

ZION IN TRANSITION: THE EDEN GARDEN IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABR	Australian Biblical Review
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BBR	Bulletin for Biblical Research
BDB	Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
EvQ	Evangelical Quarterly
Int	Interpretation
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
OLP	Orientalia lovaniensia periodica
SAAB	State Archives of Assyria Bulletin
SVTQ	St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly
TWOT	Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between the Eden Garden and Zion in the book of Ezekiel. Through the lens of both narrative theory and spatial theory, it explores why the Eden Garden appears in the book of Ezekiel more than any other prophet. The overarching dichotomy of ‘space’ and ‘place’, where Zion is ‘place’, is elaborated on through Ezekiel’s creative use of narrative. The prophet shifts narratives from Israel/Judah’s past to change how Zion is understood, thereby offering explanations for the current ‘space’ of the Babylonian exile and also offering hope for a return to some kind of future ‘place’.

Ezekiel protects a future understanding of Zion through a contrast between the mountain and the garden. The mountain becomes a holy location while the garden acts as a border area that can point to the presence of the divine without encroaching into the sacred. In separating them and allowing the garden to encapsulate the profane aspects of pre-exile Zion, namely city, temple, and land, Ezekiel is able to interpret the future Zion using the image of the mountain. The mountain of the future Zion is YHWH’s alone, and there are rules of access preventing trespass upon the sacred mountain by the profane elements visible in the garden space.

Chapter One explores the theories at work in the overall method, applies the method to a theme in the book, and then offers an outline for the rest of the project. Chapter Two interacts with the foundational issues such as defining Zion, looking at connections between Zion and Eden in wider Hebrew Bible scholarship, and examining similarities and differences between mountains and gardens. Chapter Three argues for a new approach to Oracles Against Foreign Nations (OANs) that recognizes them as a literary device connected to the overall rhetoric of the books in which they appear. This understanding is a critical step towards seeing how oracles about foreign peoples can apply directly to Ezekiel’s audience.

Chapters Four–Six engage directly with the explicit Eden Garden references in the book, arguing that mention of the garden in each location challenges a particular aspect of Zion prevalent prior to the exile. Chapter Four argues for a new interpretation of the focus of Ezek 28:11–19 showing that the verses detail the forcible separation of the city of Jerusalem from the holy mountain of YHWH. Chapter Five highlights connections between the chthonic cedar of Ezek 31 and issues of kingship. The destruction of the cedar heralds an untimely end of the Davidic king, and treatment of the downed branches has a difficult message about the longevity of the monarchy. Chapter Six first shows the misappropriation of the land promise and how it factors into the demise of the pre-exile Zion ideal. It goes on to make a connection between an Eden Garden and the *’admat yiśrā’ēl*, arguing that Ezekiel shifts the understanding of the land, and how the people use the land to relate to YHWH, through a connection between these ideas. Chapter Seven engages with Ezek 47, a chapter that most scholars accept as echoing an Edenic ideal, in order to highlight that it is not an Edenic reference at all. Rather, it fits within the theology and rhetoric of Ezek 40–48 and focuses solely on the image of the mountain, an image used by Ezekiel for the future of Zion. Chapter Eight offers a summary, suggested contributions to the field, and offers avenues for further research.

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DEDICATION

To Kathy and Mackey Williams

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Chapter One: Introduction, Theory, and Foundational Questions

There are two conflicting views of Zion in the book of Ezekiel. One view focuses on a destroyed city and all that it once encompassed; the other focuses on a majestic mountain upon which YHWH dwells and where human access is limited and controlled. The first view shows the result of the destruction wrought by Babylon on what this project will refer to as ‘physical Zion,’ while the second is a visionary manifestation referred to in this work as ‘mythic/symbolic Zion.’ It is the existence of these conflicting views that factor into the possible reason why the word ‘Zion’ never appears in the book at all. The historical circumstances of the Babylonian exile call into question the foundation of ‘physical Zion’ because the destroyed city of Jerusalem encompassed the ideals of Yahwistic belief within its physical walls. Use of the term ‘Zion’ would likely call to mind this particular understanding that the book is seeking to change, therefore it avoids using the term even as Zion’s survival is central to the book’s message. How the book navigates the chasm dividing the loss of Zion on the one hand, and the continuation of Zion described in the temple vision on the other, is the primary focus of what follows.

Also noticeable in the book is the frequency of the appearance of an Eden Garden (explicitly in Ezek 28, 31, 36; and some think implicitly in 47) when it only occurs outside of Gen 2–3 and Ezekiel in Joel 2:3. An examination reveals a connection between these references to a garden-of-god and/or an Eden Garden and the prophet’s interest in Zion. The sections where Eden appears in the text are aimed at reforming an aspect of ‘physical Zion’ likely prevalent before the exile. The central research question examined in what follows is “what is the relationship between the Eden Garden and Zion in the book of Ezekiel, and how does this relationship convey a central message of the book?” It will examine the role of the Eden Garden in the process of reimagining Zion.

Central to reframing Zion in the book of Ezekiel is a need to change how the people recognize their relationship to YHWH. Knowledge of YHWH plays a central role, evidenced in the frequency of the phrase “you/they will know that I am YHWH,”¹ but there is a significant shift in how that knowledge manifests. For ‘physical Zion,’ the existence of the city is a concrete sign of YHWH’s provision, and is consistent with how knowledge of YHWH generally occurs outside the book of Ezekiel. Usually depicted either in the context of provision (usually defeat of enemies²) or the gifting of the land (Exod 7:5, 17; 10:2; 14:4,18; 1 Kgs 20:13, 28; Isa 49:23 and Joel 4:17), the city represents both YHWH’s power and his favour towards his people. As a result, Ezekiel claims instead that the people will come to know YHWH through the *loss* of expected provision. For example, when “the slain fall among you” (Ezek 6:7) or when “the land will be a desolation” (Ezek 12:20). This new paradigm for understanding YHWH factors into how Zion changes from manifesting within a physical location to being separate from the city and strictly controlled in the future Ezekiel imagines.

The examination of the shift in Zion ideology will use the primary methodology of narrative theory. “Ezekiel, stripped of all other means by which to assert authority, possesses only words as a weapon in the fight to define the boundaries that mark off faithful Yahwism and authentic Judahite identity.”³ There are various indications in the text that Ezekiel is using words as his weapon in this fight for Judahite identity. He counters accepted theology, sometimes using the phrasing “You say ‘X’ but the truth is ‘Y’” (Ezek 20:32–33; 33:24–27),

¹ Ezek 5:13; 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:4, 9, 27; 11:10, 12, 15, 16, 20; 13:9, 14, 21, 23; 15:7; 16:62; 17:21; 20:12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44; 21:5; 22:16, 22; 23:49; 24:24, 27; 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23, 24, 26; 29:9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15; 33:29; 34:27, 30; 35:4, 9, 12, 15; 36:11, 23, 38; 37:6, 13, 28; 38:23; 39:6, 7, 22, 28.

² Paul Joyce, “Ezekiel and Moral Transformation,” in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons (Oregon: Pickwick, 2010), 151.

³ C. A. Strine, *Sworn Enemies: The Divine Oath, the Book of Ezekiel, and the Polemics of Exile* BZAW 436 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 2.

and sometimes challenging accepted sayings, “What is this proverb you have that says X?” (Ezek 12:22–24; 18:2–3). He utilizes metaphor, defined for the purpose of this project as “connotative language,” or language that puts a premium on the interpretive ability of the audience to decipher meaning.⁴ Finally, there are many examples of words or phrases that only occur in the book of Ezekiel, indicating a focus on language and its relationship to story.⁵

In addition to these indications that words are of particular importance to Ezekiel, the focus on space is also central. This concern is evident as the book jumps from exile to Jerusalem frequently, indicating there is something important about what each space provides for the audience. The divergent perspectives (on Jerusalem from the exile, and on the exile from Jerusalem) appear to factor into the overall message of the book. Also, the words and stories recast in the book of Ezekiel appear to require the setting of the exile for efficacy. When compared with the response of the people to Jeremiah’s dire predictions (see Jer 7:4 where the consensus is to kill him), the position outside of Jerusalem appears to open new ways to challenge the dominant story.⁶ Finally, Zion is a space, whether it is more physical

⁴ Definition provided by David Paul Parris, Fuller Theological Seminary Affiliate faculty in a personal conversation, Autumn 2016. He is very active with the cognitive linguistics groups at SBL and works with metaphor theory consistently. With all the different ways to understand words like *mashal*, this definition encapsulates them all (see more in Chapter Three.)

⁵ To list a few: scorn of soul (שׂאט נפש); land of Israel (אדמת ישראל); sons of Zadok (בני צדוק); bear disgrace (נשא כלם).

⁶ Spatial position is important. I also acknowledge, however, that there are other spatial positions outside of Jerusalem as well. For example, Jill Middlemas articulates the challenge with the categories of ‘exile’ and ‘exilic’ as there were various deportations along with some who chose to leave Judah. She says, “ascertaining a term inclusive of the various populations that continued to identify themselves with the worship of Yahweh and with the land following the events which led to the collapse of Judah as an independent state remains troublesome.” See Jill Middlemas, *The Troubles of Templeless Judah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4. This work is highlighting one challenge mounted against a specific issue from one perspective, that of the book of Ezekiel. (For others see Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.*, trans. David Green, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 3–44.) The reaction of the people is different from that of Jeremiah (the people are less willing to

and connected to Jerusalem, or more mythic/symbolic and disassociated from a physical location. While this project focuses primarily on narrative, the contrast of space and place that emerges from spatial theory helps frame the shift from ‘physical Zion’ to exile, and then from exile to ‘mythic/symbolic Zion.’

While “scholars have long recognized both Ezekiel’s dependence upon earlier texts and traditions and his creative adaptation of earlier materials for his own rhetorical context,”⁷ less work has focused on his narrative reconstructions than on his use of law codes,⁸ history,⁹ or morals.¹⁰ This project seeks to add to what has been done by similarly examining the book’s use of narratives. With this goal and methodology in mind, a brief note is necessary about several foundational assumptions that guide what will follow. These are the relationship of texts in the HB, the audience in mind in the text, and what is meant by ‘Ezekiel’ and the ‘exilic context’.

The project does not require a stance on many of the textual issues, meaning when stories are related to one another it does not attempt to date written texts or establish a

hear the message of Jeremiah — they plot to kill him in Jer 11:18–20—while they consult with Ezekiel despite his scathing words that they do not have the right to inquire of YHWH—Ezek 20) and it appears to be because Jeremiah’s audience is still in the land. The different spatial positions make it possible for Ezekiel to play with stories in a way likely less acceptable while still surrounded by the temple and the city. While these narrative spatial positions are important in the narratives as they exist now, it does not mean that the audiences in the two books have to be historical. Perhaps they are created to be in contrast in order to offer multifaceted views of the situation, or they were more definitively separated in a later redaction to articulate contrasting viewpoints. What matters for this project is that the book of Ezekiel is set in the Babylonian exile primarily in the years before the destruction of the temple and the city, and this position at this particular time allows the book to offer a description and solution to the problem of Zion and the city of Jerusalem.

⁷ Daniel I. Block, “Transformation of Royal Ideology in Ezekiel,” in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons (Oregon: Pickwick, 2010), 208.

⁸ Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile, and the Torah*, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

⁹ Block, “Transformations of Royal Ideology.”

¹⁰ Joyce, “Ezekiel and Moral Transformation.”

direction of influence between texts. Rather, it assumes that a narrative, likely oral, was known by the author, retold, and perhaps once given written form the texts were deliberately connected to one another. Therefore, when the word ‘prior’ is mentioned, it simply means a prior or already known story or tradition. The various diachronic issues are generally covered with a footnote at the beginning of each chapter and then not discussed again. These debates would be critical if the question for this project was “how does the Eden theme develop,” but because the question here is “what is the Eden theme doing in the text as it exists in the final form of the Masoretic Text (MT)” the diachronic issues are not especially helpful. I have chosen to approach the question differently in hopes of opening a new interest in the Eden theme in the book overall. Further, it is possible that ‘Eden’ could be added to ‘garden’ at a later phase in the development of the MT, depending on the relationship between Gen 2–3 and Ezekiel, but there is some kind of garden-of-god tradition that Ezekiel knew.¹¹ How/why that was conflated with the Eden story is not the question being addressed in this project.

As for the audience, in line with commentators, this project views Ezekiel’s audience as the elite of the Judean society exiled in the first deportation around 597/598.¹² As the elite, there would have been familiarity with the traditions and the narratives here in view.¹³ It is

¹¹ The places in Ezek where Eden occurs could have read simply ‘garden’ or ‘garden-of-god’ at one point. There is no specific way of knowing, but it leaves the possibility that at a later narrative or textual stage an editor purposely linked an Eden Garden with the book of Ezekiel. While this possibility is not specifically discussed anywhere, David Carr’s transmission process leaves this as a possibility. See David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible a New Reconstruction* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 13–101.

¹² Ronald E. Clements, *Ezekiel*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 2; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel vol. 1*, 13; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 3–4.

¹³ See Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel’s Prophecy*, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 78 (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1989), 39–45 for more on literacy during the Babylonian exile. See especially page 44 where she says of the Babylonian exiles, “a fairly high level of literacy can be inferred simply on the basis of the identity of the exiles: princes, military leaders, skilled craftsman, royal officials, ‘the notables of the land’ (2 Kgs 24:14–16).”

important to note, however, that scholars have to be careful to test theories about the character of Ezekiel.¹⁴ The text invites assumptions about Ezekiel as a historical figure with an actual historical audience during the time of the Babylonian conquest. The conclusions that follow are not dependent upon a historical figure. For example, if the book is a literary creation at some later time, where Ezekiel is a character in a drama, he and his audience become a foil for whatever historical backdrop the drama was created within. Corrine Patton writes that “the author of Ezekiel was a highly literate scribe, familiar with a wide range of stories and traditions, which he uses to portray Ezekiel.”¹⁵ Her comment highlights the book of Ezekiel as a literary creation and Ezekiel himself as a character in a written story. To the same end, Hanna Liss argues that the literary framework of the book provides more of a context for the character than any actual historical setting.¹⁶ If these assumptions are true, then the focus on Zion in the book serves a slightly different historical purpose. The audience would be a later historical group, likely concerned with Zion’s survival or re-creation, and the character of Ezekiel and the character of the audience interact as a kind of object lesson about what not to do in fashioning the idea of a future Zion. The ‘exilic context’ would then also be something of a character in this setting. It would serve either as an object lesson of what could happen, or if the later audience is still in exile it serves to make the message of the book specifically relevant to that particular audience.

Finally, depending on when the book was written, and by whom for what purpose, what the author(s) knew comes into question. Based on other work on the book of Ezekiel

¹⁴ Martti Nissinen, “(How) Does The Book of Ezekiel Reveal Its Babylonian Context?,” *Die Welt des Orients* 45, no. 1 (2015): 85–98.

¹⁵ Corinne L. Patton, “Priest, Prophet, and Exile: Ezekiel as a Literary Construct,” in *Ezekiel’s Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality*, ed. S. L. Cook and C. L. Patton, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 31 (Atlanta: SBL, 2004), 75–76.

¹⁶ Hanna Liss, “‘Describe the Temple to the House of Israel’: Preliminary Remarks on the Temple Vision in the Book of Ezekiel and the Question of Fictionality in Priestly Literatures,” in *Utopia and Dystopia in the Prophetic Literature*, ed. E. Ben Zvi, Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 92 (Helsinki: The Finnish Exegetical Society, 2006).

that focuses on how the book flips traditions, uses ideas in new ways, and generally appears to shift the foundational pieces of Judahite identity in unique ways, this project assumes familiarity with many previous traditions and stories.¹⁷ In light of the methodology, and discussed more below, storytellers function within a milieu of accepted narrative resources. They draw upon narratives more widely known in their context, meaning no story can ever be entirely new. This assumption requires that Ezekiel be understood as innovative in how he proposes a future, but dependent in many ways on the history, tradition, and in the case of this project, stories, at work in his wider context.

I. Theory and Methodology

As mentioned above, this project primarily uses narrative theory because it is through narrative that Ezekiel challenges deeply held beliefs. The reason he challenges these beliefs, however, deals with space. The loss of Jerusalem indicates a move from place to space, and Ezekiel's use of narratives is an attempt at defining what is required for a move from the space of exile back to place. Therefore, space is the overarching concern, and this section will examine spatial theory first.

A. Spatial Theory

Conversations about the nature of space go back as far as Plato and Aristotle. The addition of the concept of perspective (meaning space is something that can be interpreted) comes from Descartes in the 17th century CE, and a new trajectory in spatial study ensues.¹⁸ While built

¹⁷ See *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons (Oregon: Pickwick, 2010).

¹⁸ For a more in-depth look at these topics and citations for the philosophers see Mark K. George, "Space and History: Siting Critical Space for Biblical Studies," in *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative*, ed. Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 481 (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 15–31.

upon in various ways by philosophers like Immanuel Kant¹⁹ and Emile Durkheim,²⁰ it is Henri Lefebvre who lays the foundation for an examination of space as a social *product*.²¹

1. Lefebvre: Space as a Social Product

Lefebvre sees three categories for understanding space as a symbiotic product that is produced by a particular society and also has a role in defining, or producing, that same society.²² He calls them spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces,²³ also referred to as perceived, conceived and lived space respectively.²⁴ He understands perceived space (spatial practice) to be where a particular society's space can be observed through physical characteristics and interaction with physical objects. It is primarily apparent as geography. Conceived space (spaces of representation) is where ideas are analysed and changed, making this the space of theory and ideology. Finally, lived space (representational spaces) is where people live every day and experience the physical and ideological outputs from the first two spaces. This is also the space where the imagination realises a need or desire for change and prompts a return of the artists, politicians, and the marginalized to the spaces of representation to work out ideology and policy in a way that then reflects conceived space and changes the output of perceived space.²⁵

These layers indicate that space both contains ideas and generates them; it expresses what a society believes, and it comes to shape what that society believes. It is neutral only

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, "On the First Ground of the Distinction of Regions in Space," in *Kant's Inaugural Dissertation and Early Writings on Space*, trans. John Handyside (Chicago: The Open Court, 1929), 1–85.

²⁰ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1965).

²¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 26.

²² Lefebvre, *Production*, 288.

²³ Lefebvre, *Production*, 38–39.

²⁴ Lefebvre, *Production*, 40.

²⁵ Lefebvre, *Production*, 39.

insofar as it as it can be shaped, but it is primarily active as its shape then influences identity and practice.

2. Edward Soja: Thirdspace

A student of Lefebvre's, Edward Soja, focuses on lived space because his interest is ontology and how an ontological focus enhances Lefebvre's tripartite spatiality. He names Lefebvre's categories first, second and thirdspace²⁶ (conceived, perceived and lived space respectively) because he claims that a shift away from epistemology and back to ontology is critical for understanding how space provides new possibilities for being. He views spatial understanding as an interaction between the layers, just as Lefebvre, although he believes that without an acceptance that being and becoming lie at the heart of spatiality, scholars misconstrue how human beings actually understand space.²⁷

His ontological trialectic²⁸ takes Lefebvre's understanding of lived space in a slightly different direction. As the primary space of embodiment, he sets it up as the space of action. He coins the term "thirding-as-othering"²⁹ in order to highlight thirdspace as the primary space of action. It is a space of resistance and change even as it remains the primary space that displays a society's understanding of itself. "Soja has further elaborated the potential of lived space...for counter-experience and resistance,"³⁰ and his understanding offers a positive way to view what Human Geography, covered in the next section, refers to more negatively.

3. Human Geography: Space vs. Place

In the early 1970's the group of geographers that came to be known as Human Geographers grew dissatisfied with the current philosophical and mathematical approach to space because

²⁶ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 74–82.

²⁷ Soja, *Thirdspace*, 82.

²⁸ Soja, *Thirdspace*, 82.

²⁹ Soja, *Thirdspace*, 60.

³⁰ Christl Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 14.

they felt that these disciplines did not take into account the role of human experience.³¹ This field did not emerge from the theories of Lefebvre or Soja, but began around the same time that Lefebvre was writing *The Production of Space*. Human Geography understands “that humans do not live in the midst of geometrics, but in the midst of meanings,”³² and their emphasis is on examining “the politics of place and place-making.”³³ For example, Yi-Fu Tuan says,

A geographer speaks as though his knowledge of space and place were derived exclusively from books, maps, aerial photographs, and structured field surveys. He writes as though people were endowed with mind and vision but no other sense with which to apprehend the world and find meaning in it. He and the architect-planner tend to assume familiarity – the fact that we are oriented in space and home in place – rather than describe and try to understand what “being-in-the-world” is truly like.³⁴

While there are many authors in the field, Yi-Fu Tuan is the primary influence on this work, although his work builds on that of Edward Relph.

a. Edward Relph

In his book *Place and Placelessness*, Relph uses a methodology he refers to as “a phenomenology of place.”³⁵ He identifies two sides to spatial experience. One is “instinctive, bodily and immediate—what he calls pragmatic space, perceptual space, and existential space,”³⁶ while the other is “cerebral, ideal and intangible—planning space, cognitive space and abstract space.”³⁷ There are aspects of Soja’s first, second and thirdspace across both

³¹ David Seamon and Jacob Sowers, “Place and Placelessness (1976): Edward Relph,” in *Key Texts in Human Geography Reader*, eds. Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitichin, and Gill Valentine (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 43.

³² Jon L. Berquist, “Introduction: Critical Spatiality and the Uses of Theory,” in *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative*, eds. Jon L. Berquist and Claudia V. Camp The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 481 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 4.

³³ Berquist, “Introduction,” 5.

³⁴ Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), location 3043.

³⁵ E. C. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 4–7.

³⁶ Seamon and Sowers, “Place and Placelessness,” 44.

³⁷ Seamon and Sowers, “Place and Placelessness,” 44.

descriptions, but what is most important is that Relph sets these two concepts in opposition to one another. He is less concerned about the breakdown of the spaces and more concerned with how bodily experience contrasts with cerebral experience. His contribution is to link the ideas of space and place together in a way that requires a more deliberate definition of the two in contrast to one another (previously many used the terms interchangeably). He understood the terms in contrast in the same way that the ideas of insidedness and outsidedness are in contrast. When one is inside a place, one has a sense of safety and ease and identifies strongly with that place.³⁸ Places are “significant centres of our immediate experiences of the world,”³⁹ and they can therefore indicate the values and understandings of a person or a group. The opposite of insidedness, however, is placelessness—or outsidedness—and these two experiences function in tension with one another. “They constitute a fundamental dialectic in human life [showing that] different places take on different identities for different individuals and groups, with human experience taking on different qualities of feeling, meaning, ambience, and action.”⁴⁰ The recognition that these two expressions of belonging require each other in order to express the range of human experience paved the way for further work in the area of space vs. place as expressions of human identity.

b. Yi-Fu Tuan

Tuan’s *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* sought to elaborate on the idea of place in contrast to space by linking the idea of place directly to human identity.⁴¹ Tuan says that “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and

³⁸ Seamon and Sowers, “Place and Placelessness,” 45.

³⁹ Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 141.

⁴⁰ Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 45.

⁴¹ Tim Cresswell, “Space and Place (1977) Yi-Fu Tuan,” in *Key Texts in Human Geography Reader*, ed. Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitichin, and Gill Valentine (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 57.

endow it with value,”⁴² indicating that Relph’s ideas of insidedness and outsidedness are directly applicable to the human condition. Identity is impossible without a spatial dimension that Tuan considers place, and this linkage between spatial considerations and identity shows how Human Geography views space epistemologically. This epistemology is one of the main themes in Tim Cresswell’s summary of the discipline of Human Geography where he says, “place is ... a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world. When we look at the world as a world of places ... we see worlds of meaning and experience.”⁴³ Human Geography allows place to be a noun (a real physical space, or its absence) *and* a verb (a way of seeing, contrasting and understanding). “Human geography seeks to explain how different elements of social existence interact ... with sensitivity to variation over space.”⁴⁴

The strength in this approach is that Human Geography embodies spaces and names them places. While the idea that humans experience space with their bodies was an aspect of both Kant’s understanding of space and of Lefebvre’s innovations about space,⁴⁵ Human Geography takes that embodiment one step further and gives it an emotion. Humans experience space with their bodies and then they embed meaning and emotion in that space. The activations of certain meanings (home is safety, support/ wider world is danger, challenge) accompany that embodied experience and offer a feeling of either safety/insidedness or danger/outsidelessness to the broader experience of spatiality. These emotions are important indicators of space vs. place in the lived experience of humanity.

The physical and ideological aspects that underlie space endow it with meaning and turn it into place. Times of chaos can disrupt place and cause a return to space, but certain periods of space are likely required to make cultural places more widely available to the

⁴² Tuan, *Space and Place*, location 117.

⁴³ Cresswell, *Place*, location 322.

⁴⁴ Berquist, “Introduction,” 1.

⁴⁵ Lefebvre, *Production*, 170.

culture as a whole. This constant process of revision in thirdspace is accomplished in a variety of ways, and one such way is through the use of cultural narratives.

B. Narrative

At its most basic, narratology examines the interaction of various pieces of narratives –plot, character, setting– to understand how they influence a reader’s interpretation. It is the influence of stories that makes them interesting to fields of study focussed on psychology, community, or religion because this influence speaks to the role of story in identity. Narratives influence collective or social identity⁴⁶ in part because they have the unique capacity to weave together a “first-person psychological perspective, a second-person relational perspective and a third-person objective perspective.”⁴⁷ This layered influence indicates that broad cultural narratives somehow structure individual story. While a distinction between ‘story’ and ‘narrative’ is difficult to maintain,⁴⁸ a general guideline is that individual “stories depend on shared narrative resources.”⁴⁹ The shared narrative resources are the communal stories, or Master Narratives,⁵⁰ and they serve a variety of purposes within the communities for whom they hold value. They show stability, provide legitimacy, and in the case of religious narratives (see below) they trace divine actions in history.⁵¹ Narratives tell about the past and give it significance, and it is the accepted presentation of the past that

⁴⁶ Bruce Bradshaw, *Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 27.

⁴⁷ Kim Atkins, *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity: A Practical Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 1–2.

⁴⁸ Arthur W. Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), location 342.

⁴⁹ Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, location 342.

⁵⁰ Hilde Lindemann Nelson, *Damaged Identities, Narrative Repair* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 6.

⁵¹ Charlotte Linde, *Working the Past: Narrative and Institutional Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), location 29.

provides the currency and structure within which individual human existence is then imagined.

These shared narrative resources raise issues of both intertextuality and ethics. How readers/hearers understand one story in relation to its cultural background and what kind of life that narrative encourages is the subject of further narrative studies.⁵² It is first important to note that no story is free from the background of its Master Narrative, meaning that there is no such thing as an original story. Second, the culturally powerful and acceptable narratives that provide the resources for individual stories are not chosen by the narrator in a vacuum. Charlotte Linde claims that “the decision about which texts are available to be treated as prior texts is not made by the narrator alone. Rather, it is the work of a community that determines what prior texts are maintained so as to be available and relevant for a current narrator.”⁵³

In this narrative environment, the narrator or storyteller is not at liberty simply to craft a new narrative. Rather, he or she must function within an already accepted narrative world. The accepted narrative world is crucial for cognitive theorists who believe “story is the fundamental instrument of thought,”⁵⁴ because metaphors and images are built on the interpretive grid constructed of shared narratives. The interpretive grid that guides metaphors and images, the Master Narratives, are tied to dominant culture, however, indicating they are not free from social or ethical problems.

1. Arthur Frank: Socio-narratology

Socio-narratology is a term coined by Arthur Frank that, among other things, focuses on the ethical aspect of narratives.⁵⁵ He examines how stories influence actions, and, therefore,

⁵² Atkins, *Narrative Identity*, 80.

⁵³ Linde, *Working the Past*, location 3061.

⁵⁴ Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4.

⁵⁵ Frank claims that while some narrative theorists draw a distinction between ‘story’ and ‘narrative’ it is difficult to maintain the distinction in communication. Some argue that ‘narrative’ is a term that should apply to those narratives that become templates, while ‘story’ is more individual and enlivened. See Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, location 342.

function as actual actors in the lives of readers/audiences. He claims that stories “inform in the sense of providing information, but more significantly, stories give form—temporal and spatial orientation, coherence, meaning, intention, and especially boundaries—to lives that inherently lack form. How stories inform lives can be a gift or a danger.”⁵⁶

The concept of stories as gift or danger is not unique to Frank’s focus. It also lies behind a narrative approach called “ethical criticism,” which seeks to understand how a story “affects or is affected by the ethos- the collection of virtues- of any given reader.”⁵⁷ For Frank, however, the idea of stories as actors opens the door to an examination of how they influence ethics. He says, “when listeners become caught up in one story, that story can claim the validity of one person’s or group’s point of view.”⁵⁸ The focus on a single point of view is part of the danger of Master Narratives. Therefore, in both the field of ethical criticism and socio-narratology, stories enforce a set of values accepted by those in power, and they reinforce a culturally accepted identity.

This challenge is even more acute when applied to religion because a religious community utilizes narrative in opposition to potentially larger outside forces such as evil or chaos.⁵⁹ Religious narratives are a type of Master Narrative⁶⁰ regardless of the status of the religious community within the wider historical world. Thus, while religious narratives are not necessarily the Master Narrative of an entire culture, for the religious culture they function as the most important narrative. Furthermore, in a religious context Master Narratives take on something of a soteriological function. Religious narratives “provide the

⁵⁶ Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, loc 79.

⁵⁷ Wayne C. Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 11.

⁵⁸ Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*, location 749.

⁵⁹ Wesley A. Kort, *Narrative Elements and Religious Meanings* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 5.

⁶⁰ This is a technical term from Nelson’s theory and not meant to indicate anything about the relationship of religion to culture.

principal way in which a world divided against itself is always being made by human beings into a whole.”⁶¹ Religious narratives are further complicated by the assumption that their guiding principles, usually elucidated through a hierarchy, are always good (in opposition to dangerous). This assumption makes critiquing them especially difficult because the narratives organise community practices such as ritual and/or liturgy around maintaining order and preventing chaos.⁶² Challenging and changing master religious narratives is almost impossible outside of crisis, and it is this point that specifically applies to Ezekiel’s exilic context.⁶³

2. Hilde Lindemann Nelson: Master Narratives and “Counterstories”

It is in the interplay between ethics, narratives, and identity that the relationship between what Nelson refers to as the Master Narratives and the “counterstories” emerge. “Personal identities are always meaning systems”⁶⁴ and the meaning systems are a product of the communities with which specific individuals align themselves. Those communities are inseparable from the individual identity, and they perpetuate various truths that the individual members consciously or unconsciously accept. Master Narratives are “summaries of socially shared understandings.”⁶⁵ A “counterstory” is a story that is “told in dialogue with others,”⁶⁶ and while it changes the primary interpretation of a Master Narrative, it is not a neatly

⁶¹ Wesley A. Kort, *Story, Text, and Scripture: Literary Interests in Biblical Narrative* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 10.

⁶² Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper&Row, 1988), 121–127.

⁶³ Crisis here simply means a noted time when the Master Narrative ‘fails.’ It does not have to be a national crisis. For example, Nelson uses the example of how doctors tended to treat nurses and how it was the frustration of the nurses that led them to craft a “counterstory”. (See Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 1–6) In this instance the crisis was the relationship with the doctors and the hospital administration rather than national crisis, but there had to be a ‘crisis’ moment when realisation of the damage of the Master Narrative was recognized and a decision was made to change it.

⁶⁴ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 88.

⁶⁵ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 6.

⁶⁶ Hilde Lindemann Nelson, “Resistance and Insubordination,” *Hypatia* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 38.

completed process. Rather, the “counterstory” and the Master Narrative interact until aspects of the Master Narrative have changed to accommodate the perspective of the “counterstory.” When the new perspective becomes the Master Narrative, however, it might also require a new “counterstory” at some point. It is a narrative spiral where all constituent parts of community identity constantly interact.

It is this constant interaction of the stories, both the Master Narrative and the “counterstory,” that prompts Nelson to use the term “narrative repair”⁶⁷ to examine the efficacy of story in the process of changing both self and community perception. The idea of narrative repair is built on the belief that identity is partially constructed through narrative, and therefore it can be repaired on some level through narrative.⁶⁸ “Stories that my group tells to distinguish itself from your group are frequently different from the ones your group tells to distinguish itself from mine.”⁶⁹ As such, each group ends up with certain narratives that become the overarching narratives for identity within that specific group.

Because they are fundamentally connected with identity, many Master Narratives “reach all the way into the center of our web of belief,”⁷⁰ and changing them can be threatening because they structure “society’s understanding of the human species and its place in the universe.”⁷¹ Master Narratives are told most frequently by someone in authority,⁷² but they “are organic ensembles that grow and change, they constitute a world view, and they assimilate opposition,”⁷³ therefore making them bigger than one individual.

⁶⁷ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, xiv.

⁶⁸ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 9.

⁶⁹ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 87.

⁷⁰ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 160.

⁷¹ Diana Tietjens Meyers, *Subjection and Subjectivity: Psychoanalytic Feminism and Moral Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 54.

⁷² Nelson, “Resistance,” 34.

⁷³ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 157.

They allow members of groups “to understand who they are with respect to that society, as well as how the world works.”⁷⁴

Relying on Paul Benson’s work on agency, Nelson relates identity and agency because moral free agency requires that the individual feel as though they have the freedom to respond to the demands placed upon them.⁷⁵ Master Narratives can rob certain subgroups of the freedom to respond, and that lack of freedom diminishes their agency. Nelson says, “both others’ recognition that I am a morally responsible person and my own sense of myself as a morally responsible person, then, are required for the free exercise of moral agency.”⁷⁶ It is the job of the “counterstory” to provide a voice for the subgroup in a way that encourages a sense of responsibility and thus gives voice to their own expression of moral agency.

“[Counterstories] are stories that define people morally and are developed for the express purpose of resisting and undermining an oppressive master narrative.”⁷⁷ They are not, therefore, stories that merely reflect change. Rather, a “counterstory” is a story that sets out to cause a change.⁷⁸ The change brought about is not immediate because “counterstories” are not an already crafted story that seeks to challenge an oppressive view. They come into being slowly as they interact with and resist pieces of the narrative they eventually change.⁷⁹ In the process of changing a Master Narrative, a “counterstory” provides a different view of an aspect of the Master Narrative that “contributes to the moral self-definition of its teller by undermining a dominant story, undoing it and retelling it in such a way as to invite new interpretations and conclusions.”⁸⁰ These new interpretations sometimes emerge because the

⁷⁴ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 159.

⁷⁵ Paul Benson, “Free Agency and Self-Worth,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 91, no. 12 (December 1994): 650–68.

⁷⁶ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 22.

⁷⁷ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 8.

⁷⁸ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 156.

⁷⁹ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 69.

⁸⁰ Nelson, “Resistance,” 23.

oppressor's view changes, and sometimes the new conclusions emerge because a subgroup comes to perceive itself in a new way.⁸¹

The interaction of the Master Narrative and the “counterstory” is what allows a Master Narrative to be what socio-narratology would consider a gift to culture rather than a danger. The book of Ezekiel provides an interesting application of the interplay between a Master Narrative and a “counterstory.”⁸²

II. How the Method Applies to the Book of Ezekiel

A. Overall Application

The stream of Zion thought that connects the understanding of Zion specifically with the city of Jerusalem, which will be explained in more detail in the next chapter as ‘physical Zion,’ is an example of a Master Narrative. This Zion tradition appears to have combined aspects of Israelite/Judahite identity into an approach to the city of Jerusalem that becomes particularly untenable with the onset of the Babylonian conquest and the ensuing destruction of city and temple.⁸³

⁸¹ Nelson, *Damaged Identities*, 7.

⁸² Others have approached the book of Ezekiel through the lens of narrative. See Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 105–126. See also Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution* The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 346 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 151–161 where she discusses antilanguage and shame in Ezekiel, where antilanguage is a kind of narrative tool.

⁸³ Zion, as understood for this project, is discussed at length in Chapter Two. Various aspects of Judahite identity (cult, land, king) and how those come to be centred in the city of Jerusalem will be discussed in detail. The project will argue that the Zion the book of Ezekiel is dismantling is the concept connected to the city. Zion is still important for the book, but it has to disassociate from the physical city in order to survive the exile and the destruction of the temple and the loss of the land. Middlemas says, “Zion theology, the predominant ideology of the pre-exilic Jerusalem temple cult which rested on the dual foundation of the inviolability of the city and the eternal covenant with David, was called forcibly into question.” See Middlemas, *Templeless Judah*, 1–2.

The loss of the city of Jerusalem, constitutes not only a disruption to this particular Master Narrative,⁸⁴ but also a loss of place. Exile marks the people's return to space and disrupts what the people think they know about YHWH. Ezekiel's audience is marginalized in Babylon, but they were the elites in Judah. This means they were the storytellers of the Master Narrative at home, but their exilic circumstances indicate that the narrative has failed them in some way. In Babylon they occupy the space of the marginalized and have the opportunity to use the exile as a type of thirdspace. With a need to recast their perceived space (physical), they first have to change their conceived space (ideology). It is this need that makes the exile a unique opportunity to engage in what Soja refers to as "thirthing-as-othering." It is the nature of their spatial position in exile that makes them more open to a "counterstory," primarily because they desperately need a "counterstory." It is through an understanding of the exile as an opportunity that their lost place becomes a useful, and necessary thirdspace for change.

⁸⁴ For the purpose of this thesis, the Master Narrative Ezekiel is using/challenging is the intertwining of these aspects of identity with the physical city of Jerusalem. It is difficult to know exactly what traditions and/or stories the prophet knew, and which he knew depends on who the audience was. As mentioned above, it's possible the audience and the character of Ezekiel are literary constructs created to contain a message for a later generation. If this is the case, then the stories and traditions available to the author(s) are much deeper. With no ability to determine which audience is in view (an actual exilic audience or a later audience interested in a historical exile or questions about Zion), it is hard to claim with true confidence what undergirds the book's message. Based on other scholarship that argues for Ezekiel's creative use of older material and traditions, this project assumes that when the book of Ezekiel exhibits usage of older stories that it is, in fact, a reuse and not the original location. This assumption is also tied to the methodology that requires that narratives not be entirely new. As it challenges the intertwining of the ideas of Zion with the city of Jerusalem, there is evidence of stories/traditions about the land visible in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; the book challenges the intertwining of sacred and profane in the city of Jerusalem and appears to acknowledge a specific promise to a Davidic king, evident in the HB in various aspects of the Deuteronomistic history (Samuel and Kings); it also appears that the book plays with certain priestly traditions and creation traditions as the book challenges the people's understanding of the land and uses an Edenlike setting along with an understanding of the people as 'image bearers.' This project takes a synchronic approach to the topic at hand, and therefore, how the author(s) of the book of Ezekiel gain the knowledge of these topics is a focus for a different project.

B. Specific Application of the Method

“Counterstories” do not challenge Master Narratives because they are one fully formed and completed story. Rather, challenges to the Master Narrative come from the intertwining of various threads as each thread challenges a piece of the foundation of the Master Narrative. As just mentioned, beliefs about the land, the cult, the monarchy, and the city all combine to form a particular way of thinking. The completed “counterstory” contains multiple challenges mounted against different ideas that eventually weave together into a new narrative that changes the overall Master Narrative. In order to show how the method applies in the book of Ezekiel outside of the chapters that contain the Eden Garden, the next section will look at one example of how the book of Ezekiel attempts to recast a narrative in a unique way.

Ezekiel 36 crafts a “counterstory” to a particular message about the land from Num 13–14. When the people claim that the land devours its inhabitants in Numbers, YHWH destroys the entire generation who wanted to return to Egypt. In Ezekiel, however, supposedly the land will stop devouring its inhabitants, indicating that perhaps it actually did so at one point. Ezekiel uses the Numbers narrative to highlight the danger in trusting anything but YHWH, whether this is a report from spies or a land that has usurped YHWH.

Numbers 13:32: “the land that we passed through to spy on is a land that devours all who live in it”	Ezekiel 36: 13–14 says: (speaking to the land) “because they say of you ‘you are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation’ you will no longer devour men and no longer will your nation stumble” utters the sovereign Lord.”
The response of the wilderness generation to the declaration from Num 13:32 appears in Num 14:2 and 4: “would that we had died in Egypt” and “Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt”	
YHWH’s response to their reaction appears in Num 14:29: “in this wilderness your corpses will fall... from 20 years old and upwards.”	
And Num 14:37: “Those men who caused an evil report about the land to go out died by plague before the Lord.”	

One of the themes in the original narrative of Numbers is a negation of identity as YHWH's people. Suzanne Boorer argues that negation of the good land by the spies has specific ties to important themes and moments articulated in the priestly narrative.⁸⁵ Some of these same problems have recurred in the present. For example, just as the wilderness generation longed for a return to Egypt, Ezekiel's generation reaches to Egypt despite YHWH's provision to them under Babylonian rule (Ezek 17). Just as the wilderness generation forgot the care and provision of YHWH (as exemplified in the provision of manna and water in Exod 16⁸⁶), Ezekiel's generation is described as forgetting their adoption by YHWH (Ezekiel 16). Just as the wilderness generation's fear of the people of the land indicated a fear of other deities (military defeat is cultic),⁸⁷ Ezekiel's generation practices pagan religion because of foreign political alliances (Ezek 23).⁸⁸ The people hearing the message of Ezek 36 would find themselves in an unfamiliar place in the story, although for similar reasons. The reality of being outside a land that seemingly acted out of character, they have to wrestle with their relationship to the original wilderness generation, YHWH, and the good land.

Further, the idea of eating and vomiting recalls what the HC says happens when people commit certain transgressions, specifically, sexual immorality, idolatry, and

⁸⁵ Suzanne Boorer, "The Place of Numbers 13-14* and Numbers 20:2-12* in the Priestly Narrative (Pg)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131, no. 1 (2012): 53-58. For example, fear of the giants rejects the memory of YHWH's defeat of Pharaoh in Exodus 15, and indicates a lack of trust in YHWH as a warrior (pg, 57). Similarly, fear of the land and an expressed longing for Egypt reject both YHWH's promise of the land and his actions through the Exodus (pg, 55). Fear causes them to deny their identity and to reject YHWH's promise, and in response YHWH punishes the wilderness generation in dramatic fashion.

⁸⁶ Boorer, "Numbers," 56.

⁸⁷ V. Korosec, "The Warfare of the Hittites-From the Legal Point of View," *Iraq* 25, no. 2 (1963): 159-66, and Boorer, "Numbers," 55.

⁸⁸ Safwat Marzouk, *Egypt as a Monster in the Book of Ezekiel*, *Forschungen Zum Alten Testament 2: Reihe 76* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015) focuses on the problem being one of assimilation.

bloodguilt (Lev 18–20). When these are committed the land becomes ill and vomits out the inhabitants.⁸⁹ The sins detailed in the HC are named repeatedly in Ezekiel (sexual immorality: 16, 22:10–11; 23; idolatry: 5:11; 6:6,13; 8; 13:18–23; 14:5; 20:8,26; bloodshed: 7:23, 12:19; 19:3,8; 22:2–7,9,12–13; 24:6–9). Violations that facilitated the expulsion of the Canaanites combine with the narrative in Num 13–14 to provide a different perspective to the audience of Ezek 36. A simple verse in Ezek 36 challenges what the audience thinks they know about themselves. Between their connection with the wilderness generation who misunderstood their identity, their relationship with YHWH, and the role of the land, and their place as those vomited out for specific transgressions, they have to encounter themselves, the land, and YHWH in a new way.

C. Conclusion to the Theoretical and Methodological Application

Use of the Master Narrative is more than simply fodder for a “counterstory.” Master Narratives provide comfort and identity in difficult circumstances, and while Ezekiel uses the narratives in unique ways, he chooses narratives that allow him to place the current circumstance in the trajectory of the original Master Narrative that resulted in a covenant with YHWH and the gift of the land. Ezekiel shows the destruction of everything from temple to land with the hope that in the future there will be a new creation via the exiles. The hope of the Master Narrative is part of what gives Ezekiel the interpretive grid from which he draws his tools. At the same time that he critiques the Master Narrative he seeks to restore the hope found within it. It is through the “counterstory” that he offers a different perspective,

⁸⁹ Using Klawans’ category of moral vs. ritual impurity- moral impurity is something not mitigated by ritual, but rather only cleansed on the day of purgation and sent away. Ritual impurity comes through unavoidable aspects of life such as birth, death, sex, and disease and is dealt with through the standard priestly ritual. Moral sins are bloodshed, sexual immorality and idolatry and these leave a permanent mark on the land and on the individual. See Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 54.

and it is this new perspective that then allows the Master Narrative to be, in the words of socio-narratology, a gift rather than a danger.⁹⁰

The hope of future return to a new transformed place is built on the narratives and the historical hope of Israel's past. "The future must be constructed, not in some fantastic utopian mould, but through tangible transformations of [existing] raw materials"⁹¹ and one aspect of this process for Ezekiel is the narratives. Using existing narratives, the ideology that formed the foundation of their lost place, Ezekiel capitalises on the space of the exile to create "counterstories" that offer hope for a future place.

III. Conclusion and Project Structure

The current place of the 'physical Zion' is lost to Ezekiel's audience, and Ezekiel uses various narratives from the Master Narrative to craft a "counterstory" that defines the future place of Zion differently. The space of exile requires a new definition of place. Rather than the entirely negative experience of space that pervades Human Geography, viewing the exile as a type of thirdspace makes the exile a necessary component of change. Within this thirdspace, Ezekiel uses narratives to challenge certain aspects of the former place.

The study of the Eden Garden will reveal Ezekiel's challenge to the Zion tradition, and will proceed along the following lines. Chapter Two will create the foundation for the project by exploring the relationship in the ANE between gardens and mountains, explaining Zion for Ezekiel's context, and highlighting connections between Zion and Eden in the broader text of the HB. Chapter Three will explore how Oracles Against Foreign Nations (OANs) (in which the first two of the Eden Garden references fall) factor into Ezekiel's use of narrative and how they function as a "counterstory" to an aspect of the Zion tradition.

⁹⁰ See Frank, *Letting Stories Breathe*.

⁹¹ David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 191.

Chapter Four will examine Ezek 28 and investigate how the Eden Garden reference begins to challenge a specific aspect of the pre-exile Zion tradition, namely the city of Jerusalem.

Chapter Five will explore Ezek 31 and will look at how the Eden Garden challenges another aspect of pre-exile Zion, specifically kingship and dynastic security. Chapter Six will explore Ezek 36 and examine how the Eden Garden reference continues to challenge the pre-exile Zion, particularly the misappropriated land promise. Chapter Seven will then consider the river of Ezek 47 in order to show how it is not specifically Edenic, and thus has a message about the Zion of the future. Chapter Eight will present conclusions, suggested contributions, and avenues for further research.

Chapter Two: Background Information– Mountains and Gardens, Zion, and Connections Between Zion and Eden in the Wider Hebrew Bible

There are several important pieces of background information that are foundational to the work that follows. An exploration of mountains and gardens in the ANE, how this project understands Zion, and a seeming connection between Zion and Eden in HB scholarship will create the building blocks for the exploration of Eden in the book of Ezekiel.

Gardens and mountains in the ANE are an important topic because Zion is conceived of as a holy mountain, and there are aspects of these mountains that share crossover imagery with fertile gardens. This chapter will begin by examining similarities and differences between these two spaces because they will factor into certain accepted aspects of Zion's portrayal, and their differences are especially important to set up how Ezekiel begins to shift his image of Zion.

Then an explanation of Zion will be posited. For the book of Ezekiel it is a concept that has two very opposite expressions: on the one hand, it is an enduring image that provides a point of hope for those in exile, and on the other, it is a picture of desolation encapsulated in a destroyed temple and a ruined city. The image of Zion that Ezekiel appears to challenge twines together ideas of human kingship and divine blessing within the confines of the city of Jerusalem. By the last chapters of the book, the picture of the future Zion is more mythological, and it separates city and temple while formulating strict rules of access for the interaction of humans in what is explained as YHWH's domain. Based on the time period described in the book of Ezekiel, it is logical that the book would challenge a certain view of Zion. Ezekiel has to protect certain aspects of the Zion ideal that could have disappeared with the onset of the exile, such as the belief that YHWH rules from Zion over foreign nations, while also challenging the parts of the pre-exile Zion that have no place in a future understanding, such as the election of the city of Jerusalem. In order to accomplish this task,

Ezekiel has to find a way to use pieces of the Master Narrative of Israel/Judah's past to build toward a future hope.

Finally, the connection between Zion and Eden that is noted by certain scholars will be examined briefly to highlight that using one image to explore the other is not out of the realm of accepted scholarship.

I. Mountains and Gardens in the ANE

It is important to investigate the connections that occur in the ANE between mountains and gardens because Zion is depicted as a mountain, and Eden calls to mind a garden. There are similarities between gardens and mountains in the ANE that lead to conflation in the iconography, although there are also significant differences between the portrayal of the spaces in literature. This section will briefly show how the spaces are similar and different in order to show why setting them side-by-side in Ezek 28 allows their differences to aid Ezekiel in the process of protecting a future Zion.

A. Similarities

Gardens and mountains in the ANE often serve similar functions. Cosmic mountains are (1) places of divine assembly that (2) connect the heavens and the earth, (3) serve as a place of divine decree, and (4) are the source of the cosmic waters.⁹² Similarly, gardens in the ANE are often associated with deity as they are (1) sites of supernatural abundance, (2) locations for divine gathering and decree, and are (3) the source of the cosmic waters.⁹³ Much of the similarity between the two locations stems from studies of the iconography in which deities are often represented with images of both mountains and gardens. "Throughout ancient Near

⁹² Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2010), 190–192.

⁹³ Howard N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative*, Harvard Semitic Monographs (Atlanta: Scholars, 1985), 70–80.

Eastern cultures there is an iconographic pattern which images vegetation deities enthroned on symbolic mountains.”⁹⁴ These same images often depict source waters flowing from the deity as a symbol “of the fertilising and blessing effect of the deity in the human world.”⁹⁵ Some argue that a connection between mountains and gardens exists because the mountain is the source of cosmic waters and vegetation is an outward sign of fertility that would stem from the connection to deity.⁹⁶ In these cases, the deity is standing on something representing a mountain, or is on a mountain but with a background that depicts a garden, or some combination of both. Martin Metzger claims,

die Verbindung von Gottheiten denen Vegetationsaspekte eignem, zum Berg kommen in der Ikonographie des Vorderen Orients in mannigfaltige Weise zur Sprache. Das gilt für die altsumerische Vegetationsgöttin, für die akkadische Ishtar, für den Sonnengott Schamasch, für den Mondgott Nanna sowie für Ea, den Gott des Süßwasserozeans.⁹⁷

For example, figures 1–3 show life giving waters connected to vegetation, but there are also hints of mountains.



Figure 1. Symbolic rendering of Assur giving rain to maintain vegetal life.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 111.

⁹⁵ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 98.

⁹⁶ Martin Metzger, “Gottheit, Berg und Vegetation in Vorderorientalischer Bildtradition,” *ZDPV* 99 (1983), 59.

⁹⁷ Metzger, “Gottheit, Berg und Vegetation,” 59.

⁹⁸ H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals: A Documentary Essay on the Art and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (London: MacMillan And Co., 1939), 213.

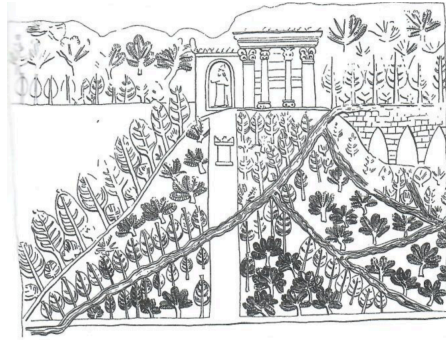


Figure 2. Wall Relief from Ashurbanipal's Palace.⁹⁹



Figure 3. El at the source of the rivers.¹⁰⁰

In figure 1, the waters flow from the image of the deity, and perhaps from a garden, represented by the tree. However, the depictions of mountains might indicate that the waters flow from the mountain and provide fertility represented in the existence of the tree. In figure 2, water either flows from the garden, or it flows from a height indicative of a mountain, therefore generating the fertility evident in the gardenlike aspects of the image. Similarly, figure 3 shows El at the source of the rivers, and Keel says “El too is king of the gods and dwells on a mountain “in the midst of the sources of the two oceans.””¹⁰¹ The stylized mountain on which he sits also appears to pour out the water, and the image blends the idea of the mountain, garden, and fertility in a way that makes them difficult to separate. While it is generally accepted that gardens are associated with cosmic waters, it is possible that the connection is merely a by-product of the blessing water that comes from the mountain.

⁹⁹ Image taken from Stordalen, *Echoes*, 485.

¹⁰⁰ Image taken from Othmar Keel, *Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 47.

¹⁰¹ Keel, *Symbolism*, 47.

One particularly difficult aspect of these similarities lies in discerning between what is considered royal and what is divine. Kings rule through divine blessing, therefore some of the royal images that depict gardens and fertility could be interpreted with divine overtones. For example, figure 2 above, found in Assurbanipal's palace in Nineveh, shows the image of a garden. Stordalen claims that these types of locations would be used for investiture.



Figure 4. Investiture of Zimri-Lim¹⁰²

An example is visible in figure 3 which depicts the investiture of Zimri-Lim. Because the garden in view is “the source from which life is pouring out,”¹⁰³ even though the focus of the image is kingship, the setting indicates that it is kingship under the purview of deity. Much like ‘religion’ and ‘politics’ are inseparable in the ANE, these images can be a representation of both political scenes or cultic ones, thereby making a distinction between the two problematic. This in turn factors in to the complication of separating out mountains and gardens since the deity could be represented with a mountain and the blessing of the king through a garden, complicating an ability to determine how the two images relate to one another.

Another way that the imagery of the two is conflated is through the connection between the world tree and world mountain. Baruch Margulis says that “by the neo-Assyrian period... the *Weltbaum* and *Weltberg* traditions are closely if not inextricably intertwined.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Image taken from Stordalen, *Echoes*, 483.

¹⁰³ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 100.

¹⁰⁴ Baruch Margulis, “Weltbaum and Weltberg in Ugaritic Literature: Notes and Observations on RS 24:245,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, no. 1 (1974): 1–23.

While a *Weltbaum* is not necessarily a garden, trees connect to the idea of fertility and there are gardens that are made up mostly of trees. Stordalen argues that the Eden Garden was viewed as a tree garden,¹⁰⁵ and as the story in Genesis exists in its current form that is supported by the fact that all the narrative mentions are trees. If there are gardens made up mostly, or entirely, of trees, then fertility is connected in these cases to trees. With an intertwining of the *Weltbaum* and *Weltberg*, the image of the mountain and the garden would become even more difficult to separate.

In summary, cosmic mountains and fertile gardens are often significant settings for divine activity, and both appear as sources for divine waters that bring abundance. The literature links deity to both locations although rarely together, while the iconography blends the mountain and garden imagery significantly.

B. Differences

In contrast to the above, mountains appear to connect heaven and earth while gardens function more as border areas. These differences emerge more in a study of literature and history.

1. Mountains as Connection between Heaven and Earth

Even when a mountain is not specifically mentioned, and the geography of a location is not particularly mountainous, the idea of raising something to create boundaries is an important part of creation. The Egyptian creation account from Heliopolis says, “Not existed heaven, not existed earth, not had been created the things of the earth, and creeping things in that place; *I raised them from out of Nu* from a state of inactivity.”¹⁰⁶ This idea also appears in the *Enuma Elish*, both with Ea and with Marduk. “[Ea] held Apsu down and slew him... *he set*

¹⁰⁵ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 87.

¹⁰⁶ Barbara C. Sproul, *Primal Myths* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 81–82. (Italics mine.)

up his dwelling on top of Apsu...then he rested... founded his own residence there.”¹⁰⁷

Marduk also uses Tiamat’s body to establish the world, and the text reads “He set her high to make fast the sky, with half of her he made a roof; he fixed the earth.”¹⁰⁸ In these examples, even without the word mountain, there is the idea that a space critical to the divine work of creating, ordering, and establishing is raised up and therefore set in contrast to what is “below.” These stories are related to the ANE approach to the cosmos as a tiered entity resembling a mountain.

The mountain is a central piece of divine rule as it is the location of the deity’s dwelling, the location of the divine assembly, and also serves as a connection between heaven and earth that creates a type of axis maintaining boundaries and facilitating rule. These different interpretations of mountains are interconnected in the literature of the ANE. It is accepted that the deity dwells on the mountain, and thus it is the location from which the deity rules. Two examples from Ugarit linking deity to a dwelling on the mountain are:

KTU 1.3.V 7-8, “[She comes to] the mountain of E[l] and enters the te[nt] of the King.”¹⁰⁹

KTU 1.3.IV 19, “In the midst of my mountain, Divine Sapan.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, Oxford World’s Classics (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 235. (Italics mine.)

¹⁰⁸ Dalley, *Myths*, 257. (italics mine.)

¹⁰⁹ Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sammartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places*, 2nd ed. (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995), 14. Translation taken from Mark S. Smith, “The Baal Cycle,” in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. Simon B. Parker, Writings from the Ancient World 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 116. In this instance *Context of Scripture* translates the verse as “She penetrates Ilu’s abode, enters the dwelling of the king.” See William Wolfgang Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, eds., *The Context of Scripture. Volume I* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 254. Smith interprets the d[d.] as mountain.

¹¹⁰ Dietrich, Loretz, Sammartín, *Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts*, 12. Translation taken from Hallow and Younger, *Context of Scripture*, 253. Further examples are: 1.3.I 21–22 “šrrt. špn” in Dietrich, Loretz, Sammartín, *Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts*, 10, translated ‘summit of Sapan’ see Smith “The Baal Cycle,” 106. See also KTU 1.4.V 22–23 in Dietrich, Loretz, Sammartín, *Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts*, 19: “m.b l.mrym. špn” translated ‘for Baal on the heights of Sapan,’ by Smith, “The Baal Cycle,” 130.

There is also a natural connection between the dwelling of the deity and the understanding of the cosmos as a tiered entity. If the deity dwells on the mountain, and the top of the tiered creation is the heavens, and deity dwells in the heavens, then to imagine them as dwelling on a high mountain is a consistent image.¹¹¹ Dwelling on the mountain also makes the mountain a place to receive divine wisdom or instruction. For example, in several places in the Baal cycle messengers hurry to the divine mountain abode to receive some kind of message or decree.¹¹²

Within the same story there are examples of where messengers hasten to the place defined as “the converse of Heaven to Hell, of deeps to stars” (KTU 1.1.III 10–15 and KTU 1.3.III 20–30, *tunt.šmm. ’m.arš.thmt. ’mm.kbkbm*).¹¹³ This phrase seems to link the mountain to both the location where deity dwells and the location that connects heaven and earth. In at least one of these examples, the location is expanded on and called a ‘mountain’ just before this phrase occurs.¹¹⁴

While mountains in different cultures are not entirely the same,¹¹⁵ they often provide an image around which the cosmos can be ordered. As the location where deity dwells, it is natural to view their top as being in the heavens. Because they are a location from which decrees are given, they offer wisdom from above to the earth below, thereby acting as a connection between heaven and earth.

¹¹¹ N. Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, 2nd ed., The Biblical Seminar 53 (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 98 note 128.

¹¹² KTU 1.2.III 5-8. This text describes Kothar receiving a decree from El to build a house for Yamm. Dietrich, Loretz, Sammartín, *Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts*, 11 and Smith “The Baal Cycle,” 95.

¹¹³ For KTU 1.3.III 20–30 see Dietrich, Loretz, Sammartín, *Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts*, 11 and Smith “The Baal Cycle,” 91.

¹¹⁴ KTU 1.1.III 10–15 where verse 12 mentions the mountain just before referencing the connection between heaven and earth. Dietrich, Loretz, Sammartín, *Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts*, 3.

¹¹⁵ Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 190–192.

2. Gardens as Border Areas

Gardens tend to draw attention to some aspect of the relationship between deity and humanity, but are usually more peripheral and have something of a liminal nature as they provide a space where opposites can come together. Both the cedar forest and the jewel garden in Gilgamesh fit this description. “They stood still and gazed at the forest, they looked at the height of the cedars...where Humbaba was wont to walk... they beheld the cedar mountain, abode of the gods, throne-seat of Irnini...the cedars raise aloft their luxuriance...full of delight.”¹¹⁶ Calling attention to the characters of Humbaba and Enkidu, Stordalen argues for the cedar forest in Gilgamesh as a peripheral space. Stordalen focuses on the cedars/garden as a fitting place for interaction between this animal/man and a semi-divine being. He claims that forests are often the abode of demonic forces, and the conflict there between Humbaba and Enkidu highlights the backdrop of the entire epic as a struggle between life and death.¹¹⁷ The forest becomes the border between the land of the mortal and the domain of the deity on the mountain.

The jewel garden of Gilgamesh is another garden that appears to act as a border area.¹¹⁸ After traversing the darkness of the inner mountain tunnel, Gilgamesh emerges “from the inhabited earth to the rim of the world,”¹¹⁹ and there he sees the jewel garden. “All kinds of ... spiky bushes were visible, blossoming with gemstones. Carnelian bore fruit... hanging

¹¹⁶ EA Speiser, trans., “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 82. The Assyrian version of this passage uses ‘pines.’ See Dalley, *Myths*, 71.

¹¹⁷ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 149–153.

¹¹⁸ While there is mention of a mountain, it is fleeting. Gilgamesh must pass through the darkness of the mountain in order to access the garden, and the mountain appears to be a means of showing passing time. It sounds similar to the Egyptian lore. See Andreas Schweizer and David Lorton, *The Sungod’s Journey Through the Netherworld: Reading the Ancient Egyptian Amduat* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

¹¹⁹ A. Leo Oppenheim, “Mesopotamian Mythology II,” *Orientalia* 17, no. 1 (1948): 17–58.

in clusters, lovely to look at, Lapis lazuli bore foliage, bore fruit and was delightful to view.”¹²⁰ While Ut-napishtim is not a deity, he is not a mere mortal either, and this kind of mythical garden would serve as a location where a character blending these traits could dwell. On an epic quest to discover more about immortality from another former mortal, the garden provides a boundary between mortality and immortality.

Outside of this literature, there are historical examples of gardens that also seem to function as a type of border area. Nebuchadnezzar boasts about his hanging gardens, Tiglath-Pileser I gathered trees and animals from afar, and there are artistic portrayals of the gardens/parks of Sargon II.¹²¹ These gardens establish a contrast between the everyday world of struggle and the ability of a ruler to provide beauty and rest purposefully through wealth and power. This theme comes through clearly in one Sumerian royal hymn: “...planted gardens alongside of them, established resting-places...[so travelers] might refresh themselves in its cool (shade)... might find refuge there like in a well-built city.”¹²² These gardens provide a border between struggle and rest. The gardens also indicate strength and conquest, as often plants are taken from conquered nations and said to grow better in the transplanted location.¹²³

Gardens are also be places of burial (2 Kgs 21:18). The polemic against mortuary cults in the HB, particularly the sections of Isa 65:3-4 and 66:17, likely indicate a common

¹²⁰ Dalley, *Myths*, 99.

¹²¹ John H. Walton, “Garden of Eden,” In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 203.

¹²² S.N. Kranmer, “The King of the Road: A Self-Laudatory Shulgi Hymn,” in *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 339.

¹²³ Mirko Novák, “The Artificial Paradise: Programme and Ideology of Royal Gardens,” in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2-6, 2001*, ed. Simo Parpola and Robert M. Whiting (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002), 452.

connection between gardens and burial within the wider culture of the ANE.¹²⁴ Francesca Stavrakopoulou uses evidence from Ugarit to posit the idea that *ḡ* in certain contexts could be rendered ‘mortuary garden’ rather than simply ‘garden.’¹²⁵ She argues that gardens are possibly the proper location for the burial of dead kings, but that the biblical text challenges this idea as it promotes monotheism and priestly holiness. As places for burial, they might serve as the site for mortuary rites, but the garden would be distinct from the temple proper. In these cases, there is also a border between life and death as the garden is the liminal space where both coexist.

These various gardens are border areas, but what they separate is not the same. The cedar forest and the jewel garden in Gilgamesh are borders between mortal and immortal; the royal gardens are a border between danger and safety; and the mortuary gardens form a cultic border between life and death. Less overtly stated than the above claim that mountains are the home of deity, gardens appear more in the background, and their purpose is different from that of the mountain. It is possible that as a border area, they provide a marker of the divine. As a marker of the divine, gardens might frequently appear with mountains. Because mountains are the location of the divine, gardens act as a sign that one is approaching the divine locale.

C. Conclusion to Mountains and Gardens in the ANE

Mountains and gardens share imagery as each is a location for divine activity and is related to the origin of the source waters. What is unclear, however, is whether they are both specifically related to the same thing, or if the relationship between divine creativity, water, and fertility, makes them difficult to separate. Despite the difficulty in separating them, there are examples where they are distinctly different.

¹²⁴ Francesca Stavrakopoulou, “Exploring the Garden of Uzza: Death, Burial and Ideologies of Kingship,” *Biblica* 87, no. 1 (2006): 8-13. See also Stordalen, *Echoes*, 106-7.

¹²⁵ Stavrakopoulou, “Exploring the Garden of Uzza,” 15.

Ziggurats, for example, are never confused with gardens, and they are likely modelled after a type of cosmic mountain. A derivative of *zagaru* that means “to be high,” the *zigguratu* is the “top of the mountain” or the “temple tower.”¹²⁶ Their names indicate their connection to mountain mythology with names such as “temple of the foundation of heaven and earth” or “temple of the exalted mountain.”¹²⁷ Whether always associated with a mountain in ancient thought or not, however, these temple towers were part of the temple complex that always served as a connection between heaven and earth. Never viewed as gardens,¹²⁸ they serve as another means of highlighting that despite conflation in certain areas, mountains and gardens are not identical.

II. Zion

One of the main struggles in defining Zion stems from its various portrayals in the texts of the HB. The HB contains contrasting images of Zion that point to differing perspectives, conflicting interpretations, and ideas from various time periods. These difficulties are compounded when the threads and ideas are compared on the level of dating or redaction because these issues continue to interest scholars. This project does not engage with the dating or redaction issues and instead accepts that “strong assertions of Zion’s inviolability seem much more natural before the destruction of the Temple than after it.”¹²⁹ Zion’s connection to Jerusalem, the primary issue at stake in the book of Ezekiel, makes more sense before the exile than after it, and therefore what is necessary for what follows is a description

¹²⁶ Andrzej Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats as the Architectonic Representations of the Archetype of the Cosmic Mountain,” *Katunog* 10 (1977): 206.

¹²⁷ John H. Walton, “The Mesopotamian Background of the Tower of Babel Account and Its Implications,” *BBR* 5 (1995): 159–60.

¹²⁸ Stephanie Dalley, *The Mystery of the Hanging Garden of Babylon: An Elusive World Wonder Traced* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17–20 for a discussion on how some mistakenly connect the Hanging Gardens to Ziggurats rather than the royal palace.

¹²⁹ Robert D. Miller II, “The Zion Hymns as Instruments of Power,” *ANES* 47 (2010): 225.

of “Zion” for the book of Ezekiel. Also visible below is a high-level examination of the HB that shows a conflict between a Zion with a more physical manifestation and one that is disconnected from the physical realm. It is within this stream of Zion tradition that the book of Ezekiel resides.

One major question that emerges from any discussion about Zion revolves around its origins. While not specifically relevant for what follows, Ben Ollenburger offers a summary of the positions regarding Zion’s origin and the different scholars who support them.¹³⁰ The first group sees the Zion tradition as a continuation of ideas already flourishing in the Jebusite city prior to David’s conquest.¹³¹ The second group argues that it is a construct of the Davidic court’s royal ideology.¹³² The third group sees it as something of a combination of royal ideology and Jebusite influence.¹³³ Just as Zion is “not the substance of any one clearly preserved text in which the tradition, as it existed in its supposed original form, is plainly set out,”¹³⁴ the origins are not entirely clear. While Antti Laato does not specifically call it a product of the Davidic courts royal ideology he does mention a political motivation.¹³⁵ Following the idea that it emerges more visibly under Davidic influence and the political pressures of that time, this project is most in line with Ollenburger’s third group.

¹³⁰ Ben C. Ollenburger, *Zion, the City of the Great King: A Theological Symbol of the Jerusalem Cult* JSOTS up 41 (Sheffield: JSOT Pr., 1987), 17–18.

¹³¹ R. E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), 43–48; Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel’s Prophetic Traditions*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker, vol. II (London: SCM, 1965), 157; Herbert Schmid, “Jahwe und die Kulttraditionen von Jerusalem,” *ZAW* 67, no. 3–4 (1955): 175.

¹³² Eckart Otto, “El und Jhwh in Jerusalem: Historische und Theologische Aspekte einer Religionsintegration,” *VT* 30, no. 3 (July 1980): 316–29; R. E. Clements, *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem: A Study of the Interpretation of Prophecy and the Old Testament*, vol. 13, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplemental Series (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 72–89. J. J. M. Roberts, “Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition,” *JBL* 92, no. 3 (1973): 339–44.

¹³³ David L. Eiler, “The Origin and History of Zion as a Theological Symbol in Ancient Israel” (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1968).

¹³⁴ Clements, *Isaiah*, 76.

¹³⁵ Antti Laato, *The Origin of Israelite Zion Theology*, Library Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 661 (London: T & T Clark, 2018), 188.

It believes that Zion is a conflation of ideas. This approach is also consistent with the idea of a Master Narrative because they are “organic ensembles that grow and change.”¹³⁶

Despite the disagreements on origin scholars generally do agree on the complex of ideas represented by the term Zion. The foundational aspects of the tradition are: (1) it is the highest mountain, (2) rivers of paradise flow from it, (3) it is the location from where YHWH triumphs over chaos, and (4) the location from which YHWH rules over other kings and nations.¹³⁷ Some debate a fifth aspect, that of Zion as a pilgrimage site. “A fifth element is the so-called Völkerwallfahrt—the nations make a pilgrimage to Zion to worship Yahweh (Pss. 68:28–29; 89:9; 87; probably also in Ps 48:11).”¹³⁸ Part of this debate revolves around who is in view in the texts describing this pilgrimage (Isa 60–62 and Zech 14), which is why this element is not always accepted as integral to Zion.¹³⁹ The debates over the fifth aspect highlight the shift in the tradition, however, which is helpful for what this project is arguing. Zion as a pilgrimage site is tied to a view of Zion that seems to understand it as a less physical concept, while the other four aspects are visible in both a physical and non-physical manifestation.

¹³⁶ See footnote 68 in chapter one.

¹³⁷ These various aspects of the holy mountain tradition were explored briefly in section I above and more information can be found in Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2010). See also a summary of these accepted aspects in Ollenburger, *Zion*, 15 and Thomas Renz, “The Use of the Zion Tradition in the Book of Ezekiel,” in *Zion City of Our God*, ed. by Richard S. Hess and Gordon J. Wenham (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999), 79–80. Both credit Edzard Rohland’s Heidelberg dissertation from 1956.

¹³⁸ Miller, “The Zion Hymns,” 219. See also, Hans Wildberger, “Die Völkerwallfahrt zum Zion: Jes 2:1–5,” *VT* 7, no. 1 (January 1957): 62–81.

¹³⁹ Miller, “The Zion Hymns,” 219

A. Components of ‘Physical Zion’ for the book of Ezekiel¹⁴⁰

The book of Ezekiel critiques the lack of boundaries between sacred and profane (Ezek 22:26; 43:7–9) and the message about Zion appears to fall within this same framework. The tradition that stems from the ANE depicting the deity enthroned on a mountain, often at the source of the rivers, from where he rules/governs is discussed above, and it not unique to biblical Zion traditions. The book of Ezekiel challenges a view of Zion, however, that takes these ANE aspects of the holy mountain tradition and creates what this project refers to as ‘physical Zion,’ or a Zion that links these ideas to human institutions that encapsulate them into a specific physical location. The book proposes a reworking of Zion that will separate out the aspects of Zion that are sacred, thereby protecting them from encroachment by the profane. It sets the future Zion apart as YHWH’s alone and reverts to the image of a mountain, and this view opposes that of a Zion overly connected to Jerusalem and described in the intertwining of the mountain and the garden (see Chapter Four). The next section will elaborate on how the book of Ezekiel explains ‘physical Zion’ and explore how Zion became entwined with the city of Jerusalem. Different historical elements— namely kingship, the role of cities, the Ark, and the Davidic monarchy— co-opt Zion and intertwine it with the city, and that leads to the crossed boundaries the book finds so problematic.

1. Kingship

It is difficult to disentangle kingship from deity in some instances in the ANE (see more in Chapter Five) because the king has a role in maintaining the order and flourishing that stems from the deity. This role is visible in iconography that depicts the king as a flourishing tree

¹⁴⁰ This information on Zion is not in-depth. The reason for this lack of depth is the complexity of Zion itself. There are various interpretations of Zion in the HB, and this section is only seeking to lay out the elements of Zion that it appears the book of Ezekiel is challenging.

watched over by divine figures.¹⁴¹ This difficulty in disentangling kingship and divinity is also visible in the HB in various psalms about ruling. There are psalms that appear to talk about YHWH's rule as king, called the enthronement Psalms (Pss. 47, 93, 95–100), and those that seem to focus primarily on a human king, the royal Psalms (Pss. 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 89:47–52, 101, 110, 132, 144:1–11).¹⁴²

Scholars debate the background to the royal psalms with some finding connections to ANE enthronement rituals¹⁴³ while others claim their background stems from an interpretation of 2 Sam 7:14 where YHWH claims a Davidic king as his son.¹⁴⁴ Some interpreters argue for Ps 2 as discussing a Hasmonean king,¹⁴⁵ and the interpretation deals with questions over dating the psalm. In all of these psalms, however, the focus is on the role of a human king and his relationship to Zion. Most accept that the background for Ps 2 is some kind of coronation ceremony with the debates being around frequency of ritual use (once at coronation, or annually at festivals celebrating the monarchy).¹⁴⁶ A more recent interpretation places the possible context as a legal dispute in the heavenly kings court.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Simo Parpola, "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy," *JNES* 52, no. 3 (1993): 161–166.

¹⁴² See Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, trans. James D. Nogalski (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1998), 99 and Allan Rosengren Petersen, *The Royal God: Enthronement Festivals in Ancient Israel and Ugarit?*, vol. 259, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 15

¹⁴³ Gerhard Von Rad, "Das Jüdische Königsritual," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 72, no. 4 (1947): 213–215. See also Joseph Lam, "Psalm 2 and the Disinheritance of Earthly Rulers: New Light from the Ugaritic Legal Text RS 94.2168," *Vetus Testamentum* 64, no. 1 (2014): 34–46; Gard Granerod, "A Forgotten Reference to Divine Procreation?: Psalm 2:6 in Light of Egyptian Royal Ideology," *Vetus Testamentum* 60, no. 3 (2010): 323–36.

¹⁴⁴ George A. Gunn, "Psalm 2 and the Reign of the Messiah," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 169, no. 676 (2012): 432.

¹⁴⁵ For examples see, Michael Alan Signer, "King/Messiah: Rashi's Exegesis of Psalm 2," *Prooftexts* 3, no. 3 (1983): 273–78 and Marco Treves, "Two Acrostic Psalms," *Vetus Testamentum* 15, no. 1 (1965): 82–3.

¹⁴⁶ See these debates in Sam Janse, *"You Are My Son": The Reception History of Psalm 2 in Early Judaism and the Early Church*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 51 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2009), 323–336.

¹⁴⁷ Lam, "Pslam 2," 35–36.

While this rendering does not change the focus in Ps 2 from the human king on Zion, it does potentially focus the psalm on a connection between YHWH's ruling on Zion via a chosen king rather than a specifically royal festival where the focus is solely on the human king. The legal reading does highlight YHWH's preferred heir, but the focus is on YHWH in a way not necessarily as prominent in a reading that only focuses on a royal coronation or festival.¹⁴⁸

In contrast to these psalms that link Zion with a royal blessing, are the enthronement Psalms that show YHWH as king. Sigmund Mowinkel highlights aspects of YHWH's kingship in the accepted enthronement psalms (47, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, and 100) while also finding evidence of YHWH as king in many other places (Pss 47:9; 93:1; 96:1,10; 97:1; 98:1; 99:1).¹⁴⁹ While not everyone agrees with Mowinkel on every aspect of his theory, most agree that these psalms pay tribute to some kind of festival where YHWH is established as the king on Zion.¹⁵⁰ These psalms blend a bit with those that appear to have a more royal focus at times, and one example is Ps 20. While Ps 20 is accepted as being a royal psalm rather than an enthronement psalm, it speaks of help and protection for the royal ruler as coming from Zion, and it requests the YHWH save the king (v. 9). It focuses on a divinely accepted royal king, but the focus is still on the dependence of the human king and kingdom on help from YHWH on Zion.

This connection between kingship in Israel and YHWH's rule indicates that the role of ruling in the Zion tradition is similar to that of the ANE. The deity rules, but often does so via a divinely blessed human monarchy. The relationship of the deity to the monarchy reflected in these different psalm traditions is difficult to decipher. For example, some claim that in the enthronement psalms the Judahite king likely plays a role similar to that of the

¹⁴⁸ Lam, "Psalm 2," 44.

¹⁴⁹ Sigmund Mowinkel, *Psalm Studies Vol. 1*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 183.

¹⁵⁰ Gunkel, *Introduction*, 69–73.

Babylonian king in enthronement rituals to Marduk.¹⁵¹ Although some argue that in the time when these enthronement psalms would have been active in the life of the temple there was no Judahite king.¹⁵² All of these questions and issues indicate either a conflict between two idea of ruling (meaning Zion was always about YHWH's reign and certain authors made it about a monarchic reign as well), or a time when the two existed seamlessly and a human monarchy served in Israel as it did elsewhere in the ANE (as a conduit for divine blessing of a particular kingdom).

As mentioned above, the issue for the book of Ezekiel is crossed boundaries. Whether those boundaries were crossed in the application of the Zion tradition to a human king, or whether the crossed boundaries indicate that the Zion tradition always had an element of human kingship but the line has become blurred, is not at issue here. What is evident in Ezekiel's challenge to kingship is that the Zion of the future will relegate the human monarchy to a role that is very clearly subordinate to YHWH. It appears to disentangle the rule of YHWH from that of the human king (see Chapter Five and Chapter Seven).

2. Cities and Temples

Another piece that factors into 'physical Zion' for the book of Ezekiel is the role of cities. Cities, and the temples they house, become prominent components in the identity of a people because they serve to encapsulate ideology into a concrete structure.¹⁵³ They represent the prosperity of a particular monarchy and people, but they also "acted as the stage for redefining the society's relationship with the past."¹⁵⁴ Their founding takes pieces of a

¹⁵¹ Mowinkle, *Psalm Studies*, 83-89.

¹⁵² Julian Morgenstern argues for the enthronement psalms to be active during the temple in Ezra's day, See "The Cultic Setting of the 'Enthronement Psalms,'" *Hebrew Union College Annual* 35 (1964): 8.

¹⁵³ Ömür Harmanşah, *Cities and the Shaping of Memory in the Ancient Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 154.

¹⁵⁴ Harmanşah, *Cities*, 9.

people's identity and builds a structure that represents the prosperity of a monarch and a deity because the fate of the city and the temple are intertwined.

Sandra Richter claims, "in the world of the ANE, kingship and temple building were inextricably linked."¹⁵⁵ It was the role of the king to build the temple, and therefore the temple solidified the rule of that king under the purview of a particular deity. Care of the temple and deity ensured the protection of the city, therefore, "the whole stability of the social order was dependent on the temple."¹⁵⁶ If the temple were to fail then the belief was that everything would be disrupted because the temple was the centre of creation.¹⁵⁷ The intersection of the city with the temple, and between kingship and deity, makes the city "a symbol of convergence of the divine and human worlds."¹⁵⁸ As the location of the deity, the city was an outward representation of the might of that deity, and the might of the king who built (or maintained) the temple for that deity.¹⁵⁹

Jerusalem incorporated both the material superiority of the Davidic monarchy and the blessing of YHWH in one location. The encompassing of this ideology within the city can account for the various texts that place Jerusalem and Mount Zion in parallel (Isa 2:3,4:3, 10:12,32, 24:23, 33:20, 37:22, 40:9, 41:27, 64:9; Jer 26:18; Joel 3:5, 4:16,17; Amos 1:2; Mic

¹⁵⁵ Sandra L. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: L^ešakkēn šēmô šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, BZAW 318 (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 2002), 72. She gives an example of Eanatum I of Lagaš visible in Jerrold S. Cooper, *PreSargonic Inscriptions*, vol. 1, Sumerian and Akkadian Royal Inscriptions (New Haven: The American Oriental Society, 1986), 51.

¹⁵⁶ George Ernest Wright, "The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East," *BA* 7, no. 4 (1944): 67.

¹⁵⁷ John M. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple: A Preliminary Typology," in *Quest for the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 212.

¹⁵⁸ Martti Nissinen, "City as Lofty as Heaven: Arbela and Other Cities in Neo-Assyrian Prophecy," in *Every City Shall Be Forsaken: Urbanism and Prophecy in Ancient Israel and the Near East*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Robert D. Haak JSOTSup 330 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 176.

¹⁵⁹ For an ANE example of this belief see "The Curse of Agade: The Ekur Avenged." See James B. Pritchard, ed., "The Curse of Agade," in *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, trans. Samuel N. Kramer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 414–23.

3:10,12).¹⁶⁰ While the role of cities is not unique to Judah, the political importance of both the city and the temple show “a close institutional fusion of political power and the cult; the main cult at the central sanctuary was to a large degree a matter of state.”¹⁶¹ With the proper boundaries this fusion would not be a problem, but from the perspective of the book of Ezekiel, these boundaries failed.

3. The Ark

The Ark is a complicated piece of ‘physical Zion’ because its existence is contested. As will be discussed below, however, the movement of the Ark to the temple in Jerusalem plays both a narrative and a spatial role in legitimizing both the Davidic dynasty and the cultic centralisation in Jerusalem.

Those who claim the Ark is connected to Shiloh still exhibit differences of opinion with one group seeing it as literary fiction and another as more historical. A proponent of the first, Gösta Ahlström claims that it explains the fall of the Elide priesthood and the rejection of Abiathar by Solomon. He argues it has a religio-political agenda tied to the Deuteronomistic historian.¹⁶² He sees this historian linking the Ark to Shiloh in order to encourage an audience living during the Babylonian exile by offering a sense of hope for future restoration.¹⁶³ Others, however, argue an actual historical tie to Shiloh in the epithets “YHWH of Hosts” (יהוה צבאות) and “dwelling on the Cherubim” (ישב הכרובים).¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ As will be discussed below, some of the instances more likely to have later redactions, or to describe a later time or understanding, that also pair Jerusalem and Zion have a more mythical tone. For example, Is 52:1, 62:1; Mic 4:2; Zeph 3:14; Zech 1:17, 9:9; Ps 51:20, 102:22, 128:5, 135:21.

¹⁶¹ Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period: Volume 1- From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1994), 128.

¹⁶² Gösta W. Ahlström, “The Travels of the Ark: A Religio-Political Composition,” *JNES* 43, no. 2 (April 1984): 141–42.

¹⁶³ Ahlström, “Travels of the Ark” 143–14.

¹⁶⁴ Bernd Janowski, “Keruben und Zion: Thesen zur Entstehung der Zionstradition,” in *Ernten, was man sät: Festschrift für Klaus Koch zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Dwight R. Daniels, Uwe Gießmer, and Martin Rösel (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 236;

Even among this group, however, there are debates. Some claim these epithets indicate a tie to an older tabernacle tradition,¹⁶⁵ while others link them to the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom.¹⁶⁶ This scholarly debate could also indicate there were two different Ark traditions.¹⁶⁷ One is from P, which reports a portable shrine tradition through a Jerusalemite lens that serves the Jerusalem temple; the second is non-P, this one linking the Ark to the journey through the Philistine camp before being placed in Shiloh. The disentangling of these approaches is not an issue for the question asked in this work.

The recognition that both potential sources are external to Jerusalem, but are capitalised upon at the founding of Jerusalem as the centre of Israelite/Judahite identity, is what is key. Bernd Janowski claims that “Sie wurde auf Grund ihrer in 2 Sam 6 berichteten Überführung von Kirjath-Jearim nach Jerusalem zwar zum entscheidenden religiösen Bindeglied zwischen den Nordstämmen und Jerusalem; dessen sakrale Traditionen aber hatten, wie auch der Jerusalemer Titel יְשֵׁב הַכְּרוּבִים zeigt, andere Wurzeln.”¹⁶⁸ Perhaps the Ark is a battle palladium, or perhaps simply a shrine for a more nomadic people, but the tradition

Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology*, Beiheft zur Zetischrift für die altestamentliche Wissenschaft 142 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977), 37–40 ; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of Everlasting Names*, trans. Frederick H. Cryer (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 130.

¹⁶⁵ Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, “YHWH Sabaoth- The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne,” in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: Papers Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5-7 December, 1979*, ed. Tomoo Ishida (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982), 109–38; Martin Metzger, “Jahwe Zebaoth, Der Kerubenthroner,” in *Königsthron und Gottesthron: Thronformen und Throndarstellungen in Ägypten und im Vorderen Orient im dritten und zweiten Jahrtausend vor Christus und deren Bedeutung für das Verständnis von Aussagen über den Thron im Alten Testament Text*, vol. 1, 2 vols., *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 15 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 309–51; Hans Wildberger, *Jahwe und Sein Volk: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament zu seinem 70. Geburtstag am 2. Januar 1980*, ed. Heinrich Schmid und Odil Hannes Steck (München: CHR. Kaiser Verlag, 1979), 224–30.

¹⁶⁶ Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* BZAW 177 (Berlin; New York: Gruyter, 1989), 208–12.

¹⁶⁷ See Menahem Haran, “Shiloh and Jerusalem: The Origin of the Priestly Tradition in the Pentateuch,” *JBL* 81, no. 1 (March 1962): 14–24.

¹⁶⁸ Janowski, “Keruben und Zion,” 241.

from the North is encapsulated in the image of the Ark, and therefore, its movement into the Jerusalem temple solidifies ideology in the sanctuary there.¹⁶⁹

4. Davidic Monarchy and centralisation in Jerusalem

The intertwining of the theological concepts of Zion with the city of Jerusalem occurs under the influence of the Davidic dynasty. As spatial theorists understand, “new nations demand new geographies,”¹⁷⁰ and as the nation consolidates under David and Solomon, Jerusalem becomes important geographically.

Solomon uses both memory and ideology in the story of the transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem in 1 Kgs 8. The Ark carries the connotations of the power of YHWH for both blessing (Josh 6 and 1 Sam 4) and curse (1 Sam 5 and 2 Sam 5), and moving it to Jerusalem solidifies the authority of the Davidic line. In the procession narrative, the Ark is mentioned nine times, the exodus from Egypt is mentioned five times, and Moses is mentioned three times.¹⁷¹ The transfer uses the story of the exodus that culminates in Sinai to show the combining of the traditions from the North into a central location in Jerusalem. The building of the temple by Solomon also puts him firmly within the ANE kingly role of temple builder and makes Jerusalem a city akin to other ANE cities that house deities. The ceremonial process described in 1 Kgs 8 explicitly moves the identity of YHWH to the temple in Jerusalem through the linkage between Moses/the Exodus narrative and Solomon/the procession of the Ark. It is this new temple that now manifests YHWH’s presence. “Once

¹⁶⁹ The Psalms about YHWH’s enthronement might describe a festival proceeding where the Ark is moved into the temple to enact his role as king. What is at stake in this section is the specific use of cultic identity to solidify power under the Davidic monarchy.

¹⁷⁰ David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers, *Geography and Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 240.

¹⁷¹ Similarly, the mention of the לוחות האבנים (the tablets of the covenant) are tied to the ark in Deut 9–10. Therefore, as the Ark is moved, they are moved with it. This movement pulls the imagery of the Israelite exodus and subsequent meeting with YHWH on Mt. Sinai into this new space in the Jerusalem temple. (The Ark is mentioned in 1 Kgs 8:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (twice), 9; the exodus is mentioned in vv. 9, 16, 21, 51, 53; Moses is mentioned three times in vv. 9, 53, 56.)

inside Jerusalem, the ark becomes associated with the Davidic monarchy...and adds to the authority of Jerusalem as the place where God dwells.”¹⁷²

4. Land/Kingdom

This location where God dwells would reflect the flourishing that stems from the blessing of deity (see above in section I), and this idea ties into the concept of land and kingdom. The ability to live in a flourishing land is a sign of the power and the protection of YHWH, but for the book of Ezekiel, the land plays a central role in how the people misunderstand YHWH’s relationship with them as it emerges more as a kingdom. Various traditions about land exist in the HB and with no real ability to determine which tradition the book of Ezekiel adopts, a brief description of the various ideas follows.

While there is a consistent relationship between the land of Canaan, the people, and YHWH, there are also divergent, or at least nuanced, views as well. On the one hand are stories and sources that tie YHWH to the land (Lev 25:23; 2 Kings 17:25–26; Ps 78:54; Lamentations), indicating that the worship of YHWH requires the land. On the other hand, there are texts that appear to craft a vision of what it is like to worship and serve YHWH without the land (the Joseph story in Genesis, Nehemiah, Daniel, Esther).¹⁷³ It is likely the theology and conception of the land promise shifts with historical circumstances,¹⁷⁴ but in the various traditions, the land is a consistent and prominent theme.

From the Exodus through the wilderness wanderings and into the laws of Deuteronomy, one of the focuses of the various metanarratives is land. For some it is giving

¹⁷² Victor H. Matthews, “Physical Space, Imagined Space and ‘Lived Space’ in Ancient Israel,” *BTB*, no. 1 (2003): 17.

¹⁷³ The redaction of the individual stories and sections is outside the scope of this project and will not be addressed.

¹⁷⁴ For example, Frankel looks at the different ways that the Sinai and Shechem covenant codes view the conquest and why, when much of the HB is redacted exilically and later, the Sinai covenant might emerge more prominently in that context. David Frankel, *The Land of Canaan and the Destiny of Israel: Theologies of Territory in the HB* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 111–36.

the land, while in others it is preparing the people for the land or teaching about living life in the land.¹⁷⁵ Each source in the Pentateuch approaches the land in a slightly different way.¹⁷⁶ Walter Brueggemann claims the land is central to the Pentateuchal traditions because “the final form of the text begins in an account of “earth” (Gen 1 and 2), but culminates with reference to the “land of promise” (Deut 34:4).”¹⁷⁷ While he is not arguing for a linear development of the theme in every historical circumstance, the text as it exists now indicates a trajectory that highlights the importance of the land for relationship with YHWH. In Genesis “life on the land is practically axiomatic for the constitution of “Israel”,”¹⁷⁸ as evidenced in the promise to Abram. This promise flows into Exodus as it builds on the concept of Israel’s formation by framing the entire journey from Egypt on the foundation of that same promise. If life in the land is a critical component of the relationship with deity in the patriarchal narratives, then the people must learn YHWH’s identity and begin the migration to the land promised, all major themes of Exodus.

There are differences in how the Priestly source material (P) in the Pentateuch views land, but it is important nonetheless. For P, purity in the land matters, because sin and impurity have a contaminating effect that can drive the divine Presence away. While “the camp of Israel is of itself devoid of holiness,”¹⁷⁹ its impurity can cause contamination of the sanctuary with its impurity. Further, the land is important because it is the place where the people experience YHWH’s presence, but the actions there can endanger the ability of the Presence to remain. H exhibits the same understanding of holiness but views the land as holy

¹⁷⁵ Frankel, *Land of Canaan*, 3–4.

¹⁷⁶ I acknowledge the complexity of Pentateuchal source criticism, but I am looking at a final form of the MT for the exploration of Eden in Ezekiel.

¹⁷⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), location 85.

¹⁷⁸ Frankel, *Land of Canaan*, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 185.

because it surrounds the tabernacle. “H draws upon the ancient priestly belief in a dynamic and contagious holiness that pervades the sacred sphere of YHWH’s earthly abode.”¹⁸⁰ It is in H where the land is able to become sick due to the failure of boundaries between the sacred and the profane (see the Holiness Code in Lev 18:24–28). Despite these nuanced differences, both P and H fear the contamination of the sacred because a breach of boundaries puts the sanctuary where YHWH dwells in danger of being profaned.¹⁸¹ The perspective on the cult from outside of the Pentateuch (e.g. Ps 137:4 and 2 Chr. 20:7), also appears to highlight a connection between land, cult, purity, and presence. This connection holds the general sense that “outside the land the Lord cannot be praised.”¹⁸²

For Deuteronomy, “the land is the gratuitous gift of YHWH to his people, the precondition for the well-being which will come about through their observance of the law.”¹⁸³ This idea is slightly different from that of H, where the land remains in the ownership of YHWH and can keep or discard the people depending on their conduct, or P, where cultic structures exist to protect the holiness of the land. Rather, Deuteronomy holds a theology of the land that weaves together the themes of gift and promise¹⁸⁴ by crafting a law that teaches how to live in that land. The pure gift from God that, by nature of its magnanimity, should prompt obedience to the commandments becomes the backdrop for a continuing relationship with YHWH.

¹⁸⁰ Baruch J. Schwartz, “Reexamining the Fate of the ‘Canaanites’ in Torah Traditions,” in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume: Studies in the Bible and the Ancient Near East, Qumran, and Post-Biblical Judaism*, ed. Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, and Shalom M. Paul (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 167.

¹⁸¹ Jan Joosten, *People and Land in the Holiness Code: An Exegetical Study of the Ideational Framework of the Law in Leviticus 17-26* VTSup 67 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 189–192.

¹⁸² Frankel, *Land of Canaan*, 11.

¹⁸³ Joosten, *People and Land*, 175.

¹⁸⁴ Patrick D. Miller, “Gift of God: Deuteronomic Theology of the Land,” *Int* 23, no. 4 (1969): 454.

David Frankel claims that the historical books articulate a “land centred perspective.”¹⁸⁵ They illustrate the changing relationship with YHWH that revolves around possession of the land and life in the land. Because the text of the MT ends on the loss of the land, with only the hope of a return in the distant future,¹⁸⁶ one aspect of the historical books could be interpreted as an historical account of why the land is lost. Even if they were written during the period of life in the land, they are read through the lens of exile and loss. As such, they serve as a historical account of the growing and changing importance of the land for the life and identity of the people of YHWH.

The prophetic texts share a perspective with the historical texts that the land is central to the actions of the people, even if it is in the background. The land reflects the people’s choices when it is described as suffering or being punished because of the people’s actions (Isa 24:4, 6; Jer 4:28, 23:10). It functions as an important backdrop for the message of the prophets. It also remains in view as reward, building on the idea of gift/obedience from Deuteronomy, as often the message is about what actions/reforms are necessary to keep the land.

In the HB’s current form, the promises given to the patriarchs are nurtured with the admonition to remember YHWH. Remembering brings to mind rescue from Egypt, covenant with YHWH, and the resulting inheritance of the land promised in Genesis. “The theme of Israel’s relationship to its land is clearly pivotal, holding a central place within the overall structure of the narrative of the Hebrew Bible.”¹⁸⁷ The promise of possession, the movement towards the land, and then the covenant in the land are the benchmarks of the narrative, and encompass how the people relate to YHWH.

¹⁸⁵ Frankel, *Land of Canaan*, 7.

¹⁸⁶ Brueggemann, *Land*, location 141, Frankel, *Land of Canaan*, 7.

¹⁸⁷ Frankel, *Land of Canaan*, 1.

As Jerusalem becomes the centre point for the human expression of Zion, the land that Zion ‘rules’ would logically be connected. As Jerusalem and the Davidic monarchy become central, the land that was initially YHWH’s gift turns into a kingdom. This kingdom takes certain promises about the land and weaves them into a connection with the city and the central temple that becomes crucial to how the people recognize YHWH’s faithfulness. The interweaving blurs the boundaries between land as gift and political kingdom and contributes to the blending of sacred and profane at issue for the book of Ezekiel.

Conclusion to Part A: Zion and Jerusalem

It is difficult to know when Zion and the Davidic monarchic connection became problematic. What is listed above in the discussion of 1 Kgs 8, for example, could have been a normal enactment of the enthronement of YHWH and might not necessarily represent a specific political move on the part of the Davidic monarchy. It represents part of the narrative trajectory that Ezekiel eventually highlights as problematic, however. Based on what the book of Ezekiel addresses, it appears that at some point the monarchy combined a belief in their existence with both the land promise and YHWH’s blessing that coalesces into a specific belief about Jerusalem and its importance. This focus on the city creates an environment where maintenance of the proper boundaries became an issue.

It is likely that as life became more centred around Jerusalem prior to the exile, and in the way that cities represent order over chaos in the thought of the ANE,¹⁸⁸ Jerusalem emerged as the connection point between heaven and earth and it ended up in parallel with the holy mountain. As the place where YHWH reigned in triumph over chaos (primordial and

¹⁸⁸ See note 57, Julie Galambush, *Jerusalem in the Book of Ezekiel: The City as Yahweh’s Wife* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1992) and Donna Lee Petter, *The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 246 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

historical), its possession represented a sign of everlasting covenant. While not entirely different from the rest of the ANE or other places in the HB, the book of Ezekiel highlights crossed boundaries that appear to make this particular manifestation of Zion problematic.

B. Shift from Physical to Mythic/Symbolic

The various components that combine with the city of Jerusalem are hereafter referred to as ‘physical Zion’ (because they manifest in the physical location of Jerusalem). An examination of the shift from ‘physical’ to more ‘mythic/symbolic’ is the next important task. This section is intended to highlight that the book of Ezekiel is not the only place in the HB where conversations about Zion and its connection to a physical location are in view. The book of Ezekiel is either written in, or written to depict, the exile and the struggle of the people to come to terms with how YHWH is visible without the various manifestations common before destruction of both the temple and the city. As it is intended to focus on the time period of the loss, situating it within a wider conversation about Zion theology shows that it is one example of theologizing the exile within what appears to be a more high-level conversation in the text of the HB as a whole.

Like all things concerning Zion, however, the challenge to this exploration also lies in the post-exilic redaction (and in some cases composition) of the various texts, making dating and authorship problematic. There are limited numbers of fairly uncontested texts that can be utilized to attempt to gain insight into the stages of Zion (i.e. Zion between 701¹⁸⁹–587 BCE

¹⁸⁹ 701 BCE is chosen as a date here because the survival of Jerusalem after the siege of Sennacherib solidified the belief in the inviolability of the city and is a major factor in ‘physical Zion’. Jerusalem was important before, but with what could be interpreted as a “miraculous” intervention, YHWH’s favour and faithfulness become even more firmly tied to the city itself. See Göran Eidevall, *Prophecy and Propaganda: Images of Enemies in the Book of Isaiah* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009) and Frederik Poulsen, *God, His Servant, and the Nations in Isaiah 42:1-9: Biblical Theological Reflections after Brevard S. Childs and Hans Hübner* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014). One of the themes in Isaiah deals with trusting YHWH, not least of which emerges in Isaiah’s name (YHWH saves), and emerges in

vs. the Zion of the exilic time vs. the Zion that emerges post-exile).¹⁹⁰ There are many texts that reference Zion or its themes, but those examined here attempt to show the high-level conversation about Zion in the wider HB. The texts accepted as pre-exilic have a theology that ties YHWH specifically to the location of the temple in Jerusalem; those that are post-exilic link Jerusalem to the future Zion using language that makes a correlation with a historical Jerusalem more difficult; and there are texts that show more of a middle ground as they exhibit signs of both.

1. Physical Zion: Isaiah 6 and Micah 3¹⁹¹

Regarding physical Zion Christl Maier claims that “although the beginning of this Zion Theology cannot be dated exactly, Psalms 46, 48, Isaiah 6 and Micah 3:12 attest to its flourishing at least in the second half of the eighth century and well into the seventh century B.C.E.”¹⁹² Isaiah 6 and Micah 3 exhibit an understanding of YHWH’s presence as tied to the temple. Both offer “an ideology of space based on divine presence,”¹⁹³ and are rooted in a

Is 12:2; 14:30; 26:3, 4; 30:12; 31:1; 32:9, 10, 11, 17; 36:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 15; 37:10; 47:8, 10; 50:10; 59:4. With the focus on Zion’s survival, these themes intertwine and there are contrasts between Ahaz’s trust of YHWH and Hezekiah’s. With four chapters devoted to the siege (36–39) with the outcome that Jerusalem miraculously survives (this is not taking into account the other places where this same occurrence is documented and explained in very different terms e.g. 2 Kgs 18–20 and 2 Chr 32), what Eidevall calls the “701 Paradigm” emerges as sign of YHWH’s faithfulness. See Charles K. Telfer, “Toward a Historical Reconstruction of Sennacherib’s Invasion of Judah in 701 B.C: With Special Attention to the Hezekiah-Narratives of Isaiah 36–37,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 22 (2011): 7–17.

¹⁹⁰ It is important to note that this comment seems to indicate a linear shift. It is my assumption that in all phases (pre-exile, exile, post-exile) there are competing ideas of Zion, and therefore, multiple voices in various texts that espouse different ideas.

¹⁹¹ Psalm 2 could potentially fit here. It is not discussed, however, because this entire section is based on texts that are not contested in terms of their dating. Mowinkle mentions that the psalm “is not political and historical reality but a religious and idealistic claim,” because it talks of things that were not actually true (such as “worldwide dominion” or a claim of Jerusalem’s status as a “world-class metropolis”). See Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalm Studies Volume 2*, trans. Mark E. Biddle, History of Biblical Studies 3 (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), 577. This leaves the dating of the psalm up for grabs as it represents an ideology that might have been written back into the text at a later date. See more on Ps 2 in section II above.

¹⁹² Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 59.

¹⁹³ Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 193.

vision of the temple “as the center of the cosmos and God’s throne as the vertical axis between heaven and earth.”¹⁹⁴ Psalms 48 and 46 exhibit layers. Therefore, in their redaction they show aspects of the shift in view in this section. They will be examined after Isa 6 and Mic 3 under the next heading.

Isaiah 6 describes YHWH in the temple, sitting on some kind of throne, surrounded by divine attendants, where his presence causes the thresholds of the physical temple to shake (vv. 1–4). The prophet’s lips must be cleansed (whether due to proximity or to make him a worthy vessel) (v. 5–7) and he hears both the sound of YHWH’s voice (v. 8–13) and the sound of the divine attendants (v. 3). While the actual temple is not mentioned, “the features mentioned insinuate that it is the temple of Jerusalem.”¹⁹⁵ The descriptions of the theophany relate the temple in Jerusalem to the concept of a cosmological centre,¹⁹⁶ therefore highlighting a view of the temple as an important means of maintaining YHWH’s physical presence.

Micah 3¹⁹⁷ similarly indicates that the dwelling of YHWH is somehow tied directly to Jerusalem. Here the paralleling of the city and Zion (vv. 10 and 12) ties their fates together, and encapsulates the spiritual within the physical city. The people think that despite the perpetuation of injustice their existence in the city of Jerusalem indicates YHWH’s favour; therefore, disaster cannot befall them. The intent of the verses is to challenge this interpretation, but the section indicates a strong connection between the city and Zion, a

¹⁹⁴ Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 54.

¹⁹⁵ Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 50.

¹⁹⁶ Friedhelm Hartenstein, *Die Unzugänglichkeit Gottes Im Heiligtum: Jesaja 6 und der Wohnort JHWHs in der Jerusalemer Kulttradition*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 75 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1997), 63–66.

¹⁹⁷ For debates over dating the book of Micah see Kenneth H. Cuffey, *Literary Coherence of the Book of Micah: Remnant, Restoration, and Promise*, The Library of HB/Old Testament Studies 611 (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015). Even opposition generally sees Mic 3 as a product of the 8th century prophet. See William McKane, *The Book of Micah Introduction and Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 7.

connection because YHWH dwells there and will therefore protect the city. Despite the fact that v. 12 denies ‘physical Zion,’ the need to do so indicates the prevalence of the belief in ‘physical Zion’. Micah’s prediction about Zion’s fall is unfulfilled in the time described by the prophet, but these verses are quoted by the author(s) of Jeremiah (Jer 26:18) as the historical destruction of the city looms closer. The use in these two locations indicates that at some point prior to the city’s downfall the idea that YHWH dwelt in the city, and that his presence both protected the city and provided beauty and strength, flourished.¹⁹⁸

2. Middle Ground: Psalm 48, Psalm 46, and 1 Kings 8

This set of texts exhibits some mismatches that make them possible examples of a middle ground between Zion’s ‘physical’ tie to Jerusalem and its eventual more ‘mythic’ location disassociated from the city. The blended approach to Zion exhibited in these chosen texts indicate early ideas incorporated into later texts, or they highlight disagreement and conversation around Zion at the times the texts were composed.

While the psalms of Korah are already generally accepted to have a late date,¹⁹⁹ another indication of a possible late date lies in the liturgical nature of certain verses (see below). Because these late indicators are side-by-side with expressions of Zion as a physical place, these psalms appear to contain differing ideas of Zion within them. In terms of Pss 48 and 46, David Mitchell claims that the Korah psalms deal with themes in “later literature” and fit with what he sees as an “eschatological theme” in the psalms.²⁰⁰ They also appear to

¹⁹⁸ James Luther Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1985), 90-91.

¹⁹⁹ Martin J. Buss mentions that some of the Korah Psalms have a clear post-exile date, see Martin J. Buss, “Psalms of Asaph and Korah,” *JBL* 82, no. 4 (December 1963): 386. Crawford Howell Toy mentions the link between Korah and Chronicles (See “The Date of the Korah-Psalms,” *Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis*, December 4, 1884: 80).

²⁰⁰ David C. Mitchell, “‘God Will Redeem My Soul from Sheol’: The Psalms of the Sons of Korah,” *JSOT* 30, no. 3 (2006): 365. Laato disagrees with the idea that everything dealing with Korah should be dated late and argues that introductory words in the Psalms can be added late while their content reflects earlier material. See Laato, *Origins*, 101.

“use the same kind of language and breathe the same atmosphere of confidence in God’s protecting power and kingship,”²⁰¹ as those discussed above expressing a more ‘physical Zion’. The mismatches in view likely indicate redaction, and it seems reasonable that these layers show either conflicts over defining Zion or development/shifting of the idea over time.

Psalm 48 starts off proclaiming that praise is due to Elohim in Zion, the city of the great king (v. 2) where Elohim is known in the palaces (ארמון v. 3) and the strongholds (משגב v. 3). It reads in a similar way to the picture of presence within the temple described in Isa 6, and yet extends that presence into the city itself. Much of the psalm indicates that despite challenges “Jerusalem stands unshaken.”²⁰² Laato links verses 2–8 to what he claims is an older Jerusalemite idea of YHWH as a storm-god,²⁰³ and his approach focuses attention on the aspects of the Psalm that view Jerusalem as a protected, physical place.

The middle of the psalm, however, shifts. It has mythical or liturgical language claiming that YHWH’s name and praise are “to the ends of the earth” (קצוי ארץ) indicating a shift away from the confines of the city (v.11). The personification of Mount Zion (v. 11) also indicates an approach that is inconsistent with a historical city. Other examples of a move away from a physical place lie in words like דמיון. Aubrey Johnson interprets the psalm as ritual performance because a) it ends with a ritual procession²⁰⁴ and b) דמה (v. 10) indicates a “ritual performance or acted ‘picture’ ... - the מַשֵּׁל *par excellence*.”²⁰⁵ Similarly, Maier says that the people speak from the midst of the temple, which might indicate that the psalm has been adapted to be applied to temple life.²⁰⁶ While the psalm begins with a Zion that

²⁰¹ J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay, *Psalms 1-50* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 219.

²⁰² Mitchell, ““God Will Redeem,” 377.

²⁰³ Laato, *Origins*, 112.

²⁰⁴ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (1955 repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 89.

²⁰⁵ Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 88.

²⁰⁶ Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 34. Laato disagrees and claims that the liturgy reflects an older liturgical tradition evident in both Pss. 48 and 46. See Laato, *Origins*, 169.

manifests its power physically in conjunction with the city, it ends with a description more fitting in liturgical use. Laato claims that the shift from one focus to the other shows that the psalm's composition history focuses first on "old mythical traditions" and then also on "Yahweh's actions in history."²⁰⁷ While he does not state this specifically, the shift could indicate a later redaction where the author(s) is able to theologise what the historical circumstances have changed about the earlier tradition.

There are similar shifts in Ps 46. Laato argues "the idea that Yahweh dwells in Zion must clearly be pre-exilic"²⁰⁸ evidenced in the middle stanza that views Zion as an actual city. The city of Elohim (v. 5) is the dwelling place of Elyon (v. 5) where Elohim is in the midst of the city (v. 6), which indicates that the city will not be shaken (v. 6) because of the presence of the deity. While God is the reason for the stability, "the language suggests more specifically that it is the city of God that is the divine refuge."²⁰⁹ The primary image is of a city as a symbol of the cosmos and ordered by divine authority.²¹⁰ The references to the physical city, however, are bracketed by more mythological language. Verses (2–4) mention the "day of YHWH" motif, and the end of the psalm shifts to what appears to be a more ritual/liturgical concept, where the war fought by YHWH should bring complete and final peace.²¹¹

In light of these changes, Maier says, "these perspectives together designate Mount Zion and the city on its top as sacred space, a space of divine presence. Post-exilic editors altered the Psalm by relating the text to their changed perspectives of space. They closely connected the praise of the victorious God to the temple liturgy and expanded the deity's

²⁰⁷ Laato, *Origins*, 167.

²⁰⁸ Laato, *Origins*, 168.

²⁰⁹ Sidney Kelly, "Psalm 46: A Study in Imagery," *JBL* 89, no. 3 (1970): 308.

²¹⁰ Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 43.

²¹¹ Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 93.

realm or rule to the whole world.”²¹² With the Psalm heading, that identifies the psalms with the Sons of Korah, it is possible that these changes emerged in the time when this group was re-writing certain psalms in an attempt to do as Maier claims. The changed perspective of space is subsequent to the loss of the city and the temple, therefore requiring a reworking of certain aspects of the theology.

1 Kings 8 is discussed here because of its connection to the ideology of ‘physical Zion’ seen above in the section on the Davidic dynasty. The text is difficult to date, and the Deuteronomistic redaction is conflicted on all levels.²¹³ Without delving into the details, a surface examination shows some of the same conflicting interpretations of Zion that are evident in Pss 46 and 48. The chapter first claims that the presence of YHWH filled the temple (as a cloud [ענן] v. 11) preventing the priest from ministering inside it. It also details the movement of the cult accoutrements that help solidify the ideology of physical Zion. Later in the passage, however, it asks “will Elohim really dwell on the earth?,” with the reply that only his name (v. 27) will do so, and the insistence that the deity is in “the heavens, your dwelling place” (v. 30).

Another apparent development in this text appears in v. 25, which echoes the covenant of grant found in Nathan’s words to the Davidic house in 2 Sam 7, but adds “only if they keep” (רק אם ישמרו) highlighting a stipulation to keep to YHWH’s ways added to the promise of a king on the throne. This phrase appears to be a later addition that would account for the fall of Jerusalem, and allow the prophetic voice about failed covenant observation to

²¹² Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 41. Italics mine. The quote is about Ps 48 but could also apply to Ps 46.

²¹³ For more on this section of 1 Kgs, see P. S. F. van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative: An Inquiry into the Relationship Between MT 1 Kgs. 2-11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2-11*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 104 (Leiden: Brill, 2005) and Matthew J. Adams, “The Composition of Kings,” in *Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography, and Reception*, ed. André Lemaire and Baruch Halpern, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 129 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 123-53.

factor in to how the later generation understood the early promise of a lasting Davidic king.²¹⁴ The early promise, however, reflects the view of Jerusalem prior to the loss of the temple and the city. The redaction then shows historical change and development.

What appear as ideological discrepancies in these various texts are useful when examining a big-picture conversation around the differences between a Zion that exhibits a tie between a physical city and a Zion separate from the fate of a doomed city. Likely a product of redactional layers, or later additions that seek to harmonize texts to a new historical circumstance, the shifts show hints of ‘physical Zion’ more obscured by the final form of the MT.

3. Mythic/Symbolic Zion: Third Isaiah and Zechariah 14

At the opposite end of the spectrum from the texts that view Zion and the physical city of Jerusalem in parallel, are texts such as Third Isaiah (Isa 55–66)²¹⁵ and Zech 14. In these texts, Zion becomes less connected to a physical city, and more a universal expression of YHWH’s dominion. It transforms into a mythical place that releases the waters of renewal and becomes a place of pilgrimage²¹⁶ as it combines elements of the city and the temple in a space that is less physical.²¹⁷ Maier links the idea of pilgrimage to the picture of a mother and claims,

²¹⁴ Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 211.

²¹⁵ There is still much debate over what constitutes Second and Third Isaiah and whether they need to be separated. This debate lies outside the scope of this project, but see Brooks Schramm, *The Opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the Cultic History of the Restoration*, The Library of HB/Old Testament Studies 193 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 2000).

²¹⁶ Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 64. There are some who do not see texts like Isa 60–62 as an example of pilgrimage. For example, Gary Stansell does not see Isa 60–62 as a pilgrimage, as in Isa 66, but rather, as a materially grounded coerced march of the nations to build up Zion’s material wealth. (Gary Stansell, “The Nations’ Journey to Zion: Pilgrimage and Tribute as Metaphor in the Book of Isaiah,” in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah*, ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *Ancient Israel and Its Literature* 4 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009).

²¹⁷ Paul Nadim Tarazi, “Israel and the Nations (According to Zechariah 14),” *SVTQ* 38, no. 2 (1994): 181–92; Abraham Sung-Ho Oh, *Oh, That You Would Rend the Heavens and*

“Zion’s motherly body will become a medium of God’s motherly care for the new residents of the city.”²¹⁸ Therefore, it is not that the city image is lost, but the city is a heavenly city, no longer connected to the physical city of Jerusalem and the monarchy or temple there. The texts appear to exhibit less of a physical tone that counters, or at least nuances, the earlier interpretation of Zion as a specific place in a specific location. They are discussed next.

As is visible in the description of Zion in Isa 60:17–18, the overall body of literature known as Third Isaiah shows theophany without a direct link to historical events.²¹⁹ These verses are leading up to the culmination of the vision in chapter 66 of the new heaven and the new earth,²²⁰ and the builder of this new Zion is YHWH himself. The description, “I will make peace your administrators and righteousness your overseers... the walls will be called Salvation, the gates Praise,” aids the reader in making the transition to a new kind of city, one not grounded in the reality of the present. George Knight links the future Jerusalem to the people of YHWH,²²¹ shifting the concept of Zion away from the physical city and onto a collective identity. Written amidst the destruction of the city, Third Isaiah sees Zion as “an illustration in parable form of the essence of eschatology.”²²² The physical city fades in prominence but the prophecy of Isaiah in the final chapters draws upon the more physical

Come Down!: The Eschatological Theology of Third Isaiah (Isaiah 56–66) (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2015), 134–75.

²¹⁸ Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 215.

²¹⁹ Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 357. The depictions of Zion and Jerusalem in Third Isaiah correspond to the return of the exiles and the resulting confrontations with those already in Yehud. The hope that each group held for the other appears to be what is at stake as they seek to live together after the return. The change in terminology over Zion likely accounts for some of the failures already being experienced by this group. See Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “Hope and Disappointment: The Judahite Critique of the Exilic Leadership in Isaiah 56–66,” in *New Perspectives on Old Testament Prophecy and History: Essays in Honour of Hans M. Barstad*, ed. Rannfrid I. Thelle, Terje Stordalen, and Mervyn E.J. Richardson, VTSup169 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 57–73.

²²⁰ John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 2nd ed., Word Biblical Commentary 25 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 298.

²²¹ George A.F. Knight, *The New Israel: A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 56–66*, International Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1985), 62.

²²² Knight, *New Israel*, xvii.

understanding from early in the book (Isa 2:2) while shifting the focus to eschatology. John Goldingay argues against a purely eschatological reading, but he claims “Isaiah 56-66 speaks of a new Jerusalem, but here Jerusalem/Zion functions... as a grand symbol.”²²³ This Zion is not the physical Zion of the pre-exile times.

Similarly, Rex Mason argues that Zech 14 reinterprets older biblical material for a new time in the life of the city. “Historical Jerusalem must be laid in ruins and its cultus disrupted so that a new remnant may emerge as a result of the dramatic theophany in a climax of crisis.”²²⁴ This section of Zechariah is focused on the return of the exiles and the resulting challenges of reintegration between those who had been exiled and those who had not. The struggle between a desire to rebuild the Jerusalem of old, and the reality, was causing strife. The hoped for “new Jerusalem” is not working and, therefore a new, new Jerusalem, more of an “ultimate Jerusalem,” is what is at stake.²²⁵ This ultimate Jerusalem will see YHWH as the king²²⁶ and there will be a shift away from a physical manifestation of YHWH’s presence. This shift seeks to avoid the failure of both the ‘physical Zion’ pre-exile, and the attempts after the exile to recreate what once existed. The focus in Zech 14 on Jerusalem is consistent with the shift in relationship between Jerusalem and Zion in the overall body of the MT. The city matters, but the renewal in view moves “beyond physical restoration”²²⁷ because the physical city is no longer the primary image of Zion.

²²³ John Goldingay, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 56–66*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 284.

²²⁴ Rex Mason, “The Use of Earlier Biblical Material in Zechariah 9–14: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis,” in *Bringing out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9–14*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 370 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 198–99.

²²⁵ Tarazi, “Israel and the Nations,” 183.

²²⁶ Mythic/symbolic Zion seems to transfer the leadership duties of the ‘physical Zion’ to YHWH himself. This trend is evident in Ezek 40–48 as well. For more, see Chapter Seven.

²²⁷ Mark J. Boda, *The Book of Zechariah*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 37.

Further, Zech 14 indicates a Jerusalem that has been raised up, but not only for YHWH's chosen people. Instead, Jerusalem is open to the nations "not as passive witnesses of the salvation of the Israelites, but as fellow-worshippers."²²⁸ The inclusivity of this future Zion challenges the concepts of exclusion at work in 'physical Zion,' making the 'mythic/symbolic Zion' of these chapters more universal. The combination of city and temple into, as Maier would say, an embracing motherly idea,²²⁹ has both an apocalyptic and a mythic essence.

Conclusion to a Shift from Physical to Symbolic/Mythical (Part B)

It is important to note that none of these specific texts are "clear." The point of this section is to highlight that in the overall body of the HB there are differing depictions of Zion. It is unlikely that a linear trajectory could be determined because there are various voices and agendas at work in the texts. Micah 4, for example, following after the polemic discussed above about the presence of YHWH in the city, speaks of Torah going out from Zion, a description more reminiscent of the water that flows from the 'mythic/symbolic Zion' in these later texts. Mark Boda comments on something similar that emerges in the book of Zechariah. He says, "the thought progresses from an initial positive expectation for a renewal which will see a global domination of the Davidic royal house in Jerusalem over both the northern and southern tribes (chs. 9-10) to a focused expectation related to Jerusalem and Judah for Yahweh's rule over the earth, accomplished by a divine war of global proportion (chs. 12-14)."²³⁰ His observation indicates that even within a text that is likely entirely post-exilic, there is evidence of shifts in ideology that either come from redaction, disagreement, or the changing historical circumstances of the author(s).

²²⁸ Mason, "Use of Earlier," 191.

²²⁹ Maier, *Daughter Zion*, 189–217.

²³⁰ Boda, *Zechariah*, 39.

The high-level shift in view in this section is not unaccounted for in other scholarship. For example, Paul Hanson's work on apocalyptic indicates a historical shift from what he terms prophetic eschatology to apocalyptic eschatology that reflects conflicts between various historical groups during post-exile times. He claims post-exilic literature reveals "two very divergent streams of tradition"²³¹ that seeks different answers to the historical challenges of the day. An example of these divergent streams are Isa 60–62 and Ezek 40–48.²³² He sees Ezekiel as "firmly grounded in mundane realities, seeking to establish the conditions necessary for Yahweh's dwelling among his people through concrete ordinances."²³³ In contrast, Isaiah is a "highly idealized picture threatening to become detached from the practical problem of fulfilment within the limitations of historical realities."²³⁴ Hanson's research supports the idea that a historical conversation about YHWH's continued presence was the subject of conversation for these various post-exilic groups.

These conflicts are likely happening on multiple levels in every community before and after the exile. The text in its current MT form synthesises voices and loses some of the difference (hence the very few texts that can still speak to the 'physical Zion' idea in a pure form). As such, the various layers and conversations around the Zion tradition defy easy categorisation. The final text indicates, however, that some texts exhibit a theology of presence that attached the identity of Jerusalem directly to the presence of YHWH in the temple. This is far more likely to occur before the exile and the loss of the city. The Zion that is interwoven with a Davidic monarchy and serves as "an aspect of the royal Davidic ideology which had become established in Jerusalem"²³⁵ comes into conflict with other ideas about Zion as a more 'mythic/symbolic' concept. Because Ezekiel describes the time when

²³¹ Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 43.

²³² Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 64–66.

²³³ Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 72.

²³⁴ Hanson, *Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 72.

²³⁵ Clements, *Isaiah*, 80.

Jerusalem was crumbling and the temple was destroyed, it is not difficult to imagine the book as a text designed to challenge the perspective of Zion that ties it to the doomed city.

C. Conclusion to Zion

Zion is difficult to conceptualise since its characteristics depend upon which texts are in view, and the texts themselves have varied authors and dates. Just the texts examined above highlight that a conversation is happening that makes it difficult to determine one particular view of Zion. In an attempt to focus on the book of Ezekiel, the point is to examine where in this overall conversation on defining Zion the book might fit. Because it challenges the view of Zion that connects it to the physical city of Jerusalem, and that makes sense based on the book's stated time period, it attempts in some ways to contextualize why there might be differences between the two interpretations. The loss of the city and the temple requires an understanding of Zion that separates it from those doomed physical entities if there is any chance of it continuing on after the Babylonian conquest.

As already mentioned, part of how the book shifts a focus on Zion is through a contrast between the mountain and the garden, and that contrast allows the book's interest in Zion and Eden to focus attention on other ways that Zion and Eden connect in the HB.

III. Zion-is-Eden: Why the Eden Garden in an Exploration of Zion

The foundational belief that there is a connection between Zion and Eden, whether metaphorically or physically, is common in HB scholarship.²³⁶ Specifically related to

²³⁶ For Fishbane the issue is one of typology. Eden is an "archetypal memory of spatial harmony and divine bounty," and because Zion comes to represent these same ideas the Edenic image aids in endowing Zion with the ideas and memories of Eden. See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 367 and see section pages 368–72. Childs claims, "...in the mind of the Biblical writers, Eden and Zion were not clearly distinguished." See Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1962), 88 and see section pages 86–88. An article on the New

Ezekiel, the work of Jon Levenson and Terje Stordalen are important. Levenson explores Ezekiel's future temple vision, and Stordalen explores Eden symbolism in the HB.

A. Levenson: Eden and the Temple Vision in Ezekiel

Levenson argues for the ideas of Eden being absorbed into images of Zion as he sees various Eden motifs expressed in the future temple of Ezek 40–48. The Zion and Eden connection is less about allusions and more of a telescoping, where the important Eden themes are overtaken by Zion as it is described by the vision in Ezek 40–48. He states Ezekiel, or his school, is “first to conceive the eschatological era explicitly in the colors of the Garden of Eden.”²³⁷ Levenson draws connections between the two intertextually. Specifically, he connects an ancient fable of the land of gold,²³⁸ Eden, and the temple, as locations of natural abundance.²³⁹ He also links Gihon and Jerusalem (1 Kgs 1:33),²⁴⁰ and finds subterranean waters and sacred trees to be identifying markers of both Eden and Zion.²⁴¹ Finally, he interprets the mountain of the temple vision as the mountain that nurtures the future king in Ezek 40.²⁴²

For Levenson, because Zion exhibits many of the same complexes of ideas as Eden, and Eden ceases to be mentioned very early in the text of the HB, Zion must be the “new”

Testament claims it as fact, Reidar Hvalvik, “Christ Proclaiming His Law to the Apostles: The Traditio Legis-Motif In Early Christian Art and Literature,” in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune*, ed. John Fotopoulos, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 405–38.

²³⁷ Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48* (Cambridge, Mass.: Scholars, 1976), 34.

²³⁸ Levenson, *Theology*, 27. The fable is reflected in Eden Gen 2:11–12 and Ezek 28:4 and the gem list Ezek 28:13–14. He does not say what the fable is, but the connection of gold and precious stones is in both.

²³⁹ Levenson, *Theology*, 28.

²⁴⁰ Levenson, *Theology*, 29. He says a mention of Gihon in Eden would have called to mind the Jerusalem/Zion complex of ideas just as any mention of supernatural waters and natural beauty would call to mind both Eden and Jerusalem/Zion.

²⁴¹ Levenson, *Theology*, 30.

²⁴² Levenson, *Theology*, 25.

Eden. Because the only other high mountain (הר גבה) outside of Ezek 40:2 is in Ezek 17:22, where a future mountain that nourishes the rescued vine representing Davidic kingship is in view, and because of the parallel mention of Eden and a holy mountain in Ezek 28, he sees Zion as a representation of the lost ideas of Eden.²⁴³ He claims that, “in Ezekiel and/or his school, the vocabulary of Zaphon/Zion, the Temple mountain, is common to the old myth of the Garden of Eden.”²⁴⁴

B. Stordalen: Eden Symbolism in the Hebrew Bible

Stordalen indicates that there is a crossover in imagery that, once recognised in various Second Temple texts, sharpens connections between Zion and Eden visible in the HB. He begins by listing out the ways that the Second Temple texts understand Eden. Many see Eden as a mountain (1 En 26 and Jub 4:26), or as a temple (indicated by the purity laws in place for access to the garden after childbirth in Jub 3). 3 Enoch 5 shows the spirit of the Lord moving about in a manner similar to the tent of meeting. 1 Enoch 24–25 sets Paradise among other mountains where it serves as a prototype for the holy mountain of Jerusalem.²⁴⁵ Jubilees 4:26 says that there are four places holy to the Lord: the Garden of Eden, a mountain in the east, Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion, suggesting that in the mind of these authors Eden is a mountain as well as a garden, and is a significant site for theophany.²⁴⁶ In some cases, a paradisiacal influence is interpreted in the temple (Enoch), and in others the temple influences later

²⁴³ Levenson, *Theology*, 25.

²⁴⁴ Levenson, *Theology*, 26.

²⁴⁵ T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2-3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 25 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2000), 410.

²⁴⁶ Andrew Geist and James C. VanderKam, “The Four Places that Belong to the Lord (Jubilees 4.26),” *JSP* 22, no. 2 (2012): 146–62.

understandings of paradise (2 Bar 4).²⁴⁷ In both cases, Eden, temple, garden, and mountain are intertwined in various interpretations of sacred space.

Stordalen then goes on to show where these more obvious connections between gardens and mountains illuminate the more implicit associations in the text of the HB. For example, once the mountain and paradise relationships are more readily recognized, when Zion is depicted as a place of peace, “the peace motif corresponds to an element of safety and harmony in garden symbolism”²⁴⁸ (e.g. Lam 2:6; Ezek 34:29). Abundance (an obvious garden attribute) comes from Zion in various forms, such as Zion roads and agricultural blessing.²⁴⁹ Stordalen’s idea of “Zion roads” indicates roads to and from Zion teeming with life, in contrast to non- Zion roads that lead to locations lacking vitality. This idea is particularly prominent in Isa 40–55.²⁵⁰ Agricultural blessing generally comes from the temple because temples are locations for divine presence.²⁵¹ Agricultural fertility, expressed in the image of a garden, would then link the image of an Eden Garden and the temple as well. Fertility becomes a sign of both Zion and Eden, which therefore allows him to find places of overlap whenever one or the other is mentioned. When added to the handful of verses that appear to indicate that Zion is specifically a garden (Jer 26:18, 31:12, Lam 2:6, Mic 3:12) he is able to reflect that Zion might well be a future reflection of the Eden Garden.²⁵²

C. Conclusion to Zion-is-Eden

The approaches articulated by Levenson and Stordalen indicate an implicit understanding of a connection between images and allusions to Zion and Eden. When Levenson claims “both

²⁴⁷ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 410.

²⁴⁸ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 412.

²⁴⁹ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 414–18.

²⁵⁰ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 415. He discusses Isa 40:1–11; 43:16–21; 51:9–11.

²⁵¹ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 417. See more below.

²⁵² Stordalen, *Echoes*, 410–14.

Zaphon/Zion and the mountain of 'El, on the one hand, and Eden, on the other, are specific historical reflexes of the idea of a garden of God/the gods,"²⁵³ he is highlighting the sense of their interchangeability. Scholarship observes the similarities between the two images, and, therefore, also the common link between Zion and Eden as reflections of the mountain and the garden.

While both Levenson and Stordalen are correct in certain ways,²⁵⁴ the implicit blending of the images makes distinguishing the characteristics of both, and what the differences mean, easy to miss. As discussed in the first section of the chapter, mountains and gardens share imagery and interpretation in the ANE that accounts for the implicit combining visible in the text of the HB. Understanding how the two are different, however, would lend more weight to the passages where they blend together. For example, why is the temple decorated with garden imagery and what might the message be when the gardens and mountains are understood as having explicit differences?²⁵⁵ It is their differences that factor into how the book of Ezekiel uses the images, and the differences contain a message about Zion that is lost if the two spaces are viewed simply as reflexes of one another.

²⁵³ Levenson, *Theology*, 31.

²⁵⁴ Both approaches require that the HB be read in its completed form in order to see the connections they make. If the layers are peeled back, it might be more difficult to find that either approach is 100% correct. Both offer unique ways of understanding the images of Zion and Eden in relationship with one another, and they highlight that the same kinds of ideas (fertility, blessing, power) are visible in both. As discussed in the section above on mountains and gardens, the crossover in the images is common and visible in certain ways of reading the HB.

²⁵⁵ See Peter Thacher Lanfer, *Remembering Eden: The Reception History of Genesis 3:22-24* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 127–157 and Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden," in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood': Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399–404 for information on garden decoration in the temple and a connection to the sanctuary.

IV. Conclusion

In the overall text of the HB there is a non-linear shift from seeing Zion as connected to physical aspects of the Israelite/Judahite worldview, namely the city of Jerusalem, to its emergence as a more mythic or symbolic place less easily defined or connected to day-to-day existence. For the book of Ezekiel, a text primarily focused on the Babylonian exile, the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple housed there would necessitate a shift in Zion theology. The connections between Zion and Eden in the metanarrative of the HB allows the images of mountains and gardens to become useful tools in crafting a “counterstory” to ‘physical Zion’.

With many areas of potential confluence in both the literature and iconography- primarily divine activity and as a source of the waters- gardens and mountains also have a notable difference. Mountains tend to represent more clearly the abode of the deity as they connect heaven and earth, while gardens are more of a border and highlight divine presence. In separating them, one can remain an immovable image of YHWH’s blessing (the mountain) while the other can be reconstructed to function as a place of both failure and restoration (the garden). The mountain remains connected with Zion in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 40–48), and becomes the image of YHWH’s future kingship as it moves towards a more ‘mythic/symbolic’ manifestation (see Chapter Seven). The garden is cleansed of impurity and then reformulated to act as a location that points to YHWH’s presence on the mountain. This separation, and how Ezekiel uses the image of the garden to change an approach to Zion, is the subject of the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Oracles Against Foreign Nations

The “counterstory” to ‘physical Zion’ begins in the OANs in Ezek 28 and 31. This chapter seeks to establish a foundation for understanding how the message in these OANs can apply to Zion, an idea integral to Judahite identity, when the oracles are addressed to Tyre and Egypt. While OANs are generally viewed as applying to foreign nations, as the name implies, part of how Ezekiel protects a belief in Zion is to highlight his own people as the object of YHWH’s wrath. This chapter will argue that OANs are a literary device used in various prophetic books, but while they have some similarity with one another, this study will argue that their primary similarity is with the rhetoric of the book in which they appear. This similarity allows OANs to function as a recognisable type of literature on the one hand, and as highly integrated with their overall prophetic book on the other. This linkage indicates that while OANs are recognizable as OANs in various prophetic books, Amos’s OANs can contain a message not present in Ezekiel’s, and vice versa. This chapter will first briefly layout how this project interprets OANs, and then it will highlight that this interpretation allows Ezekiel’s OANs to apply to his own people.

I. OANs Scholarship

OANs appear in the historical texts (1 Kgs 22:6; 2 Kgs 3:18–19), the Psalms (Ps 60), and every prophetic book of the HB except Hosea.²⁵⁶ Along with evidence of their existence in the ANE,²⁵⁷ this frequency indicates that they are a type of utterance not unique in the

²⁵⁶ They exist sometimes in one-off verses rather than long blocks of OANs as they appear in some books. Each prophetic text, however, has some saying against foreign nations, and some books, like Jonah, appear to almost be entirely an OAN.

²⁵⁷ William L. Moran, “New Evidence From Mari on the History of Prophecy,” *Biblica* 50, no. 1 (1969): 15–56; Abraham Malamat, “Prophetic Revelations in New Documents from Mari and the Bible,” in *E L Sukenik Memorial Volume*, ed. Nahman Avigad (Israel: Eretz-Israel, 1967), 231–40; Pritchard, ed., “The Curse of Agade,” 414–23.

Hebrew prophets, even though the organization of OANs into long bodies of work is unique in biblical prophetic literature. Scholars generally agree that the value of the OANs in the prophetic corpus stems from what the oracles mean to Israel, not how they are interpreted by the foreign nations themselves.²⁵⁸ Most scholarship has focused on their origin (the main suggestions are the war oracle,²⁵⁹ the cult,²⁶⁰ or treaty curses²⁶¹) rather than their usage, but it is the usage that is of primary importance for what follows.

The primary scholarship driving how this project views Ezekiel's OANs stem from John Geyer,²⁶² and the collaborative effort of the volume *Concerning the Nations*.²⁶³ Geyer posits that OANs are a type of genre. Because he claims, "hubris is the cardinal offense of

²⁵⁸ John H. Hayes, "The Usage of Oracles Against Foreign Nations in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 87 (1968): 81 and Claus Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 204–205. See also Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles," 473–92. She says there is the possibility "that Ezekiel's object was not externally oriented polemic... but an internally oriented theological argument" (475–476).

²⁵⁹ Duane L. Christensen, *Transformations of the War Oracle in Old Testament Prophecy: Studies in the Oracles Against the Nations*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion (Missoula: Scholars for Harvard Theological Review, 1975); Alfred Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination Among the Hebrews and Other Semites* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), 255–58, 281–89 (although he is talking more about the Psalms than the OAN); Christopher B. Hays, *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), location 7521; Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26–52*, vol. 27, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 275; Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 27. (example of Balaam)

²⁶⁰ Sigmund Mowinckel, *Prophecy and Tradition: The Prophetic Books in the Light of the Study of the Growth and History of the Tradition* (Oslo: Kommissjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1946), 81–84 and John B. Geyer, "Mythology and Culture in the Oracles Against the Nations," *VT* 36, no. 2 (1986): 129–45. John Hayes argues for this position by looking at Lam 4:21–22 in Hayes, "Usage of Oracles," 88.

²⁶¹ Michael L. Barré, "The Meaning of *l' sybnw* in Amos 1:3-2:6," *JBL* 105, no. 4 (1986): 611–31; Thomas G. Smothers, "A Lawsuit Against the Nations: Reflections on the Oracles Against the Nations in Jeremiah," *Review and Expositor* 85 (1988): 545–54.

²⁶² John B. Geyer, *Mythology and Lament: Studies in the Oracles About the Nations* (England: Ashgate, 2004).

²⁶³ Else Kragelund Holt, Hyun Chul Paul Kim, and Andrew Mein, eds., *Concerning the Nations: Essays on the Oracles Against the Nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel*, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 612 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

mythological traditions,”²⁶⁴ he first explores terminology of hubris in order to establish the OANs as mythological in nature. Then he argues that because mythology is active and vibrant in the life of the temple, the myriad of mythological themes in the OANs indicates their underlying use must also lie in the temple. It is this mythological link between the OANs of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and temple liturgy that allows him to see the OANs as a genre of literature specifically tied to the cult. While his focus on the genre of mythology drives his view of dating, and is therefore contested a bit in what follows, his work is instrumental in shaping my thought process on OANs.²⁶⁵ His understanding of OANs as a category of literature allows an approach separated from the traditional origins conversation. In trying to avoid the pitfall of having to conform to a particular set of rules, however, this project tries to avoid the term “genre,” while still recognizing that Geyer’s insight about a literary category is invaluable.²⁶⁶

Concerning the Nations places more importance on the overall narrative of the particular prophetic works, allowing space for all the various historical suggestions for relating OANs to the life of Israel. The authors understand “the topics investigated and the interpreted approaches are multifaceted... readers will discover [that] each prophetic book

²⁶⁴ Geyer, *Mythology and Lament*, 179.

²⁶⁵ If I followed Geyer exactly, I would discount Amos and Ezek 25 because they lack mythological themes. Their lack of mythology leads Geyer to date them later than the other bodies of OANs, and by extension they are able to be left out of his argument for proving the OANs as a genre. This project builds on his idea of genre in its understanding of the OANs as a specific literary category, but avoids the genre designation because the OANs do not need to relate to one another to be a literary device utilised by the various prophets in their rhetoric. Because of my indebtedness to Geyer, but also the need to separate out how this project understands OANs, both Amos and Ezek 25 are discussed below to show that unlike Geyer, the method of understanding OANs in this project is consistent even in those OANs he would discount.

²⁶⁶ Genre indicates more similarity than difference in my opinion. Because the OAN exist in places outside of the latter prophets, and because there are more differences in their use than similarities, I think it is clearer to claim that OANs are a type of narrative utilised in unique ways in various places. Geyer’s steps to labelling them a genre, however, is helpful in laying a foundation for my understanding.

displays its own unique issues.”²⁶⁷ The authors approach the OANs in a more holistic way, examining each prophetic book’s specific relationship to its OANs, thereby exploring questions of how the OANs integrate, complement, and function rhetorically within each book. Combining the idea of a literary category, and the OAN’s ability to further the individual messages in each book, allows for an exploration of these oracles as a common literary device utilised within the rhetorical scheme of particular prophetic works.²⁶⁸

II. OANs in Ezekiel

For this approach to OANs to hold true for Ezekiel, there must be a rhetorical tie between the overall message of the book of Ezekiel and the OANs. The next section explores that rhetorical tie in two ways. It first explores Ezekiel’s use of metaphor and story, showing the OANs as possibly an extended metaphor. Secondly, it investigates the way Ezekiel casts his audience into the position of the foreigner which then aids in understanding why the OANs exhibit linguistic and conceptual links with Judah itself.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁷ Holt, Kim, and Mein, *Concerning the Nations*, xiii–xiv.

²⁶⁸ For this project, rhetoric simply means a focus or style that pervades a particular work. Each prophet has a rhetorical task (Zion in Isaiah, idolatry in Jeremiah, see below) and the OAN of each prophet are used to support and further the main rhetorical goal of that prophet’s work. Rhetoric is a common area of scholarly interest as indicated by the following examples: Mark Gray, *Rhetoric and Social Justice in Isaiah* The Library of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament Studies 432 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006); Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* VTSup 76 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Thomas H. Olbricht and Anders Eriksson, eds., *Rhetoric, Ethic, and Moral Persuasion in Biblical Discourse: Essays from the 2002 Heidelberg Conference* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005); James Arthur Durlleser, “The Rhetoric of Allegory in the Book of Ezekiel” (University of Pittsburgh, 1988); Richard Dudley Blake, *The Rhetoric of Malachi* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Dissertation Information Service, 1993); Lloyd M. Barré, *The Rhetoric of Political Persuasion: The Narrative Artistry and Political Intentions of 2 Kings 9–11* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1988).

²⁶⁹ While Carly Crouch approaches the OANs differently than this project, the conclusions she comes to in her article “Ezekiel’s Oracles,” support those drawn in this project. She says that the goal of her study is to show how the OANs “deploy the mythological traditions of Judah specifically and deliberately to affirm Yahweh’s claims to kingship.” (479) This project is exploring how the Eden Garden references in the book challenge the pre-exile Zion tradition, one aspect of which is the intertwining of YHWH’s

1. Metaphor and Language in Ezekiel

As reflected in the methodology, this project recognizes Ezekiel as a storyteller who utilises various aspects of story and language in unique and challenging ways. One example of this use of story and language emerges in the frequency of the word מִשַּׁל. The word specifically appears in Ezek 12:22, 23; 14:8; 16:44; 18:2–3; 21:5; 24:3, while other sections of the book appear to be related to this term despite the fact that the word is not used. Some examples of the latter are where Ezekiel parallels riddle and parable (Ezek 17:1); he uses terminology that calls to mind metaphor (Ezek 3:27; 12:27–28; 16:44–45; 18:2–4; 20:32; 33:4–25; 36:13–14); he uses poetic descriptions to challenge Israel’s thinking (Ezek 11 “pot and flesh”); he uses sign acts, or bodily metaphors (Ezek 4 and 24), to teach certain lessons. His use of the מִשַּׁל is so extensive that Ezekiel complains to YHWH that the people do not listen to him because they see him as one speaking in מִשַּׁל (Ezek 21:5) they cannot understand. These various examples of the use of מִשַּׁל indicate that it factors into the rhetoric of the overall book in important ways.

In addition to the use of מִשַּׁל, there are many phrases unique to the book of Ezekiel. Some examples are: “mountains of Israel” (הַרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), “bear calamity” (נָשָׂא כְלָמָה), “land of Israel” (אֶדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל), “pestilence and blood” (דְּבַר וָדָם), “sons of Zadok” (בְּנֵי צִדּוֹק), “naked and bare” (עָרֹם וְעֵרָה), “bare rock” (צָחַח סֶלֶעַ), “spreading of nets” (מִשְׁטַח חֲרָמִים), “rebellious house” (בֵּית מָרִי), and “scorn of soul” (בִּשְׂאֵט נֶפֶשׁ). These phrases indicate a sophisticated approach to language and story that suits the book’s exilic context. The exile has raised questions about YHWH’s justice and the new geography of exile allows, and requires, new terminology and new applications of old sayings to challenge deeply held ideals. When linked to Ezekiel’s use of connotative language, or מִשַּׁל, the overall rhetoric of the book is designed to challenge the

blessing with human, especially Davidic, kingship. Crouch’s look at OANs through the lens of important elements of Judah’s past (royal military ideology for her), is to see the OANs as a kind of literature unique to the overall message of Ezekiel’s book.

accepted place of the audience in particular stories. Sometimes this is accomplished through elaborate metaphors and sometimes through unique phrasing. Ezekiel's use of the concept of foreignness is a good example of both connotative language (the need of the audience to interpret) and story. It opens an avenue of approach to the OANs that aids in understanding why so many terms applied to Israel/Judah also appear therein.

2. Foreignness in Ezekiel

Ezekiel challenges the people's relationship to the land in several ways. Discussed in-depth in Chapter Six, he alters the terminology relating to possession, and the result is that the audience has to wrestle with both the relationship between themselves and the land, and the relationship between the land and the promises of YHWH.²⁷⁰ Their position outside the land positions them as foreigners, a trope that also emerges in Ezek 44. Ezekiel 44 reads:

Enough of your abominations O house of Israel, when you allowed in sons of foreigners uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary to profane it my house when you offered my food, the fat and the blood, and they made my covenant cease with all their abominations. And you have not kept charge of the holy things, but have put keeping the charge of my holy things to (from?) you. Thus says the Lord YHWH, no son of a foreigner uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel shall enter my sanctuary. But the Levites who went far from me when Israel went astray, who went astray from me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. (Ezek 44:6–10).

In *Priestly Rule* Nathan MacDonald lays out the following breakdown of vv. 6–16:²⁷¹

Foreigners and Levites	Levites and Sons of Zadok
Actions of Foreigners v 6–8	Actions of the Levites v. 12
Leads to exclusion v.9	Leads to exclusion v. 13–14
Rather Levites went astray v. 10	But Zadokites were faithful v. 15a
Exercise of cultic role v. 11	Exercise of priestly role v. 15b–16

²⁷⁰ As noted in chapter one, this project believes that Ezekiel's audience were the elites exiled in the first deportation and that they knew the stories and traditions the book currently employs as a means of challenging their understanding of Zion.

²⁷¹ Nathan MacDonald, *Priestly Rule: Polemic and Biblical Interpretation in Ezekiel 44* BZAW 476 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 39.

MacDonald's layout highlights that structurally both the foreigners and the Zadokites are closely linked to the Levites. In other words, foreigner/Levite: Levite/Zadokite telescopes on the Levites. The relationship between the Levite/Zadokite is not discussed here but serves as a future vision of a properly functioning cult, while the foreigner/Levite combination is what Ezekiel highlights as part of the reason for the exile.

There are three primary links between the Levite and the foreigner: the bearing of sin, Ezekiel's interpretation of the exile's relationship to the land, and circumcision. The issue of bearing sin appears in v. 10, right after the disparaging of the uncircumcised foreigners in v. 9. The foreigners are unwelcome, but the Levites who went astray will bear their punishment in the continuation of their duties. In v. 10, the use of the 3rd masculine plural pronominal suffix, "their," is unclear. It reads as though the Levites are bearing the iniquity of the foreigner, which makes little sense in light of the priestly code.²⁷² Verses 9–10 read similarly to Num 18:22–23 where the Levites bear the sin of the people (also the 3rd masculine plural pronominal suffix translated as "their"), but in Ezek 44:9–10 the people are replaced by the foreigner. This reading indicates a close connection between the Levite and these foreigners, as there is no mention in the HB of cultic personnel bearing sin for anyone but the sons of Israel. But what grounds would Ezekiel have to relate his audience to a foreigner?

²⁷² MacDonald argues that Ezek 44:10 must mean that the Levites bear their own sin because v. 12 also claims that they bear their sin; see MacDonald, *Priestly Rule*, 49–51. Verse 12, however, uses the cultic נָשָׂא עוֹן to reference the Levites again bearing 'their' sin, and it follows the accusation that they ministered to the foreigners before their idols. Later in the verse, the author uses the phrase נָשָׂא כָלִם which is an Ezekielism that means 'to bear shame' and seems to have more of a connotation of memory and bearing shame/memory as a sign of guilt. It seems to me that the cultic bearing of sin still indicates bearing the sin of the foreigners because they ministered before the idols, while the less cultic bearing of shame indicates that the Levites, like the people, will bear the memory of their shame in the future. I do not see it necessary to read verse 12 as MacDonald does, where the Levites only bear their own sin. Therefore verse 12 does not influence my reading of verse 10.

There is debate over the meaning and translation for various terms describing the foreigner in the HB,²⁷³ but an exploration of Exod 12: 43–49 is helpful because many of the words for foreigner appear therein, enabling limited conclusions about their relationship to one another. Certain categories of people are excluded from Passover, namely the “son of a foreigner” (בני נכר), the “sojourner” (תושב) and the “hired servant” (שכיר); those more permanently connected to the house of Israel, namely the “purchased slaves” (עבד מקנת כסף) and the “resident aliens” (גר), are included so long as they are circumcised.²⁷⁴ These verses indicate that the distinction is “between persons permanently and non-permanently living in the land.”²⁷⁵ The concept of living in the land, and the resulting relationship between land proximity and covenant, is particularly painful for Ezekiel’s context. His audience lives outside the land, raising difficult ideological questions about their own legal right to the land. These ideological questions place them into an unfamiliar place in regards to these categories defining permanence with respect to the land.

To take the challenge of foreignness one step further, various texts dealing with participation of the various foreigners in the cult first address the issue of circumcision (Exod 12:44 and 48). While Ezekiel’s audience would already be circumcised in the traditional sense, the restorative sections of the book appear to require a new type of circumcision. This new mark of circumcision is alluded to in Ezek 44:9 and Ezek 36:26–27. Ezekiel 44 talks of circumcision of heart while Ezek 36 talks of the need for a new heart of flesh to replace the one of stone.²⁷⁶ Together, they indicate that some new mark of circumcision is required for this restored covenant. Also, as will be discussed below, the OANs against Tyre and Egypt

²⁷³ Jakob Wöhrle, “The Integrative Function of the Law of Circumcision,” in *The Foreigner and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Reinhard Achenbach, Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 71–87.

²⁷⁴ Wöhrle, “Integrative Function,” 81.

²⁷⁵ Wöhrle, “Integrative Function,” 81.

²⁷⁶ This phrase is rare in the HB appearing only in Lev 26:41; Jer 9:25; Ezek 44:9.

indicate punishment as consignment to the pit with the uncircumcised. The surprising relationship between YHWH's people and this uncircumcised group forces the question of whether the new circumcision of the heart implies that the initial act of circumcision, and the covenant it heralded, is permanent. Because they are required to undergo a circumcision of heart, and they are punished with/like the uncircumcised, the indication is that they are somehow similar to this foreign group.

While most interpret Ezek 44:6–11 as listing an abomination of the house of Israel, that of allowing foreigners into the temple to serve in YHWH's sanctuary, the link between the people and the foreigners offers an alternative interpretation. Not only did the cultic personnel not call the people to repentance, but they allowed them into the sanctuary and continued the functioning of the cult, which would further profane both the cultic accoutrements and the land itself. In this sense, the cult *is* run by foreigners and on behalf of foreigners, but the focus is on the failure of the cultic leadership to maintain proper boundaries.

Taken together with the discussion in Chapter One, the book places the audience into a foreign role in four specific ways. Firstly, the shift in the concept of possession from one where the people appear to have a kind of ownership of the land, to a term that indicates that the land remains in YHWH's possession and the people are simply allowed to use it, removes the people from a position of power relative to ownership. In this shift, they might eventually live in the land like the “sojourner” (תושב) or work the land like a “hired servant” (שכיר), but their relationship to the land is not one where they can claim ownership. Secondly, the exile, and its connection to the idea of dispossession, puts the people into the place of the foreigners who were vomited out of the land before them (Lev 18:24–28). Thirdly, the relationship between the Levite and the foreigner in Ezek 44 appears to connect to the cultic ceremony of Num 18 indicating that the Levites are bearing the sin for this group of foreigners. As there is

no precedent for cultic personnel to bear sin for anyone but the sons of Israel, these “sons of foreigners” are likely Ezekiel’s own people. Fourthly, the relationship between those who are uncircumcised and Ezekiel’s requirement for his people to undergo a new kind of circumcision, appears to shift the people from a place of relationship with YHWH to what is foreign and in need of some kind of new covenant.

3. Foreignness in Ezekiel’s OANs

Recognizing the connections between Tyre, Egypt, and YHWH’s own people continues the theme of foreignness, indicating that like the other OANs discussed above, OANs in Ezekiel are also consistent with the rhetoric of the book. These connections, along with Ezekiel’s use of מִשַּׁל, show the OANs as a type of extended metaphor.

a. Chapter 25

Chapter 25 is addressed briefly for two specific reasons. Firstly, it is the only section of the OANs not addressed to Tyre and Egypt, and secondly, just like the OANs in Amos, Geyer considers it a late addition because it does not have mythological themes. Like the sections on Tyre and Egypt, however, it exhibits rhetorical and linguistic ties to Israel/Judah. While it might be a late addition, it still conforms to the pattern being argued herein.

Lydia Lee²⁷⁷ discusses the phrases “cut off” and “outstretched hand.” Separately, the phrases are not unique to Ezekiel; the idea of “outstretched hand” is frequently used as a means of conveying YHWH’s strength whether for Israel’s gain (in the plague narratives of Exod 7:19; 8:1, 2, 13; 9:22; 10:12, 21, 22; 14:16, 26, 27) or detriment (Jer 6:12; 15:6; 21:5; 51:25; Isa 5:25). “Cut off” is common in H (Lev 17–26) and deals with divine judgment. Lee

²⁷⁷ The rest of this chapter is heavily dependent upon Lee’s argument. My own research led me to some of these connections prior to reading Lee, but as many are covered in her 2016 publication, she is cited extensively.

notes that the connection of these two common phrases, however, is unique to Ezekiel in chapters 14 and 25. In Ezek 14 there is no question that they are applied to Judah, as the chapter deals with coming judgment on Jerusalem because of false prophecy and unfaithfulness.²⁷⁸ Therefore, when applied to foreign nations in Ezek 25 the appearance of these phrases together causes comparison for the audience between the fate of Jerusalem and the fate of these nations.

While the combination of these phrases is just one example,²⁷⁹ it shows that Ezek 25 has “literary elements [that] bear resemblances to the traditions related to the Promised Land and the divine judgment against Jerusalem.”²⁸⁰ Therefore, despite not fitting Geyer’s category and being disregarded as a late addition to the OANs of Ezekiel, Ezek 25 remains true to the pattern of OANs being established here. It blurs the line between Ezekiel’s audience and the other nations thereby making connections between what is foreign and Ezekiel’s audience.

b. The Tyre OANs

There are various linguistic connections between Tyre and Israel/Judah. While the most obvious examples are in Ezek 27 and 28, where the phrase “complete in beauty” is also found, Ezek 26 contains clues as well.²⁸¹ Ezekiel’s words against Tyre in 26:4, 14, that she will be made like “bare rock” (צֶחִיחַ סֵלֶע), calls to mind Ezek 24 where YHWH tells Jerusalem he will place her blood on “bare rock” (צֶחִיחַ סֵלֶע). In Ezek 24:7–8 the phrase likely refers to the prohibition of Lev 17. Jacob Milgrom argues that covering spilled blood with dust (Lev 17:13) is what separates sacred bloodshed from murder.²⁸² While the Holiness Code

²⁷⁸ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 73.

²⁷⁹ For more, see Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 63–78.

²⁸⁰ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 64.

²⁸¹ Lee does not discuss chapter 26.

²⁸² Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), location 2750.

generally requires all blood to be presented to YHWH in the tabernacle, in certain circumstances, it allows the alternative of covering the blood (דם) with dust (עפר). Milgrom claims that this process prevents both the spilled blood from crying out for vengeance, and the use of the blood in rituals to deities besides YHWH. In Ezek 24:6, the naming of the city as “bloody,” in addition to the link to the Levitical law against bloodshed, highlights the nature of this bloodshed as murder. This fact leads YHWH to claim he will do the same to Jerusalem in his vengeance (Ezek 24:8).

“Bare rock” appears again in Ezek 26:3 when speaking of Tyre’s fate. Just as wrath will “go up” against Jerusalem in 24:8, the many nations will ‘go up’ against Tyre in 26:3 and she will become bare rock (צוח סלע) after the nations scrape her dust (עפר) into the sea. Similarly, blood will be visible on the ‘bare rock’ of Jerusalem (Ezek 24:8), and Tyre’s bloodshed will be visible on her “bare rock” (Ezek 26:4, 14) after the predicted destruction. In a further ironic twist, the destruction caused by YHWH’s wrath against Tyre will be covered up by dust (v. 10, אבק) in accordance with the Levitical law, although it is not the עפר mentioned above. Rather, Tyre’s blood will be covered by אבק, a word translated as “dust” only four times outside of Ezekiel. In Exod 9:9 and Deut 28:2 it indicates destruction, and in Isa 5:24 and Jer 29:5, it is what brings annihilation on enemies (Israel as in Isaiah or those coming against Jerusalem in Jeremiah). The irony is that YHWH will cover destruction with dust that heralds further destruction. The phrasing in Ezek 26 links the destruction of Tyre to the destruction of Jerusalem in Ezek 24, indicating inescapable destruction for both.

Another “rock” in view in the Tyre OANs is likely a wordplay on the name of Tyre. The rock which is Tyre, צר, is sometimes spelled צור, which could link the name to a different word for “rock” that is often used in poetical references to YHWH, and often represents the

temple because it is where YHWH dwells.²⁸³ The alternate spellings throughout the OANs (צור / צר)²⁸⁴ mock Jerusalem and the idea that the temple protects the city from peril.²⁸⁵ The potential word play between the rock of the Jerusalemite temple and the nation of Tyre becomes more plausible after the connections in the following two chapters of OAN's about Tyre are examined more closely.

In Ezek 27, there are many connections between the nation of Tyre and the temple in Jerusalem. Lee says, “this first section of the dirge conflates linguistic elements that characterise the tabernacle...the First Temple... and the Jerusalem temple alluded to in Ezekiel 16.”²⁸⁶ For example, the appearance of כָּלֵל and יָפָה together (Ezek 27:3) is an invitation to look more carefully at what Ezekiel is doing linguistically. Some form of this phrase appears in Psalm 50:2 and Lam 2:15, where both instances describe Zion/Jerusalem, and then they appear together only in Ezekiel 16:14 and the Tyre OANs. In Ezek 16 the anthropomorphised Lady Jerusalem's “beauty” is said to be “perfect” and vv. 10–14 describe how YHWH makes it so. One of the materials he uses is תְּהַשֵּׁ (v. 10), which is only elsewhere used of the wilderness tabernacle (Exod 25:5; 26:14; 35:7, 23; Num 4:6, 8, 10), creating a

²⁸³ In the Psalms there are phrases such as “my God my rock in whom I take refuge” (18:3) and “who is a rock except our God” (18:32) or “O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.” (19:15). Isaiah 17:10 refers to God as the “rock of your refuge” and 30:29 lays the mountain of the Lord in parallel with the “rock of Israel.” Similarly, Isaiah 44:8 reads, “Is there any God besides me, or is there any other rock?”

²⁸⁴ If the story was oral, and the sound of the words the same, this connection would be missed. That it exists in the written account indicates something deliberate and falls in line with Ezekiel's narrative style. While an alternate spelling alone is not enough to make an argument, Ezekiel's use of words to call attention to different aspects Israelite/Judahite identity makes their appearance in parallel here a probable strategy to draw connections between Tyre and his own audience. צר (*šōr*) is more common while צור (*šūr*) only appears in the HB as a reference to Tyre in 1 Kings 5:15, Pss. 83:8; 87:4, and Hos 9:13 and in these OANs.

²⁸⁵ Long before reading Lee's work, a personal conversation with Diana Edelman at the University of Oslo (October, 2014) introduced me to the possible connection between Tyre and Temple based on the spelling of ‘rock’ (צור/ *šūr*) and Tyre (צר/ *šōr*).

²⁸⁶ Lee, *Mapping Judah's Fate*, 91.

connection between beauty and cultic accoutrements.²⁸⁷ While beauty, יפה, is used to describe various things in the HB,²⁸⁸ only something blessed by YHWH and connected to the cult is “complete or perfect in beauty.”

The description of the ship of Tyre in Ezek 27 contains many connections to sacred spaces for Israel: linen (v. 7), the colours blue and purple (v.7), the plank of the ship (v. 5), and even the wisdom involved in piloting (v. 8)). On linen, Gen 41:42 and Proverbs 31 are exceptions to the connection between linen (שֵׁשׁ) and the temple/tabernacle, although in both cases one could argue that linen connotes high standing. Other than these two verses, linen is used thirteen times in the description of the tabernacle in Exod 25–28, and then twenty times to describe the tabernacle and the priestly clothes in Exod 35–39. Outside of the tabernacle images, and the two examples of Genesis and Proverbs, it appears only in Ezek 16 to designate the clothing that YHWH places on Lady Jerusalem/the temple (Ezek 16:10, 13) and then in Ezek 27:7 to describe the sail of the Tyrian ship. On the colours, Lee notes the combination of ‘blue and purple’ (תכלת וארגמן) is found primarily in the Exodus descriptions of the tabernacle (Exod 25:4; 26:1, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5, 6, 8, 15, 33; 35:6, 23, 25, 35; 36:8, 35, 37; 38:18, 23; 39:1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 24, 29) . While other combinations of these words are in Chronicles (2 Chr 2:14; 3:14), Esther (1:6; 8:15), and Jeremiah (10:9), they arguably have cultic connotations as well.²⁸⁹ Then there are the planks of the ship (קֶרֶשׁ) that indicate a connection with the frame on which the tabernacle is constructed (also קֶרֶשׁ).²⁹⁰ There is also an interesting case for relating wisdom as an attribute of craftsmanship in the construction of both the tabernacle and the Tyrian ship (Ezek 27:9). While wisdom is an attribute used in

²⁸⁷ Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 95.

²⁸⁸ Women like Sarah (Gen 12:11) or Rachel (Gen 29:17); men like David (1 Sam 17:42); and even cows (Gen 41:2, 4, 18).

²⁸⁹ Lee, *Mapping Judah's Fate*, 92.

²⁹⁰ Lee, *Mapping Judah's Fate*, 91. *Qereš* appears in Ezek 27:6 and then only in Exod 26:15, 16, 17, 18, 19 (2x), 20, 21 (2x), 22, 23, 25 (2x), 26, 27 (2x), 28, 29; 35:11; 36:20, 21, 22, 23, 24 (2x), 25, 26 (2x), 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34; 39:33; 40:18; Num 3:36; 4:31.

many places in the HB, the use of wisdom to indicate skill in craftsmanship occurs primarily “in the contexts where the construction of the temple or the tabernacle are involved.”²⁹¹ The use of wise men to construct and pilot the ship creates a connection between this ship and the construction of the cultic enclosures.

The connections between Tyre and Israel/Judah are numerous. Confusing on the surface, when examined within the wider rhetoric of the book of Ezekiel that uses metaphor, unique language, and ironic story-telling, the connections are consistent with that rhetoric. The Tyre OANs are directed at Tyre, but in this telling, Tyre blurs in many instances with Ezekiel’s audience. Their fates are linked as the language against the foreign Tyre also applies to Ezekiel’s audience of foreigners.

c. The Egypt OANs

The same can be said of the OANs describing Egypt (Ezek 29–32). There has been more scholarly acceptance of imagery and language connecting Egypt and Judah,²⁹² so broadening the understanding of the OANs to the rhetorical level discussed above simply adds more evidence to this argument. A difference from the Tyre OANs is that the oracles about Egypt seem to focus more on political issues than religious ones.²⁹³ Safwat Marzouk writes

²⁹¹ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 111. She crafts an argument linking Tyre to the temple in a broader sense throughout the HB by showing the tabernacle workers to be full of wisdom and descended from the tribes of Naphtalite and Dan. Both groups were closely associated with Tyre according to Chronicles. She claims that Ezekiel would have been aware of this deeper connection and it likely influenced his use of Tyre.

²⁹² Von Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, “Zur Frage nach ältesten Texten im Ezechielbuch-Erwägungen zu Ez 17,19 und 31,” in *Prophet und Prophetenbuch: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 65 Geburtstag*, ed. Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann and Hans-Christoph Schmitt Volkmar Fritz, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 150–72; Lawrence Boadt, “Rhetorical Strategies in Ezekiel’s Oracles of Judgment,” in *Ezekiel and His Book: Textual and Literary Criticism and Their Interrelation*, ed. J. Lust (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1986), 182–200; Boyd, “Egypt.”

²⁹³ While acknowledging a clear separation between religious and political spheres is impossible in the consciousness of the ANE, the Egypt OANs speak more of political issues than religious ones.

regarding Egypt in Ezekiel’s rhetoric, “the political alliance between Egypt and Israel... symbolized chaos in which the religious boundary between Egypt and Israel was transgressed.”²⁹⁴ Egypt is a religious threat *because* of the political alliance, and, therefore, fear over political issues underlies Ezekiel’s portrayal of Egypt.

Samuel Boyd observes four connections between the two nations: the number 40, designation of the land as a desolation (שממה), gathering to the homeland, and the temporal designator as ties between the two nations.²⁹⁵ The number 40 is used in Ezek 4:6 to denote the length of Israel’s judgment, and then in Ezek 41:2 and Ezek 46:22 as the period of Israel’s restoration. It is otherwise only used in Ezek 29:11–13 of Egypt’s punishment.²⁹⁶ When tied to land, שממה in Ezekiel generally applies to Israel (Ezek 6:14; 12:20; 14:15,16; 15:8; 20:26; 25:3; 33:28, 29; 35:12, 15; 36:3, 4, 34, 35, 36) or Egypt (Ezek 29:9, 10, 12, 30:7, 12, 14, 32:15). Furthermore, compare Ezek 11:17 (Israel) with Ezek 29:13–14 (Egypt)²⁹⁷ to see the language of being gathered from the land where they were scattered back to their homeland. Sudhir Minj specifies that this is “Exodus terminology,”²⁹⁸ here applied to Egypt. Finally, Boyd shows how most of the sections in Ezekiel are marked by ויהי + the כ preposition as a means of structuring the sections and arguments (Ezek 1:1, 8:1, 20:1, 24:1, 26:1). The section starting the oracles against Egypt in Ezek 29, however, simply begins with the כ preposition, as does the section in Ezek 40 that shows the reordered life in the land for Israel/Judah.²⁹⁹ This temporal marker is only used in relationship to Egypt and Israel/Judah.

²⁹⁴ Marzouk, *Egypt as a Monster*, 117.

²⁹⁵ Boyd, “Egypt,” 14-38.

²⁹⁶ Boyd, “Egypt,” 31.

²⁹⁷ 11:17: “Thus says the Lord God, “I will gather you from the people and assemble you out of the lands which you have been scattered in, and I will give you the land of Israel.” 29:13-14 “I will gather the Egyptians from the people’s where they were scattered. I will turn the fortunes of Egypt and return them to the land of Pathros.”

²⁹⁸ Sudhir Kumar Minj, *Egypt: The Lower Kingdom: An Exegetical Study of the Oracle of Judgment Against Egypt in Ezekiel 29, 1–16* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006), 23.

²⁹⁹ Boyd, “Egypt,” 23. These are the only two places marked this way in the book of Ezekiel.

In addition to what is laid out by Boyd, there are other phrases in Ezek 30–32 that are only otherwise used of Israel/Judah. For one, Ezek 30:21–26 uses the concept of YHWH’s arm. These verses show Pharaoh being punished by the arm of YHWH, which calls to mind Ezek 20:33, where YHWH’s arm is punishing Judah. This connection between YHWH’s arm and the punishment of both nations ironically recalls that it is YHWH’s arm that initially saved his people from Egypt (Exod 6:6; Deut 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; 26:8).³⁰⁰ Another connection lies in Ezek 31 and the image of the “tree top” (צמרת). The “treetop” being saved in Ezek 17:3 (and thus interpreted as messianic hope for the Davidic line) is what is raised by Egypt between the clouds. The arrogance of the “treetop” in Ezek 31:3 causes the tree to be chopped down.³⁰¹

Chapter 32 has connections via the punishment of both nations, the appearance of the word רשת, and a structure that calls to mind Ezek 19. Firstly, the punishment of both nations happens by the “sword of the king of Babylon,” a phrase only used twice in Ezekiel, referencing Judah (Ezek 21:24) and then Egypt (Ezek 32:11).³⁰² Secondly, רשת (“net”) is used in Ezekiel “exclusively in the context of divine wrath”³⁰³ and only in political situations. It is used in Ezek 12:13, 17:20 and 19:8–9 dealing with Israel’s political leaders and their poor choices, and then in the OANs against Pharaoh in Ezek 32:3b.³⁰⁴ The idea of a net therefore links Pharaoh to the political leaders of Jerusalem. Thirdly, the structure of Ezek 32, which depicts the final fall of the kingdom of Egypt, shows a marked similarity to the structure of Ezek 19, where the fall of the kingdom of Judah is in view. This structure is

³⁰⁰ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 137–39.

³⁰¹ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 142. See more in Chapter 5 below.

³⁰² Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 168.

³⁰³ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 168.

³⁰⁴ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 168.

unique to the political destruction of Egypt and Judah and is absent from the destruction perpetuated against Tyre.³⁰⁵

Marzouk argues that Egypt is a religious danger because of its seduction as a political ally, and these various connections sharpen a focus on political issues. There are other indications of a political focus in the Egypt OANs such as the reference to Pharaoh as a sea monster (Ezek 29:3–5),³⁰⁶ or designating Egypt as a “staff made of reed” (v. 6) in order to highlight “Egypt’s unreliability”³⁰⁷ as a political ally. Combined together, the Egypt OANs pose a particular polemic against kingship, and with the connections to Judah, contain a message about royal leadership for Ezekiel’s audience as well.

Conclusion to Ezekiel’s OANs

Ezekiel uses the trope of foreignness to challenge the perceptions of the exiles about their relationship to YHWH. The exile in Babylon forces the people to wrestle with their spatial position relative to the land. For example, does the need for a new circumcision upon their return mean that distance negates the initial covenant of circumcision? By highlighting the failure of the cultic leadership to hold the people accountable, the people and the cultic leaders become the “foreigner/Levite” combination of Ezek 44, thereby becoming directly complicit in the circumstance of the exile. Recognizing their role in the spatial distance from the land brings the various land terms in the book into focus in order to challenge what kind of future inheritance the people can hope for.

³⁰⁵ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 172. Commentators like Zimmerli noted the connection between Ezek 19 and Ezek 32 (Zimmerli, *Ezekiel vol. 2*, 157), but Lee takes it one step further by showing that the other OAN do not use the same style.

³⁰⁶ Referencing enemy kings as monsters is not uncommon. See Cristiano Grottanelli, *Kings & Prophets: Monarchic Power, Inspired Leadership, and Sacred Text in Biblical Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 47-72.

³⁰⁷ Minj, “Egypt,” 23. See also Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, vol. 29, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 105; Paul M. Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, Library Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 482 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 181; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 139.

Further, Ezekiel's use of words and metaphors allow the OANs against foreign peoples to function as extended metaphors for Ezekiel's foreign audience. The image and language connections between the nations and Israel/Judah are therefore signs of Ezekiel's creative storytelling and serve to extend the message of foreignness further. In light of the book's overall use of the foreignness trope, it is not surprising that the OANs also display the theme. The OANs continue to form uncomfortable ties between what is foreign to YHWH and the audience of the book.

III. Conclusion

Despite debates over the origins and dating of the OANs in the HB, the different OANs are consistent with the overall message of the books in which they appear. The shift towards viewing OANs as individual bodies of work with specific and intentional distinctions and foci is helpful in understanding how these OANs are applicable to Ezekiel's audience. An understanding of OANs within their overall rhetorical context allows for an exploration of how they aid in developing the message of their distinct prophetic book. In Ezekiel, this thematic connection appears both in the consistency of the appearance of *marshal* throughout the book, and the theme of foreignness visible in both the OANs and the overall book.

Ezekiel has little at his disposal but words, and he uses them in complex and fascinating ways to shift misplaced understanding. In addition to his use of connotative language (*marshal*, unique phrases), he fashions a future out of the pieces of the narrative past, thereby using elements of the old Zion tradition to begin a shift to the new. One primary piece of the Master Narrative of the 'physical Zion' is the rule of YHWH from the tallest mountain over other nations and peoples, and the OANs aid him in his narrative recrafting because of their connection to this primary Zion ideal. By placing his audience within the scope of the foreigner, it is ironic that, while YHWH rules from the highest mountain, he

now punishes and rules over his own people in a way they have never experienced. In light of this depiction of foreignness, using the genre of the OANs to challenge the very tradition they uphold is classic Ezekielian narrative style.

Chapter Four: Ezekiel 28:11–19³⁰⁸ and the City of Jerusalem

This chapter is the first to directly engage the way that Ezekiel offers a “counterstory” to ‘physical Zion’. There are three foundational ideas the following four chapters build upon. Firstly, Ezekiel utilises the space of the Babylonian exile as a type of thirdspace where he can recast narratives about Zion in order to articulate a return to place (see Chapter One). Secondly, Ezek 28:13–14 is the only location in the HB where the garden-of-God and the mountain-of-God are placed side-by-side, drawing attention to the similarities and differences between the two images (see Chapter Two). Thirdly, through the trope of foreignness, the book of Ezekiel places the audience in an unfamiliar place within their known narratives. Alienation from their place in the land puts them into the location of the foreigner, and this trope allows OANs that are traditionally about foreign nations to apply to the exiles in a new way (see Chapter Three).

This chapter will explore Ezek 28 to ascertain how the Eden Garden reference aids Ezekiel in challenging ‘physical Zion’. It will argue that the appearance of the garden and the mountain-of-god in such close proximity is a deliberate way to begin to separate out what becomes a more distinct garden space (in contrast to a mountain space) moving forward in the book’s sequence. As the garden and the mountain are separated, a new possibility for the focus of Ezek 28 and the question around protagonist emerges.

³⁰⁸ This chapter covers Ezek 28:11–19 and excludes the rest of the chapter. The Eden Garden reference is in this section. Since the trope of foreignness exists through the entirety of the book and there is a deliberately blurred line between Tyre and Judah, an examination of vv. 1–10 reveals similar themes to those in vv. 11–19. There is a focus on the leader of Tyre, wisdom, and wealth, and as argued below, the attributes highlight an indistinct line between sacred and profane. The conclusion of the chapter, that the protagonist of these verses is the city of Jerusalem, is not challenged by the wording or focus of the initial verses in the chapter, so the verses containing the Eden reference are examined exclusively here.

I. The City of Jerusalem as the Focus of Ezek 28:11-19

Madhavi Nevader argues that the rhetoric of the Tyre OANs show “YHWH engaging directly with the wise king in an ideological debate over royal right to rule.”³⁰⁹ As explored in Chapter Three, there are many connections between the language used of Tyre and that of the temple; therefore, setting a political debate in the temple is a compelling invitation to look more closely at what is at stake in Ezek 28. With a slightly different focus on the debates around the protagonist, this section seeks a new path for the Eden Garden section of Ezek 28. This chapter seeks to show that as the section attempts to reconcile the challenge of a royal polemic within a priestly setting, the city of Jerusalem emerges as the focus of Ezek 28: 11–19. The capturing of the expansive ideas of Zion within the confines of the physical city of Jerusalem must be dismantled in order for ‘physical Zion’ to begin to shift towards ‘mythical/symbolic Zion.’ The first stage of that process is a separation of the city of Jerusalem from the sacred area.

A. Understanding the Setting

The mountain is the domain of deity, and therefore certain connections between Ezek 28 and other sections of the book, namely Ezek 10, which revolve around heavenly temple imagery, lay the groundwork for what the protagonist of Ezek 28 is losing. As the setting of Ezek 28 has so many options on first glance (Tyre, temple, mountain, garden), finding wider narrative connections that offer insight into what lies behind the images is an important step toward identifying the protagonist and recognizing what is at stake in the text. This section will discuss the heavenly temple imagery shared between Ezek 10 and Ezek 28 to argue that these

³⁰⁹ Madhavi Nevader, “YHWH and the Kings of Middle Earth: Royal Polemic in Ezekiel’s Oracles Against the Nations,” in *Concerning the Nations: Essays on the Oracles Against the Nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel*, eds. Else Kragelund Holt, Hyun Chul Paul Kim, and Andrew Mein, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 612 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 168.

two chapters narrate the same event from different perspectives: one outside, watching as the coals of fire are scattered on the city, and the other inside as the city burns.

There are two important elements of Ezek 10 for what follows. One is its portrayal of YHWH's presence in the temple, and the other is its apparent use of the city of Jerusalem as a sacrifice. In terms of the first, Isa 6 and Ezek 10 both display a key feature of 'physical Zion': the localized presence of the deity within the temple in Jerusalem. Both texts describe the presence of YHWH as smoke (עשן in Isa 6:4) or as cloud (ענן in Ezek 10:4) filling the temple. Both texts also note the presence of divine attendants, with seraphim calling to one another in Isa 6:3–4 and the noise of cherubim in Ezek 10:5. Isaiah 6 was discussed in the 'physical Zion' section as a key text expressing a view of YHWH's presence in the temple. Ezekiel 10 holds a similar description. As part of the grouping of Ezek 8–11 that detail the sins of the temple and the subsequent departure of the presence of YHWH from the city of Jerusalem, it is not surprising that Ezek 10 reflects an understanding of YHWH's presence that was prevalent pre-exile and encapsulated in 'physical Zion'.

As for Jerusalem as a sacrifice, Ezek 10 bears some similarity with Lev 16 and the Day of Atonement ritual, such as the coals of fire and the man clothed in linen. Identified in Lev 16 as Aaron, the linen-clothed figure offers sacrifices to atone for himself, the sins of the people, and to cleanse the holy areas. In this process, the coals of fire have a two-fold function. On the one hand, they provide the place to sacrifice the animals, and on the other, incense is placed on them to provide a screen that protects the priest. The coals are critical for performing the purifying rituals. Ezekiel 10 also has coals of fire and a mysterious linen-clothed figure, although the actions of the figure in Ezek 10 appear to the detriment of the people. In Leviticus, the cult is fully functioning, and the priest makes an atoning sacrifice that cleanses the holy areas. In Ezekiel, however, the cult is not functioning. Described in Ezek 8–9, there is no sacrificial system that could serve to offer an atoning sacrifice.

Therefore, in Ezek 10, instead of offering an atoning sacrifice upon the coals of fire, the priest scatters the coals upon the city seemingly making the city itself the sacrifice.³¹⁰ In this case, the priest does not cleanse the holy areas; rather, he is instrumental in destroying them.

Ezekiel 10 describes YHWH's presence in the temple before he moves from its threshold. It highlights the destruction of the city of Jerusalem utilising a cultic ritual intermingled with purification imagery. It also shares heavenly temple imagery with Ezek 28 (the precious stones, cherubim/other divine being, fiery destruction) that link the chapters as they appear to describe similar settings.

a) Precious stones. In Ezekiel, precious stones often appear in the vicinity of the sacred as a marker of YHWH's presence (Ezek 1, 10, 28). While there is a debate over the redactional history that ties the "living beings" in Ezek 1 to the cherubim in Ezek 10,³¹¹ precious stones appear in the theophany of both chapters. Ezekiel 1 has a stone resembling an eye like "amber" (חַשְׁמַל v. 4), and what resembles a throne has "stone like sapphire" (אֶבֶן v. 26). Ezekiel 10:1 also has the "stone of sapphire" (כֶּאֱבֶן סַפִּיר) over the heads of the cherubim, in addition to a wheel resembling an eye like "beryl stone" (אֶבֶן תְּרִשִּׁישׁ v. 9). Ezekiel 28:13 lists the precious stones that cover the protagonist of the oracle (אָדָם פְּטוּדָה וַיְהִלֵּם) (תְּרִשִּׁישׁ שֶׁהֵם וַיִּשְׁפֹּה סַפִּיר נֶפֶךְ וּבִרְקַת וְזֹהָב). As the throne of YHWH is described to contain סַפִּיר in Exod 24:10, and the priestly breastplate is what the priest wears in front of YHWH in Exod 28, the precious stones note narrative scenes where YHWH is present.³¹² The existence of precious jewels is not unique to these two sections in terms of the HB as a whole, but for the

³¹⁰An in-depth discussion of Lev 16 falls outside the scope of this project. The differences between moral and ritual impurity described by Klawans and how it might fit into how and why Ezekiel uses the imagery would be an interesting further study. See Klawans.

³¹¹Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 105–07.

³¹²Daniel Block disagrees with scholars who see a direct link between the jewels of verse 13 and the breastplate of the high priest. He claims that while Ezekiel does use obscure language and imagery, he and his audience would have been quite offended to see such a highly valued and significant cultic accoutrement on a pagan king. See Block, *Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48*, 111–112.

sections of Ezekiel that deal with theophany and/or a setting in the temple (Ezek 1, 10, 27, 28), the stones create a theme across the narratives.

b) Cherubim/Divine beings. Cherubim are often associated with the divine as either throne bearers or guardians.³¹³ Interestingly, Ezekiel's cherubim appear more like Isaiah's seraphim than the descriptions of cherubim elsewhere in the HB; they are active, have hands, and are tied to an inaugural prophetic call. In Ezek 10, the cherubim have hands that handle the coals of fire and convey the presence of YHWH. In Ezek 28, the cherub has a protective function, and some argue that the story is about a cherub who cast another cherub from the heavenly location (again indicating activity not generally found for cherubim outside of Ezekiel). The existence of cherubim in both chapters calls to mind imagery of YHWH's presence and a holy enclosure. Another possible sign of divine beings in Ezek 28 are the stones of fire (unique to Ezek 28 as אבני אש v.16). Some argue for the stones of fire as other divine beings that the protagonist of Ezek 28 is no longer allowed to be among.³¹⁴

c) Fiery destruction. The figure in linen takes coals of fire from the cherubim in Ezek 10:2 and scatters them over the city. While the text does not describe what happens to the city, the assumption is that it burns under the coals. The protagonist in Ezek 28 has fire brought from its midst and it is turned to ashes (v. 18).

These connections between Ezek 28 and Ezek 10 highlight Ezek 28's connection with areas of the HB not as obvious if Ezek 28 is read alone. For example, the pre-exile understanding of YHWH dwelling in a temple where the people have access to him that comes from Isa 6, and the purification imagery at work in the background of Ezek 28 that

³¹³ The HB indicates cherubim guard areas where the presence of YHWH might reside (Eden in Gen 3:24, tabernacle in Exod 25 and 37, temple in 1 Kgs 6 and 2 Chr 3), they are made of hammered work (Exod 25:18, 37:7), overlaid with gold (1 Kgs 6:28, 2 Chr 3:10), have wings (Exod 25:20, 37:9, 1 Kgs 6:24,27 and 8:6–7, 1 Chr 28:18, 2 Chr 3:11–13, 5:7–8) and YHWH can ride them (2 Sam 22:11, Ps 18:10).

³¹⁴ Callender, *Adam*, 116.

calls to mind Lev 16, are easily missed if the connection between Ezek 28 and Ezek 10 is not noticed. On the first, Ezek 28 claims its protagonist was on the mountain of god. Mountains are the abode of deities and connect heaven and earth. Ezekiel 10 and Isaiah 6 share a description of YHWH as being inside a temple construct, and temples also ideologically serve as the abode of deity and connect heaven and earth. All three sets of text, Ezek 10, Isa 6, and Ezek 28 reflect a pre-exile understanding of 'physical Zion' where YHWH is in the temple, and in the case of Ezek 28, where the protagonist has access to the presence of the deity. This connection is important because as the city is cast from the mountain, it highlights the reality that the city is being cast from the presence of deity as understood in 'physical Zion'.

On the second, Ezek 10 and Ezek 28 share crossovers that link the two sets of texts through heavenly temple imagery. As Ezek 10 utilises ritual imagery from Lev 16 to show coals of fire from the altar burning the city of Jerusalem in an ironic twist on purification rituals, Ezek 28 details that occurrence from within. The protagonist of Ezek 28 is burned to ashes and cast from among the stones of fire, detailing what happens ritually to the protagonist when the coals are scattered upon it. From the outside, Ezek 10 describes the actions of the priest that lead to Jerusalem's burning. From the inside, Ezek 28 explores what the city experiences as fire is brought from its midst and it loses access to the divine place it once held in an attempt to separate the sacred and profane.

B. Recognizing the City³¹⁵

It is odd that Ezek 28 has a protagonist that is somewhat unclear when the rest of the book of Ezekiel offers indictments against specific groups of people (leaders in exile: Ezek 14, 20; political leaders: Ezek 17, 19; priests: Ezek 7, 22; false prophets: Ezek 13). The clarity of the indictment in other areas of the book indicates that the murky nature of Ezek 28's protagonist is likely a deliberate narrative choice. This narrative choice draws attention to what lies

³¹⁵ I recognize that cities are traditionally feminine (including Jerusalem), and the masculine pronouns do not fit with this feminine nature. Most of the attempts to determine a protagonist for Ezek 28:11–19 focus on the Cherub, the Primal Human, or a High Priest all of which are masculine offices. The fluctuating protagonist, where initially he appears to be human, then is related to a cherub or a high priest, is possibly a deliberate way to focus on the lack of boundaries called out in other places in the book. Cities in the ANE would combine these various offices in their confines, but the book of Ezekiel calls specific attention to the failure of boundaries as a significant contributor to the defilement of the city itself. Behind the masculine figures, Jerusalem is in view as the one who is defiled and who is burned. So while the protagonist of the passage is this murky masculine figure that has attributes of both a human and something divine, the real message is on how these indistinct figures represent crossed boundaries and focus the message on the city. While Markus Saur's approach to this passage is different, he says that the downfall of cities are often described in language similar to what appears in Ezek 28. See Markus Saur, "Ezekiel 26-28 and the History of Tyre," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 24, no. 2 (2010): 218. (For debates on the nature of the protagonist as a Primal Human see Norman C. Habel, "Ezekiel 28 and the Fall of the First Man," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 38, no. 8 (1967): 516–24; Dexter E. Callender, *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human*, Harvard Semitic Studies 48 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000); John Day, "Wisdom and the Garden of Eden," in *Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Jarick, The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 618 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 336–52. For debates on the protagonist as a Cherub see James E. Miller, "The Mælæk of Tyre (Ezekiel 28,11-19)," *ZAW* 105, no. 3 (1993): 497–501; James Barr, "'Thou Art the Cherub': Ezekiel 28:14 and the Post-Ezekiel Understanding of Genesis 2–3," in *Priests, Prophets, and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp*, ed. Eugene Ulrich et al., Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 149 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 213–23; Alice Wood, *Of Wings and Wheels: A Synthetic Study of the Biblical Cherubim*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 385 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). For debates on the protagonist as some other cosmic creature see Nicholas Wyatt, "The Hollow Crown: Ambivalent Elements in West Semitic Royal Ideology," *UF* 18 (1986): 425; Hubertus Jakobus van Dijk, *Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez. 26,1–28,19): A New Approach* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1968), 113–16; Barr, "Thou art the Cherub," 220. For an example of debates about the protagonist as a high priest see Markus Saur, *Der Tyroszyklus des Ezechielbuches*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 386 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 250.)

behind the identity of protagonist, where the focus is on an encapsulating space for all of the various elements of this figure. As all cities in the ANE would house both a cult and a king, Jerusalem is no different. By making it difficult to distinguish between a human, a priest, or a cherub here, the focal point becomes a lack of boundaries and what that means for the city itself.

An initial look at vv. 11–19 reveals that the “you” is difficult to apply to a specific figure. Verse 16 says “with your great trade they filled your midst with violence.” This verse is a cumbersome way to call out an individual’s actions, particularly in the immediate context of Ezek 27, which appears to be about a city or a nation’s trade. Verse 18 links “your trade” to the profaning (חללת) of the sanctuaries (מקדשִׁיךָ), which is equally problematic when applied to an individual. How would an individual’s financial choices influence the viability of the temple? In searching for a what might lie behind the indistinct protagonist, it is enlightening to realize that the accusations of Ezek 28 echo those against Jerusalem in other places in the book.

Ezekiel 5, 7, 22, and 24 are specifically about Jerusalem,³¹⁶ and the message to the city in all of them is consistent. Each of these chapters indicates the intertwining of the sacred and profane has led to the defilement of the sacred and therefore the dire end of the city. In Ezek 5, Jerusalem is “in the midst” of the nations, where it is intended to represent YHWH by being exemplary. Jerusalem defiles the sanctuary with abominations and idols (v. 11), and her punishment is to be a devastation that is visible “in the eyes of all who pass through” (v. 14). In Ezek 7, there is no specific mention of Jerusalem, only of the “four corners of the land” (v.2), although the inhabitants of “the city” (v.15) are mentioned. Wealth is tied to iniquity (v. 19), primarily blood and violence (דמים) and (חמס v. 23), and it predicts that in the moment when the city most needs wealth, it will gain

³¹⁶ Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 130–141.

them nothing to alleviate the discomfort of judgment. In Ezek 22, Jerusalem is called a “bloody city” (עיר הדמים v. 2), and her crimes include bribes (שחד, v.12), and interest and profits (נשך ותרבית) v.12 gained by violence (bloodshed דם שפך and דמך vv. 12–13). In response to Jerusalem’s actions, the city will “profane yourself in the eyes of the nations” (v.16). In Ezek 24, Jerusalem is once more addressed (v. 2), again as the “bloody city” (עיר הדמים v. 6,9). According to vv. 10–11, a fire should be kindled and the coals heated in order to purify the pot that is Jerusalem.

In all of these sections Jerusalem is consistently said to be filled with violence and blood, is frequently viewed as “profane,” and its punishment is forecast as being burned or cast before onlookers as a devastation.³¹⁷ These predictions are echoed in Ezek 28 and can be summarised:

Ezek 28	Jerusalem in the book of Ezekiel
Trade has led to violence (v.16).	Jerusalem is described as bloody (Ezek 22:2; 24:6,9), violent (Ezek 7:11; 22:12–13), and unjust (Ezek 22:12–13).
Guilty of “profaning your sanctuaries” (v.18)	The sin of Jerusalem is the “profaning of my sanctuary” (5:11)
Fire is brought from its midst (v.18).	Fire is blown on Jerusalem (22:20–21) Jerusalem needs to be burned in order to cleanse it (24:10–12)
Turned to ashes “before the eyes” of onlookers (v.18)	Jerusalem should be profaned in the eyes of the nations (22:16) Jerusalem should be shamed in the sight of the nations (5:8)
All who know you among the peoples are appalled (שממו) at you (v. 19)	Jerusalem will be viewed as a devastation (משמה) by the nations who surround you (5:15)

³¹⁷ It is also important to note that Ezek 24 falls right before the OANs (chs. 25–32) and opens the possibility that the OANs are an elaboration upon the stated destruction of Jerusalem in Ezek 24:15–27.

C. Sacred and Profane Intertwined

An examination of the specific accusations against the protagonist in Ezek 28 reveal the intertwining of the sacred and profane. The coexistence of sacred and profane is not uncommon in cities in the ANE as they are the site of both the deity and the seat of the monarchy, and Jerusalem would be no different. The problem in the mingling of the attributes is that one corrupts the other. The indictments against the priests in Ezek 7:26 indicate that the cultic personnel did not maintain the boundary between the sacred and the profane, and the attributes of this protagonist add details to this indictment.

Ezekiel uses priestly language to describe all manner of sins. The distinctions discussed below between sacred and profane, therefore, are thin at times. The main point is to highlight that in each of the accusations, there appears to be a more cultic element profaned by a more monarchic one, and vice versa. The following chart indicates the accusation against Ezek 28's protagonist, whether it is primarily cultic/sacred or monarchic/profane, and discussion then follows.

Phrase	Cultic/sacred	Monarchic/profane	
חותם תכנית (signet seal)	Y	Y	Both, v. 12
מלא חכם (full of wisdom)	Y	Y	Both, v. 12
תמים (blameless)	Y		More cultic, linked with "iniquity" v. 15
עולתה (unrighteousness)		Y	More monarchic, linked with "blameless" v. 15
רכלה (trade)		Y	More monarchic, linked with "sin" v. 16
חטא (sin)	Y		More cultic, linked with "trade" v. 16
יפה (beautiful)	Y		In Ezekiel it is cultic and linked with "wisdom" v. 17

חכם (wise)		Y	More monarchic, linked with “beauty” v. 17
עון (iniquity)	Y	Y	Both, linked with “trade” in v. 18 (but both are said to profane the sacred)
רכלה (trade)		Y	More monarchic, linked with “iniquity” in v. 18

Ezekiel 28:12 uses both the contested phrase “signet seal” (חותם תכנית) and “full of wisdom” (מלא חכמה). The signet seal represents the concept of responsibility. The different emendations highlight the role of measuring, judging, or representing, which can be either cultic or monarchic. In terms of non-cultic leadership, there are examples where someone acts as a type of vice-regent (Joseph representing Pharaoh, Gen 41:42), or when the term indicates the measuring of human actions against YHWH’s standards (Ezek 18:25, 29; 33:17, 20). If read in light of the list of precious stones from v. 13, the signet combines with the imagery of the breastplate of the high priest and also could indicate cultic leadership. The priest represents the people before YHWH (Exod 28:29–30) and therefore acts both in their stead to offer sacrifice, and also in YHWH’s stead to mediate blessing. Any or all options could be in view; this phrase is unclear as to its specific linkage with either king or priest.

The protagonist is also said to be “full of wisdom,” and wisdom (חכמה) is a trait that has various applications. The linkage of full, or filled, and wisdom (מלא חכם) occurs three times in the context of cultic construction (Exod 28:3, 35:35; 1 Kgs 7:14) and once dealing with leadership and succession (Deut 34:9). Generally being full of wisdom is tied to the creative process of crafting cultic enclosures and thus describes a necessary attribute for performance of this kind of work. While that would seem to make this attribute a cultic one, it is also used of the monarch. Solomon’s wisdom is tied to his lasting rule (1 Kgs 3:12, 1 Kgs 5: 9–14). Therefore, even though it can designate the skills of craftsmanship used to construct the cultic enclosure (Exod 31:3,6), חכמה describes an attribute required of leaders

(Deut 34:9; 2 Sam 14:20; Is 10:13) as well.³¹⁸ The phrase is unclear in its linkage to king or priest in v. 12.

Ezek 28:15 claims that the protagonist was blameless (תמים) until unrighteousness (עולתה) was found in him. תמים most frequently denotes the kinds of offerings that should be sacrificed (Leviticus, Numbers) and often is translated as “without blemish.” It is used of both YHWH and certain important figures to describe exemplary conduct (Noah in Gen 6:9 and Abraham in Gen 17:1). While there are places where it describes YHWH and calls the reader to mimic the deity and act blamelessly in accordance with covenant faithfulness, the latter appears in the historical books, which focus less on cult and more on covenantal language.³¹⁹ These occurrences indicate a cultic meaning extended into the realm of the moral. The book of Ezekiel is in line with Leviticus and Numbers (Ezek 43:22,23; 45:18), as would be expected from someone with a priestly lineage (Ezek 1:3).

Unrighteousness (עולתה), however, appears to have more to do with justice, a notable monarchic function, than any kind of cultic involvement. Leviticus claims that leadership should be responsible not to perpetuate injustice in their role of mediator and judge (Lev 19:15,35). Deuteronomy indicates that each household is responsible for fairness among people (Deut 25:13–16). BDB offers three translations of the word’s usage. Firstly, it can mean “violent deeds of injustice” (2 Sam 3:34, 7:10; Isa 61:8; Hos 10:9; Mic 3:10; Hab 2:12;

³¹⁸ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., “חכם,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 283.

³¹⁹ See John Barton Payne, “תמים,” in *TWOT*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 973-974. See also F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, “תמים,” *BDB* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 1071. BDB does not specifically link the word to the cult, but based on its usage in Leviticus and Numbers where it is connected with offerings, it has a distinctly cultic connotation. (Lev 1:3,10; 3:6; 4:3,23; 5:15,18,25; 22:19,21; 23:12; Num 6:14). As Deuteronomy avoids specifically sacrificial language, it seems to be in a similar context, although in connection with covenant faithfulness (Deut 18:13) See also Ps 15:2. Deuteronomy also uses it to denote YHWH as blameless (Deut 32:4), and this sentiment is echoed in Ps 18:26. It is also used of YHWH in 2 Sam (2 Sam 22:31) and Psalms (Ps 18:31).

Zeph 3:5,13; Job 36:23; 2 Ch 17:9). Of special note are Mic 3:10 and Hab 2:12 both of which deal with a city built with injustice. Micah specifically mentions Jerusalem. Secondly, the word can indicate “injustice of speech” (Isa 59:3; Mal 2:6; Job 5:16, 6:29, 13:7, 27:4). Finally, it can mean “general injustice” (Hos 10:13; Job 11:14, 15:16,22:23, 24:20, 36:23).³²⁰ There is little connection with the cultic realm, indicating that in this usage it likely relates to the realm of civil affairs.

Ezekiel 28:16 and 18 both claim that trade (רכלה) (more specifically articulated in Ezek 27) led to violence (חמס) and sin (both חטא and עון). Emphasized by the connections between the descriptions of trade in Ezek 27, and the ties to various temple accoutrements in that description, this verse likely indicates using the temple to amass wealth (Ezek 16). The verse says that this trade leads to violence that in turn is sin (חטא). Trade in itself, however, is aligned to the civil side of the divide.

חטא is another word with both civil and cultic connotations although it is more tied to the cult. While it can indicate a civil breach (Gen 40:1; 2 Kgs 18:14), it is one of the primary words in the management of the cult because in its noun form, it denotes a purification offering.³²¹ In light of Ezekiel’s propensity to refer to Jerusalem as full of blood (7:23; 9:9; 22:2–4,6,9,12–13,27; 24:6,9; 35:6; 36:18), the violence in view is likely tied to trade and therefore leads to a corruption that requires cultic intervention. The חטאת sacrifice is generally used to cleanse the sancta of impurities.³²² Similarly, עון can be both civil and cultic.³²³ The tie between trade and the profaning of the sanctuaries mixes the sacred and

³²⁰ F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, “עולה,” *BDB* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 732.

³²¹ N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 56 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 161.

³²² Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*, 162–164. Verse references for the sacrifice: Lev 4:3–21; Lev 9:8–11; Lev 16; Lev 17.

³²³ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., “עוה,” *TWOT Volume 2* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 650–51.

profane here, even if עון is intended to have a totally secular sense in this verse. The direct result of profaning the sanctuaries, however, indicates that the idea of the passage is that עון was not mitigated via the cult, thereby profaning the entire system. If the entire system is profaned then the *חטאת* sacrifice cannot be performed and thus the contagion spreads.

Ezekiel 28:17 claims that this protagonist corrupted wisdom (חכם) with his beauty or splendor (יפעתך), again indicating a perversion of one institution due to intrusion from the other. Beauty in Ezekiel is bestowed by YHWH (Ezek 16), and this protagonist is said to be “complete in beauty” in v. 12. Perfect beauty is a cultic attribute that specifically calls to mind references to Zion in Ps 50:2 and Lam 2:15. While beauty is not always about the cult, perfect beauty is a phrase reserved for Jerusalem/Zion. Further, in Ezekiel, the concept of beauty is tied to the cult because beauty comes from the bestowing of YHWH’s gifts. It is YHWH who makes the personified Jerusalem beautiful (Ezek 16), and it is that beauty that leads the city to be treated like royalty, which then causes the corruption in view. Wisdom is more of a monarchic attribute, especially bringing to mind someone like Solomon. The ability to corrupt wisdom with an attribute that, at least in the context of the book of Ezekiel is more cultic, highlights the intrusion of profane into sacred.

The key to what Ezekiel is trying to do in this section lies in the way he links a cultic/sacred attribute with a monarchic/profane one as he discusses the downfall of the protagonist. Like all cities in the ANE that housed the sacred and profane in one place, Jerusalem would have coexisting spheres as well. The problem appears in the indictment against the leadership. For the cultic, apparently the priests did not maintain the boundary between sacred and profane (Ezek 7:26). For the monarchy, reaching for Egypt’s political support brings the dangers of religious pluralism, thereby threatening the cultic for the benefit of the monarchic (Ezek 17).³²⁴ The issue, therefore, is not the existence of the cultic and the

³²⁴ See Marzouk, *Egypt as Monster*.

monarchic together. The problem is the corruption resulting from the lack of boundaries.³²⁵

With the references to Jerusalem as bloody and corrupt, the sacred could not help but be profaned.

II. Conclusion

‘Physical Zion’ privileges the city of Jerusalem *as* the holy mountain of YHWH and encapsulates both king and cult within the same locale. The leadership has failed to maintain the proper boundaries, and the city cannot be the holy location of the temple when it also is the centre of trade that is unrighteous, and a monarch that is not living up to the royal ideal. The charge is that this city can no longer be profane at the expense of the sacred. As cities inherently mingle the sacred and profane, Ezek 28 begins the process of theologizing a future Zion that is separate from the city.

Ezekiel 28 and Ezek 10 share heavenly temple imagery and when looked at together offer a glimpse of the same event from two different perspectives. Ezekiel 10 shares language and imagery with both Isa 6 and Lev 16 as it shows YHWH’s physical presence in the city, and then it shows the actions of the figure clothed in linen. With the failure of the cult and the abandonment of the temple (Ezek 11), the cult breaks down entirely so that rather than the linen clothed figure offering a sacrifice on the city and people’s behalf, the city itself becomes the sacrifice. As Ezek 10 shows the destruction of the city, Ezek 28 mirrors that circumstance from within. With the understanding that the protagonist of Ezek 28 is somehow in YHWH’s presence as he/it has access to both the garden-of-god and the mountain-of-god, vv. 11–19 show access to YHWH’s presence.

Ezekiel 28 shows the casting of a protagonist off the holy mountain-of-god. With an initial mention of both the garden and the mountain, the lack of any second mention of the

³²⁵ The intertwining of sacred and profane is challenged throughout the book of Ezekiel. See Ezek 16 and 20 specifically. Also, on the indictment of the priests, they do not separate between sacred and profane, clean and unclean (7:26).

garden is curious. In laying them side-by-side in verses 13–14, followed by the forcible separation of the protagonist from the mountain, the distinct difference between gardens and mountains comes into further prominence. If gardens are border areas, while mountains tend to be more obviously tied to the dwelling of the deity (see Chapter Two), then gardens are a place where the profane can exist in proximity to the sacred without actually encroaching on the sacred. The description of the separation of the protagonist from the mountain protects the holiness of the mountain as a distinctly separate sphere. The separation also allows the garden space to encapsulate various profane elements that can be reshaped and recast in hopes that their reformation points to the presence of deity. The garden would still serve as a sign of YHWH's presence because it lies on the border of the sacred, but the contrasting images of mountains and gardens enable Ezekiel to craft a "counterstory" to the 'physical Zion' by separating the sacred and the profane so that they do not occupy the same location.

Chapter Five: Ezekiel 31 and Dynastic Concerns

Just as Ezek 28 began to separate ‘physical Zion’ from ‘mythic/symbolic Zion,’ Ezek 31 continues this programme. Because the city was the domain of the king, its destruction contains a pointed message about the understanding of monarchy in the pre-exile, ‘physical Zion’. Using the image of the tall tree, Ezek 31 challenges the understanding of dynastic longevity inherent in ‘physical Zion’ in order to establish the future ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ as a holy space separate from the realm of a human king.

As discussed in Chapter Three above, Ezekiel uses linguistic clues to tie the political fate of Egypt to the fate of the monarchy in Israel/Judah. In Ezek 31, Ezekiel uses the setting of Egypt and Assyria to craft a polemic against the belief of ‘physical Zion’ in a lasting dynastic promise. Ezekiel 31 challenges monarchy in a way that also sets expectations for the potential of a future return of a Davidic king after the exile. A discussion of the setting and the addressees of the oracle is followed by an examination of how the fate of the cedar in Ezek 31 challenges the notion of dynastic security/kingship that prevailed in the ideology of ‘physical Zion’. This examination will address how the Eden Garden in Ezek 31 offers another “counterstory” aiding Ezekiel in building a new theology of Zion.

I. Use of the Eden Garden in Ezek 31: Changing the Understanding of Dynastic

Legitimacy³²⁶

In the next section, more points of connection between Israel/Judah and Egypt (see Chapter Three for earlier stated connections) will be examined in order to establish further how Ezekiel blurs the boundaries between the two nations. Tree imagery in Egypt and Assyria will then be explored in order to establish how the tree calls to mind kingship in these two different contexts.

A. Egypt and Israel/Judah: Blurred Lines

Ezekiel minimizes differences between Egypt and Israel/Judah, and while unique in the prophetic corpus, this blurring is not unheard of in the Pentateuch.³²⁷ This lack of distinction is visible in the Joseph, Moses, and wilderness narratives, and is used by Ezekiel as a theme that underlies the Babylonian exile. In addition to the linguistic connections touched on in Chapter Three above, a brief explanation of how Ezekiel uses Egypt throughout the book (not just in the OANs) is helpful in showing how Egypt shares characteristics with Israel/Judah in Ezekiel's rhetoric.³²⁸

³²⁶ For information on diachronic issues in Ezek 31 see the following sources. On the question of Assyria versus a cedar tree, see Lawrence Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles Against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29-32*, Biblica et Orientalia 37 (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1980), 96–100. Boadt (Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 96) and Zimmerli (Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 141–42) argue for Assyria while N. Bowen argues for “daughter of cypresses” (Nancy R. Bowen, *Ezekiel*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 192). Most now agree that the versions support the Hebrew and tend to follow “Assyria.” See Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 22A, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 646. For information on debates around genre in the passage see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 141–53; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 46–7; Stordalen, *Echoes*, 383–4; Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 94; Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 124; Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, 179–197; Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Pub., 2005), 393; Crouch, “Ezekiel's Oracles,” 482–483; Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 196; Geyer, *Mythology and Lament*, 146.

³²⁷ F. V. Greifenhagen, *Egypt on the Pentateuch's Ideological Map: Constructing Biblical Israel's Identity* JSOTSup 361 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 45–59.

³²⁸ For more information see Marzouk, *Egypt as Monster*, 115–54.

1. המון

As discussed by Daniel Bodi, when המון appears in conjunction with Judah it indicates noise and connects to the problem of hubris.³²⁹ He claims that “the high statistical frequency of *hāmôn* in Ezekiel indicates that one is dealing with an important catchword in the overall structure of the book.”³³⁰ המון appears five times in Ezek 5 and 7 in relation to Jerusalem. In Ezek 5:7, YHWH has placed Jerusalem in the centre of the nations, but she has more המון than all the others that surround her. Ezekiel 7 uses המון four times (vv. 11, 12, 13, 14) as part of the description of why destruction is coming against Judah. Pharaoh is then linked with המון (30:10,15; 31:2, 18; 32:12, 16, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26, 31), inviting a comparison between Judah and Egypt.

Lee also points out that, in addition to the metaphorical means of understanding המון as “hubris” or “pride,” it could also be used quantitatively in Ezek 31. In a quantitative sense, it denotes “multitude, people”³³¹ and draws attention to the multitudes comprising Pharaoh’s army. In this sense, the indictment would be against all of the allies of Pharaoh, and because Judah is one of the most prominent political allies of Egypt in the book of Ezekiel,³³² the term serves to connect the two entities. Regardless of the choice (metaphorical or quantitative), the word המון calls to mind Jerusalem and Egypt, because “Judah and Egypt share a rebellious identity.”³³³

This word specifically focuses on political concerns. The leadership is in view for its bad choices, but also for characteristics that generally have bad outcomes. המון in Ezekiel is a

³²⁹ Daniel Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 104 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 27 and 117–128. Bodi compares the concept of המון (*hāmôn*) with occurrences in various Akkadian literature and sees the המון of Ezekiel as closer to the irreverence, insolence, and disrespect as in the Poem of Erra rather than how it is portrayed in Atrahasis.

³³⁰ Bodi, *Poem of Erra*, 128.

³³¹ Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 156.

³³² See Lee, *Mapping Judah’s Fate*, 154–158.

³³³ Marzouk, *Egypt as Monster*, 119.

sign of rebellion that appears in relation to both Judah and Egypt offering further evidence of a connection between the two nations.

2. צמרת

“Upper part” or “top,” is used in the metaphor about Israel/Judah in Ezek 17:3, 22, and about Egypt in Ezek 31:3. While scholars often interpret the “treetop” as a type of future hope in its earlier appearance,³³⁴ its use in Ezek 31 challenges that interpretation. Both sections have a message about the future of kingship, and the fates of these two צמרת are contrasted. The connection between Egypt and Israel/Judah, however, raises the possibility that the message to the treetop in Ezek 31 also applies to the “protected” remnant of the Davidic line represented by the “treetop” in Ezek 17. If this is the case, the fate of the “treetop” in Ezek 17 is possibly quite different from what the audience might initially expect.

Summary of Part A: Blurred Lines

The linguistic connections here and in Chapter Three indicate that, contrary to the majority of the HB that focuses on Israel’s separation³³⁵ from the space of Egypt and what it represents, there is a connection between them in Ezekiel’s rhetoric. Ezekiel uses Egypt as a “counterstory,” taking the traditional space of Egypt with its echoes of YHWH’s actions and the covenant he forms with his people, and placing those things out of Israel/Judah’s reach. Rather than a space that supports Israel’s view of herself as YHWH’s covenantal people, Ezekiel positions Egypt as a foil. Because his people have chosen to realign with the entity

³³⁴ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 209. Zimmerli comments that this sprig is “raised up and not humiliated.” See Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*, ed. Frank Moore Cross and Klaus Baltzer, trans. Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 367.

³³⁵ By separation here I mean the way that Exodus focuses on a need to leave Egypt in order to make a new covenant with YHWH in the wilderness at Sinai, which is the foundation for the covenant that comes to be encapsulated in the idea of Zion. For more information see Nicholas P. Lunn, “‘Let My People Go!’: The Exodus as Israel’s Metaphorical Divorce from Egypt,” *EvQ* 86, no. 3 (July 2014): 239–51.

that enslaved them, the memory of YHWH's past actions becomes an indictment. Israel has undone what YHWH set out to do through the story arc of the Pentateuch and has re-joined her fate to Egypt's by her own choice. For Ezekiel, Egypt stands for infidelity, shame, and poor choices rather than rescue and covenant.

B. Trees³³⁶ and Kingship

Trees are utilised in ways that call to mind various aspects of kingship. This section will explore trees in Egypt and Assyria before examining how the information applies to Judah as well.

1. Trees in Egypt and Assyria

a. Trees in Egypt

For Egypt, trees are linked to a mortuary cult where the deceased is sometimes represented by a living tree and is sometimes cared for and protected by a tree goddess. The living tree is both a link to ancestors and/or an indication of hope for regeneration in the afterlife. Trees are also a visible means of blessing kingship.

As for blessing kingship, the *īšd* tree is a sacred tree connected with the royal annals, and the kings have their names inscribed upon it.³³⁷ There are also representations in different temples that show Amen-Re, Thoth, and Seshat writing the names of the reigning king on

³³⁶ For this chapter, the important aspects of the Eden Garden that appear in the setting deal with two specific facts. Firstly, as it appears in Gen 2:9, Eden is a garden of trees. This fact aids in understanding why Ezek 31 contains so many trees in a setting 'like' Eden. Secondly, personifying people, nations, and rulers as trees or plants is a common trope in the HB (see Stordalen, *Echoes*, 86–94). It is not clear who or what the other trees in Ezek 31 specifically represent, but as they experience emotion, they represent something on the human plane.

³³⁷ Marie-Louise Buhl, "The Goddesses of the Egyptian Tree Cult," *JNES* 6, no. 2 (April 1947): 89.

fruits and leaves of another sacred tree.³³⁸ The intention would be two-fold: firstly, the king is blessed in this life, and secondly, the inscription of the name would indicate a kind of never-ending existence since the tree would keep the record. Both of these trees act as a means of legitimating kingship and establishing a king with an ongoing record, thereby providing a kind of immortality to reigning kings. In addition to the *īšd* tree, trees possibly serve as a symbol of the “rightful line of descent”³³⁹ that emerged around the time of Thutmose I to link him to Amenhotep I because he was not a son of the former ruler.³⁴⁰

Trees also feature prominently in mortuary concerns. There is a connection between Osiris and the tree,³⁴¹ and because of the role that Osiris plays in the both the underworld and the cult of the dead, the burial mounds with a tree planted on the top are referred to as Osiris mounds.³⁴² Osiris’s soul, in the shape of a bird, is depicted as alighting on a tree under which is the mound where the dead person’s coffin sits.³⁴³ One Pyramid Text reads, “Hail to you, you tree which encloses the god, under which the gods of the Lower Sky stand... O Osiris, your shade which is over you, O Osiris, which repels your striking-power, O Seth;... Turn about, O King! Turn about, O King! Shout! Shout! Day by day, night by night, day after day, [so long as ... exists], he shall exist for ever.”³⁴⁴ Christopher Hays says, “the deceased person himself (or herself) is explicitly linked to the afterlife tree by means of a connection to

³³⁸ William R. Osborne, *Trees and Kings: A Comparative Analysis of Tree Imagery in Israel’s Prophetic Tradition and the Ancient Near East* (Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 46.

³³⁹ Osborne, *Trees and Kings*, 48.

³⁴⁰ Osborne, *Trees and Kings*, 48.

³⁴¹ “His connection with the Persea-tree, and the legend which associates him with the Erica-tree, prove that at one time he was a tree-spirit, and that he absorbed the attributes of many tree-spirits both in the north and south of Egypt.” Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection Vol I* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 19.

³⁴² Christopher B. Hays, “‘There Is Hope for a Tree’: Job’s Hope for the Afterlife in the Light of Egyptian Tree Imagery,” *CBQ* 77, no. 1 (2015): 48–54.

³⁴³ Buhl, “Goddesses,” 90.

³⁴⁴ See Pyramid Text 574 in R.O. Faulkner, trans., *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 229.

Osiris.”³⁴⁵ The tree, therefore, represents hope for regeneration, both because it is an Osiris image, and because the image of the tree provides the location for the soul to dwell in the afterlife.

In addition to a link with Osiris, a tree goddess is also similarly depicted as providing a perch for the *ba* (soul), protecting the deceased, and providing provision.³⁴⁶ This provision is visible in funerary art, an example of which is the tomb of Nakht at Thebes.³⁴⁷ Marie-Louise Buhl describes the scene as “representation[s] of the goddess of the sycamore who feeds the deceased... [I]n one hand... is... a tray of food, while the other holds... the symbol of prosperity commonly shown in all periods as an attribute of goddesses.”³⁴⁸ Examples depicting the tree/goddess as protector and a perch for the soul are found in both the Coffin Texts and other tombs. For example, in response to a question about where the soul will partake of provisions in the afterlife, Coffin Text 203 says, “Under the branches of the *hs-nfrt* tree which supports *Hknws*...I have travelled around the sky over its four corners, and I sit in the place I desire to be.”³⁴⁹ The text indicates hope for the soul as it finds its place in the branches where it can rest. Another example is from Theban Tomb 106, “May I go to my ‘canal pool,’ may my *ba* sit on that sycamore, may I refresh myself in its shadow and drink its water.”³⁵⁰ This mortuary statement sees the tree as a perch for the *ba*, and indicates hope for an afterlife of leisure where the dead is protected by the tree and where the goddess facilitates the care of the soul after death.³⁵¹

³⁴⁵ Hays, “Hope for a Tree,” 48.

³⁴⁶ See Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 209–234 and Buhl, “The Goddesses,” 88–95.

³⁴⁷ Visual accessible through public domain.

<https://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15324coll10/id/174719>

³⁴⁸ Buhl, “Goddesses,” 92.

³⁴⁹ R.O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts: Vol 1 Spells 1-354* (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips Ltd., 1973), 165.

³⁵⁰ Assmann claims “‘that sycamore’ clearly alludes to the tree goddess.” See Assmann, *Death and Salvation*, 224.

³⁵¹ See also Osborne, *Trees and Kings*, 37–42.

While these examples indicate care of the dead, likely through mortuary rites facilitated by the living and mediated by the tree goddess, there are also specific mentions of tree goddesses being petitioned for immortality. For example, there are various depictions of Nut appearing to grant some kind of life after death. She is sometimes requested to return breath,³⁵² and at others to pour out “life-giving water into the hands of the deceased.”³⁵³ The latter is evident in Spell 59 of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, which reads, “Oh thou Sycomore (sic) of Nut, give me of the water and of the wind which are within thee. It is I who hold that abode which is in Heracleopolis, I watch over that Egg of the Great Cackler. My strength is the strength thereof, my life the life thereof, and my breath the breath thereof.”³⁵⁴

These depictions of Nut have lead scholars to claims that she is the “protector of the king, allowing him to be reborn.”³⁵⁵ There are other goddesses linked to similar concerns as well, and the differences in goddesses indicate that Egyptian deities “frequently take differing forms, assume different hierarchal relationships, and exhibit different aspects of divine power at different times.”³⁵⁶ To this end Michael Hundley indicates that Isis, Nephtys, Hathor, and Maat are all connected with trees at various times,³⁵⁷ and both Isis and Hathor are seen to have roles similar to Nut.³⁵⁸ Therefore, “the general motif of the tree goddess is found as a

³⁵² William R. Osborne, “The Tree of Life in Ancient Egypt and the Book of Proverbs,” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 14, no. 1 (2014): 120-121.

³⁵³ John H. Taylor, *Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: The British Museum, 2010), 177.

³⁵⁴ See Spell 59 in P. Le Page Renouf and Edouard Naville, “The Egyptian Book of the Dead,” 1904, <https://archive.org/details/egyptianbookofde00reno>, 113.

³⁵⁵ Carolyn Graves-Brown, *Dancing for Hathor: Women in Ancient Egypt* (London: Continuum International, 2010), 162.

³⁵⁶ Osborne, “Tree of Life,” 134.

³⁵⁷ See Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*, Writings from the Ancient World Supplements (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 164.

³⁵⁸ Buhl, “Goddesses,” 87.

common element in the repertoire of Egyptian funerary art from the 18th Dynasty and later.”³⁵⁹

These various images of trees form a milieu in Egypt indicating the prominence of: trees as a sign of ongoing, legitimate kingship (the *īšd* tree, and the existence of a world tree where Egyptian deities write the names of kings); an Osiris cult, where a tree represents hope for immortality; and tree goddesses that offer protection and facilitate the mortuary rites that allow for a functioning cult of ancestors. While not the only ways that trees function in art and mythology, these depictions indicate that one way they function is as a link between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Primarily, the living see these trees as a sign of hope for regeneration in the afterlife, or as the means of facilitating the mortuary cult. Because of Osiris’s link to immortality, and the way that various goddesses, depicted as trees, are imagined as caring for the deceased, trees have a tie to the survival of kings in the afterlife.

b. Trees in Assyria

For Assyria, trees carry the connotation of kingship blessed by deity, of dynastic legitimacy, and of mortuary concerns focused on legitimating kingship. Images of trees are primarily found in iconography connected to kingship, and they also appear in the earthly political realm as representations of the power of the king.

The idea of world order is on occasion depicted as a tree flanked by figures (sometimes human, sometimes divine) with a round disk, indicating the deity, floating above it.³⁶⁰ The tree represents the empire as a fruitful orchard,³⁶¹ and because the king is part of the

³⁵⁹ Nils Billing, “Writing an Image- The Formulation of the Tree Goddess Motif in the Book of the Dead, Ch. 59,” *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 32 (2004): 36.

³⁶⁰ Parpola, “Assyrian Tree,” 167 n. 28.

³⁶¹ Edith Porada, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collections: The Collections of the Pierpont Morgan Library, I*, Bollingen 14 (Washington, DC: Pantheon Books, 1948), 76 and 93.

care of the tree – or at times replaces the tree³⁶²– there is a likely message about the role of the king in both order and abundance. The iconography is often accompanied by the epithet “vice regent of Assur,”³⁶³ likely showing the king as a “benevolent figure, little lower than the gods, who joins them in conferring order, abundance, and security on the world.”³⁶⁴ The relationship between the king and a date palm is part of this milieu. The date palm was a symbol of tremendous wealth and fertility (easily transported and abundant food, good shade, use for housing material, and made into wine), and Osborne claims these things make it “a symbol of kingship, a mark of office” to an original audience.³⁶⁵ Whether this connection between the king and the tree is consistent through history is debated, but by the ninth century B.C.E. the link appears solid.³⁶⁶

Trees likely tie into the idea of monarchic legitimacy. In his article on Aššurnasirpal II’s movement of the palace from Aššur to Kalḫu, Seth Richardson argues that the walls of the throne room in Kalḫu are covered in trees to reinforce legitimacy. Because trees link world order with human kingship and abundance, moving the palace from its initial location of legitimacy would require a creative way of depicting an ongoing tie to the blessings of Aššur in the new location. He says, “we can well imagine that the abandonment of Assur was fraught with political tensions: Assyrian kingship was embedded in a city-state political

³⁶² Parpola, “Assyrian Tree,” and Barbara N. Porter, *Trees, Kings, and Politics: Studies in Assyrian Iconography*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 197 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

³⁶³ Parpola, “Assyrian Tree,” Seth Richardson, “An Assyrian Garden of Ancestors: Room I, Northwest Palace, Kalhu,” *SAAB* 13 (1999); Porter, *Trees, Kings, and Politics*.

³⁶⁴ Porter, *Trees, Kings, Politics*, 95.

³⁶⁵ Osborne, *Kings and Trees*, 68.

³⁶⁶ It seems likely in the time period of Aššurnasirpal II, and for some time after, the tree could be viewed as a representation of some aspect of kingship. See also, Stordalen, *Echoes*, 91–92. Widengren would argue more strongly that the king is linked to the tree, but his work is more contested now. See Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion: King and Saviour* (Uppsala: Lundequistska and Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1951).

structure, and legitimate kingship was virtually unthinkable seated outside of the city of Assur.”³⁶⁷

The hypothesis is that the trees of the Northwest Palace throne room express the line of kings and their connection with Aššur while also serving as a site of veneration of the deceased kings who had come before. These trees would invoke an important theme in Assyrian kingship, namely “the conceit of an unbroken lineage of kings stretching back to the dawn of the city of Assur,”³⁶⁸ and thereby supporting, “Aššurnasirpal II’s claims to legitimate and traditional kingship.”³⁶⁹ Supporting Richardson’s interpretation is Stavrakopoulou’s work on mortuary gardens, where she argues that the number of trees in the Northwest Palace throne room depict an “iconographic mortuary garden, within which the dead ancestors of the royal line are imaged as sacred trees.”³⁷⁰ In this context, the trees on the palace walls offer legitimacy to the current king by placing him in the midst of other legitimate kings, and they also allow for the mortuary rites that maintain important associations to past monarchs.

A third link between trees and kingship lies in the use of tree imagery to indicate political achievement and the flourishing of a nation under the monarch. The *topos* of the conquest of Lebanon, common in Mesopotamian literature, is linked to imperial achievement.³⁷¹ As “the Akkadian radical set ṣ-l-l forms a lexicon relating to the shade of garden; royal protection; and sleep, including eternal sleep,”³⁷² the felling of a tree would indicate that it can no longer provide shade for its subjects. This protection, or shade, specifically relates to “the authority and the protection of the Assyrian king and kingship,”³⁷³

³⁶⁷ Richardson, “Assyrian Garden of Ancestors,” 147.

³⁶⁸ Richardson, “Assyrian Garden of Ancestors,” 147.

³⁶⁹ Richardson, “Assyrian Garden of Ancestors,” 148.

³⁷⁰ Stavrakopoulou, “Exploring,” 17.

³⁷¹ David Stephen Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1999), 153.

³⁷² Richardson, “Assyrian Garden of Ancestors,” 160.

³⁷³ Richardson, “Assyrian Garden of Ancestors,” 161.

and the ability of the monarch to provide that shade/protection declares his legitimacy.

Nebuchadnezzar's power is highlighted in the image of him felling a cedar because it shows him as the triumphant, and thus legitimate, ruler. This theme is "concretized in the Wadi Brisa rock relief, in Lebanon, which apparently depicts him felling a cedar."³⁷⁴

Another political tie between trees, flourishing, and an able monarch, is the practice of taking exotic trees and plants from various, far-reaching areas of an empire and placing them in royal gardens to highlight imperial power.³⁷⁵ Recent scholarship places the so-called "Babylonian gardens" in Nineveh with an Assyrian predecessor,³⁷⁶ highlighting the Assyrian focus on trees/gardens as a sign of a strong and flourishing monarchy.

The Assyrian milieu just discussed indicates that the idea of kingship, world order, and legitimacy come together in the image of the tree. From the world of iconography, where the tree and the king represent the idea of a blessed world order, to the palace walls in Kalḫu, the tree is an image associated with various aspects of kingship. Kings also use trees and other plants to demonstrate their power as they are displayed in gardens that act as a testimony to their benevolence and ability to provide for their people.

Conclusion to Trees in Egypt and Assyria

In Egyptian and Assyrian ideological contexts, the tree carries the connotations of hope for a favourable afterlife, regeneration or immortality, legitimate kingship, and dynastic strength. The relationship between trees and kingship is "widespread in Syria and Palestine as well as in other areas... between the mid-ninth and mid-eighth centuries B.C.E."³⁷⁷ While the image of the tree is not only concerned with kingship, the evidence indicates that when in a political context in one of these nations, it heralds hope for legitimacy and longevity.

³⁷⁴ Vanderhooft, *Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 167.

³⁷⁵ Novák, "Artificial Paradise," 452.

³⁷⁶ Dalley, *Mystery*.

³⁷⁷ Wallace, *Eden Narrative*, 107.

2. Trees in the Hebrew Bible

These various themes (dynastic strength, legitimate kingship, immortality, favourable afterlife) also appear in the text of the HB, although in different combinations and forms than those just discussed.³⁷⁸ A brief examination of where these themes occur in the wider context of the HB will be followed by an exploration of how they come together in the story of the cedar in Ezek 31.

Noticeable in a wide range of texts in the HB, the tree appears in relationship with themes of both dynastic strength and legitimate relationship with YHWH. Firstly, in relation to dynastic strength, the idea of shade and its connection to protection and provision appears in both Judges and Hosea. The fable of Judg 9 has the cedars asking for a tree to rule over them. It places the bramble in contrast to the other trees, and when the people ask the bramble to rule over them, it suggests that if they want it to rule then they should come and take refuge in its shade (v.9). The inability to provide shade mirrors the inability to provide refuge and safety, mocking the idea that the bramble could be king. Hosea 14 also uses the theme of shade as it articulates a future hope where the flourishing nation will be like a cedar of Lebanon that provides shade (vv. 6–8).

The same theme, but from the opposite perspective, appears from the connection between the cedar of Lebanon and siege craft and warfare. Conquest is described as reaching the remote parts of Lebanon “to cut down its tall cedars” (אכרת קומת ארזיו) (2 Kgs 19:23; Isa 37:24). The felling of trees, not just cedars, in warfare is connected to the defeat of those whose trees the conquering nation is felling (Isa 37:24).³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ These are not the only ways trees appear in the HB. For more, see Osborne, *Trees and Kings*, 87–111.

³⁷⁹ For more on cutting trees as a sign of conquest see Deut 20:20; 2 Kgs 3:19 and 25; Jer 22:7.

The relationship between cedars/trees and legitimacy is visible in the building of the Jerusalem temple. The ability to use cedars of Lebanon to build YHWH's house is an indication of the peace and security of the empire under Solomon. When Solomon is able to command that people "cut for me cedars from Lebanon" (ויכרתו לי ארזים מן הלבנון), his ability to make the request stems from the lack of an adversary (שטן) or misfortune (פגע) (1 Kgs 5:18).

In terms of a legitimate relationship with YHWH, there are the images in the HB that describe the people as YHWH's planting.³⁸⁰ These images deal with legitimacy in the sense that they often indicate favour or protection from YHWH. For example, Exod 15:17 claims that YHWH will plant those he has rescued from Egypt on the mountain of his inheritance. There are verses indicating planting as a type of action that will result in protection or status (2 Sam 7:10, Jer 24:6, Ps 80:8) or a blessed future (Isa 60:21, 61:3). YHWH is also described as the planter of nations (Jer 18:9, 31:28, 32:41, 42:10, 44:2; Ps 80:15, 104:16; 1 Chr 17:9). The opposite of the idea of legitimacy and protection would be a connection between failure and uprooting/destruction. For example, the failure of Israel/Judah as YHWH's planting is highlighted in Isa 5:7 and Jer 2:21, 11:17, 12:2 and 45:4.

Ezekiel uses this common trope of planting as a sign of relationship, and focuses it on the image of the tree. There are HB examples of righteousness represented with a tree, for example Jer 17:7–8 where the righteous person is like a tree planted by water (see also Ps 1:3). There are also specific examples of failure that use the image of a tree and show YHWH as the one who breaks cedars (Ps 29:5) or punishes cedars (Zech 11:1–2). Further, Isaiah goes so far as to say that YHWH is against the "cedars of Lebanon that are lofty and lifted up" (ועל כל ארזי הלבנון הרמים, Isa 2:13). This common depiction of the people as a type of planting,

³⁸⁰ Sometimes what is planted is a vine, and sometimes it is a tree. The idea of YHWH's planting, however, is a sign of care and protection (thus legitimacy).

and the idea of a tree as one type of planting where the top represents the leadership, allows the image of the tree in Ezek 31 to combine a common HB trope with the information on trees in the ANE to offer a message about legitimate relationship with YHWH.

The other two primary themes from the sections on Egypt and Assyria, specifically concern over burial and immortality stemming from access to a favourable afterlife and ancestor worship, is visible in the text of the HB, although not specifically connected to the image of a tree. Matthew Suriano explores how the epithet “lay with his fathers” is an important indicator of dynastic succession described in 1 Kgs.³⁸¹ He argues for the phrase as a link to dynastic legitimacy as it appears, or is absent, at important times in the history displayed in the text. The phrase is used of those who are succeeded in death by a son from David through Manasseh. It falters with the onset of the internal challenges that begin the decline of Judah, and has a final appearance with Jehoiakim, likely intended to highlight the continuing “patrimonial integrity of the royal house of Judah.”³⁸² Suriano argues that the reappearance in connection with the succession of Jehoiakim/Jehoiachin is likely part of the final redaction of Kings to express a particular concern for the continuation of the Davidic dynasty post-exile. Its appearance seeks to legitimate the hope for continuation of the proper dynasty via Jehoiachin, who is treated well in Babylon, in specific contrast to Zedekiah, who is humiliated and defeated. Any future hope for a Davidic line would require a legitimate tie to the dynasty that the people believe has been chosen by YHWH.

Just like in the ANE, the royal tomb and proper burial are essential to political legitimacy because they indicate the legitimate succession to royal ancestors and confer authority on the successor.³⁸³ A “primary concern was that the king was buried on his

³⁸¹ Matthew J. Suriano, *The Politics of Dead Kings: Dynastic Ancestors in the Book of Kings and Ancient Israel*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe 48 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 83–96.

³⁸² Suriano, *Politics*, 84.

³⁸³ Suriano, *Politics*, 99.

ancestral patrimony, representing a continued line of legitimate rulers that began with David.”³⁸⁴ As “most self-respecting ancient Near Eastern palaces intended to accommodate either the burial or commemorative cults of their rulers”³⁸⁵ and were an extensive aspect of “the social conceit of royal establishments,”³⁸⁶ it appears as though that practice was important in Judah as well. While not clearly discussed in the book of Ezekiel, Ezek 43:7–9 hints that this issue of monarchic burial was enough of a concern that it caused a blurring of the boundaries between the sacred and the profane. Whether the issues dealt with the cult of the dead, or possibly some kind of statue commemorating kingship, is not entirely clear.³⁸⁷ However, the ‘physical Zion’ put a premium on some aspect of kingship that caused encroachment on YHWH’s domain.³⁸⁸

Trees appear in many manifestations in the HB, and there are similarities with the role they play in Egypt and Assyria above. Trees represent nations, they are a sign of YHWH’s protection, and they can indicate either conquest or peace. They are an image used in describing a successful monarch, as the king, personified as a tree, is able to provide shade for his people. Trees are chopped down as a means of expressing defeat of an enemy nation, both because the action steals the ability of the nation to eat and because the enemy king (also personified as a tree) is destroyed and no longer able to shade his people. Further, there are specific places where YHWH is said to be against haughty cedars, and where he chops those haughty trees down.

³⁸⁴ Suriano, *Politics*, 126.

³⁸⁵ Richardson, “Assyrian Garden of Ancestors,” 168.

³⁸⁶ Richardson, “Assyrian Garden of Ancestors,” 170.

³⁸⁷ Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 229. Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 584–585. For an alternative view see Margaret S. Odell, “What Was the Image of Jealousy in Ezekiel 8?,” in *The Priests in the Prophets: The Portrayal of Priests, Prophets, and Other Religious Specialists in the Latter Prophets*, ed. Lester L. Grabbe and Alice Ogden Bellis, vol. 408, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 134–48.

³⁸⁸ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel vol. 2*, 416–418; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 257.

Despite the fact that burial concerns are not specifically connected to the image of the tree, the concerns over dynastic succession and the relationship between burial and succession in the ANE are in view in the depiction of kingship in the HB as well. Suriano's work highlights that redactors of the HB recognised the need for legitimacy, just as other nations, and sought to redact the text to reflect a positive continuation of the Davidic line. Proper burial is central to maintaining dynastic legitimacy and connection to ancestors for the kings of Judah, just as it was for the kings of other ANE nations.

Summary of Trees in the HB

The same concerns at work in the milieu of Egypt and Assyria— namely connotations of hope for a favourable afterlife, regeneration or immortality, legitimate kingship, and dynastic strength— are also at work in the text of the HB. These different themes are evident in the image of the cedar in Ezek 31, making the fate of the cedar a poignant message to the concept of kingship prevalent in 'physical Zion'.

C. Tree Themes in Understanding Ezekiel 31

Ezekiel 31 draws the themes from the HB and the wider ANE together in the chthonic cedar in order to use the image of the tree to describe "YHWH's impending judgement."³⁸⁹ The three primary ways the cedar of Ezek 31 draws on the above images are: it addresses kingship, it focuses on the idea of a world tree as the embodiment of order, and it addresses issues of burial and the afterlife. Firstly, it deals with kingship. The oracle is addressed to Pharaoh, making a focus on political office clear from the outset. Discussed above (and in Chapter Three), there are political connections between Egypt and Judah that should focus the Egypt OANs on the leadership of Judah. Another indication of kingship lies in the trope in the HB where nations are viewed as trees. Nations are represented by trees, and the ruler is

³⁸⁹ Osborne, *Trees and Kings*, 145.

often viewed as the topmost part of that tree.³⁹⁰ As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the “treetop” of Ezek 17 represents the future Davidic king, and here in Ezek 31 the “treetop” appears again, thereby creating a focus on the king.

Secondly, Ezek 31:3–12 reflects use of the tree as a ‘world tree’ that represents divinely blessed world order. Ezekiel 31:3–9 describes the cedar as having beautiful branches that offer shade (v. 3), while the birds of heaven and beasts of the field rest within its largess (v. 6). The nation represented by this tree, therefore, provides shade, which represents protection and allows for abundance just like other blessed nations in the ANE. Fed by the cosmic waters (vv. 3–5), this tree is blessed with the deity’s favour and is able to place its top in the clouds (v. 3). Just as the world tree represents order blessed by a deity, and mediated through a chosen king, the cedar in view of Ezek 31 represents divinely blessed world order.

Just as the destruction of trees, and the chopping down of cedars, in the ANE represents a loss of legitimacy, the chopping down of the cedar in Ezek 31:10 heralds the same problem. In Isa 2:13, YHWH is specifically against cedars that are haughty, and his destruction of cedars is visible in other locations in the HB (Ps 29:5; Zech 11:1–2). Also, Isa 14:8 references Babylon as a tree-cutter, thereby connecting the destruction of the cedar in Ezek 31:11 at the hands of the “ruler of the nations” to Ezekiel’s context in the Babylonian conquest.

Thirdly, Ezek 31 addresses themes of burial and the afterlife as it describes the tree’s fated destruction. Once the tree falls out of favour, the focus shifts from dynastic strength to the question of burial and its influence over favourable afterlife and continuing dynastic legitimacy. In discussing Ezek 31 in the context of burial, two things are important to note: from the beginning of the description of the trees there is a question of belonging, and also, the tree is chopped down, indicating that it cannot stand as an image of future hope.

³⁹⁰ Stordalen, *Echoes*, 91–92.

Ezekiel 31: 8–9 claims that other tree species in the Eden Garden are jealous of this stately cedar. They “could not match it” (לֹא עֲמָמָהוּ) or “were not like it” (לֹא דָמָו). While at one time they did not belong together, by the time of death these disparate types of trees all suffer the same fate (Ezek 31:16-18). While generally translated as “hide, darken” (translated above as “match”), John Strong argues for translating עֲמָם in Ezek 31:8 as a form of family/people in order to recall a “kinship association.”³⁹¹ He argues that because of the linkage between עָם and both the burial and the banishment formula outside of Ezekiel, seeing the usage in Ezekiel dealing with belonging and family likeness fits better with the text.³⁹² This translation would indicate that the trees in the Eden Garden do not belong in kinship association, or familial belonging, with this stately cedar in the beginning. As already shown, the chthonic cedar is initially blessed and stands apart from these other trees because of YHWH’s favour. As the tree loses its position, however, it comes to find its place among those to whom it at one point did not share any kind of relationship.

Without accepting all parts of his argument, Strong’s work on עֲמָם as reflecting familial belonging is helpful because it ties the message of the tree’s destruction to the concept of inclusion within a kinship group. כָּרַת, the fate of the tree in Ezek 31:12, is used idiomatically to designate the making of a covenant (Gen 9:11, 15:18, 31:44; Exod 34:12) or to being excluded from the community because of an infraction against the covenant (Gen 17:14; Exod 12:15, 19; Lev 7:20, 21, 25, 27; 17:4, 9, 10, 14; 18:29; 19:8; 20:3, 5, 6, 17, 18; 22:3; 23:29; Num 9:13). Just as being planted by YHWH indicates legitimacy and protection,

³⁹¹ John T. Strong, “Verb Forms of ‘MM in Ezekiel and Lamentations,” *Biblica* 88, no. 4 (2007): 547. Without accepting all of Strong’s argument, his work supports a focus in this section on familial belonging. In light of Suriano’s work on burial and dynastic legitimacy, Strong’s familial idea further supports the conclusion that this section has a message about familial connections and belonging.

³⁹² Strong, “Verb Forms of ‘MM,” 547. It is important to note that even without Strong’s argument, the passage begins claiming that these other trees are somehow different than the tall cedar. They are jealous of the cedar for its beauty.

being cut off from family or from YHWH shows a loss of legitimacy, connection, and belonging. If the tree was once separate from the other trees because it was chosen by YHWH, its loss of legitimacy ties to a loss of covenant with YHWH. The word כרת forms a connection between “chopping down,” something that would happen to an actual tree, and the idiomatic “cutting a covenant,” converging to show the chopping of the tree as an indication of lost covenant, and lost belonging.

This tree now belongs with those whom it was not originally in a kinship relationship with, and by extension, it has lost its initially exalted status. The chopping down of the physical tree, and the loss of the relationship/covenant conveyed by that action, calls its future into question. The action of chopping the tree down, and the resulting scattering of its branches, further connects to ANE burial traditions and their association with issues of legitimacy.

Scattering bones is an aspect of cultic purification because the desecration of bones prevents any kind of afterlife or veneration of ancestors. For example, Josiah does more than destroy the high places in 2 Kgs 23:16–18. He removes the bones to desecrate the site beyond rededication. “The use and abuse of corpses is a powerful trope in biblical texts, extending well beyond the literary imaging of destruction and death to index instead a complex of socio-religious, political, and cultural concerns about the placement, treatment, and status of the dead among the living.”³⁹³ The least desirable treatment for a corpse is not to bury it at all,³⁹⁴ and the threat of such treatment is visible in the HB as a form of curse in treaty formulae (Deut 28:26, 2 Kgs 9:25).³⁹⁵ This lack of burial finds representation in the scattered

³⁹³ Francesca Stavrakopoulou, “Gog’s Grave and the Use and Abuse of Corpses in Ezekiel 39:11-20,” *JBL* 129, no. 1 (2010): 69.

³⁹⁴ Saul M Olyan, “Some Neglected Aspects of Israelite Interment Ideology,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 4 (2005): 607. An ANE example is found in the story of Aqhat, where the king kills the bird that eats his son in order to retrieve the body and give it a proper burial.

³⁹⁵ Olyan, “Some Neglected Aspects,” 607.

remains of the tall tree. When the tree is ‘cut’, its branches fall to the ground and remain there as their final resting place. If there is no burial, then the idea of belonging, and how belonging carries connotations of longevity, becomes a concern for the tree represented by these scattered branches.

What happens to the branches on the ground also raises concerns for longevity, as “scavenging of corpses by animals and birds signals an absence of the living community to care for the dead and to facilitate their transition into a post-mortem existence through repeated mortuary rites.”³⁹⁶ While it is not entirely clear that the birds and beasts scavenge the tree, they return to dwell upon its “ruin.” The actions of the animals indicate “alienation from society and thus the total abandonment of the dead.”³⁹⁷ The abandonment of the dead contains a message about dynastic longevity and future legitimacy: if the tree represents monarchy at the time of the exile, its destruction and treatment signals a loss of legitimacy and little hope for longevity.³⁹⁸

Therefore, on the second issue, the tree as a sign of hope, the passage ends with death and a descent to Sheol. As the tree in Egypt is sometimes an image in funerary art that offers either hope of regeneration, as with Osiris, or the possibility of a favourable afterlife cared for by a tree goddess, the destruction of the cedar in Ezek 31 would indicate a loss of that hope. The tree is not able to offer protection, and the soul cannot perch in its branches,

³⁹⁶ Stavrakopoulou, “Gog’s Grave,” 74.

³⁹⁷ Stavrakopoulou, “Gog’s Grave,” 74.

³⁹⁸ There is also a possible connection between Ezek 6 and Ezek 31. Ezekiel 6 claims that YHWH will bring a sword against the mountains, hills, rivers, and valleys (להרים ולגבעות) (v. 3) and the people’s bones will be scattered (v. 5), their idols broken (v. 6) and the land filled with the slain (v. 7). This oracle against the land has these bones causing corpse impurity thereby defiling the land. As the cedar in Ezek 31 is chopped down the branches fall upon the mountains and in all the valleys (אל ההרים ובכל גאיות), and in all the rivers of the land (בכל אפיקי הארץ) (v. 12). It is possible that the destruction of Ezek 6 is realized in Ezek 31. These words also appear in Ezek 35, similarly to the future destruction envisioned in Ezek 6. As the phrases are not unique to Ezek 6 and 31 it is a tentative connection. For more on the connection between Ezek 35 and Ezek 6, with no mention of Ezek 31, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 712.

because it is scattered on the ground, forgotten by some and only potentially gathered with those who it was originally “not like.”

The three primary connections just discussed between Ezek 31 and the wider use of trees in Egypt, Assyria, and the HB are: a focus on kingship, the role of kingship in divine world order, and the need for legitimate monarchs to have a proper burial. The cedar in Ezek 31 draws on a set of symbolic associations in use within the ANE to craft a polemic against the interpretation of kingship associated with ‘physical Zion’. Once the cedar is chopped down, the animals have to dwell on top of it rather than underneath it, a sign similar to the fable in Judg 9 indicating that it is foolish to put faith in leadership that cannot provide the needed refuge and protection. The book of Ezekiel uses the tree metaphor “to symbolize divine rebellion and human pride,”³⁹⁹ and also to make a specific statement about how those attributes influence an understanding of future longevity and ongoing legitimacy for the monarchy.

II. Conclusion

The tree has a complex lore in both Egypt and Assyria, the two nations specifically mentioned in Ezek 31. In Egypt, trees represent various deities and hope for regeneration and immortality. In Assyria, the tree connects the ideas of world order as maintained via a divinely blessed monarch, and a mortuary cult that carries connotations of dynastic legitimacy. Themes of conquest are wrapped up in each as the felling of trees indicates a loss of hope for regeneration, divine order, and dynastic legitimacy. The HB has diverse verses about trees and plants that are similar to those found elsewhere in the ANE, indicating a common milieu underlying the image and lore of the tree. There are also texts in the HB that specifically reference YHWH as one who is opposed to haughty trees, and that tie Babylon to

³⁹⁹ Osborne, *Trees and Kings*, 159.

the role of tree-cutter. These ideas converge in Ezek 31 to explain a historical situation where Babylon is being used to destroy the tree that represents the Davidic monarchy prior to the exile.

Ezekiel crafts a “counterstory” to the pre-exile understanding of kingship that flourishes in ‘physical Zion’ by using the Eden Garden in Ezek 31. Placing personified trees in a garden of God, Ezek 31 explores how kingship has failed whoever is represented by those other personified trees and contributes to the desecration of the land. As a model for kingship, the destruction of the mighty cedar contains a pointed message about the dynastic promise. Just as the Eden Garden of Ezek 28 offers a “counterstory” to the Master Narrative that Jerusalem and Zion are the same by casting the city off the holy mountain of Zion, Ezek 31 challenges an accepted interpretation of kingship. Ezekiel 31 utilises the setting of the Eden Garden to highlight the role of a monarchic cedar, once blessed, that is cut down and left without proper burial. Without the proper burial, the idea of legitimate kingship is called into question. This chapter offers a “counterstory” to those still holding hope for a return to the old ways of understanding the promise to the Davidic monarchy.

Chapter Six: Ezekiel 36 and Land in the Understanding of YHWH

As in previous chapters, this chapter will discuss how the appearance of the Eden Garden serves to challenge an aspect of ‘physical Zion’. For Ezek 36, the offered “counterstory” focuses on reshaping the patriarchal land promise. As already mentioned in the methodology test of Chapter One above, Ezekiel is concerned with shifting how the people relate to the land. While the patriarchal land promise has to change, Ezekiel still sees the land as a future hope (Ezek 20:41–42). Without destroying the promise of the land that is a component of every tradition of the HB, Ezekiel has to shape the future hope in a way that changes how the land intertwined with the Zion of the past. He does this through the idea of the *’admat yiśrā’ēl*.

In Ezek 36, Ezekiel claims that the desolate land destroyed by the siege of Babylon will become like an Eden Garden, and it is this same land that is in parallel with where the bones of the people are installed in Ezek 37. This chapter will explore how the *’admat yiśrā’ēl* draws upon the spaces of the old Promised Land and an Eden Garden as it ascribes new knowledge and new hope. It will investigate how the *’admat yiśrā’ēl* is linked to knowledge of YHWH and thus is able to encapsulate both the failure of the patriarchal land promise and the future hope that its link to an Eden Garden provides.

I. Land in Ezekiel

The Eden Garden in Ezek 36⁴⁰⁰ recasts the old land promises, therefore, understanding how land functions in the wider book is important.

⁴⁰⁰ For information around the manuscript traditions, the missing “Eden Garden” in the LXX traditions, and how the addition of the Masada Ezekiel fragment changed the conversation around the relationship between the MT and LXX see William A. Tooman, “Textual History of Ezekiel,” in *Textual History of the Bible: Pentateuch, Former and Latter Prophets*, ed. Armin Lange and Emanuel Tov, 1B (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Ingrid E. Lilly, *Two Books of Ezekiel: Papyrus 967 and the Masoretic Text as Variant Literary Editions*,

A. The Land as a Possession

While many interpret the text of Ezekiel through the lens of modern ecojustice concerns, and therefore find implicit fault with what they see as an anthropocentric approach to the land, there is a very specific program in place in the text.⁴⁰¹ The specifics of this program may not entirely alleviate the concerns of this group of scholars, but it nuances them. Michael Lyons refers to the land in the book of Ezekiel as its own actor.⁴⁰² While outside of Ezekiel the land is often portrayed as a victim that suffers on account of its inhabitants (Isa 24:4, 33:9; Jer 4:28, 23:10; Hos 4:3; Zech 12:12), or as an entity that belongs to YHWH and must be avenged when its inhabitants cause it distress (Lev 18:24–25), Ezekiel ties the land and the people together in a different way. They function as separate

Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 150 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), John W. Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary Based on Iezekiāel in Codex Vaticanus*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Ashley S. Crane, *Israel's Restoration: A Textual-Comparative Exploration of Ezekiel 36-39*, vol. 122, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Allan Chester Johnson et al., *The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri: Ezekiel*, Princeton University Studies in Papyrology 3 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938); Henry Snyder Gehman, "The Relations Between the Text of the John H. Scheide Papyri and That of the Other Greek MSS. of Ezekiel," *JBL* 57, no. 3 (1938); J Barton Payne, "The Relationship of the Chester Beatty Papyri of Ezekiel to Codex Vaticanus," *JBL* 68, no. 3 (September 1949); John William Wevers claims, "it is a recognized fact that the Greek of the LXX was Hebraic in character." ("Evidence of the Text of the John H. Scheide Papyri for the Translation of the Status Constructus in Ezekiel," *JBL* 70, no. 3 (1951); Joseph Ziegler, "Zur Textgestaltung der Ezechiel-Septuaginta," *Biblica* 34, no. 4 (1953); Peter Katz, ("Zur Textgestaltung der Ezechiel-Septuaginta," *Biblica* 35, no. 1 (1954); Johan Lust, "Ezekiel 36-40 in the Oldest Greek Manuscript," *CBQ* 43, no. 4 (1981); Emanuel Tov, "Recensional Differences Between the MT and LXX of Ezekiel," *ETL* 62, no. 1 (1986); Shemaryahu Talmon, "Fragments of an Ezekiel Scroll from Masada (Ezek 35:11-38:14) 1043-2220, MAS 1D: Latest Photograph 302367," *OLP* 27 (1996).

⁴⁰¹ Keith Carley, "From Harshness to Hope: The Implications for Earth of Hierarchy in Ezekiel," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality*, ed. S. L. Cook and C. L. Patton (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004); Kalinda Rose Stevenson, "If Earth Could Speak: The Case of the Mountains against YHWH in Ezekiel 6:35-36," in *The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets*, ed. Norman C Habel *The Earth Bible* 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 158–71.

⁴⁰² Michael A. Lyons, *An Introduction to the Study of Ezekiel* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2015), 150.

actors whose interplay significantly influences how the people understand and relate to YHWH.

The failure of the ‘physical Zion’ requires that the land be subdued under YHWH’s control because it is its own actor. It must be put into the proper place in the consciousness of the audience. Keith Carley criticizes Zimmerli’s work on hope in the book of Ezekiel because it focuses on future restoration with no mention of what that restoration might mean for the land.⁴⁰³ While Carley is not wrong in seeing that the land is not specifically restored, the reason for this circumstance lies in the theology of the book as a whole. The ‘physical Zion’ exhibits a strong tie between the possession of the land and YHWH’s promises. If the land remains in its current place in the consciousness of the audience, significant failures are difficult to grasp (i.e. the lack of boundaries between the sacred and the profane, the sins of the city, the problem of a monarchy unfaithful to the covenant, a priesthood that acts in violation of the rules of the cult). The land has become a distraction that needs to be addressed. As it becomes its own actor, it is able to be punished, and painted in a new light, so the people hopefully recognize that the promises of YHWH are not the same as YHWH himself.

The promise of the land first appears in the MT in Gen 13:15, elaborated on in Gen 15, and the idea of a land promised to the people is a core tenet through the HB. The various sources indicate slightly different relationships to the land, but all of them require that Israel be faithful to keep it (see more in Chapters Two above and Six below). The Master Narrative indicates that possession of the land “is a visible token of divine fidelity, of the faithfulness and trustworthiness of God.”⁴⁰⁴ In this Master Narrative, loss of the land calls into question

⁴⁰³ Carley, “From Harshness to Hope,” 117.

⁴⁰⁴ Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), 101.

the promises of YHWH, and, therefore, the faithfulness of YHWH. Ezekiel offers a “counterstory” by nuancing the idea of “possession” (Gen 15/Ezek 11 and 33).

There are two central pieces of the Master Narrative in view when מורשה appears. The idea that possession of the land is a sign of YHWH’s favour, and also that YHWH dwells in, and rules from, Jerusalem alone. Ezekiel posits the “counterstory” to this Master Narrative by showing that YHWH can dwell outside of Jerusalem and then by mixing the verbal root of ירש with ideas from the Holiness Code (Ezek 33).

Gen 15:3-8: “‘Because you have not given to me offspring, so a son of my house is the one to possess (ירש) it. Behold, the word of the Lord came to him saying, ‘this man will not possess (ירש) (it), but rather one who comes forth from your insides he will possess (ירש) (it). And he said to him ‘I am YHWH who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give to you this land to possess (לרשתה) it.’ And he said, ‘Sovereign Lord, how will I know when I possess (אירש) it?’”

Non-exiles say to the exiles in Ezek 11:15: “Go far from YHWH, to us has the land been given as a possession (מורשה).”

YHWH replies in Ezek 11:16: “Therefore say, ‘Thus says the sovereign Lord, because I caused them to be far off among the nations and because I caused them to be scattered among the countries, but I was to them a sanctuary in the countries where they had gone.’”

Those in destroyed Jerusalem say in Ezek 33:24: “Abraham was one and he possessed (ירש) the land, but we are many (so) to us the land has been given as a possession (מורשה).”

Ezek counters the idea in Ezek 33:25-26: “Therefore say to them, ‘thus says the sovereign Lord, you eat meat with the blood in it, lift your eyes up to your idols as you shed blood... should you possess (ירש) the land?’”
“You rely on your sword, you commit abominations, and each of you defiles your neighbour’s wife... should you possess (ירש) the land?”

The non-exiles call on the Abrahamic land promise found in Gen 15 where ירש is the main word for what Abraham’s descendants will do with the land.⁴⁰⁵ This promise makes sense for them on two levels: firstly, it offers a sense of security they can cling to because they are not yet in exile, and secondly, it supports the belief that YHWH dwells in Jerusalem and places his favour there. Those still in Jerusalem tell the exiles that because they are far off from YHWH, and therefore clearly being punished, the land has been given to them (the

⁴⁰⁵ Strine, *Sworn Enemies*, 186.

non-exiles still in Jerusalem) as a possession. The idea that being far off from the place where YHWH dwells indicates a lack of relationship and shows the belief that YHWH is centralized in Jerusalem. The belief that those who were exiled were in the wrong and being punished, and possession of the land remains with those who are ‘right,’ shows how the possession of the land indicates YHWH’s favour. The “counterstory” here is expressed not in a particular word choice, but in a claim that YHWH will be a “little sanctuary” (לְמִקְדָּשׁ מְעוֹט)⁴⁰⁶ to those whom he scattered. If YHWH is present with those who are far from Jerusalem, then a belief that he only dwells in the city would require scrutiny. Further, if YHWH does not only dwell in the city, then how the people measure YHWH’s favour would also require scrutiny. YHWH’s response calls into question the idea of the land as a specific tie to either YHWH’s presence or his favour.

This concept of possession is so deeply rooted, however, that even after the fall of Jerusalem those living in the destroyed city claim a tie to the Abrahamic land promise. They say that if Abraham possessed the land as only one man, then surely the nation, made up of many, can still claim the land as a possession (מורשה, Ezek 33:24). Ezekiel responds to this claim and avoids use of their word for possession (מורשה). Instead he intertwines certain ideas from the Holiness Code (primarily the actions that would lead to pollution and expulsion from the land in Lev 17–18) in order to counter the idea that possession is permanent (Ezek 33:25–26). Citing deeds that pollute the land,⁴⁰⁷ followed by “should you then possess the land?” highlights the failure of those who think they are deserving of the land. Viewing the

⁴⁰⁶ Block, “Transformations of Royal Ideology,” 234. Being with the people in a far-off land, whether this term indicates a kind of permanence in terms of place or a type of permanence in terms of who he favours, the point here is that YHWH’s presence is somewhere besides Jerusalem. Regardless of whether the term implies ‘for a brief time,’ or something else, it implies that he can, in fact, reside somewhere besides Jerusalem. This raises the question of Jerusalem’s central importance.

⁴⁰⁷ Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55.

land as a possession (מורשה) caused the people to pollute the land as they forgot that the land was not theirs but YHWH's, thereby requiring certain faithful actions from them.

Ezekiel also nuances the understanding of the land by using different terms for what the people can call the land. The three possession terms for the land in Ezekiel are מורשה, אחזה, and נחלה. While ירש is not uncommon in the HB, the noun form מורשה only occurs 11 times, 7 of them in Ezekiel, and all of them in a negative context.⁴⁰⁸ While Ezekiel does say that the people will ירש the land (Ezek 36:12), he never calls the land the מורשה of the people. Rather he refers to it as אחזה or as נחלה.

While the differences can be overstated, מורשה carries connotations of complete ownership. "Abraham's entitlement to the land, based on the promise charters, is offered as an unconditional trust,"⁴⁰⁹ seemingly devoid of covenant stipulations and permanently gifted to Israel. Therefore, in contrast to מורשה, Ezekiel tends to use אחזה or נחלה. אחזה designates property that even if leased to others remains in the possession of the original family.⁴¹⁰ Because it can be leased to other users it sometimes carries the connotation of "acquired property,"⁴¹¹ although the property reverts back to the original owner in the year of Jubilee. Used three times in Lev 25 (vv. 10, 13, 28), its use in descriptions of the Jubilee discourage any notion of permanence. It is also used to describe the land given by Joseph to his brothers in Egypt (Gen 47:11), supporting the idea that while there is a legal lease involved, it is

⁴⁰⁸ Ezekiel uses the word to indicate one nation being conquered by another (Ezek 25:4, 10 and 36:2, 3, 5) or to refute the land claim of the Master Narrative (Ezek 11:15, 33:24). See Strine, *Sworn Enemies*, 186.

⁴⁰⁹ Norman C. Habel, *The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), loc 1511.

⁴¹⁰ See Herbert Wolf, "אֶחְזֶה," in *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 34.

⁴¹¹ Habel, *The Land is Mine*, loc 1241. The word is sometimes translated as "property" but most English translations use "possession." See Wolf, "אֶחְזֶה," 33.

intended to be utilised for cultivation while remaining in the overall possession of the lender.⁴¹²

While נחלה is often translated as ‘inheritance’ and is “entitlement or rightful property... legitimated by a recognized social custom, legal process, or divine charter,”⁴¹³ it generally belongs to YHWH. Gerleman argues for נחלה as linked to the idea of residence based on a connection between verses claiming YHWH dwells on Mt. Zion and Ps 79:1 where YHWH’s נחלה is invaded by the foreign nations.⁴¹⁴ Therefore, the land is YHWH’s נחלה and that נחלה is divided up for the tribes of Israel, but it remains YHWH’s. Whether for cultivation (אחזה) or because נחלה is tied to YHWH’s dwelling, both terms indicate a less permanent possession of the land with the overtone that actual permanent possession is YHWH’s alone.

To avoid relying only on the subtle differences in the definitions, the purpose underlying Ezekiel’s use is important. To this end, Ezek 36:12 is a helpful example. In his definition of ירש, John Hartley argues for the intertwining of the idea of possession with the concept of ‘dispossess.’⁴¹⁵ He arrives there because in order for the land possession promise of YHWH to come to fruition, the people who inhabit the land before them must lose the land indicating that possession requires dispossession. In Ezek 36:12, Ezekiel’s audience can only repossess the land because of the exile, or an initial dispossessing of the same land. Further, upon their return the land is a נחלה and remains the primary possession of YHWH alone. The irony of having to dispossess the land they viewed as a possession (מורשה) and regain a

⁴¹² Habel, *The Land is Mine*, loc 1306.

⁴¹³ Habel, *The Land is Mine*, loc 487.

⁴¹⁴ Gillis Gerleman, “Nutzrecht und Wohnrecht: Zur Bedeutung von ’Achuzah und Nachalah,” *ZAW* 89, no. 3 (1977): 320.

⁴¹⁵ John E. Hartley, “יָרַשׁ,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament Volume 1* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 409.

different kind of ‘inheritance’ (labeled as a נחלה), changes the way that the land promise evokes YHWH’s faithfulness.

At the core of the use of the Abrahamic word for possession is a misunderstanding about the nature of YHWH’s promise. The people have placed the land promise above YHWH as they see life in the land as contingent upon YHWH’s faithfulness rather than their own obedience. As both a priest and a deported Judahite, Ezekiel’s position in the exile negates an understanding of the Abrahamic land promise as permanent. To protect YHWH’s reputation, Ezekiel uses a concept of land more prominent in the priestly Holiness Code to explain the current circumstances. While Ezekiel does not use one term to explicitly refute the use of מורשה in the mouths of the non-exiles, he counters the theology of the Master Narrative that underlies use of the term.

The land is one of the central components of the book of Ezekiel, and rather than directing anger at the land for no reason, the book deals with “bitter grief” (Ezek 21:11) over the way the land promise has usurped YHWH himself. The land is a core tenet of ‘physical Zion’ that Ezekiel is trying to tear down, and therefore he has to do something unexpected to shift it in the consciousness of the audience. As its own character, it can narratively interact with the people in unique ways.

B. ’Admat yiśrā’ēl

The *’admat yiśrā’ēl* (אדמת ישראל) is a phrase that only occurs in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 7:2; 11:17; 12:19, 22; 13:9; 18:2; 20:38, 42; 21:7, 8; 25:3, 6; 33:24; 36:6; 37:12; 38:18, 19). Julie Galambush assigns the *’admat yiśrā’ēl* an underlying meaning of homeland.⁴¹⁶ Because of connections between the Promised Land and an Eden Garden (discussed below),

⁴¹⁶ Julie Galambush, “God’s Land and Mine: Creation as Property in the Book of Ezekiel,” in *Ezekiel’s Hierarchical World Wrestling with a Tiered Reality*, ed. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 99.

however, homeland is not the entire picture. Homeland carries political connotations, but in light of the concept of ‘physical Zion’ that the book abandons, is a slightly problematic definition. The *’admat yiśrā’ēl* is necessary for the people’s future identity because of its correlation with the land promised in the past and described throughout the text of the HB. In this sense it is a homeland. There are also important shifts in how the phrase lays out the land of the future, however, and these shifts prevent it from being confused with the way the land factored into the ‘physical Zion’. If it is a homeland, it is one defined in a new way. This first section will describe the connections between the Promised Land, an Eden Garden, and the *’admat yiśrā’ēl* in order to explore how this phrase unique to Ezekiel recasts the land of ‘physical Zion’ into a place of future hope and renewed blessing.

1. *’Admat Yiśrā’ēl and Promised Land*

The *’admat yiśrā’ēl* is conflated with the Promised Land of the past because the spaces are in the same general geographic location. Whether this is specifically historically accurate, or is due to the conflation of various promises with the physical location of Jerusalem at work in Ezekiel’s rhetoric, is not at stake here. As discussed previously in Chapter One above, Ezekiel puts the understanding of the land into the mouths of those who remain in Jerusalem in Ezek 11 and 33, where the possession of the land indicates YHWH’s faithfulness to the Abrahamic land promise. This promise is core to how the people relate to both YHWH and the land; therefore, Ezekiel offers a “counterstory” to this aspect of Zion’s Master Narrative. The first phase of this “counterstory” lies in connections between descriptions of the Promised Land of the past, and the *’admat yiśrā’ēl*.

About the Promised Land	About the <i>’admat yiśrā’ēl</i>
“I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land that is flowing with milk and honey.” (Exod 3:8)	“When I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered... when I bring you into the <i>’admat yiśrā’ēl</i> , the land I lifted my hand to give to your fathers.” (Ezek 20:41–42)

<p>“Surely all the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I performed in Egypt and the wilderness but (still) tested me ten times and did not listen to my voice, they will certainly not see the land I swore to their fathers all who despised me will not see it.” (Num 14:22–23)</p>	<p>“My hand will be against the prophets seeing falsely and practice lying divinations. They will have no place in the council of my people and they will not be written in the register of the house of Israel and they will not go into the <i>'admat yiśrā'ēl</i>, that you will know that I am the Lord Yahweh.” (Ezek 13:9)</p>
<p>“If you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God that he commanded you, and you walk and serve other gods and worship them, YHWH’s anger will burn at you and you will perish quickly from upon the good land that he gave to you.” (Josh 23:16)</p>	<p>“and I will purge from you those who are rebellious and those who are transgressing against me from the land of their sojourning, but to the <i>'admat yiśrā'ēl</i> they will not go.” (Ezek 20:38)</p>
<p>“And the Lord God will bring you back to the land that your fathers possessed and he will cause you to prosper and be greater than your fathers.” (Deut 30:5)</p>	<p>“Therefore say thus says the Sovereign Lord, “I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you from the lands where I scattered you among them and I will put you (in) the <i>'admat yiśrā'ēl</i>.” (Ezek 11:17)</p>

As a location where the people will be gathered, and a location reserved for those who are faithful, the land serves as the hope of the past generation. Similarly, as the place where the people will be gathered in the future, and also reserved for those who are faithful, the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* is the hope of the current exiled generation.

2. Promised Land and Eden Garden

There are also literary ties between the Promised Land and the Eden Garden that allow the above crossover imagery to bring garden ideology into the new conception of the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* as well. Magnus Ottosson argued that the Promised Land was always an attempt at regaining the Eden Garden because of the way the narrative in Genesis lays out spatial movements. Because the Euphrates marks the eastern boundary of the garden in Gen 2, when the humans are cast out, they live to the east of the ideal space. The HB narrates movement by the patriarchs in a westerly direction, back towards the place from which they came. This

direction casts the land of Canaan into the spatial position (and the mythical and utopic position) of the original Eden Garden.⁴¹⁷

Werner Berg argues that descriptions of the Promised Land are similar to an Eden Garden because, just as Eden is described as an ideal place with its fruit trees and fresh water, an ideal land or country would also have these same things detailed.⁴¹⁸ He highlights how the land of Israel is often described as good, or flowing with milk and honey, and it is a land characterized by flowing water and flourishing orchards.⁴¹⁹ Israel is described as a fertile garden because such a designation indicates YHWH's blessing and the flourishing of a good civilization. He goes so far as to say that "Der Garten von Eden in Gen 2 ist nichts anderes als das Ursymbol, <<das Urbild>> für das Land Israels und zugleich Wunschbild für die Zukunft."⁴²⁰ The Promised Land is imagined as a kind of paradise reminiscent of an Eden Garden.

3. Eden Garden and 'Admat Yiśrā'ēl

Ezekiel 36:35 says that the land that has been destroyed by Babylon will be made to flourish again. Further, the land of Ezek 36 that will be made like an Eden Garden is in parallel with the land where Ezekiel experiences the reanimation of the nation in Ezek 37.

36:35 "And they will say, 'This land has become <i>like the Eden Garden</i> and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.'"	37:12 ... "I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves my people and <i>I will bring you into the 'admat yiśrā'ēl.</i> "
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⁴¹⁷ Magnus Ottosson, "Eden and the Land of Promise," in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem, 1986*, ed. J.A. Emerton VTSup 40 (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 179.

⁴¹⁸ Werner Berg, "Israel's Land, der Garten Gottes: Der Garten als Bild des Heiles im Alten Testament," *BZ* 32, no. 1 (1988): 36.

⁴¹⁹ Berg, "Israel's Land," 38.

⁴²⁰ Berg, "Israel's Land," 49.

As a new version of the Promised Land with garden overtones, the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* provides Ezekiel with a location to restore and reanimate corporate Israel. Other scholars have made a connection between the two chapters as well. Firstly, in his discussion of spatial typologies, Fishbane argues that the positioning of Ezek 36 and 37 is done by the redactors of the MT specifically to juxtapose an image of Eden with an image of the future land. The juxtaposition imposes aspects of the first space, with its representations of past harmony, onto the future land in order to propose hope for future harmony as well.⁴²¹

Stephen Herring sees a connection between Ezek 37 and the Eden Garden story in the two-stage process of revivification of the bones in Ezek 37 that mirrors the two-stage creation of the human in Gen 2:7 (creating the body and then breathing life into it).⁴²² Another connection noted by several scholars is use of the word נֹחַ. In Genesis, the human is created by YHWH and then installed/placed (נֹחַ) in the garden. While often translated as “put” in Genesis, likely to mirror the use of שִׁים as chosen earlier in the narrative (and also translated as “put” Gen 2:8), נֹחַ can have a slightly different meaning. In examining the role of gardens in the animation of cultic statues, Catherine McDowell shows that the 2nd *hifil* form נֹחַ often appears to indicate the installing of cultic tools or divine images. As the Eden Garden is specifically mentioned in Ezek 36, and the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* of Ezek 37 is garden-like, the נֹחַ of the dry bones is possibly a deliberate choice (see more below) to link the two stories and the two images of animation.⁴²³

⁴²¹ Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 369–371.

⁴²² Stephen L. Herring, *Divine Substitution: Humanity as the Manifestation of Deity in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 199; John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 133–134; Catherine L. McDowell, *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden: The Creation of Humankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of Mīs Pī Pīt Pī and Wpt-r Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 197; Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 24–48*, 379.

⁴²³ Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 133–134; McDowell, *Image of God*, 197; James Robson, *Word and Spirit in Ezekiel*, *The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies* 447 (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 240.

C. Conclusion to Land in Ezekiel

The ideal future land is what is in view in Ezek 36, and the book claims that the ruined former Promised Land will become like an Eden Garden. As both the lost land and the future land are cast from the mould of Eden, a closer look at how a future garden space aids Ezekiel in establishing a location for renewal is important. The first step in understanding how the garden aids Ezekiel's message lies in seeing how the spaces of the Promised Land, the Eden Garden, and the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* intertwine in the book. This intertwining is partially spatial, as the three share a common location. The Promised Land is conceptualized as a kind of Eden Garden with its lush fertility and its status as YHWH's gift to his people. The descriptions of this Promised Land are reflected in the verses about the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* as both are places of refuge for YHWH's faithful people. Further, the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* also appears to be described as a garden since it both draws on the garden imagery inherent in the Promised Land and it mimics aspects of the story described in Gen 2–3.

II. *'Admat Yiśrā'ēl* and Knowledge of YHWH

As mentioned above, the land in the book of Ezekiel functions as its own character. Punishment of this character is directly tied to the role it plays in how the people understand YHWH at the time of the exile. The promise of the land that runs through the HB (see Chapter Two) means possession of the land should highlight YHWH's faithfulness. It is not surprising that the exile, and dispossession of the land, creates a challenge for the people as they feel it shows a lack of protection and therefore a lack of faithfulness on YHWH's part. Galambush claims that "the land is the sinful body whose injury displays YHWH's power."⁴²⁴ While true, the reason is that the land lies at the centre of how the people

⁴²⁴ Galambush, "God's Land and Mine," 101.

understand YHWH's power, and therefore it must be included in the reworking of how the people know him. As a central piece of the failed 'physical Zion,' if the land has any place in the future 'mythic/symbolic Zion' it has to be shifted slightly. The "counterstory" of the land lies in how Ezekiel sets it up as an important setting for the rebirth of the nation,⁴²⁵ but in a way that prevents the people from confusing it with YHWH himself again in the future. The rest of the chapter explores how the book of Ezekiel seeks to change the old approach to the land, and how the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* and the Eden Garden factor into that change by providing a place for future renewal that shifts the old patriarchal land promise.

A. Knowledge of YHWH

Knowledge of YHWH is an important component of the book of Ezekiel, evident in the number of times a variant of the phrase "you will know that I am YHWH" appears.⁴²⁶ How the people know YHWH, however, is different in the book of Ezekiel than in the wider HB.

1. Knowledge of YHWH in the Wider HB

Outside the book of Ezekiel, the phrase "you/they will know that I am YHWH" is primarily used in connection with the defeat of enemies (Exod 7:5,17; 10:2; 14:4, 18; 1 Kgs 20:13, 28; Isa 49:23; Joel 4:17). The phrase also occurs in the context of YHWH's provision for his people. Firstly, it is consistently tied to the exodus account since the phrase indicates that rescue from Egypt should encourage knowledge of YHWH (e.g. Exod 6:7; 10:2; 29:46). Part of the rescue from Egypt is divine provision during the wilderness journey (Exod 16:12). Secondly, while often in the context of memory, knowledge of YHWH is tied to the

⁴²⁵ McDowell also likens the connection to the formation of "corporate" Israel. McDowell, *Image of God*, 197.

⁴²⁶ Ezek 5:13; 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:4, 9, 27; 11:10, 12, 15, 16, 20; 13:9, 14, 21, 23; 15:7; 16:62; 17:21; 20:12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44; 21:5; 22:16, 22; 23:49; 24:24, 27; 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23, 24, 26; 29:9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15; 33:29; 34:27, 30; 35:4, 9, 12, 15; 36:11, 23, 38; 37:6, 13, 28; 38:23; 39:6, 7, 22, 28.

observation of the Sabbath (Exod 31:13). The retelling of these events also brings knowledge of YHWH, just as remembering YHWH's past actions should bring knowledge of YHWH in the present.⁴²⁷ The phrase is consistently tied to YHWH's provision, whether that provision is the defeat of enemies or the giving of land, food, or protection.

2. Knowledge of YHWH in Ezekiel

As mentioned above, the reality of life in the land should bring obedience to YHWH because it is both a tangible example of YHWH's faithfulness and a sign of his ongoing provision.

The questioning of YHWH's trustworthiness and character despite the gift of the land exhibits a lack of understanding about YHWH, and therefore, a type of disobedience. In light of the need to shift how the people understand both YHWH and land, it is not surprising that at no point prior to the fall of Jerusalem does knowledge of YHWH in Ezekiel deal with the expected provision. Rather, "you will know that I am YHWH" when "the slain fall among you" (Ezek 6:7), "I repay you according to your ways" (Ezek 7:9), "you fall by the sword" (Ezek 11:10), "I scatter them among the nations" (Ezek 12:15), "the land will be a desolation" (Ezek 12:20). Ezekiel's rhetoric links ideas normally applied to foreign peoples (defeat, loss of provision) with his own people.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ Zimmerli articulates two phases in the Moses traditions where this phrase occurs. There are the verses that narrate the actual event, and then verses that tie the exodus event to the Sabbath, where the Sabbath is a means of remembering YHWH's previous provision throughout the exodus. See, Walther Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 45 and 70. One outlier needs mention: while Zimmerli argues that the awkward style and placement of the phrase in Deut 29:5 likely indicates a later addition, the verse still speaks of knowing YHWH because of provision.

⁴²⁸ Joyce, "Ezekiel and Moral Transformation," 151. In light of the trope of foreignness, using a literary genre generally reserved for foreign people against his own audience is consistent.

B. Knowledge of YHWH and Representation

The lack of knowledge highlighted in Ezekiel leads to a loss of the people's status as living representations of the divine. In turning to idols, the people become like idols (see Ezek 6, 8, 16, 20, 23) and this action hardens their hearts to the point of stone because "the powerlessness of cultic images is also applied to those who worship them."⁴²⁹ There are examples of this reciprocity between image and idolater in Isaiah and Psalms. It appears in Isaiah when the prophet indicates that when the idolatrous trees are burned, the people who worship them will also be burned (Isa 1:29–31).⁴³⁰ Psalm 135:18 says "the ones making them will be like them, all those who trust in them." Ezekiel 6:4–6 appears to promise something similar as it describes that "just as the idols themselves will be broken down and destroyed, so also will the idolaters be killed, and their bones scattered around the altars."⁴³¹ This reciprocity also explains why the hearts of the people are described as hardened. The prophet is warned that the people will not hear him because they are hard hearted (חזקי לב Ezek 2:4 and קשי לב Ezek 3:7). Ezekiel 14 accuses the elders of taking their idols into their hearts (14:3) explaining why their hearts are like stone. Another example is Ezek 20:32 where the people claim they will become like the nations, worshiping wood and stone. The idea of reciprocity between the fate of the idol and that of the idolater indicates that the hard heart of the Israelites is not just stubborn, it is actual stone, both unresponsive and insensitive.⁴³²

Herring claims that Ezekiel utilises the Mesopotamian conceptualization of cultic images to address challenging questions with regard to the Babylonian exile. As images are animated in a ceremony that "opens their mouths"⁴³³ it seems as though the focus in Ezekiel

⁴²⁹ Herring, *Divine Substitution*, 188.

⁴³⁰ G. K. Beale, "Isaiah VI:9-13: A Retributive Taunt Against Idolatry," *VT* XLI, no. 3 (1991): 259–60.

⁴³¹ Herring, *Divine Substitution*, 190.

⁴³² Paul Joyce, *Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel*, *Isot Supplement Series* 51 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1989), 109.

⁴³³ See McDowell, *Image of God*.

on the closing of the mouth carries connotations connected with idolatry as well. While there is no specific ceremony in the ANE that “closes the mouth” of decommissioned statues, Ezek 16:63 indicates that idolatrous Jerusalem will lose her “opening of the mouth” (פתחון פה).⁴³⁴ Without specifically mentioning a “closing of the mouth,” the loss of the “opening of the mouth” would appear to indicate a loss of status and ability to bear the image of YHWH. The people made in YHWH’s image have lost their place as image-bearers due to the idolatry called out frequently in the book.⁴³⁵ Further,

[t]hose who worship idols become like them- deaf, blind, and dead. Accordingly, the punishment for idolaters mirrors the actions taken against cultic images of a defeated people: 1) they would be destroyed alongside their idols and their bones scattered around their altars (e.g. 6:4–6,13); and 2) they would be abducted and carried off into a foreign land (e.g., 36:18–19a; cf. 20:32–4).⁴³⁶

These idolatrous people have been carried off, just as is the fate of idols when their city is attacked by a stronger deity. As the people are treated as the idols of defeated people are treated, they find themselves in the position of the foreigner, losing provision and being defeated despite YHWH’s faithfulness. This reality causes the destruction of their previous ways of knowing (possession of the land and YHWH’s provision). The loss of that way of knowing brings a profound sense of shame, and that shame is a key component of the disorientation necessary for a new way of knowing.

⁴³⁴ James M Kennedy, “Hebrew Pithôn Peh in the Book of Ezekiel,” *VT* 41, no. 2 (April 1991): 235.

⁴³⁵ The concept of *šalmu* as a representation of deity in a statue form is common in the ANE. How idols are treated in the ANE is mirrored in how the people are treated in the book of Ezekiel in terms of destruction in the land and those being carried into exile. Because Ezekiel uses traditions and distorts them into something uncomfortable, even if this section of Ezekiel has no reliance on Gen 1, there was some knowledge of the idea of “likeness” and a connection between humans, deity, and some kind of cultic statue.

⁴³⁶ Herring, *Divine Substitution*, 207.

C. Shame and Knowledge

When the text appears to link the idea of knowledge to a new covenant, there is the addition of this shame (Ezek 16:61–62; 20:42–43). It acts as a primary means of promoting disorientation and alienation in the present while also acting as a future deterrent. Ezekiel has to change “both the basis of Israel’s self-knowledge, and also the fundamental condition of the nation’s existence.”⁴³⁷ Without the necessary self-knowledge to recognize past actions and what the gift of the land represents, the shift to idolatry and the resulting loss of animation and exile is inevitable. Self-knowledge is intimately tied to shame in Ezekiel, and shame is one of the ways that the audience gains the ability to acquire a new heart.⁴³⁸ While shame can emerge from a loss of status,⁴³⁹ it can also indicate a type of knowledge about the self. One central place where Ezekiel links the punishment of the people to shame, idolatry, and lack of knowledge is Ezek 16. This chapter condemns the nation and provides a rationale for its demise.⁴⁴⁰ It focuses on the fact that the people do not even recognize their actions as shameful, indicating a lack of self-knowledge.⁴⁴¹ There are two approaches to shame in the book of Ezekiel that aid in understanding how shame and knowledge fit together.

Odell sees shame in Ezek 16 tied to a legal appeal and serving as a counterchallenge.

The shame in view is psychological in that it stems from feelings inspired by the gaze of

⁴³⁷ Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 75.

⁴³⁸ Much work has been done on shame in the HB. For example, see Lyn M. Bechtel, “Shame as Sanction of Social Control in Biblical Israel: Judicial, Political and Social Shaming,” *JSOT* 49 (1991): 47–76; Margaret S. Odell, “Inversion of Shame and Forgiveness in Ezekiel 16:59–63,” *JSOT* 17, no. 56 (1992): 101–12; Stiebert, *Construction of Shame*. For more references see Jacqueline E. Lapsley, “Shame and Self-Knowledge: The Positive Role of Shame in Ezekiel’s View of the Moral Self,” in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 146 n.6 and 7.

⁴³⁹ Odell, “Inversion of Shame.”

⁴⁴⁰ Petter, *Book of Ezekiel*, 85.

⁴⁴¹ Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live: The Problem of the Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel* BZAW 301 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 145. She points to Ezek 16:2 as focusing on the fact that Jerusalem does not recognize her shameful actions.

others. The loss of status brings external scorn and prompts what she sees as the challenge from the people over how YHWH has treated them. As the people have tried to plead their case, Ezek 16 is YHWH's response. It seeks to bring the realisation that the people have no cause to challenge YHWH on account of their loss of status because the fault is entirely their own.⁴⁴² She says that shame is "a counterchallenge that forces the people to examine their own role in their failure."⁴⁴³ Shame here should highlight for the people the ways they thought they knew YHWH, and therefore the basis for their appeal is a misinterpretation of the situation.

In contrast to how Odell understands the language of shame in Ezek 16 stemming from legal rhetoric, Jacqueline Lapsley argues for a more internal experience of shame.⁴⁴⁴ What is at stake for Lapsley is Israel's understanding of herself under the gaze of YHWH (rather than the gaze of other nations). Lapsley argues that Ezekiel utilizes the language of memory and shame to construct what she terms a new "moral identity."⁴⁴⁵ Because this new moral identity understands the self, by extension it brings a knowledge of YHWH that is more theocentric and less anthropocentric. She argues that Ezekiel purposely uses the language of shame to call attention to the people's moral deficit, which is a critical component for a transformed interpretation of themselves.

Despite the differences between Odell and Lapsley, both see shame as a means of bringing a new understanding. As the people challenge YHWH's character over their circumstances, they are drawn to a new understanding of their own complicity. In the case of external shame, they would experience their shame first in the sight of the nations and then in

⁴⁴² Odell, "Inversion of Shame," 112.

⁴⁴³ Odell, "Inversion of Shame," 111.

⁴⁴⁴ See Lapsley, "Shame and Self-Knowledge," 151. She is not claiming that shame is an individual, psychological experience. Rather, while it has an individual component of recognition, it is still communal.

⁴⁴⁵ Lapsley, "Shame and Self-Knowledge," 144.

the sight of one another. If it is internal shame, the shame they would see in one another is internal to the community and internal to each specific person. In both cases, it leads to alienation as they are still in the position of losing their previous status. They are cast as the foreigner, they transition from being living representations of YHWH to being destroyed and exiled idols, and all of the consequences are a result of their own actions, therefore bringing a profound sense of shame.

D. Ezekiel as Model

All of these failures, and their solutions, are modelled in the character of Ezekiel and his relationship to the *'admat yiśrā'ēl*. Ezekiel models failure; he has his mouth closed and is at the mercy of the רוח.⁴⁴⁶ It is the רוח that brings the prophet visions (Ezek 1:4), and the רוח that lifts him to his feet (Ezek 2:2). He is also forced to eat the scroll. YHWH says, “Do not be rebellious like the rebellious house, open your mouth and eat what I am giving to you” (Ezek 2:8). Eating the scroll closes his mouth to all but “mourning, lamentation and woe” (Ezek 2:10) and opens it only to allow YHWH to speak through him (Ezek 3:27). His mouth is closed to his own volition and models the loss of agency that comes from a closing of the mouth. This loss of agency sets him up as “a kind of living idol. Like the idol he is deaf and mute until the deity moves to speak through him.”⁴⁴⁷ It is “רוח [that] *brings about* Ezekiel’s obedience”⁴⁴⁸ and facilitates his role in the rest of the book. Ezekiel is the first to experience the closing of his mouth through the eating of the scroll, and as the רוח fills him, it causes an experience of intense shame and alienation.

Just as the community is experiencing shame and alienation, Ezekiel’s character does as well. Ezekiel’s character is specifically at odds with the ways that a priest would relate to

⁴⁴⁶ Whether defined as ‘spirit’ or ‘wind,’ this רוח represents YHWH’s power.

⁴⁴⁷ Beale, “Isaiah VI:9–13,” 235.

⁴⁴⁸ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 214; Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live*, 115.

YHWH. “The fact that Ezekiel is enjoined to perform acts which are unnatural for any person (24.16), abhorrent to him as an observer of the law (4.14), and even in violation of the special restrictions laid upon him as a priest (shaving his hair) ... he is even obliged to become alienated from his own identity in order to serve as its vehicle.”⁴⁴⁹ Alienated from his own identity, and as a result, all of his previous personal ways of knowing YHWH, Ezekiel directly confronts shame in a way the community struggles to accomplish. At the mercy of the רוּחַ, however, he immediately has to learn a new way of relating to YHWH, and in that change, he models a new relationship.

As a model of this new relationship, Ezekiel himself causes the people to experience alienation (Ezek 24:24). The alienation from their previous way of knowing is supposed to inaugurate a new evaluation of YHWH’s historic actions that, in turn, brings a newfound understanding of their own guilt. “Only recognition [of deserved punishment], more humiliating than the destruction itself, can serve as the basis of a renewed relationship with YHWH (6.8–10; 16.62–63; 20.43–44).”⁴⁵⁰ Recognition of their complicity allows for the transforming power of רוּחַ to work in the community as it worked in Ezekiel’s character. “As the inspiring power that takes Ezekiel, though in visions, to the place of revelation where he comes to know Yahweh and his will, so רוּחַ will bring the book’s addressees to a true knowledge of Yahweh (cf. 36:27; 37:6,14).”⁴⁵¹ True knowledge is an acceptance of YHWH’s enduring character and the ability to accept their own complicity. Recognition that their idolatry has turned them into statues, and that they have been treated the way idols of defeated nations are treated in the ANE, forces a re-examination of their understanding of

⁴⁴⁹ Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 71.

⁴⁵⁰ Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 57.

⁴⁵¹ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 269.

YHWH. “Ezekiel subjects his audience to the most stringent test of moral maturity: whether they can be brought to pass judgement on themselves.”⁴⁵²

The radical theocentricity of the book⁴⁵³ brings with it the ability to recognize the self. The book proposes a new spirit that is YHWH’s alone and it brings complete knowledge. “Human recognition and knowledge emerge vis a vis Yahweh’s actions and are realized by Yahweh’s own self-introduction to human beings: “I am Yahweh.””⁴⁵⁴ Once they can pass judgment on themselves, they will receive a new heart and a new spirit. The new spirit is the divine רוח, and the new heart replaces the one of stone brought on themselves through the reciprocity with their idols. With the recognition of their complicity, however, comes a loss of agency, just as is modelled in the character of Ezekiel. “The people themselves take no action to bring about the revival of their fortunes.”⁴⁵⁵ They are entirely at the mercy of the רוח. Andrew Mein refers to this movement as one from “responsibility to passivity.”⁴⁵⁶

Ezekiel’s character also models the future hope in his relationship to the *’admat yisrā’el*. There is a contrast in Gen 2 between the reality of the earth before there was a human and the earth after the human. There is a wordplay between the human (אדם) and the land (אדמה),⁴⁵⁷ and Phyllis Trible highlights the reality that without the human to serve the land, the land sat untouched.⁴⁵⁸ The tasks given to the human indicate that from its creation, the human was to serve the land. The human and the land have intertwined destinies and one cannot exist without the other. Similarly, Ezekiel’s title as בן אדם (son of man) relates to the

⁴⁵² Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, 75.

⁴⁵³ Joyce, *Divine Initiative*, 129 and Joyce, “Ezekiel and Moral Transformation,” 150–156.

⁴⁵⁴ Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh*, 88.

⁴⁵⁵ Andrew Mein, *Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile*, Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 215.

⁴⁵⁶ Mein, *Ezekiel and the Ethics*, 215.

⁴⁵⁷ Ellen A. Robbins, *The Storyteller and the Garden of Eden* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 17–20.

⁴⁵⁸ Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Overtures to Biblical Theology 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 77.

'admat yiśrā'ēl. Just as the first human, אדם, is tied to the land, אדמה, Ezekiel is tied to the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* through the same kind of wordplay (אדמת ישראל to בן אדם). בן אדם as a form of address is not quite unique to Ezekiel as it occurs once in Dan 8:17. It is telling, however, that the targum (Tg Jonathan of Ezekiel), rather than using the Aramaic בר אנש like in the Peshitta, choose instead in Ezekiel to use בר אדם, perhaps as a specific tie to an original אדם.⁴⁵⁹ As the original אדם is “installed/put” and enlivened in the Eden Garden of Gen 2–3, the model of the new creation in the book of Ezekiel, the בן אדם, has a similar interrelationship with the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* that allows it to function similarly to the animating locale in Gen 2–3. As “a paradigm of the people in his experience of the divine רוח, he can be seen as the first human in Yahweh’s new work of creation among the exiles.”⁴⁶⁰ As the representation of the new community, he is “installed/put” (נר) in the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* as part of the new creation. Therefore, as the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* combines ideas of the Promised Land with those of an Eden Garden, it is the setting for the reanimation of dry bones, and the site of the new creation.

E. Gardens as Animating Locales

The connection between where the bones are animated in Ezek 37 and the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* becomes more significant when examined in the context of gardens and cultic ritual in the wider ANE. Catherine McDowell notes the role of the garden as an important animating locale in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian rituals dealing with divine statue animation. In her discussion of the “washing of the mouth/opening of the mouth” ritual in Mesopotamia, she claims that “most of the vivifying acts occurred in a verdant and fruit-filled temple

⁴⁵⁹ Samson H. Levey, *The Targum of Ezekiel*, The Aramaic Bible 13 (Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1987), 7. This connection is also a possible later narrative tie to explicitly link the two.

⁴⁶⁰ Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 240.

garden.”⁴⁶¹ She goes on to claim that while the “opening of the mouth” rituals in Egyptian lore do not mention gardens, they are often depicted in lush and fertile settings. “The tomb shrine, the place where the image was installed, and its surrounding garden, would then be the equivalent of the temple in the mouth-washing and mouth-opening ceremonies”⁴⁶² in the Mesopotamian accounts. Based on connections she draws between the creation of the image of humanity in Gen 1 and the role of the garden in Genesis 2–3, she argues for the Eden Garden as a similar example of an animating locale.⁴⁶³

Ezekiel 37 uses similar steps to describe the reanimation of corporate Israel. Ezekiel 37:12 indicates that the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* becomes the location for future animation. The reciprocity between idol and idolater means that corporate Israel is in an unanimated, closed-mouth state, represented in Ezek 37 as dry bones.⁴⁶⁴ These dry bones will be animated by the same רוּחַ that opened Ezekiel’s mouth early in the text. After the רוּחַ enlivens them, they will be installed/placed (נִוּחַ) in the *'admat yiśrā'ēl*. This action is reminiscent of the way the אָדָם is enlivened and put (נִוּחַ) in the Eden Garden (Gen 2:15), as noted by various scholars.⁴⁶⁵ In Genesis the אָדָם was created, breath breathed into his nostrils, and then installed/placed (נִוּחַ) in the garden. In Ezekiel, the bones of the nation are constructed, breathed into with the animating רוּחַ, and then “installed/placed” (נִוּחַ) in the *'admat yiśrā'ēl*. In light of the connection between the process of animating the human and then corporate Israel in the same sequence makes the use of נִוּחַ in both accounts an important narrative connection. The

⁴⁶¹ McDowell, *Image of God*, 143.

⁴⁶² McDowell, *Image of God*, 149.

⁴⁶³ McDowell, *Image of God*, 142–52.

⁴⁶⁴ The threat of Ezek 6 to scatter the bones of Israel around her idols is mimicked in the destruction of the tree in Ezek 31, but also reflects the fate of the idols of conquered people in the ANE.

⁴⁶⁵ Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 133–134; McDowell, *Image of God*, 197; Robson, *Word and Spirit*, 240. Despite the contrast between a first and second *hiphil* form of the word, there is a connection between the use in Genesis and Ezekiel.

connection allows the *'admat yiśrā'ēl*, with its echo of an Eden Garden, to act for the community in a way reflective of how the Eden Garden of Gen 2 acted for the first humans.

Gen 2	Ezekiel 37
Then YHWH Elohim formed the אדם of the dust from the אדמה and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the אדם became a living being (v. 7)	Son of man or בן אדם (v. 1) and I will bring you into the אדמת ישראל (v. 12)
Then YHWH Elohim took the אדם and put/installed him (וינחהו) in the Eden Garden to serve it and to guard it (v. 15)	I will put my spirit in you and you will live, and I will put/install you (והנחתי) in your land then you will know that I the Lord have spoken and done it utters YHWH

F. How the Reanimation and Ezekiel as a Model Changes Future Knowledge

As the model, Ezekiel is completely under the animating power of the רוח until after the fall of Jerusalem. The passivity of his character reveals that the future knowledge of YHWH requires something new. The new knowledge of YHWH carries a loss of agency, or at least a recognition of inferiority, that by extension brings a new trust in YHWH. Recognition of their complicity brings a more mature knowledge of themselves and their place in the relationship with YHWH. It is the new knowledge that facilitates the new heart, and by extension the ability to be planted in the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* and animated by a new indwelling of the רוח. The dry bones of the idolatrous community are reanimated and “installed” (נחה) in the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* as part of a return to the Promised Land, but the return for Ezekiel’s audience is not a return to the patriarchal promise of the Pentateuch. Part of the move to passivity that is modelled by Ezekiel is the reality that instead of a straight return, this future entails a continual reminder of their shame.

Not only is the land no longer theirs (see above), but the return also entails an enduring sense of shame encapsulated in the phrase ‘bear disgrace’ (כלמה + נשא). A phrase only found in Ezekiel (Ezek 16:52, 54; 32:24–25, 30; 44:13), it calls to mind the cultic conception of bearing sin. Disgrace, by contrast, is a word that is more about memory (it deals with shame or disgrace) than cult. They are able to return to the land because of

YHWH's name, not because they deserve the land, and it is this fact that leads them to bear disgrace permanently. This disgrace is the end goal of the stories, parables, and sign acts utilised to bring the people to a new knowledge about their complicity in the circumstance of the exile. With the acknowledgment of their complicity comes the vindication of YHWH's character, and with the vindication of YHWH's character comes the ability to separate the land from YHWH himself. When life in the land entails perpetual shame, and that shame enables the people to know YHWH in this new way, the land is unable to intertwine with YHWH's presence and promises in the way it did in 'physical Zion.'

G. Conclusion to 'Admat Yiśrā'ēl and Knowledge of YHWH

Through a mixture of shame and alienation, the role of knowing YHWH through provision (often of the land) is reversed. The initial provision required that the people act as representatives of YHWH, but the people have failed in this respect. This failure turns the people into idols, and as a result, they lose their status as living representations of YHWH. Using the language of ANE cultic statue animation, the book of Ezekiel shows the people being treated like the idols of defeated nations. They lose the land because they lose their status. Ezekiel's character embodies the alienation from the old way of knowing, and then highlights how the land of the future provides a place for the reanimation of the nation. This shift, and the way Ezekiel models it, is important within the setting of the garden-like *'admat yiśrā'ēl* because of the role gardens play in the process of ANE cultic statue animation. The *'admat yiśrā'ēl* is also never returned to the people as a possession, thereby shifting the patriarchal land promise. The *'admat yiśrā'ēl* deals with renewal, but it is a renewal that will bring perpetual shame to the people.

It is this perpetual shame that links the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* with a new way of knowing YHWH. The *'admat yiśrā'ēl* was the genesis point of their reanimation, and their continuing

existence is tied to this land in a way that constantly serves to remind them of their failure. In a sense, the land mimics the way that YHWH is known in the wider HB as the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* is given as a kind of provision. It is not the land, however, that is the focus of future knowing. Rather, it is the shame wrapped up in the gift that brings knowledge.

The *'admat yiśrā'ēl* ties together the memory of YHWH's past actions, their unfaithfulness, and YHWH's returned provision into one location. The traditional role of the land coalesces with certain memories—losing the land initially understood as YHWH's provision, their treatment as idols, the destruction of the human institutions and the resulting defilement of the land, and their rebirth—into one location. The new location combines these memories and YHWH's continuing provision into one space that results in a profound feeling of shame that they bear permanently. It is the shame contained in the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* that will bring a new knowledge of YHWH and hopefully prevents the problems of the past from occurring again in the future. This shame is an inevitable aspect of life in the *'admat yiśrā'ēl*, and it is this space that ensures that they “will know that I am YHWH” in the future.

III. Conclusion

Capitalising on the Master Narrative of the land from the HB, Ezekiel offers a “counterstory” to how the people have conflated the land and ‘physical Zion’. By combining imagery from the original Promised Land with that of an Eden Garden, Ezekiel seeks to create a space for future renewal that avoids certain pitfalls from the past. The *'admat yiśrā'ēl* is his narrative creation, and while it does not indicate a return to the Promised Land of the patriarchs, nor does it indicate a return to a Gen 2–3 circumstance, it combines images from both. While the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* is the new promise, this new promise has stipulations about ownership not necessarily understood by the pre-exile generation about the Promised Land. Further, the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* is not an Eden Garden like in Gen 2–3 because there is never a return to a life

without fear or shame described there. There is a reversal in the awareness of the humans, and a promised return to a flourishing land that indicates a partial return to a Promised Land with a garden-like setting. These spaces, and the stories they conjure, help Ezekiel shift how knowledge, shame, and relationship to YHWH are perceived by a post-exile generation.

Through the indwelling of the new רוּחַ, Ezekiel's character in the story models the alienation necessary from the former ways of knowing themselves and YHWH. The new רוּחַ brings with it the ability to change the idolatrous hearts of stone to hearts of flesh, able to receive a new circumcision, and thus begin a new relationship. Ezekiel models the new creation as he is the first-born of the new nation. Just as the breath of life (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים) in Gen 2:7 animates the אָדָם, and there is an intimate connection between the אָדָם and the אֲדָמָה, the רוּחַ enlivens Ezekiel (Ezek 1-24) and there is a connection between the בֶּן אָדָם and the *'admat yiśrā'el*.

The idolatry of Ezekiel's audience has made their hearts like stone, and because “genuine *šēlamim* are human beings, not statues,”⁴⁶⁶ the people must be made human once again. Because gardens are animating locales for cultic statues in the ANE, the renewal of the idolatrous people in a land that is made to resemble an Eden Garden is consistent. Just as the אָדָם was installed/placed (נִוּחַ) in the Eden Garden, the dry bones will be installed/placed (נִוּחַ) in the desolate land (aka the old Promised Land) made like an Eden Garden (Ezek 36:35) after they come to a new knowledge of YHWH and themselves, and receive a new heart.

Ezekiel offers a view of restoration that returns the land to YHWH's possession and makes its use by the people a lasting sign of their own shame. This recognition of their own shame protects faith in YHWH and prevents the land from becoming misconstrued in the future understanding of Zion.

⁴⁶⁶ McDowell, *Image of God*, 207.

Chapter Seven: Ezekiel 47 and Mythic/Symbolic Zion

The last three chapters focused on the specific places where the Eden Garden is mentioned in the book of Ezekiel. It was argued that utilising the way the images of the mountain and the garden appear in literature and iconography of the ANE, the two images are also contrasted in Ezekiel. Gardens serve more as a border area that points to the presence of deity but is not specifically where the deity dwells. In contrast, mountains are the domain of the deity and they connect heaven and earth. The places where the garden is mentioned deal with an element within the border area. Ezekiel 40–48 is entirely concerned with the relationship of the mountain to a restored people, and there is no mention of an Eden Garden, continuing Ezekiel’s separation of the spaces.

Ezekiel conceptualises a new Zion through his use of story. He is posing a “counterstory” to the original Master Narrative in order to introduce a new Master Narrative of Zion. In separating out the profane, and placing these elements within the image of the garden, he protects the Zion of the future by making it a mountain alone. There is no mention in the final nine chapters of a garden, and it is only in the flourishing of the land that scholars find hints of an Eden. The other texts in Ezekiel that *explicitly* mention the Eden Garden are doing so to place the two locations in contrast. As Ezek 40–48 focuses on the mountain alone, reading a recombination of the spaces into a possible *implicit* Eden Garden reference would be inconsistent with the rest of the book.

This inconsistency raises the question of what the author might have hoped to convey using the stream flowing from the temple in Ezek 47 if not a message about a return to some kind of paradisiacal memory. While many scholars accept Ezek 47 as a direct recall of an Eden Garden,⁴⁶⁷ this chapter seeks to address the stream and resulting abundance in Ezek 47

⁴⁶⁷ Levenson, *Theology*; Kathryn Pfisterer Darr, “The Wall around Paradise: Ezekielian Ideas about the Future,” *VT* 37, no. 3 (July 1987): 271–79; Steven S. Tuell, “The

differently. As the Zion of the future, the “counterstories” from the other sections deconstructing ‘physical Zion’ converge to show Ezekiel’s picture of the new ‘mythic/symbolic Zion.’ The chapter will explore how the “counterstories” to Jerusalem, monarch, and land are visible in the new Zion displayed in Ezek 40–48. It will also show how the lack of any mention of Eden factors into the message about the mountain and what it indicates about the ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ envisioned in the final nine chapters of the book of Ezekiel.

Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Genesis 2:10-14,” in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 171–89; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel, Vol.2.*, 510; Steven Shawn Tuell, *The Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40-48*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 49 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1992), 69; Susan Niditch, “Ezekiel 40-48 in a Visionary Context,” *CBQ* 48, no. 2 (April 1986): 217. Madhavi Nevader also suggests that Ezekiel 47 does not have to be Edenic in Madhavi Nevader, *Yhwh versus David: Royal Reconfigurations in Deuteronomy and Ezekiel 40-48* (forthcoming), 184.

Chapter Two above laid out how this project approaches Zion. It argued for an understanding of ‘physical Zion,’ prevalent before the exile, as conflating various aspects of the Israelite/Judahite worldview into a physical manifestation of YHWH’s presence in the city of Jerusalem. The loss of the city of Jerusalem would call such an understanding of Zion into question. It is not surprising, then, that the book of Ezekiel, with its setting in the Babylonian exile, offers a glimpse into one means of theologising that loss. Zion represents place in the terminology of Human Geography as discussed in Chapter One above. ‘Physical Zion’ was place, and exile is space. Ezekiel seeks a new place in ‘mythic/symbolic Zion,’ and this new place builds on pieces of the past Zion. He attempts to recast problematic aspects that he

⁴⁶⁸ For information on the various layers and diachronic approaches to these chapter see Moshe Greenberg, “The Design and Themes of Ezekiel’s Program of Restoration,” *Int* 38, no. 2 (April 1984); Ronald E. Clements, *Ezekiel*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996); Hartmut Gese, *Der Verfassungsentwurf des Ezechiel (Kap 40–48): Traditionsgeschichtlich Untersucht*, BHT 25 (Tübingen: J C B Mohr, 1957), 108–23; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* vol. 2, 547–553; Thilo Alexander Rudnig, *Heilig und Profan: Redaktionskritische Studien zu Ez 40–48*, vol. 287, Beiheft zur Zetischrift für die altestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000); Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Das Buch des Propheten Hesekiel/Ezechiel Kapitel 2–48: Übersetzt und Erklärt*, Das Alte Testament Deutsch. ATD. Kartonierte Ausgabe 22 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001) and Michael Konkel, *Architektonik des Heiligen: Studien zur zweiten Templevision Ezechiels (Ez 40–48)*, Bonner Biblische Beiträge (Berlin: Philo Verlagsgesellschaft, 2001); Janina Maria Hiebel, *Ezekiel’s Vision Accounts as Interrelated Narratives: A Redaction Critical and Theological Study*, Beiheft zur Zetischrift für die altestamentliche Wissenschaft 475 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015); Ian M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994); Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel*, ed. Rolf P. Knierim and Gene M. Tucker, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature, XIX (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989); Michael A. Lyons, “Envisioning Restoration: Innovations in Ezekiel 40–48,” in *‘I Lifted My Eyes and Saw’: Reading Dream and Vision Reports in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Elizabeth R. Hayes and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, Library Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 584 (London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014); Ernst Vogt, *Untersuchungen zum Buch Ezechiel*, AnBib 95 (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981); Susan Niditch, “Ezekiel 40–48 in a Visionary Context,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (April 1986); William A. Tooman, “Transformation of Israel’s Hope: The Reuse of Scripture in the Gog Oracles,” in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 127 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010); Kalinda Rose Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996); Tuell, *Law of the Temple*.

argues contributed to the complicity of the people, and thus the loss of the initial place. Using the Eden Garden as a narrative means of challenging those problematic aspects of ‘physical Zion,’ Ezekiel offers various “counterstories” in order to highlight them as distinctly separate from the sacred.

The ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ of the future offers a return to place after the chaos of the exile, but the new place has to be both distinctly different and comfortingly familiar.

Ezekiel’s vision of the new temple in chs. 40–48 shows how the city, the monarchy, and the land are visible in the future Zion in new ways. The “counterstories” offered by Ezekiel in the Eden Garden sections come together to highlight his attempt at a new Master Narrative of the important sacred space of Zion.

A. The Zion of Chs. 40–48 is New and also Familiar

Ezekiel 40–48 seeks to reestablish a belief in Zion that, while new, draws upon the hope it had engendered in the past. Many read in Ezek 40–48 a description of a Utopia.⁴⁶⁹ While there is debate about how to define such a place, the term expresses “an aspect of ‘no place’ in its radical displacement from the author’s immediate environment, whether it is in space or time.”⁴⁷⁰ This “radical displacement” does not have to be entirely imaginary, or rather, what makes it “‘imaginary’ is not that it is unthinkable or fantastical, but rather that it will exist in

⁴⁶⁹ Rimon Kasher, “Anthropomorphism, Holiness and Cult: A New Look at Ezekiel 40-48,” *ZAW* 110, no. 2 (1998): 194 and 198; Jan William Tarlin, “Utopia and Pornography in Ezekiel: Violence, Hope, and the Shattered Male Subject,” in *Reading Bibles, Writing Bodies: Identity and the Bible*, ed. Timothy K. Beal and David M. Gunn, Biblical Limits (New York: Routledge, 2003), 175–83; Roland Boer, “Ezekiel’s Axl, or Anarchism and Ecstasy,” in *Violence, Utopia and the Kingdom of God: Fantasy and Ideology in the Bible*, ed. Tina Pippin and George Aichele (New York: Routledge, 1998), 24–46; Nathanael Warren, “Tenure and Grant in Ezekiel’s Paradise (47:13-48:29),” *VT* 63, no. 2 (2013): 323–34,

⁴⁷⁰ Steven Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles*, Library Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 442 (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 22.

a time that is different from the text's present."⁴⁷¹ In this explanation, the world of Ezek 40–48 is certainly “imaginary” and a type of “no place” since it expresses a hope for a future shaped very differently from what came before. While not utilising the word utopia, in part because Ezek 40–48 expresses Ezekiel's hope for a place, this project agrees that these chapters articulate a future vision that is separate from reality. Despite being imaginary, in the sense that it is a vision from exile, they articulate a longing for a return to Zion. Ezekiel 40–48 harks forward to an eschatological future, although it still contains elements of the physical place lost prior to when this section was written. The two together highlight that Ezekiel is using the familiar aspects of ‘physical Zion’ in new ways that make ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ a place to hope for, even as it recasts the problematic aspects of the old Zion.

There is some disagreement on whether the vision describes a return to something old, or casts something new, because there are elements in chs. 40–48 that appear to be physical, just as there are aspects that cannot express anything physical. For example, John Strong sees these chapters as supporting a return to a more “conservative” vision of Zion, similar to what existed prior to the exile.⁴⁷² In contrast, Tuell and Joyce see the vision as dealing with political reality or perhaps something heavenly/eschatological rather than physical.⁴⁷³ Despite the variety in the scholarship seeking to sort out what the final nine chapters of the book of Ezekiel mean, most scholars agree that these chapters tell of something radically new. For example, one scholar says “the familiar world with its known boundaries is abolished.”⁴⁷⁴ Another claims that Ezekiel “envisages a radically restructured

⁴⁷¹ Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 9.

⁴⁷² John T. Strong, “Grounding Ezekiel's Heavenly Ascent: A Defense of Ezek 40–48 as a Program for Restoration,” *SJOT* 26, no. 2 (2012): 192–211.”

⁴⁷³ Tuell, *Law of the Temple*, 14. Joyce, *Ezekiel*, 221.

⁴⁷⁴ Kirsten Nielsen, “Ezekiel's Visionary Call as Prologue: From Complexity and Changeability to Order and Stability?,” *JSOT* 33, no. 1 (September 2008): 108.

society.”⁴⁷⁵ Still another says, “Thus... a cosmological concept common in Mesopotamia and Israel is left behind.”⁴⁷⁶ This new space recasts what led to the problems of the ‘physical Zion,’ and yet the important aspects of that old understanding of Zion appear in this vision as well.

These contrasting interpretations of what the vision of 40–48 entails, along with the approaches to the vision as a utopia (its “radical displacement” and “imaginary” nature), highlight what this project is arguing. The vision of 40–48 casts something new, but it does so using pieces of what is old. It recasts the city, the monarchy, and the land as it attempts to create a future return to place.

B. The New Zion

“Ezekiel’s apocalyptic vision is something more than the standard imagery of old Zion tradition.”⁴⁷⁷ Barring the humans from easy access, and setting up clear means, days, and processes for any allowed access, there is no mingling of the human and divine as there is in the conception of Zion from before the exile. The city appears to be the property of everyone, but is separate from the holy area indicating a specific boundary between the sacred and the profane not found in the understanding of the city prior to the exile. The stream of Ezek 47 ties to kingship and abundance (see more in Chapter Two), but the king who emerges in this vision is not one Israel/Judah can approach physically for the normal tasks monarchy provides. The kingship envisioned is real and yet distant, and the *nāśī’* looks nothing like the Davidic monarch of old. Finally, the land takes its place as an ארצה (acquired property for cultivation) whose ownership belongs with YHWH who allows the people to use the land in

⁴⁷⁵ Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 1.

⁴⁷⁶ Konkel, “System of Holiness,” 451.

⁴⁷⁷ Min-Kyu Lee, “Creation Symbols: River and Tree in the Beginning of Time (Urzeit) and the End of Time (Endzeit),” 한국기독교신학논총 102 (2016): 396.

the primary duty of serving the king, YHWH. As an אֲחִיזָה it cannot be confused with YHWH or with their relationship to YHWH in the same way it could pre-exile (see more in Chapter Two).

1. The city

This new manifestation of Zion highlights the spatial distance between the high mountain where the temple sits, and the profane day-to-day activities at its base. It is not surprising, then, that the city and the holy space are no longer connected. In the early verses of the vision the prophet is taken to a high mountain where there is the appearance of a “structure like a city” (כַּמְבִּנָּה-עִיר) (Ezek 40:2). This structure is described in Ezek 40–42 and represents the temple itself. Rather than a city that houses the temple in its midst as in ‘physical Zion,’ the temple on the mountain takes on the significance and certain roles once held by Jerusalem in the ‘physical Zion’. As the location that housed the temple, it had a protective role, even as the presence of the temple had a reciprocal role in protecting the city. In this new manifestation of Zion, however, “where once the Temple stood as a *symbol* of security, now it undertakes the security of the nation itself.”⁴⁷⁸

The laws guarding the temple pre-exile were in place to protect against contagion. The presence of the temple within the city, with both its moral and ritual impurity,⁴⁷⁹ makes the spatial dimension of the pre-exile Zion impractical. As the book of Ezekiel explains in elaborate detail in chs. 1–39, the contagions were not kept from the temple precinct, and the blurring of the boundaries between sacred and profane led to the downfall of the city and the destruction of the temple. In the new Zion “the city with its walls does not protect the temple any longer; rather, the temple has to be protected from the profane city.”⁴⁸⁰ The city is separated from the temple by some distance and even though there are rules to access

⁴⁷⁸ Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 185. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁷⁹ Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice*.

⁴⁸⁰ Konkel, “System of Holiness,” 451.

YHWH's presence, the deity no longer resides within the location of the people or the city itself. "The City has a divine name in it, but unfortunately, the name is described by an adverb 'there' (שמה) which indicates that YHWH dwells in temporal, spatial, and spiritual distances from the future City or future City residents."⁴⁸¹ The distancing of the city and the mountain of the temple are an attempt to prevent the failure of the pre-exile period from occurring again in the future. "When examined from this perspective, the gates of the Temple are less polemical than they are protective."⁴⁸² They protect access to the temple space where YHWH dwells, and serve to keep the mountain separate from what is around it.

The city of Jerusalem might appear in the vision, however. While usurped by the temple, a city is specifically addressed in Ezek 45:6–7 and 48:15–19. Ezekiel 45 is read by some scholars as indicating that the city described in vs. 6 is inside the holy portion.⁴⁸³ In light of what chapter 48 indicates about the city, however, it makes more sense that the verses in chapter 45 be read as indicating that the city is on the outskirts of the holy portion. For example, Block is one who argues for the city being inside the holy portion based on Ezek 45. He also claims, however, that Ezek 48:15 designates the city as חל הוא, "common."⁴⁸⁴ Further, he argues that the city is surrounded by "open land/pasture" (מגרש Ezek 48:15) "that generally identifies a demarcated zone outside the walls of a city."⁴⁸⁵ These zones were used to graze the cattle of priests in Numbers, and the use of this word to separate the city from the holy portion suits a different word used of the city in Ezek 45:6: ואחזת העיר. The אחזה, as described in Chapter One, denotes a kind of possession that is loaned out for the purpose of cultivation. Based on the details provided in Ezek 48, the future city is described as farmland

⁴⁸¹ Soo J Kim, "YHWH Shammah: The City as Gateway to the Presence of YHWH," *JSOT* 39, no. 2 (December 2014):199.

⁴⁸² Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 185.

⁴⁸³ Block, *Ezekiel Chapters. 25–48*, 733.

⁴⁸⁴ Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 731.

⁴⁸⁵ Block, *Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*, 732.

(v. 19) for the city's workforce, and its proximity to the sacred area gives the idea that the purpose of this city and this land is twofold. While it is a city where people can dwell, the people who dwell there are referred to as "workers" (עֲבָדִים v. 19), and its proximity to land set apart for grazing animals for temple service (מִגְרָשׁ v. 15) hints that this city exists primarily to serve the temple. When viewed together, the "possession of the city" of Ezek 45:6, the "workers" (Ezek 48:19) in close proximity to the temple, and the surrounding "demarcated zone" that is generally an indication of temple use (Ezek 48:15), indicate that the new city serves a very different purpose than the old one. This "new" city is an אֶחָזָה, something loaned to the people for a specific purpose. These clues lead to a need to see the city separately from the holy allotment, similar to the layout found in Odell's commentary,⁴⁸⁶ where the city lies southeast of the land allotted to Benjamin.

When viewed all together, there is a restored city, but it is restored in a way that prevents it from becoming conflated with YHWH and his faithfulness in the future. It is also placed on the periphery of the holy where it cannot contaminate the sacred the same way it did in the pre-exile understanding of 'physical Zion'.

2. Monarchy

Chapter Five above discussed the questionable longevity, and future legitimacy, of the Davidic monarchy. The uncertain future is continued in Ezek 40–48 with the portrayal of the *nāšî'* and the rise of YHWH as king. It is especially in this area that the miraculous stream of Ezek 47 highlights a shift to a new concept of kingship. "Water gushing forth in Mesopotamia is the image, *par excellence*, of divine life given to humanity through the king, and the literary motif of abundance can be traced over millennia."⁴⁸⁷ Because water is a sign

⁴⁸⁶ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 508.

⁴⁸⁷ Stéphanie Anthonioz, "Water(s) of Abundance in the Ancient Near East and in Hebrew Bible Texts: A Sign of Kingship," in *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin BZAW 461 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 49.

of the fertility of the deity, and the king is the mediator of that fertility, flowing water and fertility are signs of blessed kingship and lead to a connection between the role of gardening and that of ruling.

This concept is visible in epithets of the kings, duties of the kings, and the narratives about kings. Geo Widengren claimed that kings are sometimes “given the title of “gardener,” Sumerian *nu-kiri*₆, Accadian *nukarribu*.”⁴⁸⁸ He goes on to argue that this gardener/king’s task was taking care of the garden of the gods, which was a common ANE conception of kingship.⁴⁸⁹ There are also stories that indicate a link between gardening and kingship in the ANE. For example, in the Legend of Sargon, the king says, “Aqqi, drawer of water, set (me) to his orchard work. During my orchard work, Ishtar loved me, fifty-five years I ruled as king.”⁴⁹⁰ This story highlights the link Widengren draws between the task of gardener and being chosen as king. All of these indicators create a background connection between kingship and gardening in the ANE.

As it is generally the flowing waters and the fertility described in Ezek 47: 8–12 that cause scholars to connect Ezek 47 and the Eden Garden of Genesis,⁴⁹¹ a brief examination of how the river functions as a sign of kingship in both texts is necessary.

⁴⁸⁸ Widengren, *King and the Tree*, 15.

⁴⁸⁹ Widengren, *King and the Tree*, 11.

⁴⁹⁰ William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, eds., “The Birth Legend of Sargon of Akkad,” in *The Context of Scripture, Volume I: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, trans. Benjamin R. Foster (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 461.

⁴⁹¹ In “Rivers of Paradise,” 171–89 Tuell focuses on connections between the rivers, but he also finds parallels in the word choices of Ezekiel 47 (such as נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה/ *nepeš hayāh* and שָׂרָא/ *šāraš*) (171–173). He shows that the existence of *nepeš hayāh* and *šāraš*, especially as they appear together, indicate that Ezek 47 is drawing on the tradition from the beginning of Genesis. He claims that the terminological connections “deliberately evoke not merely Zion imagery in general, but *Eden* imagery in particular.” (172) He finds further support for the connection between Ezek 47 and Gen 2-3 in how Revelation draws the two texts together. He says because “John understood Ezekiel’s vision with explicit reference to Genesis 2” (172–173) it offers support for his own textual connections claiming that the author of Ezek 40–48 also deliberately called upon Eden Garden imagery to make his point. Others find connections primarily in the flourishing of the land as a kind of paradise. Levenson, *Theology of the Program*; Darr, “Wall around Paradise, 271–79; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel, Vol.2.*, 510; Tuell,

a. Genesis 2–3

Applying these ideas to the Eden story of Gen 2, scholars find clues that tie the אָדָם to kingship.⁴⁹² For example, Brueggemann explores the idea of being created from dust and claims that “behind the creation formula lies a royal formula of enthronement. To be taken ‘from the dust’ means to be elevated... to royal office...”⁴⁹³ In addition to the potential of being created for kingship, the duties of the human are similar to royal and/or cultic duties similar to the gardener/king of the ANE.⁴⁹⁴ This tie between gardens and kingship allows the Eden Garden to act as a recognisable “symbol of cosmic order, and... above all of royal management of the cosmos.”⁴⁹⁵ Therefore, despite the paucity of royal language that explicitly names the human as king/leader (נָגִיד, נָשִׂיא, מֶלֶךְ), the duties of the human, the setting of the garden, and the background of the story, offer a similar description of kingship found in other ANE stories.⁴⁹⁶ These connections lead Wyatt to claim, “the putting of the man in the garden... is another royal ideological motif.”⁴⁹⁷

This idea is exhibited in Gen 2–3 where the blessing of the earth only comes about with the creation of the human. In Gen 2:5 plants did not grow on the earth because, “there was no אָדָם to work/serve the אֲדָמָה.” In lieu of a human to work the ground, and to make up for a lack of rain (לֹא הָמָטִיר Gen 2:5), the text says there is another water source, the mist or

Law of the Temple, 69; Niditch, “Ezekiel 40-48,” 217. It seems as though the connection has become fairly rote in scholarship now.

⁴⁹² See also Andreas Schüle, “Made in the ‘Image of God’: The Concepts of Divine Images in Gen 1-3,” *ZAW* 117, no. 1 (2005): 5.

⁴⁹³ Walter Brueggemann, “From Dust to Kingship,” *ZAW* 84, no. 1 (1972): 2.

⁴⁹⁴ Callender, *Adam in Myth*, 61–65; Nicholas Wyatt, “A Royal Garden: The Ideology of Eden,” *SJOT* 28, no. 1 (2014): 25.

⁴⁹⁵ Wyatt, “Royal Garden,” 22.

⁴⁹⁶ Callendar, *Adam in Myth*; Widengren, *King and the Tree*; McDowell, *Image of God*. See Chapter Six.

⁴⁹⁷ Wyatt, “Royal Garden,” 24.

flow that waters the face of the ground (וַאֲדָר יַעֲלֶה מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה). While the mist (78, Gen 2:6) waters the earth, there is no indication of the flourishing of creation prior to the appearance of the human. As a sign of the abundance associated with a deity, the trees that are pleasing to the eye (Gen 2:9) appear at the same time the human is created.

Following the above approaches to seeing the human as a prototypical king, the stream of the next verse (Gen 2:10) takes on the significance of the flowing waters. With the placement of the human into the garden, presumably where he can act as the king/gardener, the stream that allows the fertility of the deity to encompass the entire creation appears. Dexter Callender says, “the J image of gardening is a royal image,”⁴⁹⁸ and as the mediator of blessing to creation, the waters that appear in Gen 2 connect to the concept of waters as a sign of kingship.⁴⁹⁹

b. Ezekiel 40–48

The waters also appear in Ezek 40–48. Kalinda Stevenson and Madhavi Nevader both argue for YHWH’s kingship in Ezek 40–48 although they do so differently. Stevenson establishes YHWH’s kingship by looking at what she calls the territorial rhetoric of chs. 40–48. She compares the building narratives of Solomon’s temple in 1 Kgs 6–8 with those of the temple in Ezek 40–48, and highlights a primary difference. “The Solomon narrative recognizes two kings, the divine king YHWH, and the human King Solomon. In Ezekiel, there is only one King, the divine King YHWH.”⁵⁰⁰ Ezekiel’s building narrative, while similar to those of the kings in the ANE, has a different builder, thereby establishing a different king. Instead of a

⁴⁹⁸ Callendar, *Adam in Myth*, 62.

⁴⁹⁹ There are other interpretations of the first human that view him in a primarily cultic role rather than as a king. The reality is that it is probably something of both, and Ezekiel uses the royal aspects to his advantage. See Gordon J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden,” in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood’: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399–404.

⁵⁰⁰ Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 115–116.

type of human kingship being in view, “YHWH builds this house as a claim to kingship;”⁵⁰¹ and rather than being a normal building plan, Ezekiel receives a blueprint that reinforces a “territorial claim.”⁵⁰² The mountain upon which the future is built belongs to YHWH and YHWH alone, and from there he will exercise his authority.

Nevader establishes YHWH’s kingship by looking more closely at the devaluing of the monarchic institution itself, primarily focusing on the role of the *nāśî’*, and the tasks taken on by YHWH. She examines the duties of the *nāśî’* in chs. 40–48 and articulates the devaluing of his role. While many argue for his prominence based on the task to provide the materials for the sacrificial cult,⁵⁰³ she shows how that role exhibits a distinct change from the view of the monarch prior to the exile. She argues,

His exalted status is based entirely upon a ‘secular’ standard. If, as many claim, the *nāśî’* here legislated is the utopian heir of the pre-exilic monarch, then this point of departure is astounding, considering that his predecessor was thought to be the great proxy seated at the right hand of his adopted father, Yhwh (cf. Ps 2.7), at times even flirting with divine rank (Isa 9.6; Ps 45.7).⁵⁰⁴

Beyond providing the materials for the cult sacrifice, the *nāśî’* has little role in ruling.

Nevader notes that YHWH builds the temple rather than a human king,⁵⁰⁵ and the standard roles of judging and shepherding are also fulfilled by YHWH.⁵⁰⁶ “Yhwh assumes a duty otherwise not his and, in doing so, takes on a royal function.”⁵⁰⁷ Between the royal roles he

⁵⁰¹ Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 116.

⁵⁰² Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 117.

⁵⁰³ See Charles R. Biggs, “The Role of Nasi in the Programme for Restoration in Ezekiel 40–48,” *Colloquium* 16, no. 1 (October 1983): 53; Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, 51; Levenson, *Theology of the Program*, 68; Brian Boyle, “The Figure of the Nāśî’ in Ezekiel’s Vision of the New Temple (Ezekiel 40–48),” *ABR* 58 (2010): 10–11.

⁵⁰⁴ Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 132.

⁵⁰⁵ Nevader, “Picking Up the Pieces,” 287.

⁵⁰⁶ She notes that judging, while portrayed differently in Ezekiel, is not a theme found only in Ezekiel. When connected to how he also takes on the task of shepherding in Ezek 34, however, where she claims his statement that he will be the shepherd of his own people, he is claiming kingship for himself. See, Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 166–167.

⁵⁰⁷ Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 166.

adopts, and the tasks taken from the monarch and given to the priests (who are also said to judge in 44:24), Ezek 40–48 “leaves little more than the skeleton of a monarch in the figure of the *nāšī’*’, removing any ideological or practical outlet for the expression of human kingship.”⁵⁰⁸

It is the role of the king in the ANE to mediate divine abundance, defined sometimes as bringing “the water(s) of life to their cities,”⁵⁰⁹ and there is no question that the mediating of abundance in Ezek 40–48 falls to YHWH alone. With the establishment of YHWH’s kingship, and the river as a sign of blessing on the land, a new era commences, one where YHWH alone rules with legitimacy and longevity. The stream is the sign of his reign.

The rushing waters of both Genesis and Ezekiel signal a sign of the blessing of fertility upon the land that comes through a divinely blessed king. In Genesis that king is the human (מלך). In Ezekiel the king is YHWH. The devaluing of the human monarch described in the book finds its counterpart in Ezek 40–48 and the focus on a new king, YHWH. Discussed more below under section III, there does not have to be a direct connection between the story of Genesis and that of Ezekiel. Rather, underlying both texts is common ANE image that calls to mind kingship. Both texts can be about kingship without needing to claim any kind of dependence on one another.

3. Land

The land is never referred to as either אדמת or *’admat yiśrā’ēl* in Ezek 40–48. The *’admat yiśrā’ēl* is primarily about the people, while Ezek 40–48 is about YHWH. The land in Ezek 40–48 flourishes as a sign of YHWH’s kingship and is utilised by the people for the benefit of the temple. It bears no linguistic tie to the people as the *’admat yiśrā’ēl* was shown to connect to the people in Chapter Six above. Rather, the land in Ezek 40–48 reflects YHWH

⁵⁰⁸ Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 160.

⁵⁰⁹ Anthonioz, “Water(s) of Abundance,” 57.

himself. Following the appearance of the river in Ezek 47, there is the new allocation of territory in Ezek 48. Some consider this layout of territory to be a kind of royal land grant renewal,⁵¹⁰ but similarly to what was just said about the city and its role as an אֶחָזָה, Nathanael Warren makes a case that rather than a royal land grant, these verses enact a temple land grant. He says the land itself is a “peripheral concern merely enabling the grantees to fulfil their role in the temple cult.”⁵¹¹ The flourishing land is for the temple, and it only extends to the people’s livelihood somewhat accidentally.

Flourishing land, returned entirely due to YHWH’s faithfulness and designated for use in service of the cult, is a very different kind of flourishing than what was visible in the land understanding of ‘physical Zion’. For ‘physical Zion,’ the land had usurped YHWH to the point that its loss led the people to question YHWH’s faithfulness. Ezekiel casts the land as an actor in the drama of exile as a means of placing the land back under the hierarchy of YHWH and back to a place where it can function as sign of YHWH’s blessing, but one contingent upon obedience from the people. As the land is no longer allowed to be called a מורשה, it is a new kind of possession in Ezek 40–48, and this new possession, אֶחָזָה, is loaned to the people for one specific purpose: service of YHWH and the cult. As YHWH’s alone, the land in Ezek 40–48 is restored, but it is restored firmly under the hierarchy of the new king.

C. Analysis of City, Monarch, and Land in Ezekiel 40–48

Ezekiel 40–48 explores the vision cast by Ezekiel as the future of Zion. With its focus on YHWH’s kingship, the flowing water from the temple, and the universalism of the allotment

⁵¹⁰ David H. Engelhard, “Ezekiel 47:13–48:29 as Royal Grant,” in *Go To The Land I Will Show You: Studies in Honor of Dwight W. Young*, ed. Joseph Coleson and Victor Matthews (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 45–56.

⁵¹¹ Warren, “*Tenure and Grant*,” 324.

of land (meaning how Ezek 48 casts land equally to all tribes), it reflects a view of Zion more consistent with Third Isaiah and Zechariah. While only briefly examined above, the “counterstories” proposed by Ezekiel in the Eden Garden sections of chs. 28, 31, and 36, take shape as a new Master Narrative in the ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ espoused in Ezek 40–48. The new Master Narrative seeks to establish the future ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ as a return to place. The loss of the familiar place represented by ‘physical Zion’ allows the exile to become a kind of thirdspace where Ezekiel has the freedom to craft “counterstories” to elements of ‘physical Zion’ he believes are misconstrued. Ezekiel 40–48 offers a glimpse into what he proposes as a new place, and it utilises the changes he has made to the elements of ‘physical Zion’. The city is separate from the holy mountain (Ezek 28, Chapter Four); the Davidic monarch is demoted and YHWH is the legitimate king (Ezek 31, Chapter Five); and the land promise of the patriarchs is recast (Ezek 36–37, Chapter Six) as the land in Ezek 40–48 serves YHWH and the temple first and foremost.

II. Ezekiel 47 does not have to be interpreted as Edenic

The goal of this chapter is to examine whether Ezek 47 is a reference to an Edenic kind of paradise. Unlike most scholars who find shades of Gen 2–3 in Ezek 47, this project disagrees. Both of the stories utilise an ANE image, that of flowing waters, to designate the blessing of creation under the purview of a ruler. The ruler envisioned is quite different, however. The agenda at work in Ezek 40–48 is “a political battle that is fought not between Yhwh and the gods of the nations, but between Yhwh and his servant David.”⁵¹² For David, the inheritance of the original creation and the blessing of that first river described in Gen 2–3, ended in the disaster of the exile. The “why” of that ending is elaborated on in great detail throughout the first 39 chapters of the book. The failures of both the king and the priest that resulted from

⁵¹² Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 198.

the intertwining of the sacred and profane bring about the downfall of the city and requires a new manifestation of Zion.

This new manifestation is explored in Ezek 40–48 which is focused on ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ and firmly establishing the boundaries between sacred and profane that emerge with YHWH’s kingship. In the new era there are aspects of the old: “the land will produce for its king, and the Temple will guarantee that the royal blessing remains timelessly intact for Yhwh’s nation.”⁵¹³ What is different, however, is that the temple and the royal blessing are intertwined in the person of YHWH rather than a human king. YHWH alone is the authority in the new Zion.

This strict separation of YHWH’s authority is visible in Ezekiel’s spatial layout and rules of access in chs. 40–48, and it reflects his separation of mountain and garden from the rest of the book. He sets the garden up as a border area where the human institutions are intended to highlight YHWH’s presence without ever being confused with YHWH’s dwelling. This separation takes form in the spatial divide in Ezek 40–48, where the mountain is set into polemical relief as the sole domain of the deity. With no mention of the garden in his description of the mountain of the future ‘mythic/symbolic Zion,’ Ezekiel is able to show how the mountain of the future sits in relation to aspects of the garden space (city, monarchy, land) in a new way. Unlike in ‘physical Zion’ where the people and YHWH intermingled in the same space and always ran the risk of contagion, the new mountain is separate, and the people are only able to move from the border area into YHWH’s space under strict rules of access (Ezek 46). Further, the border area contains the old elements of ‘physical Zion’, but reformed through Ezekiel’s “counterstories” and placed into a new relationship with the sacred mountain.

In his dissertation on mountains in Ezekiel David Casson claims,

⁵¹³ Nevader, *Yhwh versus David*, 184.

The paradigm of Mt. Zion was intended to provide Judah a single divine alternative to multiple promontories of human authority. There are significant elements of this Zion paradigm that Ezekiel can and does affirm as he sets about providing his own alternative. But for Ezekiel, Zion itself has ironically become just another mountain in the many competing and fragmented summits of power cluttering the Judean landscape. Ezekiel sees such divided loyalties as the underlying problem his people face, and he searches for a more viable single MOUNTAIN paradigm to provide what Lawrence Boadt calls a “countertheology” to confront that of the Old Israel, “which confused ruler and temple, secular city and sacred presence.”⁵¹⁴

This project argues that the concept of a ‘*physical Zion*’ became one of many foci in a search for identity, and the ideas of the mountain and space in Ezek 40–48 attempt to make the new mountain of the *future*, ‘*mythic/symbolic Zion*’ central to the experience of post-exile identity. One of the ways the text aids in this new identity is to put strict rules around access and space. In this new order, the monarchy is demoted, humans are in a different position relative to YHWH, and the new Zion is a mountain not intertwined with the garden. YHWH alone is the king, and the flowing river is the sign blessing this new era.

It seems unlikely that there is a specific image of Eden at work in Ezek 47 because of both the shift in theology at work in the wider text, and how Ezekiel uses the image of an Eden Garden to challenge the intertwining of the sacred and the profane. The image of the garden encapsulates the profane aspects of daily life that, when functioning properly, act as gardens in the ANE generally do. They are border areas that are able to point to the presence of deity while not being the specific location of the deity. The mountain, on the other hand, is the location of the deity. As the central icon of chs. 40–48, Ezekiel reiterates that this mountain is the future Zion, and it is different from that of the past because it is separate from the profane, and set apart for YHWH alone.

⁵¹⁴ David Casson, “The Mountain Shall Be Most Holy: Metaphoric Mountains in Ezekiel’s Rhetoric” (Emory University, 2004), 138.

III. Conclusion

Chapter One above laid out the methodology for this project, and while most of it relies on narrative theory, it opened with a brief examination of spatial theory. Space is an overarching concern for Ezekiel in his quest to recast Zion, but the work of changing understanding is done through his use of story. He examines the initial place of ‘physical Zion’ extensively, and uses the image of a garden to explore why that place became chaotic space. The knowledge of YHWH described in the misunderstanding of the city, the monarchy, and the land allows Ezekiel to recast those things in a way that maintains their importance, but shifts how they relate to YHWH in the future.

It is in chs. 40–48 that Ezekiel casts the vision for a return to the place of ‘mythic/symbolic Zion,’ and it is represented by the image of the mountain where YHWH rules as king. In the new place, the “counterstories” crafted by Ezekiel throughout the book converge as the chapters cast the transformed city, monarchy, and land in relationship with this majestic mountain. The new era of YHWH’s rule is cast using the image of the rushing waters common in ANE conceptions of blessed kingship. It is this use of the waters, and the ensuing flourishing of creation, that most scholars see a recasting of an Edenic paradise. This chapter set out to highlight that despite the commonality in the image of flowing waters, Gen 2–3 and Ezek 47 have different messages. The human rule established in Gen 2–3 is tied into the image of kingship that prevails in ‘physical Zion’. The exile narrates the downfall of that rule. Therefore, rather than a recasting of the Edenic paradise and a return to the picture of human involvement in the flourishing of the land, the image in Ezek 47 is focused solely on YHWH. In Ezek 40–48, YHWH is the one through whom blessing will flow. The image of the streams makes a connection between the two stories, but a deeper examination reveals that the flowing stream is likely an image that deals with kingship in the ANE and is not a direct connection between the stories and (eventual) texts of Genesis and Ezekiel.

Chapter Eight: Summary of Findings and Avenues for Further Research

I. Summary Eden in Ezekiel

A. Summary

This study began with one primary goal: to explore the use of the Eden Garden in the book of Ezekiel from a holistic perspective. Scholarship on the sections where Eden occurs is vast. None attempted to look at the overall picture in the same way as this project, however, and the concern herein was the ‘why’ question. This enquiry is relevant in two primary ways, one dealing with application of the book to modern theological concerns, and one dealing directly with Ezekiel scholarship. On the first, recent scholarship critical over the implications of the book’s message for modern concerns of ecojustice do not consider the frequency of the garden theme, and therefore overestimate the negative message towards creation in the book. As for the second, Zion is a debated topic in Ezekiel scholarship, and this exploration into Eden brought it to the forefront and sought a middle ground. The enquiry into Eden and Zion in Ezekiel reveals a creative use of story. It emerges that Ezekiel is a master storyteller, brilliantly able to couch scathing rebuke within the confines of the familiar. Amid the traumatic setting of national catastrophe, the book recasts Zion to separate it from the troublesome blurring of sacred and profane inherent in its tie to the city of Jerusalem. It couches the recasting of Zion in the contrast of mountain and garden, and the Eden Garden sections of the book challenge various threads of the pre-exile understanding of Zion.

Chapter One began the process of showing how Zion is recast in the book by laying out the methodology of the project and then examining its application to the book. The overall contrast between ‘physical Zion’, exile, and ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ is one of space vs. place although spatial theory is more of a subset as it does not factor into *how* Ezekiel

changes perspectives. Despite the negative nature of space (in contrast to place) from the perspective of Human Geography, the narratives used to facilitate change are only efficacious in the space of the exile. In the place of Jerusalem, the centre of ‘physical Zion’, the necessary message of change is difficult to understand (see Jeremiah). While the goal of the shift from ‘physical Zion’ to ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ is a maintenance of place (or a loss of place and a vision of a hopeful return to such place), it is only the onset of chaotic space that gives the prophet the ability to significantly challenge the audience’s understanding. This positive aspect of space in the book of Ezekiel makes the exile a kind of thirdspace in the understanding of Soja. The exile places Ezekiel on the margins and therefore allows for critique and challenge of certain ways the people used to understand YHWH. The specific challenge and change, however, is not accomplished through a kind of spatial understanding. Rather, it comes in the form of Ezekiel’s shifting of important stories.

Using narrative theory as the primary methodology, several Master Narratives are challenged, and Ezekiel offers “counterstories” to shift how the audience understands their relationship with YHWH. The primary Master Narrative in question is that of Zion, but there are threads to ‘physical Zion’ that entail their own Master Narratives as well. For example, the Master Narrative of ‘physical Zion’ intertwines city, monarchy, and land as it creates the foundation for how the people relate to and understand YHWH’s faithfulness. In order to craft a “counterstory,” Ezekiel must challenge each aspect individually. Therefore, Jerusalem, Davidic monarchy, and Promised Land are all individual Master Narratives that he shifts before the overall picture of a “counterstory” emerges as ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’.

Chapter Two discusses several important foundational aspects of this project. Firstly, it examined gardens and mountains in the ANE to explore their similarities and differences. Often conflated in the iconography, both are significant settings for divine activity, and they are possibly both sources for divine waters that bring abundance. Despite these similarities,

there is also a distinct difference: mountains connect heaven and earth and are the abode of deity, while gardens serve more as a border area. It is this distinct difference that primarily factors into how the book of Ezekiel uses the image of the mountain vs. the garden. As the mountain emerges as the image of the future ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’, the garden serves as a location that highlights the presence of YHWH on the mountain. Forming a border between sacred and profane, the garden space is not again conflated with the mountain.

Next it examined the idea of Zion and sought to define ‘physical Zion’ and ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’. The picture of Zion the book of Ezekiel challenges twines together ideas of human kingship, divine blessing, a promised land, and YHWH’s presence within the confines of the city of Jerusalem. There is evidence in the HB of both a Zion connected to a physical location and one that is devoid of the physical ties evidenced in Ezekiel. Without claiming that a shift is linear, it seems clear that Zion goes from being tied to a physical place to being a mythical place or a symbolic idea that encompasses various aspects of the Hebrew worldview. The book of Ezekiel offers one example of how to theologise that change.

Finally, the connection in scholarship between Zion and Eden is examined. The two primary scholars reviewed there were Jon Levenson and Terje Stordalen who approach the conflation of ideas quite differently. For Levenson, Zion is a reflex of the primordial idea of Eden, and therefore he sees Ezekiel’s holy mountain as drawing on paradisiacal ideas that telescope Eden into Zion. For Stordalen, the issue is a connection between the two that emerges in the second temple literature. He reads those connections back into the text of the HB and therefore reads Eden themes in Zion. Showing the scholarly connection between these two ideas sets the stage for what follows, as this project then proceeds to show how the Eden Garden sections of the book of Ezekiel challenge various understandings of Zion. In line with how Ezekiel recasts narratives, the connections that may exist in the HB between

the two complexes of ideas are turned sideways as he uses one in distinct contrast to the other.

Chapter Three focused on OANs and argued an alternative approach to current scholarship. Previous scholarship is primarily concerned with origins, looking at whether OANs stem from something in the cult, or, perhaps, from the war oracle. It is also very preoccupied with redaction and formation of the bodies of oracles that become OANs. This project shifts the focus and argues that OANs are a common literary device used by the various prophetic books in ways that are consistent with the rhetoric of the rest of the specific book. This argument allows Amos's OANs to have a particular focus, while Isaiah's or Ezekiel's OANs could have a different focus or meaning. For Ezekiel, this means that because the book as a whole uses the trope of foreignness to challenge the exile's relationship to the land, the OANs about foreign nations can more easily be applied to the prophet's audience. The connection between foreignness and Ezekiel's audience helps explain the myriad connections between Israel/Judah and the nations that appear in Ezekiel's OANs.

The book of Ezekiel narrates the time period when a shift from a 'physical' to a more 'mythic/symbolic' understanding of Zion would have been historically necessary in order to protect a future hope in any kind of Zion ideal. Seeing the OANs as specifically about Ezekiel's exilic audience allows him to keep an important piece of the Zion ideology intact, specifically, that Zion is the tallest mountain, and from this tallest mountain YHWH rules over foreign nations. At the same time, the intertextual connections between Israel/Judah and the foreign nation in view challenge aspects of the 'physical Zion' that have been misconstrued. By linking parts of Israel/Judah's identity to the foreigner, the election of both the city of Jerusalem and the longevity of the Davidic monarchy are in question as their uniqueness is lost.

Chapter Four began the look at the Eden references themselves. The Eden reference in Ezek 28 claims that the protagonist of the oracle initially walked both in the garden-of-god and on the mountain-of-god. There is no mention after the initial verses (13–14) of a garden, but rather a focus on separating the protagonist from the mountain. The entity in view in Ezek 28 is being forcibly separated from the mountain but not necessarily losing access to the garden. Connections between the accusations and fate of the protagonist and the city of Jerusalem (Ezek 5, 7, 22, and 24) allow Chapter Four to posit a new focus that lies behind the shifting identity of the protagonist of the oracle. Arguing that Ezek 28:11–19 focuses on casting the city of Jerusalem from the mountain, shows the disentangling of Jerusalem from a space that remains holy.

Chapter Five then addressed Ezek 31. After challenging the role of the city in how the people relate to YHWH, Ezek 31 delves into the garden space again, this time to challenge a different aspect of ‘physical Zion’: kingship. Using the image of the great cedar, Ezek 31 contains a message to those with faith in the monarchy of old. As background, the complex lore of the tree in Egypt and Assyria was discussed. In Egypt, trees represent various deities with a hope for regeneration and immortality. In Assyria, the tree connects the ideas of world order, maintained via a divinely blessed monarch, with a mortuary cult that carries connotations of dynastic legitimacy. Themes of conquest are wrapped up in each as the felling of trees indicates a loss of hope for regeneration, divine order, and dynastic legitimacy.

The chapter then highlighted how those same themes exist in the text of the HB and then converge in Ezekiel’s image of the tall cedar. Ezekiel 31:3–9 indicates that in the beginning this cedar fits the image of a monarch able to provide for his subjects. It becomes haughty, however, and as specifically indicated in Isa 2:13, YHWH is against cedars that are haughty. Babylon is referenced as a tree-cutter in Isa 14:8 and YHWH utilises Babylon to

destroy this tree. The abandonment of the branches that represent the bones of the monarchy signifies a lack of dynastic security as they are not honoured with any kind of burial.

Therefore, the cedar of Ezek 31 represents kingship that is blessed and able to provide shade. It becomes haughty, is chopped down and not properly buried, thereby calling the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty into question and severing another thread of the 'physical Zion'.

Chapter Six disentangled the land from the 'physical Zion'. The chapter highlights that for Ezekiel, knowledge of YHWH comes from the opposite of what brought knowledge throughout the HB. Usually a product of provision or promise (often of the land), Ezekiel claims that knowledge of YHWH comes through destruction or loss of provision. This reversal places the loss of the land in the context of YHWH's plan for bringing future knowledge and relationship. The chapter went on to discuss the promise of the future land encapsulated in the *'admat yiśrā'el*. Unique to Ezekiel, the *'admat yiśrā'el* serves as a combination of various themes from Eden and the Promised Land, and the chapter sets it up as a new kind of Promised Land. While not simply a return to a land promised to the patriarchs, the *'admat yiśrā'el* brings that foundational promise into the future vision by casting it in shades of Eden. It is not about paradise, however, but rather a land whose possession requires a new knowledge, and a sense of shame that is a perpetual reminder of the faithfulness of YHWH.

Chapter Seven addressed the absence of Eden in Ezek 40–48, with a focus on the stream flowing from the temple in Ezek 47. Circling back to the overarching spatial aspect of the method discussed in Chapter One, it argued that Ezek 40–48 is focussed on articulating Ezekiel's hope for a return to place. It is argued that the lack of any mention of Eden focuses Ezek 47 on the mountain and leaves the garden as the border area where profane things, like monarchy and city, are able to coexist in close proximity to the sacred, while remaining separate. With a focus entirely on the mountain, Ezek 47 would be inconsistent with the rest

of the Eden Garden references in the book if it suddenly recombined the garden and mountain. Rather, while both Gen 2 and Ezek 47 use the image of the stream, the stream is not specifically Edenic. Rather, it is an image tied to kingship. As the stream of Gen 2 inaugurated the era of the human care of creation with the human acting, in a sense, as king, the stream of Ezek 47 depicts YHWH as king. While both use the ANE trope of the stream, the tie between the texts is that both deal with kingship, not that Ezek 47 is specifically a reflex of the Eden Garden of Gen 2–3.

The book of Ezekiel uses the image of the Eden Garden as part of a “counterstory” to the ‘physical Zion’ prevalent before the exile. In an attempt to cast a future hope built upon aspects of the past, the future Zion cannot be entirely new. At the same time, it cannot be a return to the status quo. As such, the ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ is less tangible and remains tied to the image of a mountain from which YHWH rules as king. The profane day-to-day life of city, monarchy, and land exist in the garden space that borders the holy. Once purged of misplaced ideology, the garden is the place of renewal for this future community and it contains the reformed aspects of the old ‘physical Zion’. With new rules of access, the community that dwells in the garden space can approach YHWH’s domain on the mountain, but there are rules preventing the blurring of sacred and profane — of mountain with garden— that led to the downfall displayed in the Babylonian exile.

B. Concluding Thoughts

The book of Ezekiel has a strong message about what Zion should and should not be, and as is consistent with various other topics, it plays with aspects of Israel/Judah’s identity to make its point. How the book uses certain stories/traditions allows it to highlight a move from place to space before then describing what a future return to place might look like.

The blending of the image of the garden and the mountain (Eden and Zion) that is common in the HB allows the book to draw a potentially startling line between the two locations. This line represents a needed boundary between sacred and profane called out in other areas of the book more explicitly. The disconnect then provides a specific means of separating out what Zion should be— a mountain— while distancing it from what it should no longer be— a mountain blended with a garden. The initial blend of the two spaces linked Zion with the physical city of Jerusalem, the Davidic monarchy, and a specific understanding of the land. Separating the mountain and the garden indicates a loss place as it is what was familiar. The loss of the place of ‘physical Zion’ creates the environment necessary to challenge specific aspects of the people’s understanding. The book then capitalises on the idea of gardens as border areas in order to show how those misconstrued aspects of identity can serve as signposts to YHWH’s domain in the future.

In the space of the exile, the audience is in the position of the foreigner, and according to Zion theology would be ruled over rather than protected. This spatial position safeguards a central belief of Zion, specifically that Zion is a holy mountain where YHWH rules over foreign nations. This spatial focus protects YHWH’s reputation, and also provides a foundation for the book of Ezekiel to begin to shift certain aspects of the audience’s perception. It focuses attention on the garden space, and the process of reformulating how the human elements of kingdom can be reformed and serve as a border to YHWH’s domain in the future. In this sense, Zion is not lost; rather, it is misunderstood and reformulated. This shift highlights YHWH’s continuing faithfulness while showing the complicity of the book’s audience in their circumstances.

The contrast of space and place allows the message of the book of Ezekiel about Zion to come into sharper focus. Both contrasting images represent place—‘physical Zion’ with its overt connection to the city of Jerusalem and ‘mythic/symbolic Zion’ with its distinct

separation between the mountain of YHWH and the human elements of kingdom. It is the space of the exile that creates the setting where the book can recast narratives and traditions in a way that shows how the first view of Zion can transition into the second.

II. Suggested Contribution

The use of narrative theory with significant attention to how Ezekiel recasts narratives from Israel/Judah's past supports scholarship already arguing for Ezekiel's use of older traditions by expanding those discussions to the area of narratives. Further, the combination of both spatial and narrative theory opened a way to study the connection between the spaces of Eden and Zion through the lens of story. Particularly, the combination creates a lens through which to explore how narrative interpretations might factor in to shifting an understanding about specific spaces. The specific space in view here was Zion, and the methodological lens led to the conclusion that Ezekiel uses aspects of the Eden Garden narrative to explain both the failures of one view of Zion, and the hope available in an alternative view of the same space.

Using the image of the Eden Garden allows Ezekiel to capitalize on one of the main differences between mountains and gardens, that mountains are the location of the deity and connect heaven and earth, while gardens tend to be border areas. Showing the images combined in Ezek 28, where the protagonist has access to both spaces, makes the forcible separation of the protagonist from the mountain a means of focusing on the two spaces as distinctly different. This dichotomy sets up the ability to examine the garden space as encapsulating the profane, while the mountain emerges as distinctly sacred. This image then allows an Eden Garden to contrast with the future mountain of Zion. Once the images are distinct, then the function of the garden sections show more clearly how Ezekiel's reform occurs.

The examination of the Eden Garden sections, especially in light of shifting the understanding of Zion, opens up several new possibilities for interpreting difficult sections of the text. Firstly, this approach allows the murky nature of the protagonist of Ezek 28:11–19 to focus on the city of Jerusalem. This idea does not disavow either of the most common approaches of the Primal Human or the Cherub, but nuances the conversation by offering an alternative that allows for the inclusion of both within the idea of the city. Secondly, this project proposes a new interpretation for the Ezekielian phrase *'admat yiśrā'ēl* because of an emerging connection between this place and an Eden Garden. Just as the narrative in Genesis posits a connection between the אדם and the אדמה, the book of Ezekiel contains a connection between the אדם בן אדם and the *'admat yiśrā'ēl*. The connection between the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* and an Eden Garden is what opens up the ability to examine the *'admat yiśrā'ēl* in this new way.

The conclusion of the work, that the Eden Garden serves Ezekiel's desire to shift the prevalent understanding of Zion, attempts to find a middle ground between the debates over Zion in Ezekiel scholarship. Tying the concept of 'physical Zion' to use of the word Zion, the book's lack of the word has a particular message about Zion. Lack of the word, but not lack of ideas about Zion, indicate that the concept is important to the book as a whole, even as the deliberate lack of the term contains a pointed message in itself. The book is focused on a shift in Zion, and use of the term would conjure the expression of Zion that Ezekiel is specifically seeking to change. This means that both sides of this debate are correct. On the one hand, Zion is not a concept Ezekiel supports, if that Zion is interpreted as 'physical Zion.' On the other hand, Zion is an important theme in the book as Ezekiel spends significant time reformulating an understanding of what this project called 'mythic/symbolic Zion.'

III. Areas for Further Enquiry

There are three areas of further study that emerge from the work done in this thesis. Firstly, from the beginning this project acknowledged that the diachronic approaches to the text of Ezekiel that are important and very common in Ezekiel scholarship at this time, did not offer a means of answering the main enquiry. With the idea now that in MT Ezekiel the Eden Garden serves as part of a “counterstory” to the Master Narrative of ‘physical Zion’, it would be interesting to explore whether this holds true in the LXX manuscript traditions. Given that current scholarship has acknowledged that the Greek and Hebrew versions of Ezekiel offer a glimpse of variant literary traditions, exploring whether the conclusions drawn in this project would apply therein, would be interesting. It would also be fascinating to see if the Eden Garden theme is the same in P967 as it is in B, and if not, to explore why that development was omitted in the narrative arc in question.

Secondly, there is room for more work on how Ezekiel views the foreigner. Scholarship has often connected Ezekiel with the group of post-exile texts that have a negative view of those who were not exiled. If Ezekiel casts his own audience as the foreigner, this connection might be more tenuous than initially implied. More work exploring the literary casting of the foreign in other post-exile texts (such as Ezra and Nehemiah) and comparing their message within the rhetoric of each book, would make for an interesting discussion on the text of the HB as a whole.

Finally, there is room for further work on OANs and how they relate to the bodies of work in which they appear. *Mapping Judah’s Fate in Ezekiel’s Oracles Against the Nations* and *Concerning the Nations* have begun to ask new questions from the traditional approaches to OANs. The questions of authorship and redaction are useful and obviously still relevant, as are the questions of origin, but more work could be done to explore how the OANs function within the wider rhetoric of the prophetic works. An exploration of the OANs in the rhetoric

of both the Hebrew and Greek manuscript traditions would be an interesting and welcome study.

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