3		x		IMF
24:6		x		IMF
24:9		x		IMF
24:14		x		FDS
24:21		x		IMF
24:24		x		RF
25:3a <sup>12</sup>		x		
25:3b		x		IMF

<sup>11</sup> יהוה is attested in this verse as a variant reading, not in place of אֱלֹהֵי, but in addition to it, which would yield the double appellation, אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה. This may very well be the original reading, since the double form of the divine name is found in the IMF in nearly every instance in Ezekiel.

<sup>12</sup> שְׁמֵעוּ דְבַר-אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה.

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Ezek. 25:6		x		IMF
25:8		x		IMF
25:12		x		IMF
25:13		x		IMF
25:14		x		FDS
25:15		x		IMF
25:16		x		IMF
26:3		x		IMF
26:5		x		FDS
26:7		x		IMF
26:14		x		FDS
26:15		x		IMF
26:19		x		IMF
26:21		x		FDS
27:3		x		IMF
28:2		x		IMF
28:6		x		IMF
28:10		x		FDS
28:12		x		IMF
28:22		x		IMF
28:24		x		RF
28:25		x		IMF
29:3		x		IMF
29:8		x		IMF
29:13		x		IMF
29:16		x		RF
29:19		x		IMF
29:20		x		FDS
30:2		x		IMF
30:6		x		FDS
30:10		x		IMF
30:13		x		IMF
30:22		x		IMF
31:10		x		IMF
31:15		x		IMF
31:18		x		FDS
32:3		x		IMF
32:8		x		FDS
32:11		x		IMF
32:14		x		FDS
32:16		x		FDS
32:31		x		FDS
32:32		x		FDS
33:11		x		FDS
33:17			יהוה	
33:20			יהוה	
33:25		x		IMF
33:27		x		IMF

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Ezek. 34:2		x		IMF
34:8		x		FDS
34:10		x		IMF
34:11		x		IMF
34:15		x		FDS
34:17		x		IMF
34:20		x		IMF
34:30		x		FDS
34:31		x		FDS
35:3		x		IMF
35:6		x		FDS
35:11		x		FDS
35:14		x		IMF
36:2		x		IMF
36:3		x		IMF
36:4a <sup>13</sup>		x		
36:4b		x		IMF
36:5		x		IMF
36:6		x		IMF
36:7		x		IMF
36:13		x		IMF
36:14		x		FDS
36:15		x		FDS
36:22		x		IMF
36:23		x		FDS
36:32		x		FDS
36:33		x		IMF
36:37		x		IMF
37:3	x	x		
37:5		x		IMF
37:9		x		IMF
37:12		x		IMF
37:19		x		IMF
37:21		x		IMF
38:3		x		IMF
38:10		x		IMF
38:14		x		IMF
38:17		x		IMF
38:18		x		FDS
38:21		x		FDS
39:1		x		IMF
39:5		x		FDS
39:8		x		FDS

<sup>13</sup>שְׁמַעוּ דְבַר־אֲלֹהֵי יְהוָה.



Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Ezek. 39:10		x		FDS
39:13		x		FDS
39:17		x		IMF
39:20		x		FDS
39:25		x		IMF
39:29		x		FDS
43:18		x		IMF
43:19		x		FDS
43:27		x		FDS
44:6		x		IMF
44:9		x		IMF
44:12		x		FDS
44:15		x		FDS
44:27		x		FDS
45:9a		x		IMF
45:9b		x		FDS
45:15		x		FDS
45:18		x		IMF
46:1		x		IMF
46:16		x		IMF
47:13		x		IMF
47:23		x		FDS
48:29		x		FDS
Zech. 9:4			יהוה	
9:14		x		
Mal. 1:14			יהוה	
Pss. 2:4			יהוה	
16:2	x			
22:31				
30:9			יהוה	
35:17	x			
35:22	x			
35:23	x			
37:13				
38:10	x			
38:16	x		יהוה	
38:23	x			
39:8	x		יהוה	
40:18	x		יהוה	
44:24	x		יהוה	
51:17	x			
54:6			יהוה	
55:10	x		יהוה	
57:10	x		יהוה	
59:12	x			

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Pss. 62:13	x			
66:18				
68:12				
68:18				
68:20				
68:21 <sup>14</sup>		x		
68:23				
68:27 <sup>15</sup>			יהוה	
68:33				
69:7	x	x		
71:5	x	x		
71:16	x	x		
73:20	x			
73:28		x		
77:3				
77:8				
78:65				
79:12	x			
86:3	x		יהוה	
86:4	x			
86:5	x		יהוה	
86:8	x		יהוה	
86:9	x		יהוה	
86:12	x		יהוה	
86:15	x		יהוה	
89:50	x		יהוה	
89:51	x		יהוה	
90:1	x			
90:17				
109:21	x			
110:5			יהוה	
130:2	x		יהוה	
130:3	x		יהוה	
130:6			יהוה	
140:8	x			
141:8	x			
Job 28:28			יהוה	

<sup>14</sup>The word order here, and in Pss. 109:21; 140:8; and 141:8, is יהוה אֱלֹהֵי. Cf. Hab. 3:19.

<sup>15</sup>According to BHS, יהוה is the preferred reading here, even though אֱלֹהֵי is attested in several mss.

Verse	Address to God	+ יהוה	Variant Reading	Prophetic Formula
Lam.	1:14		יהוה	
	1:15a		יהוה	
	1:15b		יהוה	
	2:1		יהוה	
	2:2		יהוה	
	2:5		יהוה	
	2:7		יהוה	
	2:18		יהוה	
	2:19		יהוה	
	2:20		יהוה	
	3:31		יהוה	
	3:36		יהוה	
	3:27		יהוה	
	3:58	x	יהוה	
Dan.	1:2		יהוה	
	9:3		יהוה	
	9:4	x		
	9:7	x		
	9:9			
	9:15	x	יהוה	
	9:16	x	יהוה	
	9:17	x	יהוה	
	9:19a	x	יהוה	
	9:19b	x	יהוה	
	9:19c	x		
Ezra	10:3		יהוה	
Neh.	1:11	x		
	4:8			

## APPENDIX B

### THE FORMS OF THE DIVINE NAME IN THE INTRODUCTORY MESSENGER FORMULA (IMF) AND THE FORMULA FOR A DIVINE SAYING (FDS) IN INDIVIDUAL OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

The first part of this Appendix lists by book of the Old Testament the frequency of occurrence of both the basic forms of the IMF (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה) and FDS (נְאֻם יְהוָה or יְהוָה אָמַר), and their expanded forms which are created by the addition or substitution of various epithets of יְהוָה, such as אֲדֹנָי, צְבָאוֹת, and מְלֶכֶךְ (e.g., כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, צְבָאוֹת, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, and נְאֻם מְלֶכֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ כֹּה). The second part lists by prophetic formula the specific verse references in which the different forms of the IMF and FDS occur in the various biblical books. The first part shows the variety of formulaic usage within individual books; the second part shows the distribution of the different formulas throughout the Old Testament. Both parts illustrate the unique contribution of Ezekiel, as well as his relationship to prophetic tradition.

#### PART ONE: Arrangement by Old Testament Book

##### Genesis

(1) נְאֻם יְהוָה

Exodus

- (5) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (2) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- (3) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעֶבְרִים

Joshua

- (2) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

1 Samuel

- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
- (1) נְאֻם יְהוָה
- (1) נְאֻם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

1 Kings

- (9) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (3) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- (4) נְאֻם יְהוָה

2 Kings

- (14) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (5) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אַבְיָה
- (1) אָמַר יְהוָה

1 Chronicles

- (3) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Psalms

- (1) יֹאמַר יְהוָה

Numbers

- (1) נְאֻם יְהוָה

Judges

- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

2 Samuel

- (3) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

2 Chronicles

- (5) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (2) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אַבְיָה
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר הָאֱלֹהִים
- (1) נְאֻם יְהוָה

Isaiah (36 forms, 92 occurrences)

- (19) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אֲבִיךָ  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר הָאֵל יְהוָה  
 (5) כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה  
 (2) כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻלְכֶם קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻלְךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻלְךָ וַיִּצְרַף מִבְּטָן  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻל יִשְׂרָאֵל קְדוֹשׁ  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה מְלֹךְ-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגֵאלוֹ יְהִנֶּה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָיִךְ יְהוָה וְאֵלֹהֶיךָ דָּרִיב עִמּוֹ  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּצְרוּ  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (1) כֹּה אָמַר דָּם וְנִשְׂא שֹׁכֵן עַד וְקְדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ  
 (15) נְאֻם יְהוָה  
 (1) נְאֻם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (4) נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) נְאֻם יְהוָה וְגֵאלְךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (1) נְאֻם הַעֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) נְאֻם הַעֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (1) נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה מִקְבֵּץ גְּדֻחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (12) אָמַר יְהוָה  
 (2) אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
 (1) אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי  
 (1) אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) אָמַר גְּאֻלְךָ יְהוָה  
 (1) אָמַר מִרְתְּמוֹ יְהוָה  
 (5) יֹאמַר יְהוָה  
 (1) יֹאמַר אֲדֹנָי

Isaiah (cont'd)

- (1) יֹאמֵר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
- (1) יֹאמֵר קְדוֹשׁ
- (1) יֹאמֵר מֶלֶךְ יַעֲקֹב

Amos (11 forms, 44 occurrences)

- (11) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֲדֹנָי
- (2) כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה
- (14) נְאֻם יְהוָה
- (2) נְאֻם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת
- (4) נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה
- (1) נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת
- (5) אָמַר יְהוָה
- (1) אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ
- (1) אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ
- (2) אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה

Micah

- (2) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (2) נְאֻם יְהוָה

Hosea

- (4) נְאֻם יְהוָה

Obadiah

- (1) כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה
- (2) נְאֻם יְהוָה

Nahum

- (1) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (2) נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Zephaniah

- (4) נְאֻם יְהוָה
- (1) נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
- (1) אָמַר יְהוָה

Jeremiah (15 forms, 335 occurrences)

- (82) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
- (14) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Jeremiah (cont'd)

- (18) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת  
 (32) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (3) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 (1) פֶּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה  
 (1) פֶּה נְאֻם יְהוָה  
 (163) נְאֻם יְהוָה  
 (4) נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה  
 (3) נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (3) נְאֻם הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ  
 (8) אָמַר יְהוָה  
 (1) אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Ezekiel (2 forms, 203 occurrences)

- (122) פֶּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה  
 (81) נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה

Haggai

- (5) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (4) נְאֻם יְהוָה  
 (5) נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (2) אָמַר יְהוָה  
 (2) אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Zechariah

- (2) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה  
 (17) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (1) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי  
 (10) נְאֻם יְהוָה  
 (9) נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (4) אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Malachi

- (1) פֶּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
 (2) נְאֻם יְהוָה  
 (2) אָמַר יְהוָה  
 (20) אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת



## PART TWO: Arrangement by Prophetic Formula

## כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה

Ex. 4:22; 7:17; 7:26; 8:16; 11:4  
 1 Sam. 2:27  
 2 Sam. 7:5; 12:11; 24:12  
 1 Kgs. 12:24; 13:2,21; 20:13,14,28,42; 21:19; 22:11;  
 2 Kgs. 1:4,6,16; 2:21; 3:16,17; 4:43; 7:1; 9:3,12; 19:6,32;  
 20:1; 22:16  
 1 Chr. 17:4; 21:10,11  
 2 Chr. 11:4; 12:5; 18:10; 20:15; 34:24  
 Isa. 29:22; 37:6,33; 38:1; 43:1,16; 44:2; 45:1,14,18;  
 49:8,25; 50:1; 52:3; 56:1,4; 65:8; 66:1,12  
 Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13; 2:1,4,6; 3:12; 5:4; 7:17  
 Mic. 2:3; 3:5  
 Nah. 1:12  
 Jer. 2:2,5; 4:3; 6:16,21,22; 8:4; 9:22; 10:2,18; 11:11,21;  
 12:14; 13:1,9,13; 14:10,15; 15:2,19; 16:3,5a; 17:5,21;  
 18:6,13; 19:1; 20:4; 21:8,12; 22:1,3,6,11,18,30; 23:38;  
 24:8; 26:2,4; 27:2,16; 28:11,13,16; 29:10,16,31,32a;  
 30:5,12,18; 31:2,7,15,16a,35,37; 32:3,28,42;  
 33:2,10,17,20,25; 34:2b,4,17a; 36:29,30; 37:9; 38:2,3;  
 44:30; 45:4; 47:2; 48:40; 49:1,12; 51:1,36  
 Zech. 1:16; 8:3

## כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Ex. 5:1; 32:27  
 Josh. 7:13; 24:2  
 Jdgs. 6:8  
 1 Sam. 10:18  
 2 Sam. 12:7  
 1 Kgs. 11:31; 14:7; 17:14  
 2 Kgs. 9:6; 19:20; 21:12; 22:15,18  
 2 Chr. 34:23,26  
 Isa. 37:21  
 Jer. 11:3; 13:12; 21:4; 23:2a; 24:5; 25:15; 30:2; 32:36;  
 33:4; 34:2a,13; 37:7; 42:9; 45:2

## כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַעֲבָרִים

Ex. 9:1,13; 10:3

## כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

1 Sam. 15:2; 2 Sam. 7:8  
 1 Chr. 17:7  
 Jer. 6:9; 9:6,16; 11:22; 19:11; 23:15,16; 25:8,28,32; 26:18;  
 27:19; 29:17; 33:12; 49:7,35; 50:33; 51:58  
 Hag. 1:2,5,7; 2:6,11  
 Zech. 1:3,4,14,17; 2:12; 3:7; 6:12; 7:9;  
 8:2,4,6,7,9,14,19,20,23  
 Mal. 1:4

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת

Jer. 5:14

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֲדֹנָי

Amos 5:16

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Jer. 7:3,21; 9:14; 16:9; 19:3,15; 25:27; 27:4,21; 28:2,14;  
29:4,8,21,25; 31:23; 32:14,15; 35:13a,18,19; 39:16;  
42:15,18; 43:10; 44:2,11,25; 48:1; 49:28; 50:18; 51:33

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Jer. 35:17; 38:17; 44:7

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אָבִיךָ

2 Kgs. 20:5  
2 Chr. 21:12  
Isa. 38:5

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי

Zech. 11:4

כֹּה אָמַר הָאֵל יְהוָה

Isa. 42:5

כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה

Isa. 7:7; 28:16; 49:22; 52:4; 65:13  
Amos 3:11; 5:3  
Obad. 1  
Jer. 7:20

Ezek. 2:4; 3:11,27; 5:5,7,8; 6:3b,11; 7:2,5; 11:7,16,17;  
12:10,19,23,28a; 13:3,8a,13,18,20; 14:4,6,21; 15:6;  
16:3,36,59; 17:3,9,19,22; 20:3a,5,27,30,39;  
21:3,29,31,33; 22:3,19,28; 23:22,28,32,35,46;  
24:3,6,9,21; 25:3b,6,8,12,13,15,16; 26:3,7,15,19; 27:3;  
28:2,6,12,22,25; 29:3,8,13,19; 30:2,10,13,22; 31:10,15;  
32:3,11; 33:25,27; 34:2,10,11,17,20; 35:3,14;  
36:2,3,4b,5,6,7,13,22,33,37; 37:5,9,12,19,21;  
38:3,10,14,17; 39:1,17,25; 43:18; 44:6,9; 45:9a,18;  
46:1,16; 47:13

כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Isa. 10:24; 22:15

כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Isa. 30:15

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻלְכֶם קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Isa. 43:14

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻלְךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Isa. 48:17

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻלְךָ וַיִּצְרָךְ מִבְּטָן

Isa. 44:24

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻל יִשְׂרָאֵל קְדוֹשׁ

Isa. 49:7

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה מְלִיץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגֹאֲלוֹ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Isa. 44:6

כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָיִךְ יְהוָה וְאֵלֹהֶיךָ יְרִיב עִמּוֹ

Isa. 51:22

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּצְרוּ

Isa. 45:11

כֹּה אָמַר קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Isa. 30:12

כֹּה אָמַר רָם וְנִשְׂא שְׂכָן עַד וְקְדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ

Isa. 57:15

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי

Zech. 11:4

כֹּה אָמַר הָאֱלֹהִים

2 Chr. 24:20

נָאִם יְהוָה

Gen. 22:16

1 Sam. 2:30<sup>b</sup>

2 Kgs. 9:26<sup>2</sup>; 19:33; 22:19

2 Chr. 34:27

Isa. 14:22<sup>b</sup>; 30:1; 31:9; 37:34; 43:10,12; 52:5<sup>2</sup>; 54:17; 55:8  
59:20; 66:2,17,22

Hos. 2:15,18,23; 11:11

Joel 2:12

Amos 2:11,16; 3:10,15; 4:3,6,8,9,10,11; 9:7,8,12,13

Obad. 4,8

Mic. 4:6; 5:9

Zeph. 1:2,3,10; 3:8

## נָאֵם יְהוָה (cont'd)

Jer. 1:8,15,19; 2:3,9,12,29; 3:1,10,12<sup>2</sup>,13,14,16,20;  
 4:1,9,17; 5:9,11,15,18,22,29; 6:12; 7:11,13,19,30,32;  
 8:1,13,17; 9:2,5,8,23,24; 12:17; 13:11,14,25;  
 15:3,6,9,20; 16:5b,11,14,16; 17:24; 18:6; 19:6,12;  
 21:7,10,13,14; 22:5,16;  
 23:1,2c,4,5,7,11,12,23,24<sup>2</sup>,28,29,30,31,32<sup>2</sup>,33;  
 25:7,9,12,31; 27:8,11,15,22; 28:4;  
 29:9,11,14<sup>2</sup>,19<sup>2</sup>,23,32b; 30:3a,10,11,17,21;  
 31:1,14,16b,17,20,27,28,31,32,33,34,36,37b,38;  
 32:5,30,44; 33:14; 34:5,17b,22; 35:13b; 39:17,18;  
 42:11; 44:29; 45:5; 46:5,23,26,28;  
 48:12,25,30,35,38,43,44,47;  
 49:2a,6,13,16,30,31,32,37,38,39;  
 50:4,10,20,21,30,35,40;  
 51:24,25,26,39,48,52,53

Hag. 1:13; 2:4,14,17

Zech. 1:4; 2:9,10,14; 8:17; 10:12; 11:6; 12:1,4; 13:8

Mal. 1:2,13

## הִיאָנִי נָאֵם יְהוָה

Num. 14:28  
 Isa. 49:18  
 Jer. 22:24

## כֹּה נָאֵם יְהוָה

Jer. 9:21

## נָאֵם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

1 Sam. 2:30a  
 Isa. 17:6

## נָאֵם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Isa. 14:22a,23; 17:3; 22:25  
 Nah. 2:13; 3:5  
 Jer. 8:3; 25:29; 30:8; 49:26  
 Hag. 1:9; 2:8,9b,23<sup>2</sup>  
 Zech. 1:3,16; 3:9,10; 5:4; 8:6,11; 13:2,7

## הִיאָנִי נָאֵם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Zeph. 2:9

## נָאֵם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי צְבָאוֹת

Amos 6:8,14

## נָאֵם יְהוָה וְגַאֲלֵךְ קְרוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Isa. 41:14

נָאִם הַאֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל

Isa. 1:24

נָאִם הַאֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Isa. 19:4

נָאִם אֲלֹנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

Isa. 3:15

Jer. 2:19; 49:5; 50:31

נָאִם אֲלֹנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת

Amos 3:13

נָאִם אֲלֹנֵי יְהוָה

Amos 4:5; 8:3,9,11

Jer. 2:22

Ezek. 11:8,21; 12:25,28b; 13:8b,16; 14:11,14,23; 15:8;  
16:8,14,19,23,30,43,63; 18:9,23,30,32; 20:36,40,44;  
21:12,18; 22:12,31; 23:34; 24:14; 25:14; 26:5,14,21;  
28:10; 29:20; 30:6; 31:18; 32:8,14,16,31,32;  
34:15,30,31; 36:14,15,23,32; 38:18,21;  
39:5,8,10,13,20,29; 43:19,27; 44:12,15,27; 45:9b,15;  
47:23; 48:29

הִיאֲנִי נָאִם אֲלֹנֵי יְהוָה

Ezek. 5:11; 14:16,18,20; 16:48; 17:16; 18:3; 20:3b,31,33;  
33:11; 34:8; 35:6,11

נָאִם אֲלֹנֵי יְהוָה מִקְבֵּץ גְּדֻמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Isa. 56:8

נָאִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ

Jer. 48:15; 51:57

הִיאֲנִי נָאִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ

Jer. 46:18

אָמַר יְהוָה

2 Kgs. 20:17

Isa. 39:6; 48:22; 49:5; 54:1; 57:19; 59:21<sup>2</sup>; 65:7,25;  
66:20,21,23

Amos 1:5,15; 2:3; 5:17; 7:3

Zeph. 3:20

Jer. 6:15; 8:12; 30:3b; 33:11,13; 44:26; 49:2b,18

Hag. 1:8

Mal. 1:2; 3:13

אָמַר יְהוָה זְבָאוֹת

Isa. 45:13

Hag. 2:7, 9a

Zech. 1:3; 4:6; 7:13; 8:14

Mal. 1:6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14; 2:2, 4, 8, 16;  
3:1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 17, 19, 21

אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ

Amos 9:15

אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי-זְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ

Amos 5:27

אָמַר יְהוָה זְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Jer. 46:25

אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה זְבָאוֹת

Isa. 22:14

אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה

Amos 1:8; 7:6

אָמַר אֱלֹהֵיךָ

Isa. 54:6; 66:9b

אָמַר גְּאֻלְךָ יְהוָה

Isa. 54:8

אָמַר מְרַחֵמְךָ יְהוָה

Isa. 54:10

אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי

Isa. 57:21

יֹאמַר יְהוָה

Ps. 12:6

Isa. 1:11, 18; 33:10; 41:21; 66:9a

יֹאמַר אֲדֹנָי

Isa. 29:13

יֹאמַר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

Isa. 40:1; 54:6; 66:9

יֹאמַר קְדוֹשׁ

Isa. 40:25

יֹאמַר מֶלֶךְ יִעֲקֹב

Isa. 41:21

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