

**“My People Shall Know My Name”**

**The Divine Designations in the Book of  
Isaiah as a Hermeneutical Key to the  
Formation of the Text in its Final Form**

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*To My Grandmother, Pearl Tooher,  
For teaching me what it means to be truly Christian*

*A Thiana, ár dTiarna, nach éachtach é d'ainm ar fund na cruinne*

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## **A Note on Biblical Quotations**

All English quotations from the Book of Isaiah are my own translation unless otherwise stated. All other English translations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version. Quotations of Hebrew text are taken from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, (4th edition). The Greek text used is the LXX *Septuaginta* (Old Greek Jewish Scriptures) edited by Alfred Rahlfs, (Copyright 1935).

## Abbreviations

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>AB</b>           | Anchor Bible   |
| <b>ABD</b>          | <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 volumes. New York, 1992  |
| <b><i>AbrN</i></b>  | <i>Abr-Nahrain</i>   |
| <b>AnBib</b>        | Analecta biblica   |
| <b>ANET</b>         | <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3d ed. Princeton, 1969                  |
| <b>ASV</b>          | American Standard Version (1901)   |
| <b>BDB</b>          | Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907                   |
| <b><i>Bsac</i></b>  | <i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>   |
| <b>BHS</b>          | <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983   |
| <b>BZAW</b>         | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft  |
| <b><i>CBQ</i></b>   | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>   |
| <b>CBQMS</b>        | Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series   |
| <b>ConBOT</b>       | Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series  |
| <b><i>DBI</i></b>   | <i>Dictionary of Biblical Imagery</i> . Edited by Leland Ryken. Leicester, 1998  |
| <b><i>DDD</i></b>   | <i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> . Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden, 1995 |
| <b><i>EB(C)</i></b> | <i>Encyclopaedia Biblica</i> . Edited by Thomas Kelly Cheyne. 1903.  |

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>EDB</b>     | <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. Grand Rapids, Mich., 2000.     |
| <b>ER</b>      | <i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i> . Edited by Mircea Eliade. 16 volumes. New York, 1987               |
| <b>ESV</b>     | English Standard Version (2001)   |
| <b>ETL</b>     | <i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>  |
| <b>HB</b>      | Hebrew Bible  |
| <b>HKAT</b>    | Handkommentar zum Alten Testament   |
| <b>Hor</b>     | <i>Horizons</i>   |
| <b>HTR</b>     | <i>Harvard Theological Review</i>   |
| <b>HUCA</b>    | <i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>  |
| <b>IB</b>      | <i>Interpreter's Bible</i> . Edited by G. A. Buttrick. 12 volumes. New York, 1951–1957                  |
| <b>IDB</b>     | <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by G. A. Buttrick. 4 volumes. Nashville, 1962 |
| <b>Int</b>     | <i>Interpretation</i>   |
| <b>JAOS</b>    | <i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>   |
| <b>JB</b>      | The Jerusalem Bible (1966)  |
| <b>JBL</b>     | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>   |
| <b>JNES</b>    | <i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>  |
| <b>JPS</b>     | Jewish Publication Society Old Testament (1917)   |
| <b>JSOT</b>    | <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>   |
| <b>JSOTSup</b> | Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series   |
| <b>KJV</b>     | King James Version (1611/1769)  |
| <b>LXX</b>     | Septuagint  |
| <b>MT</b>      | Massoretic Text (of the Old Testament)  |
| <b>NAB</b>     | The New American Bible (1986)   |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>NEB</b>    | The New English Bible (1970)  |
| <b>NIB</b>    | <i>The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes.</i> Edited by Leander Keck. 12 volumes. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.  |
| <b>NIV</b>    | New International Version (1984) (US)   |
| <b>NJB</b>    | The New Jerusalem Bible (1985)  |
| <b>NJBC</b>   | <i>The New Jerome Biblical Commentary.</i> Edited by R. E. Brown et al. Englewood Cliffs, 1990  |
| <b>NJPS</b>   | <i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>  |
| <b>NLT</b>    | New Living Translation (1996)   |
| <b>NRSV</b>   | New Revised Standard Version (1989)   |
| <b>NT</b>     | New Testament   |
| <b>OT</b>     | Old Testament   |
| <b>OTL</b>    | Old Testament Library   |
| <b>OTM</b>    | Old Testament Message   |
| <b>RevExp</b> | <i>Review and Expositor</i>   |
| <b>SBLDS</b>  | Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series  |
| <b>SBLMS</b>  | Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series   |
| <b>SBLSP</b>  | <i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>  |
| <b>SEA</b>    | <i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>  |
| <b>SOTSMS</b> | Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series  |
| <b>SubBi</b>  | <i>Subsidia biblica</i>   |
| <b>TDOT</b>   | <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.</i> Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. 8 volumes. Grand Rapids, 1974– |
| <b>Tg.</b>    | Targum  |
| <b>ThWAT</b>  | <i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament.</i> Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Stuttgart, 1970–   |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b><i>TLOT</i></b> | <i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament.</i> Edited by Ernst Jenni, with assistance from Claus Westermann. Translated by Mark Biddle. 3 volumes. Peabody, Mass., 1997 |
| <b><i>TS</i></b>   | <i>Theological Studies</i>  |
| <b>Vol(s)</b>      | Volume(s)   |
| <b><i>VT</i></b>   | <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>  |
| <b>VTSup</b>       | Supplements to Vetus Testamentum  |
| <b>Vg.</b>         | Vulgate   |
| <b>WBC</b>         | Word Biblical Commentary  |
| <b>WMANT</b>       | Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament  |

## Chapter 1

### The Book of Isaiah: A Survey of Critical Analysis and the Need for a New Approach

#### I. Introduction

The book of Isaiah is commonly accepted as the most complex book in the OT.<sup>1</sup> This complexity is most clearly seen in the vast timeline that the sixty-six chapters appear to span. The opening title (1:1) introduces it as “The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” The death of Uzziah is usually dated from around 742 to 734 B.C.E. A major episode in the book (36:1-22) concerns the invasion of Jerusalem by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E. By the reckoning of the superscription, Isaiah was active for more than thirty years, possibly for as many as forty. The vision depicted in ch. six, which is usually taken to be the prophet’s call vision, is dated to the year of King Uzziah’s death. This leads many commentators to suspect that this vision may only have been mentioned in the superscription because of the reference to it in ch. six. Chs. 7 and 8 have their setting in the time of the Syro-Ephramite war, in the reign of Ahaz (734-733 B.C.E.). There is also reference to a campaign of the Assyrian king, Sargon against Philistia in 712 B.C.E. in Isa 20.

The structural composition of the final form of the book of Isaiah that forms part of the modern canon is also complex. Only a small part of the

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<sup>1</sup> John Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 307.

book of Isaiah can be associated with the prophet of the eighth century. Chapters 40-66 clearly relate to the Babylonian exile and its aftermath. Cyrus of Persia, founder of the Achaemenid empire who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.E. and died in battle in 530 B.C.E., is mentioned by name in Isa 44:28 and 45:1. With the rise of critical scholarship in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, scholars were unwilling to believe that a prophet who lived in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. would have prophesied so specifically about the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. It was more reasonable to assume that an anonymous prophet who lived in the sixth century composed these oracles. This prophet was dubbed "Second" or "Deutero" Isaiah, although there is no evidence that he spoke under the name of Isaiah. At the end of the nineteenth century, the German scholar Bernhard Duhm argued that chs. 55-66 should be distinguished as the work of a third prophet dubbed "Third" or "Trito" Isaiah. For the last century or so, it has been customary to refer to chs. 1-39 as "First" or "Proto" Isaiah, though some scholars see the Book of Isaiah as comprising of only sections, Chs.1-39 and 40-66. For the purposes of this study, the terms Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah will be used.

Not all of chs.1-39 can be attributed to the eighth century prophet, however, and this was clear to Duhm and to others before him. The oracles against Babylon in chs. 13-14 are most naturally dated to a time after Babylon has replaced Assyria as the dominant power. The origin of some of the other oracles against foreign nations is uncertain. Isa 24-27, often termed the "Isaiah Apocalypse,"<sup>2</sup> is usually dated to a time after the exile, by analogy

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<sup>2</sup> Jacques Vermeylen, "La Composition littéraire de l'apocalypse d' Isaïe, *ETL* 5 (1971): 5-38; Georg Fohrer, "Der Aufbau der Apokalypse des Jesajabuches Is. 24-27," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 34-35 and Benedikt Otzen, "Traditions and Structures of Isaiah xxiv-xxvii," *VT* 24 (1974): 196-206.



with other late prophetic writings. Chs. 34 and 35 are similar to Deutero-Isaiah in tone and theme. Several shorter passages in chs. 1-39 appear to date from a time after the Deuteronomic reform (2:1-4) or after the end of the monarchy (11:1-9). The narrative section of chs. 36-39 reproduces with comparatively few changes the text of 2Kgs 18:13-20:19. Passages introduced by the phrase **וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא** “so on that day” (e.g. 7:18-25; 11:10-11) are usually thought to be editorial additions.

Many recent scholars have endeavoured to locate signs of intelligent editorial intentions in the construction of the present form of the book of Isaiah. The final edition was certainly later than the Babylonian exile, and it was probably guided by thematic rather than historical interests. Even though the vision in ch. six is usually thought to describe the call of the prophet and the beginning of his mission, it may have originally been introduced as a separate booklet, consisting of Isa 6:1-8:22. The final editors, however, were less concerned with the career and biography of Isaiah than with the theme of judgment. This theme is revisited at the end of the book, in ch. 66. The story of the envoys from Babylon in ch. 39 provides a bridge to the second half of the book, which addresses the Babylonian exile. Some scholars make a case that the book should be divided after ch. 33, since chs. 34 and 35 admittedly bear a resemblance to Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>3</sup> Chs. 36-39 can be read as an introduction to the remainder of the book, which is concerned with the final destiny of Zion. Against this, it must be noted that chs. 36-39 refer to events in the Assyrian period at the end of the eighth century, and are the last chapters in the book that can be related to the career of the eighth-century

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<sup>3</sup> For example John Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (WBC 24; Waco, Tex.: Thomas Nelson, 1985).

prophet. A number of commentators<sup>4</sup> have recently argued that the text of Deutero-Isaiah was edited in some of the earlier chapters, and that his work was presented as an extension of that of the older prophet. It is quite likely that Deutero-Isaiah was familiar with the oracles of Proto-Isaiah, and may well have had them in mind as “the former things” **דְּרֵאשְׁנֹתַי** that had “come to pass” **וְהִנֵּה-בָאֵי** (42:9). For instance, there is a clear allusion to Isa 11 in 65:25 (“the wolf and the lamb shall be pastured together”). The prevailing scholarly view is that the texts of Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah were probably attached to the existing Isaian tradition because of their common concern for the fate of the city and people of Jerusalem. By contemporary standards, the text as a unity does not appear to be tightly structured, as some chapters are grouped together because of common subject matter (chs. 7 and 8) or a common theme such as the oracles against the nations in chs. 13-19. Chronological arrangement also appears to be a factor, for example, the ordering of the material relating to the Syro-Ephraimite war is featured in the early stages of the book and the Sennacherib crisis at the end of Proto-Isaiah. In other cases, the reason for the placement of oracles, depending on the critic’s insights, is often difficult to discern, for example in chs. 2-4 and 24-27. While some principles of editing can be identified, the degree of intentionality should not be exaggerated.

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<sup>4</sup> The most recent writer in this regard is Hugh Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah. Deutero-Isaiah’s Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

## II. Critical Scholarship on the Book of Isaiah

Due to the apparent disparate origin and complexity of the individual sections of text, critical study has tended to give close attention to the complex composition of the book. It is constructive at this stage to survey some of the principal stages in Isaian scholarship (in chronological order) to better ascertain the developments, both in historical and modern terms, of the research and critical methodologies that have been engaged in the study of the book of Isaiah.

1. **Abraham Ibn Ezra** of Spain (1092-1167) composed his work on Isaiah in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> He closely followed **Moses ibn Gikatilla** (who wrote in the latter part of the eleventh century), in recognizing that the book of Isaiah is not a literary unit, hinting that there may have been two different authors for chs. 1-39 and chs. 40-66. Most critics of this period (both Jewish and Christian) assumed without question that a single author, Isaiah of Jerusalem in the eighth century B.C.E., had written the text. Ibn Ezra believed that his use of the Talmudic or Midrashic traditions of the framework for presenting the insights of the most sophisticated linguistic scholarship available made his exegesis superior to all other methods.

2. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, commentators such as **Johann Döderlein**, along with other German scholars, had begun to pay particular attention to the sources behind the book of Isaiah in its present form. Döderlein argued in his commentary *Esaias*<sup>6</sup> that chs. 40-66 were written during the exile, as he refused to believe that an eighth century writer could have

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<sup>5</sup> Abraham ibn Ezra, *The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah, Vol. 1: Translation of the Commentary* (trans. M. Friedländer; New York: Philipp Feldheim, 1873).

<sup>6</sup> Johann Döderlein, *Esaias* (Altorfi: Venum prostat in officina Schuipfeliana, 1780).

predicted the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E., much less the rise of Cyrus, who in 538 B.C.E., restored the exiles. The assertion that he was the first to put forward the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis is no longer tenable. Statements concerning a “second Isaiah” are not found until the 1789 edition of his commentary. **Johann Koppe**, in his 1780 translation<sup>7</sup> of **Robert Lowth’s** 1778 commentary,<sup>8</sup> is more properly credited with first identifying a Deutero-Isaiah, while it was especially **Johann Gottfried Eichhorn’s** 1783 introduction to the OT<sup>9</sup> that circulated the thesis and was widely adopted by scholars. Döderlein’s role in this momentous shift in the view of the structure of the book of Isaiah was considerable. As early as the 1775 edition of his work, he offered interpretations that played an important role in the eventual formation of the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis, including the suggestion that chs. 40-66 concern the liberation from exile and that these oracles were addressed by the prophet to his contemporaries.

3. The culmination of these analyses came with **Bernhard Duhm’s** monumental work, *Das Buch Jesaia* first published in 1892.<sup>10</sup> Duhm noted the disparate dates for the various sections of the text but offered little explanation as to why the parts have been made into a composite whole. His primary aim was to reproduce the original text of the poetic sections based on the Hebrew meter. As a result, he made ingenious but very plausible conjectures, some of which have been confirmed by the

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<sup>7</sup> Johann Koppe, *D. Robert Lowth’s...Jesaias, neu übersetzt nebst einer Einleitung und kritischen philologischen und erläuternden Anmerkungen* (Leipzig, 1779-81).

<sup>8</sup> Robert Lowth, *Isaiah. A New Translation; with a preliminary dissertation and notes* (2 vols; London: J. Dodsley & T. Cadwell, 1778).

<sup>9</sup> Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, *Einleitung ins Alte Testament* (Leipzig: Weidmann & Reich, 1781).

<sup>10</sup> Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892).

later discovery of the Isaiah scrolls at Qumran. Behind his consistent textual criticism stood recognition of the character of the prophet as author and poet. Duhm placed more emphasis on the appraisal of the prophets as religious personalities, whose message he brought to light by applying cultural and religion-historical criticism. This kind of appraisal in his Isaiah commentary represented for many readers a new discovery of prophetism. In the first half of Isaiah, Duhm evaluated the especially controversial salvation oracles as almost completely authentic. Within Isa 40-55, he isolated the Servant Songs as independent blocks of poetry, separated them from Deutero-Isaiah, and dated them in the postexilic period. Isaiah 50-66 was, according to him, a further, originally independent book, which he assigned to a postexilic prophet Trito-Isaiah. Scholars widely accepted this thesis, although the questions raised by Duhm regarding the relationship of Deutero-Isaiah to the Servant Songs, the identity of the Suffering Servant, and the independent unity of Trito-Isaiah still remain controversial.

4. In 1926, the Norwegian scholar, **Sigmund Mowinckel**, following the lead of earlier form critics such as Gunkel, proposed that a school of disciples was responsible for the composition of the text.<sup>11</sup> He did not produce any proof other than the book of Isaiah itself for the existence of the group. Nor was there any great elucidation on the apparent sizeable shifts in theological outlook that occur in the text, regarding the temple in

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<sup>11</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *Jesaja-disiplene. Profetien fra Jesaja til Jeremia* (Oslo: Aschehoug (Nygaard), 1926).

66:1-2. His later work on the Messiah, focused on the Servant Songs and he ascribes them to “another prophet” from Isaiah’s school of disciples.<sup>12</sup>

5. **Jacques Vermeylen**<sup>13</sup> (1977-1978) agrees with the line taken by **Hermann Barth**<sup>14</sup> that there was a significant redaction made of Isaiah’s prophecies during Josiah’s reign (640-609 B.C.E.). Barth sees the primary concern of the text as demonstrating that Yahweh, the God of Israel, would shortly overthrow the Assyrians by a mighty demonstration of his power and sees the main structure of the Josianic redaction in chs. 2-32.

6. **Hans Wildberger** (1980-82) offers a detailed study of the text of the Proto-Isaiah in three volumes.<sup>15</sup> His methodology combines literary, form-critical, and redactional. He does not usually discuss particular text in relation to a larger literary structure, though he often expresses a need to consider the unity of a literary composition and thereby the theological intention of the text. In terms of chs. 24-27, he sees a need to view these chapters as a single, unified literary composition that was added to the existing body of text in chs. 13-23, so that a new interpretation for the post-exilic community could be made. He views the redactional structure of the book of Isaiah as comprising of three stages: chs. 1-35 were a pre-existing text, chs. 36-39 were inserted around 400 B.C.E., with the

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<sup>12</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (trans. G.W. Anderson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956), 189.

<sup>13</sup> Jacques Vermeylen, *Du Prophète Isaïe à l'Apocalyptique* (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, J. Gabalda et Cie, 1977-1978).

<sup>14</sup> Hermann Barth, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit* (WMANT 48; Neukirchen Verlag: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1977).

<sup>15</sup> Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12* (trans. Thomas Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); trans. of *Jesaja 1-12* (Biblischer Kommentar, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980). Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27* (trans. Thomas Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997); trans. of *Jesaja 13-27* (Biblischer Kommentar, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980). Wildberger, *Isaiah 38-39* (trans. Thomas Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002); trans. of *Jesaja 28-39* (Biblischer Kommentar, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982).

remaining chs. 40-66 added later. The final redactional activity took place during the translation of the text to Greek.

7. **John D. Watts**<sup>16</sup> (1985-1987) sought to interpret the book of Isaiah as the “vision” of Isaiah of Jerusalem, composed in the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. but based on an otherwise undated corpus of tradition originating with the prophet in the eighth century. He does not offer a redaction-historical analysis of Isaiah, preferring instead to study “the completed book of Isaiah.”<sup>17</sup> He also regards the text, with particular focus on the text of Deutero-Isaiah, as a drama and uses dramaturgical categories of “acts” and “scenes” to present a division of the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah into twelve “acts,” or as Watts asserts,<sup>18</sup> ten acts framed by a Prologue and an Epilogue. He allocates a named character to every verse of the sixty-six chapters, with discussion of staging requirements provided at many points. John Wilks notes that staging such a drama would “require a large and wide-ranging cast.”<sup>19</sup>

8. **Roland E. Clements** (1980) sees the book’s unity in terms of a series of four editorial productions: an original text in the eighth century, a redaction in the seventh century in the time of Josiah, (as proposed previously by Barth and Vermeylen), an exilic and a (final) post-exilic edition.<sup>20</sup> He criticises Childs for his “rather heavily historicist

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<sup>16</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 1-33 and Isaiah 34-66* (WBC 25; Waco, Tex.: Thomas Nelson, 1987).

<sup>17</sup> Charles Conroy, “Reflections on Some Recent Studies of Second Isaiah,” in *Palabra, prodigio, poesía: in memoriam P. Luis Alonso Schökel, S.J.* (ed. Vicente Collado Bertomeu; AnBib 151; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 2003), 147.

<sup>18</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*.

<sup>19</sup> John Wilks, “The Prophet as Incompetent Dramatist,” *VT* 53 (2003): 535.

<sup>20</sup> Ronald E. Clements, “A Light to the Nations: A Central Theme of the Book of Isaiah,” in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in honor of John D. Watts* (eds., James Watts and Paul House; JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 57-69. See also Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (New Century Bible Commentary, Grand

perspective”<sup>21</sup> and dismisses the Zion tradition as an insignificant influence on Isaiah, preferring to focus on the theological grounds that affect the interpretation of the prophet’s preaching and his impact on the deuteronomic reform in Josiah’s age. In Clements’s interpretation, the brief period between the last years of Josiah and the fall of Jerusalem in 587/6 B.C.E. saw theological development in that both the covenant theology and the Zion tradition were produced, only to be rapidly amended with a new covenant theology and a modified Zion tradition.

**9. Edgar Conrad** (1991) focuses on the concern with the history of the development of the literature. He argues that the historical context of the text is beyond recovery and distracts attention from the meaning of the text itself.<sup>22</sup> He rejects as outdated the search for an “Isaiah” or indeed for a redactor of the book. By taking a strong stance within reader response criticism, he sees the book of Isaiah as having its own meaning which has nothing to do with the external world or to those who might have formed the text but to the world of the text itself.

**10. Hugh G.M. Williamson** (1994) argues that an independent book of Deutero-Isaiah never existed. Rather, the same poet who wrote chs. 40-55 edited what is now Isa 1-39 and used it as the basis for his own work.<sup>23</sup> Based upon material he ascribes to Proto-Isaiah, Williamson identifies common vocabulary, references, phrases, linguistic devices, divine images, and theological emphasis between the two texts. With this

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Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), and Clements, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah,” *Int* 36 (1982): 117-129.

<sup>21</sup> In Child’s work *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (London: SCM Press, 1967). Roland Clements, *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem: A Study of the Interpretation of Prophecy in the Old Testament* (JSOTSup 13; Sheffield: JSOT, 1980).

<sup>22</sup> Edgar Conrad, *Reading Isaiah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 3-33.

<sup>23</sup> Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*.



evidence, Williamson argues that Deutero-Isaiah was influenced at the point of composition by the form that chs. 1-39 had assumed by the latter part of the exilic period.

**11. Walter Brueggemann** (1998) approaches the text from a professedly expository and homiletic angle. He looks more towards the study of the canonical text where he sees commentators as having a “nearly unanimous” viewpoint, regarding the first twelve chapters and chs. 28-31 as being the work of eighth century Isaiah.<sup>24</sup> The canonical approach forms the main methodology in his work, which he sees as drawing on historical-critical gains but moves them towards theological interpretation.

**12. Klaus Baltzer’s** (1999) work on Deutero-Isaiah<sup>25</sup> also uses the idea of the work as a drama, dividing the text into acts and scenes, and suggests settings and even scenery for the scenes. The entire work is subject to the idea of the drama-performance, and several aspects of written information are described using dramatic terminology. He proposes that the text was written at the end of the sixth century B.C.E. by a group of writers who would have been closely connected with Deutero-Isaiah, the “author.” Baltzer notes that the link between the Jacob/Israel tradition in Isa 40-48 and the Zion/Israel tradition in chs. 49-55 and gives structure to the work of Deutero-Isaiah. He surmises that the text was initially a festive scroll and that its objective was to offer praise to Yahweh. With regard to the theological aspects of the section, Baltzer places emphasis on the

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<sup>24</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39* (Westminster Bible Companion, Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 8. Brueggemann uses an identical introduction in his work *Isaiah 40-66* (Westminster Bible Companion, Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40-55* (trans. Margaret Kohl: Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001); trans. of *Deutero-Jesaja: Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Kommentar zum Alten Testament)*; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999).

theologies of crisis and hope, where the text echoes the demise of the Davidic monarchy but preserves the lives, and the future, of the exiles.

**13. Brevard S. Childs** (2001) views the book as a whole from both literary and canonical perspectives. He is widely regarded as the pioneer of canonical criticism; his primary concern is to read and interpret biblical books in their final form, as the scriptures of communities of faith.<sup>26</sup> While Childs sets out to view the book of Isaiah as a canonical whole, he does concede the case for its multiple authorship and complex redactional composition. Childs is critical of studies that are primarily diachronic, which seek to discover earlier redactional layers within a text. His contention is that canonical authority is found not in earlier redactions, but only in the preserved final text of the prophetic collection. Childs has long contended that the Isaiah scroll provides the classic example of an extended redactional process, involving repeated revisions or changes over a long period. He does note that Proto-Isaiah clearly contains material that is equally as late as material in Trito-Isaiah. These texts from after the exile were deliberately characterized as having been written by the eighth century prophet. They have been purposely “divorced” from their original historical context so that they may be identified as the “living word” of Yahweh, which was given to Isaiah in his vision but then conserved for a new audience.

**14. Joseph Blenkinsopp** (2000-2003) introduces the main body of his work in relation to the structure and division of Isaiah by a detailed analysis of how the divisions in the text came about. He relies on the

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<sup>26</sup> Brevard Childs, *Isaiah A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

argument of theological coherence to justify the divisions, rather than on a literary technique. The principle question for Blenkinsopp is “whether the text is coherent and homogenous enough” to identify a redactional unity of some kind.<sup>27</sup>

### III. The Shift from Past to Present

The work of a critic such as Conrad is an indication of a change in direction, not only of the study of the book of Isaiah, but of biblical texts in general. Traditional criticism of prophetic literature was guided by the objectives of the historical-critical method in attempting to recover the authentic prophetic word. The premise of this critical objective was that every prophetic book which carries a name of a prophet, referred to an historical figure that delivered the prophetic message under particular historical circumstances. These prophetic words, the researchers claimed, were preserved, and are possible to reconstruct.<sup>28</sup> In addition, critical prophetic study maintained that a prophetic book did not simply preserve the “genuine” words of the original prophet; it had accumulated additional strata of material from revisions. Hence, the foremost task of any criticism of the prophetic corpus was to separate the editorial from the genuine prophetic layers. Their priority was the recovery of the “genuine” prophetic utterance while the editorial additions were regarded as marginal by comparison.<sup>29</sup> Scholars did not read the

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<sup>27</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2002), 71. See also Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 2000) and *Isaiah 56-66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19B; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia*, 1892.

<sup>29</sup> John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany*, (London: SPCK, 1989).

prophetic book as a self-contained composition, but rather as a chain of distinct single speeches, each of which is an individual. This theory formed the basis for Gunkel's form criticism in 1924. A distinguishing characteristic of these speeches is their anti-establishment approach, namely criticising the worship at the temple or criticizing the behaviour of the monarchy.

Several modern commentators, in particular Yehoshua Gitay, associate the change in ideologies and methodologies with the changing situation of post-war Europe. Gitay depicts the change as being how "the individual hero was replaced by the society and the present reader replaced the historical set-up of the work."<sup>30</sup> This phenomenon has been termed as a major paradigm shift, entailing a move away from the historical-critical approach to prophetic literature.

The term "paradigm" was initially used by the philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn, in his work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to describe "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners."<sup>31</sup> He asserted the need to test a paradigm and describes an approach whereby the paradigm is not tested as being like a chess player who "with a problem stated and the board physically or mentally before him, tries out various alternative moves in search for a solution."<sup>32</sup> Biblical studies are therefore in the process of testing paradigms or moves, towards a "solution." By shifting paradigms, or more simply, methodologies and critical outlooks, there is no danger of being in a constant state of drifting from one idea to another. Rather, with retrospect as

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<sup>30</sup> Yehoshua Gitay, "Prophetic Criticism-'What Are They Doing?': The Case of Isaiah- A Methodological Assessment," JSOT 96 (2001): 102.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), viii. First edition published in 1962.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

a guide, the various paradigms can be used to construct a more beneficial methodology. This can be done before approaching the text and hence avoid the tendency to manipulate the text, rather than the approach or paradigm.

The paradigm shift in the study of prophetic literature was the fact that the readers of the texts were no longer seen primarily as an historical group, but rather as readers who are also the observers of the literary work in its canonical shape. The text itself is at the centre of research, that is, the internal structure of the work is the focus of any literary investigation.

This shift had a significant impact on the modern study of prophecy. The focus on the individual prophet, inspired by Yahweh's demand to serve as his messenger, and to deliver sharp critical speeches of doom, has changed. Prophetic scholarship is no longer interested in presenting the prophet as someone who is merely concerned with pessimistic oracles. The speeches as a whole are now regarded as a prophetic book in itself, or more specifically as a literary composition. The book has now replaced the prophet. As a result, the entire representation of the prophet has changed. A prophetic book is now considered as a planned work. At the same time, the complete text represents the redactor's theological view, which shaped the book as a message of hope and a sign of Yahweh's salvation.

This outlook may appear to be the simple solution to a very complex problem but on further inspection, in the period of time that literary-centred (synchronic) criticism has gained a foothold, little has been achieved in the way of consensus, whether regarding method of approach or the feasibility of a particular exegesis. Consensus is not of course the ultimate end that must be strived towards, but an approach that seems to diversify readings even further

cannot be considered as being particularly advantageous. Instead of historically-led methods, the approach to the text is now driven by new influences and forces, particularly sociological, anthropological, feminist, and literary considerations. What is needed now is not another “about turn” in methodology. Commentators should look to refining methods. This is most easily achieved through a selective process, which highlights the various aspects of several methods, when combined together, allow for a honed focus on a text. Consequently, a reading and exegesis is obtained that is more sensitive to the text and the theology behind it.

#### **IV. Redaction Criticism**

Traditional literary criticism of the Bible was concerned primarily with such matters as the authorship of the biblical texts, the possible composite nature of a given work, and the identity and extent of sources that may lie behind a particular document. In the last fifty years, biblical scholars have been paying attention to the criticism of fiction and poetry, and to aesthetics and philosophy of language, in line with developments in secular literary criticism. The literary criticism of the Bible therefore, began to reflect an interest in questions such as the relationship of content to form, the significance of structure or form for meaning, and the capacity of language to direct thought.

The purpose of form criticism was to get behind the sources that literary criticism might identify and to examine what was happening as narratives and traditions were handed on orally from person to person, and from community to community. Redaction criticism developed from form

criticism as it presupposes and maintains the procedures of the earlier discipline while extending and intensifying a number of them. The term redaction criticism, *Redaktionsgeschichte*, was coined by Willi Marxen<sup>33</sup> to denote the method whereby a researcher investigates how an editor or author expresses their theological outlook by means of the arrangement and editing of pre-existing traditional material. Redactional criticism also has noteworthy antecedents in studies of Hebrew texts, reaching back at least to the observations of the medieval rabbinic scholars Rashi (11<sup>th</sup> century) and Abraham ibn Ezra (12<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>34</sup> concerning late editorial activity in the Torah.

Sigmund Mowinckel suggested a dynamic model for understanding the formation of the prophetic corpus as early as 1913 (similarly in 1933 and more systematically in 1946).<sup>35</sup> He rejected Scandinavian tradition criticism, which regarded prophetic books as the product of verbatim oral transmission of prophetic preaching so that the documents virtually represented the *ipsissima verba* of the prophets. He foresaw a dynamic process of growth throughout a long period of oral transmission of prophetic sayings and, finally the production of the existing prophetic books. Mowinckel's dynamic model of selection, reinterpretation, and redaction also questioned the "authentic/inauthentic" categories of earlier source analyses of the prophets. Like source criticism of the Pentateuch, such analyses had principally sought to identify later glosses and insertions in order to reconstruct a "perfect" original. As opposed to this interest in originality, redaction critics after

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<sup>33</sup> Willi Marxen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 21.

<sup>34</sup> Mark Edward Biddle, "Redaction Criticism: Hebrew Bible," *DBI* 2:373.

<sup>35</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *Prophecy and Tradition: The Prophetic Books in the Light of the Study of the Growth and History of the Tradition* (Oslo: I kommisjon hos J. Dybwad, 1946).

Mowinckel came to regard the prophetic books as witness to a living tradition that continually makes the prophetic message a actualization. Redactional studies of the prophets have continued to struggle with models of prophetic activity and with the formation of prophetic books. The phenomenon of the Isaiah scroll is perhaps an irrefutable indication of the capacity of prophetic traditions to generate new statements; accordingly, it has lent itself to a number of redactional studies. Otto Kaiser<sup>36</sup> subjected the book of Isaiah to a stringent redactional examination, rejecting any attempt to identify genuine texts in favour of a model of redactional composition by an Isaianic school. Jacques Vermeulen<sup>37</sup> identified successive redactions of the book of Isaiah, revealing the continuing interest of later eras in appropriating the message of the prophet. Reference has already been made to a Josianic redaction. This was followed by an extensive exilic “deuteronomistic” redaction. Finally, after the exile, successive elaboration and a process of *relecture* led to the entire book being read and interpreted as an apocalyptic document. Several other commentators have pursued the question of prophetic books as archives of living traditions.<sup>38</sup>

While being mindful of possible flaws in the method and outlook of redaction criticism, it is possible to apply the method to the book of Isaiah. The position adopted by Roland Clements in this regard is worth careful examination. In his two major essays on the redactional unity of Isaiah, Clements argues that Isaiah is not the work of a single author. He notes that

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<sup>36</sup> Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Westminster, 1983) and *Isaiah 13-39* (trans. R.A. Wilson; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1974). The original German additions were first published in 1960 and 1973 respectively.

<sup>37</sup> Vermeulen, *Du Prophète Isaïe à l'Apocalyptique*.

<sup>38</sup> See Pierre Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe. Son Disciple et leurs Étudeurs Isaïe 40-66* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1972) and Walter Brueggemann, “Unity and Dynamic in the Isaiah Tradition,” *JSOT* 29 (1984): 89-107.



there are signs that the book is not simply an accidental collection put together for literary convenience: “the overall structure of the book shows signs of editorial planning and that, at some stage in its growth, attempts were made to read and interpret the book as a whole.”<sup>39</sup> He argues that a correct appreciation of the book should focus on its editorial history and should not merely focus on individual units isolated from the larger literary contexts in a search for original meaning.<sup>40</sup> Clements understands the editorial history of the book to be complex and of long duration but a relationship between Proto and Deutero-Isaiah is deliberate: “from the time of their origin, the prophetic sayings of Isaiah 40-55 were intended as a supplement and sequel to a collection of the earlier sayings of the eighth-century Isaiah of Jerusalem.”<sup>41</sup>

Clements maintains that Deutero-Isaiah consciously develops themes first stated by Isaiah of Jerusalem. For example, the theme of blindness and deafness (42:18-20 and 43:8) is a development of the theme found in 6:9-10. In addition, the theme of the divine election of Israel in Deutero-Isaiah, represented in such passages as 40:1; 43:6-7, and 44:1-2, is acknowledging, and indeed responding to the theme introduced in Proto-Isaiah, that Yahweh had rejected his people (e.g. 2:6). He states that it is possible to interpret the phrase “former things” in Deutero-Isaiah (for example 42:9 and 48:3) as referring to the earlier prophecies. Finally, Clements argues that the placing of the prophecies concerning Israel’s salvation beginning in 40:1, following prophecies announcing Jerusalem’s destruction in chs. 1-39, represents the intentional editorial shaping by “the scribes who have preserved and ordered

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<sup>39</sup> Clements, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah,” 121.

<sup>40</sup> Ronald Clements, “Beyond Tradition History: Deutero-Isaianic Development of First Isaiah’s Themes,” *JSOT* 31 (1985): 100.

<sup>41</sup> Clements, “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah,” 124.

the various prophetic collections...[and who] have sought to ensure that divine threats be followed and counterbalanced by divine promises.”<sup>42</sup> For Clements then, thematic relationships between various parts of the book of Isaiah point to an intentional unity resulting from the editorial development of the book.

Recent redactional critical studies of the book of Isaiah illustrate the change that has taken place as well as forming an ongoing process in historical-critical interpretative strategies. Language is still understood to be referential. The redaction critical studies retain the focus on authorial intention and historical background. Nevertheless, the aim is to recover the intentions of the redactors in the development of the book and the historical background of the redactional process, rather than the intentions and the historical background of the prophet Isaiah. Edgar Conrad, dismissing Fohrer’s view of the book as a “unified whole” states, “the new shape of those interpretative strategies has resulted in a new shaping of Isaiah.”<sup>43</sup> If the book of Isaiah is a unified whole, as these and other redaction critics like Marvin Sweeney maintain, then the original quest for the authentic words of Isaiah is impossible since the text has been reworked in such a way as to make this quest futile.<sup>44</sup>

In contrast, if the book of Isaiah is understood simply as a collection of collections of material as Fohrer viewed it, then Clement’s search for redactional intention is futile. Barton succinctly describes this phenomenon as

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 124-125.

<sup>43</sup> Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, 17.

<sup>44</sup> Marvin Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39 with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (Forms of the Old Testament Literature 16; Grand Rapids, Mich./ Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996), 10-15.

“the trick of the disappearing redactor.”<sup>45</sup> He highlights the delicate balancing act that a critic has to maintain when examining a text. The more impressive critics make the redactor’s work appear, the more they succeed in emphasizing how the redactor is in fact a skilled artist, producing a simple and coherent text out of the diversity of materials they have set out before them. In this instance, they also reduce the evidence on which the existence of those sources was established. Barton warns that if redaction criticism is perceived as the only hermeneutical technique worth using, then the text is quite simply reduced to something so coherent that division into sources is no longer warranted. Naturally, parts are required in order to speak about the redaction of a text, but when redaction succeeds in presenting the text as a unified whole, the original basis for the text must be then called into question. Disunity and disorganization of the material make a venture such as redaction criticism necessary, or in Conrad’s words, “when redaction criticism succeeds in demonstrating unity, however, it eliminates its reason for being.”<sup>46</sup> Conrad has stated the fundamental fatal flaw in redaction criticism, apart from its close associations with historical criticism, namely that the outcome of an examination of a particular text has been concluded before it has begun. Redaction criticism, by its very nature, will always conclude with disunity, as it cannot reach an alternative outcome. The parameters of its methodology may be reshaped according to the particular slant taken by a critic but the field of vision will always remain the same.

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<sup>45</sup> John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1996), 57.

<sup>46</sup> Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, 20.

## V. The Thesis to be Explored

At this stage in the formation of a methodology to approach the text of the book of Isaiah, it is necessary to identify a hermeneutical key with which to properly investigate the book of Isaiah as it appears in its final form. The means of this exploration must obviously span the three sections of the text and be substantial enough to warrant an extended analysis. It should allow for a deeper understanding of the “disunity” that the use of redaction criticism brings about in the text and ought to bring a greater coherency to the examination of the text.

With this in mind, the divine designations have been selected as a means of formulating a hermeneutical key with which to approach the text. The book of Isaiah has a wealth of descriptions and terms to describe God and even a cursory glance through the pages of the text indicates that the distribution of the various terms may not be proportionate throughout the text. Modern translations of the Bible often fail to do justice to the rich poetic vein in which most of these terms feature and are not therefore translated accurately. The thesis being explored here is that the use of divine designations may reveal much about the theological standpoints of the authors of the text and the audiences towards which the texts were directed. This question has long been overlooked and underdeveloped by commentators and critics over the years.<sup>47</sup> When any scholar does take note of a divine designation, it is usually limited to the context of the verse or chapter of the text, with little or no regard to a wider etymological setting or the context of

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<sup>47</sup> Pierre Bonnard is the only author to have attempted to formulate a list of Isaian divine designations. However, his listing in *Le Second Isaïe. Son Disciple et leurs Étudeurs Isaïe 40-66* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1972) is only concerned with Deutero-Isaiah. Blenkinsopp, in his three Anchor Bible commentaries, and Tryggve Mettinger are the only authors I have located to give any meaningful attention to the divine designations.

the term in the broader sphere of the OT. Frequently the terms are simply ignored, possibly as they are such common biblical terms that it seems almost pedantic to include them in an exegesis. When the designations do appear in a commentary there is rarely any attempt made to classify them and the terminology of “name” and “title” seems to be used interchangeably.

By closely studying the designations, the insight into theology and the view of God that will inevitably be gained, however simple or complex this may turn out to be, the negative aspect of the “disunity” of the text after redaction criticism, may in fact be cast in a more positive light. Shifts in theological thinking, though often in historical terms only relatively gradual, can have wider implications for a community’s religious outlook. It may therefore hold true for the texts in the book of Isaiah that if they demonstrate even small and seemingly insignificant differences in how they view God through depictions in prophetic texts, then these markers will illustrate how there can be tangible divisions in the text in terms of authorship and theological outlook. The similarities, that redaction criticism so often either ignores (whether purposefully or not) or demotes to a position of secondary importance will in this instance hold an equal footing and the view will be maintained that the similarities in the texts are as important as the differences. With this outlook, a more rounded and more focused view of the text can be conducted with the hope of a more successful hermeneutical exegesis of the text in its final form.

## **VI. Conclusion**

With the divine designations identified as the most appropriate hermeneutical key with which to approach the book of Isaiah, it is now necessary to conduct a thorough investigation of their occurrences throughout the text. The designations must be counted with a view to establishing how many there are in the entire text, and listed in a coherent manner so that any further study can be methodical and logical.

## Chapter 2

### **An Analysis of the Distribution of the Divine Designations in the Book of Isaiah**

#### **I. Introduction**

For clarity, the thirty-six divine designations identified in the book of Isaiah have been listed in Appendix A. The list that follows is not in any particular order, though similar designations have been grouped together. At this initial stage, no attempt has been made to classify, and exploration is limited to etymological considerations<sup>1</sup> and to the use of the particular term in the wider contexts of OT and Semitic literature.

The method by which the divine designations are set out needs to achieve several aims, the primary being an identification of the designations and indicating in as clear a manner as possible where in the text they are located. This will then lead to the matter of the frequency by which they are distributed throughout the entire final form of the text and the “clusters” of usage will be identified. With the aim of looking at both the positive and negative aspects, it is essential to look at how some designations may be absent from a particular section. To clearly demonstrate these “clusters” and the more complex frequencies, simple pie charts have been used. This methodology cannot be described as completely accurate, as evidently there is an uneven amount of text in the three traditional sections of the book of

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<sup>1</sup> This work takes into account the criticisms of a purely etymological approach as detailed in James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 107-160. The meaning of a term is more fluid than its “history.” Language and terminology can only “work” in the semantic setting of the sentence and of the larger literary unit.

Isaiah, so it seems inevitable that there may be more usage of one term in Proto-Isaiah than in Trito-Isaiah for example. Fortunately, for the scope of this work, in the case of the more noteworthy examples, the frequency of use of the term is quite small and therefore any deviations can be identified quite easily.

## II. Statistical Analysis of the Divine Designations

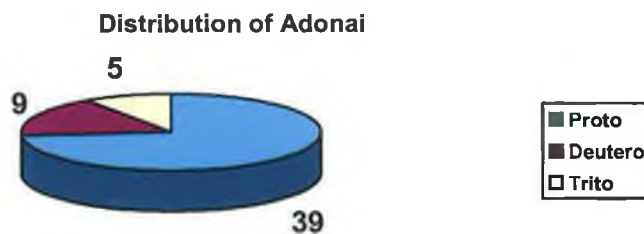
### 1. Adonai (אֲדֹנָי)

#### 1. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah      | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1:24              | 40:10          | 56:8         |
| 3:1, 15, 17, 18   | 48:16          | 61:1, 11     |
| 4:4               | 49:22          | 65:13, 15    |
| 6:1, 8, 11        | 50:4, 5, 7, 9  |              |
| 7:7, 14, 20       | 51:22          |              |
| 8:7               | 52:4           |              |
| 9:8               |                |              |
| 9:17              |                |              |
| 10:12, 16, 23, 24 |                |              |
| 11:11             |                |              |
| 19:4              |                |              |
| 21:6, 8, 16       |                |              |
| 22:12, 14, 15     |                |              |
| 25:8              |                |              |



|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| 28:16, 22   |  |  |
| 29:13       |  |  |
| 30:15, 20   |  |  |
| 36:8, 9, 12 |  |  |
| 37:24       |  |  |
| 38:14, 16   |  |  |



### 1. ii. Meaning and Use

The translations for the term אֲדֹנָי are varied among different Bible translations. The NRSV translates אֲדֹנָי as “Sovereign” for inclusive language reasons. More commonly, the term is translated as Lord, LORD, master, or owner. In an etymological sense the phrase is actually quite easy to render as the Ugaritic *ʾadn* means “lord” or “father” and the Akkadian *adannu* carries a similar meaning, “mighty.”

2Sam 3:4, where David’s son born to Haggith is named אֲדֹנִיָּה (Adonijah or “my lord is Yahweh”) is the oldest instance that can be dated with confidence where Israel made use of the notion of אֲדֹנָי. It is probable that the people of Israel had already named their heavenly or human lord,

אֲדֹנָי in an earlier stage, for example Gen 42:10.<sup>2</sup> In some instances, the king is called אֲדֹנָי and in Jer 22:18; 34:5 אֲדֹנָי הוּא "Alas Lord," appears as a lament over the dead king. In the simple unsuffixed form or when pointed 'adoni or 'adona(y), for the first common singular suffix or with other pronominal suffixes, אֲדֹנָי usually refers to males. Sarah used it in reference to her husband in Gen 18:12, Abraham used it in speaking to the angelic visitors in Gen 19:2, and his servant frequently called his master by this term in Gen 24. The term is used to refer to the king of Egypt, who was called by this title in Gen 40:1, and in 42:10 where the brothers of Joseph, not knowing who he was, address him as "my lord" (אֲדֹנָי) and refer to themselves as "your servants" in relationship to him. Ruth used it of Boaz before they were married (Ruth 2:13). Hannah addressed Eli the priest by this term in 1Sam 1:15. Saul's servants also called him by the title (1Sam 16:16). Likewise, officers of a lower rank than the king, such as Joab, had this designation (2Sam 11:9). In 1Kgs 16:24 there is the distinctive interpretation of "owner" for Shemar, who was the owner of the hill of Samaria. The prophet Elijah bore the title "lord" (1Kgs 18:7).

Nevertheless, there are many sections of text, chiefly in the book of Psalms, where these terms, which are the only ones to apply to males, refer to Yahweh. Exod 34:23 combines the terms, "the Lord God, the God of Israel" אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. Deut 10:17 and Ps 136:3 both use the singular and plural in the construction "Lord of lords" אֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנָיִם. It is also

<sup>2</sup> Otto Eissfeldt, "אֲדֹנָי 'adōn 'אֲדֹנָי," *TDOT* 1:61.

worthy of note that numerous personal names comprise the constituent אָדוֹן:  
*Adoni-bezek* (Judg 1:5); *Adonizedek* (Josh 10:1); *Adonijah* (1Kgs 1:8; 2Chr  
17:8; Neh 10:17); *Adonikam* (Ezra 2:13); and *Adoniram* (1Kgs 4:6).

When אָדוֹן is cited in the distinctive plural form, with a first common  
singular pronominal suffix, אָדוֹנַי it usually refers to Yahweh. It frequently  
emerges in this form in the OT, predominantly in the book of Psalms,  
Lamentations, and the Latter Prophets. Just as אֱלֹהִים is plural in Hebrew, so  
also this word may also be termed an intensive plural or plural of majesty.  
The suffix is rarely translated (e.g., Gen 18:3; Isa 21:8; Ps 16:2).

The use of the term in reference to Yahweh is often strongly  
associated with religious practices. This is usually a result of the fact that it  
was used by individuals or groups of people in Israel to speak about Yahweh  
as the superior, as lord or to refer to him as the “lord” equivalent to earthly  
(real or fictional) servant-lord relationships. In contrast to, for example מֶלֶךְ  
or king, the word is a simple phrase of respect that would have been used by a  
servant in dialogue with any of their superiors. The use of אָדוֹן also appears  
as a primitive but standard divine designation. The significance of the word  
in this instance, does not at first surpass what has previously been dealt with,  
as for example, in the formal title הָאֲדוֹן יְהוָה “the Lord Yahweh” in the  
pilgrimage legislation (Exod 23:17 and 34:23) and also in the formula  
הָאֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת used several times by Isaiah, which probably stems  
from Jerusalem tradition (Isa 1:24; 3:1; 10:16, 33; 19:4). It was also used by  
neighbouring religious communities to refer to gods they felt were more

important. Israel was (at least in a terminological sense), described as the “servant” of Yahweh, since the work of Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>3</sup> This practice is comparatively uncommon and indeed unusual. In contrast, the use of the vocative as a divine designation is recurrent and almost standard, which develops in agreement with the distinctiveness of this “lord,” into an apt ontological designation as the “lord of all” and ultimately takes the place of Yahweh.

The divine designation אֲדֹנָי without the possessive suffix, is used reasonably often in the book of Isaiah compared with its use in the remainder of the OT. This term is indicative of the lord as the one who rules as a master over everything that he has attained, as in Ps 105:21. Undoubtedly the author’s recurrent use of this term can be linked with the idea that this was an ancient predicate that referred to Yahweh, even used in Jebusite era, as the names *Adoni-bezek* בְּזֶק אֲדֹנָי (Judg 1:5-7) and *Adoni-zedek* זֶדֶק אֲדֹנָי (Josh 10:1, 3) demonstrate.<sup>4</sup> It is because of this origin of the term that it was used in a more limited sense in ancient Israel as there was a wish to avoid designations with Canaanite roots, as is very clearly the case with regard to the synonym בַּעַל. As in 10:16 and 10:33 the term אֲדֹנָי is combined with the divine name יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת is found with יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת in 3:15; 10:23, 24; 22:5, 12, 14, 15; 28:22). The comparative regularity with which these two designations are located in tandem must be associated with their shared background of cultic tradition, which has its roots in Jerusalem (as represented by its appearance in the doxology of Amos 9:5). The shift of the

<sup>3</sup> Ernst Jenni, “אֲדֹנָי ‘ādōn lord,” *TLOT* 1:26.

<sup>4</sup> Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 67.

use of designations, from Yahweh as **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**, which had its roots in Shiloh and was closely connected with the ark, to become a cultic name for the God of Jerusalem, formed an intimate bond that linked with Jerusalem traditions with the articles of the tenets of ancient Israel.

## 2. Creator (**בָּרָא**)

### 2. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 40:28          |              |
|              | 43:15          |              |

### 2. ii. Meaning and Use

The root **בָּרָא** has the fundamental meaning, “to create.” It differs from **יָצַר** “to fashion,” in that the latter primarily emphasises the shaping of an object while **בָּרָא** emphasizes the initiation of the object. The question of the meaning of the root **בָּרָא** is complicated by its connotation in the Pi’el of “cut down” (Josh 17:15, 18; Ezek 23:47). This meaning may also be found in the use of the word in Ezek 21:19, where it does not necessarily signify carving a signpost, but simply the act of cutting down a branch or sapling as a marker. If this meaning attests to the concrete form of the Qal, the word may have meant, “to form” or “to fashion” in the sense of carving or cutting out. The Pi’el form may represent an entirely different root. Helmer Ringgren in the *TDOT* supports the notion that there is one root with the basic meaning of “to

separate” or “to divide.”<sup>5</sup> This explanation accounts for the usages of the Pi’el, but is not sufficient to account for the nuances in meaning that are encountered in the Qal form. Since the word is used in such a distinctive sense in the Qal form, it is best to consider the meaning of the root solely based on usage.

The word is used in the Qal tense only of Yahweh’s activity and is thus a purely theological term. This distinctive use of the word is especially appropriate to the concept of creation by divine word. The root בָּרָא denotes the concept of “initiating something new” in a number of passages. Meira Polliack notes, “Much attention has been given to Deutero-Isaiah’s conception of the cosmological event [creation] as a prototype for Israel’s historical redemption.”<sup>6</sup> In Isa 41:20, it is used in relation to the changes that will take place in the restoration, when Yahweh will bring about what is new and different. It is used of the creation of new things בָּרָאֵת in Isa 48:6 and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (Isa 65:17). Wonders that had never been seen before are described by this word (Exod 34:10), and Jeremiah uses the term to depict a fundamental change that will take place in the natural order (Jer 31:22). The Psalmist prayed that Yahweh would create in him a clean or pure heart (Ps 51:10) and coupled this with the appeal that Yahweh would give them a new spirit (see also Num 16:30; Isa 4:5; Isa 65:18). The word also possesses the meaning of “bringing into existence” in several passages (Isa 43:1; Ezek 21:30; 28:13,15).

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<sup>5</sup> Helmer Ringgren, “בָּרָא bārā’,” *TDOT* 2:245.

<sup>6</sup> Meira Polliack, “Deutero-Isaiah’s Typological Use of Jacob in the Portrayal of Israel’s National Renewal,” in Henning Graf Reventlow and Yair Hoffman eds, *Creation in Jewish Tradition* (JSOTSup 319; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 72.

It is not surprising that this term, with its distinctive emphases is used most frequently to describe the creation of the universe and the natural phenomena (Gen 1:1, 21, 27; 2:3 etc.). The uses of the term in this sense present a clearly defined theology. The magnitude of Yahweh's power is exemplified in creation. This has implications for the weak (Isa 40:26; 40:27-31) and for the unfolding of Yahweh's purposes in history (Isa 42:5; 45:12). Creation displays the majesty (Amos 4:13), orderliness (Isa 45:18), and sovereignty of Yahweh (Ps 89:12). In an anthropological sense, the common creation of humanity actually forms an appeal for unity in Mal 2:10.

### **2. iii. Creation in the Old Testament**

The notion of creation in the OT demonstrates two different, yet interrelated connotations, and it is important to acknowledge both in a study of Yahweh as Creator. Creation can refer to the primordial origination of the world, the beginning of history (as in *creatio ex nihilo*). Additionally, creation in the biblical sense can represent the continuing order and maintenance of the world (*creatio continua*). The creation accounts of the Priestly and Yahwist traditions (Gen 1:1-2:3; 2:4b-25) are connected with the former, as well as Wisdom literature's account of cosmic creation in Prov 8:22-31. Creation as a "work-in-progress" or continuance, is underlined in some of the psalms (8, 19, 33) and Job 38:12-41:34. These two dimensions of creation are inseparably connected. In one sense, the creation accounts that depict the period of creation of the world also have significance for how the world is structured and ordered. Conversely, sections of text that refer to the constant creative

activity of Yahweh in the world, often have the original act of creation as their reference point.

Connected to the second meaning, a third consequence of creation is evident in biblical literature. Creation can indicate new or even future creation, or indeed the “consummation of history.”<sup>7</sup> The topic of the “new creation” becomes significant amongst the exilic and postexilic prophets, Deutero-Isaiah included. Yahweh’s “new beginning” of history involves a new act of creation. In this way, the creation event as the beginning of history can anticipate the end of history. Typically, this is expressed as the end-point of the primeval creation. New creation in this form assumes obvious redemptive or soteriological features.<sup>8</sup> In the book of Isaiah, chaos is overcome (27:1); the day will triumph over the night (60:19-20), and a new heaven and a new earth will be an everlasting source of joy (65:17-25).

### 3. Maker (עשה)

#### 3. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 17:7         | 45:9           |              |
|              | 45:11          |              |
|              | 51:13          |              |
|              | 54:5           |              |

<sup>7</sup> William Brown, “Creation,” *EDB*, 293.

<sup>8</sup> Phillip Harner, “Creation Faith in Deutero-Isaiah,” *VT* 17 (1969): 298.



### 3. ii. Meaning and Use

The verb עָשָׂה has the fundamental meaning of “to do” or “to make.” It is used in many expressions, usually with the same essential thought. Excluding the abundant incidences of the meaning “do” or “make” with a wide-ranging significance, עָשָׂה is frequently used with the sense of an ethical duty. The people of the covenant were often ordered to “do” all that Yahweh had commanded (e.g., Exod 23:22; Lev 19:37; Deut 6:18).

The term is often used in particular expressions such as “make war” (Gen 14:2), “show faithfulness” (Gen 32:11), “deal kindly” (Judg 1:24), “do a senseless act” (Deut 22:21), “offer sacrifice” (Exod 10:25), “keep the Passover” (Exod 12:48), “execute vengeance” (Judg 11:36) among many more. When used in the sense of “make,” the emphasis is on the fashioning of the object (Gen 8:6; 33:17; Exod 25:10-11, 13, 17). The word also connotes the concepts “commit,” when used of wrong (Hos 6:9), “to deal with one” (Zech 1:6), and “to follow” with the meaning of following advice (2Sam 17:23).

When used in reference to Yahweh, the word frequently emphasizes his acts in the realm of history. These contexts lay emphasis on one of the more fundamental concepts of OT theology, i.e. that Yahweh is not only transcendent, but he is also immanent in history. What Yahweh has done to the nations is a testimony to his intervention in history (Josh 23:3). Solomon, in his memorial prayer, could implore Yahweh to “act” עָשָׂה (1Kgs 8:39).

The word עָשָׂה is sometimes used to depict the wonders and signs that are

carried out by Yahweh in the course of history (Josh 24:17; Ps 98:1; Isa 25:1), once again demonstrating the prominence in the OT on the immanence of Yahweh.

The term is often employed in the account of creation in the book of Genesis, which is the first immense act of Yahweh in our world history. The interchange between the words **בָּרָא** “create” and **עָשָׂה** is especially interesting. The word **בָּרָא** usually signifies that which only Yahweh can do and frequently emphasizes the utter “newness” of the object that has been created. The word **עָשָׂה** is much broader in scope, indicating above all, the fashioning of the object, with little concern for subtleties. The use of **בָּרָא** in the opening statement of the Priestly account of creation seems to carry the implication that the physical phenomena came into existence at that time and had no previous existence. The Yahwist account uses **יָצַר** (2:7) and **אֶעֱשֶׂה** (“I will make” 2:18). The use of **עָשָׂה** may simply denote the act of fashioning the objects involved in the entire creative process.

The elemental sense of the root **עָשָׂה** is “to form” or “to fashion.” While the word occurs in synonymous parallelism with **עָשָׂה** “make” and **בָּרָא** “create” in a number of passages, its main stress is on the shaping or forming of the object concerned. As with numerous Hebrew terms of theological significance, the root **יָצַר** may be used to denote human as well as divine activity. When used in its material sense, it is employed most often in the participial form meaning, “potter,” i.e. one who fashions (clay). The

word is used in this form frequently in prophetic literature where “the potter” provides an appropriate medium for the announcement of the prophetic message (Isa 29:16; Jer 18:2, 4, 6).

The theory of “fashioning” is very much in evidence in Isa 44:9-10, 12 where an idol is pictured in v. 12 as being “shaped” (יָצַר) by hammers. The same idea is evident in the use of the word in Ps 94:20 where “wicked” leaders use the law to invent or bring about misdemeanours. When used in relation to divine agency, the root refers most commonly to Yahweh’s creative activity. It portrays the purpose of the divine potter as forming humans and animals from the dust of the earth (Gen 2:7-8, 19). It occurs in association with בָּרָא “create” and עָשָׂה “make” in passages that refer to the creation of the universe (Isa 45:18), the earth itself (Jer 33:2), and natural phenomena (Amos 4:13; Ps 95:5). The word also occurs in the sense of Yahweh developing something in his mind, forming a thought or idea. It is used to denote his intentions (2Kgs 19:25; Isa 37:26; 46:11; Ps 139:16) as well as his current plans (Jer 18:11).

The root is used with regard to the forming of the nation of Israel, in the sense of bringing it into existence. The book of Isaiah is the only text that uses it in this manner and it always represents Yahweh’s activity (Isa 43:1, 7, 21; 44:2, 21, 24). The participial form meaning “potter” is applied to Yahweh in Isa 64:7 where humanity is depicted as the work of his hand. When applied to the objects of Yahweh’s creative work, the emphasis of the word is on the forming or structuring of these phenomena. The word speaks to the manner of creation of these phenomena only insofar as the act of shaping or forming

an object may also involve the introduction of that object. In this way the root **יָצַר** is a suitable surrogate for **בָּרָא** but not a precise synonym.

#### 4. Holy One (קָדוֹשׁ)

##### 4. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 10:17        | 40:25          |              |
|              | 43:15          |              |
|              | 49:7           |              |

#### 5. The Holy God (הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ)

##### 5. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 5:16         |                |              |

##### 5. ii. Meaning and Use

In its present form, the expression “the holy God” **הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ** is exclusive to the Isa 5:16. The verse itself speaks of how Yahweh reveals himself to his people. The term is used in parallel with **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**. A good starting point for an examination of the text is Wildberger’s work on the subject. He notes there are similar expressions elsewhere in the OT such as “jealous God” **אֵל קַנָּא** (Exod 20:5) and as **אֵל-קַנּוּא** in Josh 24:19 (in parallel with “the

holy God”); “a gracious God and merciful” אֱלֹהֵי חַנּוּן (Jonah 4:2).<sup>9</sup> Wildberger interestingly points out how the short form אֵל (*el*) is normally used when an “attributive adjective” is to be used.<sup>10</sup> He defines the phrase as showing that Yahweh will not allow those who oppose him to go unpunished. This apparently simple term seems to encompass a breath of meaning. The fact that it does not appear elsewhere in OT may lend itself to the argument that the term is a complex one, both in meaning and theological significance. Rather, it may be more appropriate to view the term as a straightforward statement that Yahweh is *the* Holy God, above all others and answerable to no one. The idea of holiness should also be seen in light of not only the Isaian view, but also the predominant outlook of the OT, that the concept of “Holy” was to set Yahweh apart from other gods and to establish him as the sole and supreme creator. The term in 5:16 therefore simply states this. Proto-Isaiah was not given to overstating a belief or concept and his adaptation of the term in this situation should not be over read, rather it should be seen in its location as parallel to Yahweh Sabaoth and as a statement in its own right.

## 6. The Holy One of Israel (קָדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל)

### 6. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

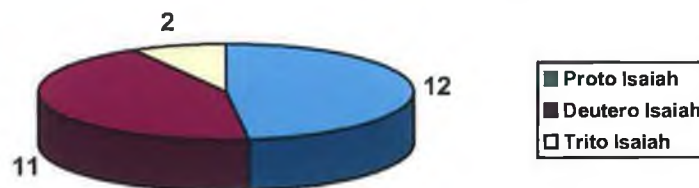
| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1:4          | 41:14, 16, 20  | 60:9, 14     |
| 5:19, 24     | 43:3, 11       |              |

<sup>9</sup> Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 205.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

|               |       |  |
|---------------|-------|--|
| 10:20         | 45:11 |  |
| 12:6          | 47:4  |  |
| 17:7          | 48:17 |  |
| 29:19         | 49:7  |  |
| 30:11, 12, 15 | 54:5  |  |
| 31:1          | 55:5  |  |
| 37:23         |       |  |

**Distribution of the Holy One of Israel**



## 6. ii. Meaning and Use

The term “The Holy One of Israel,” while a relatively simple term to grasp in its association with Yahweh, compared for example to “Yahweh Sabaoth,” still proves to be worthy of discussion especially with regard to its distribution throughout the text of the book of Isaiah. It is almost evenly distributed between Proto and Deutero-Isaiah with 12 instances of the term in Proto-Isaiah and 22 in Deutero-Isaiah) and its occurrences in Trito-Isaiah (60:9 and 60:14) seem to be easily explained. However, as Blenkinsopp highlights, the term is not one that is “peculiar to Isaiah”<sup>11</sup> (though it has to be noted it only appears in 2Kgs, the book of Jeremiah, and the book of Psalms<sup>12</sup>) and as such

<sup>11</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> 2Kgs19:22; Jer 50:29; 51:5; Ps 71:22; 78:41; 89:19

does not follow the trend that appears evident with other terms that have been explored.

The majority of commentators term the phrase a “title.” Paul Redditt identifies it as a “title that appears primarily in Isaiah” and as a “name that emphasizes the elements of God’s moral holiness and special relationship with the entire people of Israel.”<sup>13</sup> Mitchell Reddish also classifies the term as a title that emphasizes “God’s separateness, God’s otherness, God’s mystery.”<sup>14</sup>

In prophetic literature, the tradition that “Yahweh’s holy will and purpose were determinative for the existence and destiny of the holy people.”<sup>15</sup> Much of the prophetic literature demonstrates an influence from the cultic liturgies and songs that praise Yahweh’s holy activity (Exod 15), and the cultic laws (Exod 19:5-6), both in their theologies and in their literary forms. The idea of Yahweh being “holy” actually identifies his nature with the holy. The holiness of Yahweh for the prophets is a personal holiness, and is involved in the entire field of history as well as in the lives of his messengers, the prophets. It is against this background that Isaiah’s perception of Yahweh’s holiness is to be understood. The detachment of the holy and the profane becomes visible in the contrast between the sin of humanity and the divine perfection of Yahweh.<sup>16</sup> Yet holiness cannot simply be identified with the traditional idea of moral types: the “otherness” of Yahweh remains after the moral types are depleted (31:1). The holiness of

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<sup>13</sup> Paul Redditt, “Holy One of Israel,” *EDB*, 600.

<sup>14</sup> Mitchell Reddish, “Holy One of Israel,” *ABD* 3:258.

<sup>15</sup> James Muilenburg, “Holiness,” *IDB* 2:621.

<sup>16</sup> For more on the traditional view of the concept of “holiness” in a moral sphere see Walther Eichrodt, “On Prophet and Covenant: Observations on the Exegesis of Isaiah,” in *Proclamation and Presence. Essays in Honor of Gwynne Henton Davies* (eds., John Durham and J.R. Porter; London: SCM Press, 1970), 169-172.

Yahweh is now seen as active; it is less a condition or state and more of an expression of his purpose and will. It becomes apparent in judgment and destruction (1:4-9; 5:13-16; 30:8-14), especially on the Day of Yahweh (2:6-22). It is active in mercy and grace, in redemption and salvation (10:20-23; 12:6; 17:7-9; 29:19-21).

The book of Isaiah is noted by several commentators as not only being the text that defines the ideas of Yahweh as “Holy” to the greatest degree but also one that sees the notion of holiness as an absolute. J.J.M. Roberts goes as far as to see the term “the Holy One of Israel” as “the Center (*sic*) of Isaianic Theology.”<sup>17</sup> Several other commentators look to the call vision in chapter six to elucidate the term and its origins.<sup>18</sup> Isaiah’s inaugural vision of Yahweh as a king on his throne has a three-fold proclamation of his holiness by the seraphim; “And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh Sabaoth.” Their exclamation ends with the affirmation that “the whole earth is full of his glory” and this was visually impressed on Isaiah by his view of the elevated divine king, the overstatement of the image of the bottom of his robe appearing to fill the entire temple. The vision of the divine as a physical reality opens the prophet’s eyes to his sins and to the sins of his fellow Israelites. There is also an ethical element in the understanding of Yahweh’s holiness throughout the book of Isaiah. As with Isaiah in chapter six, in order to be associated with Yahweh, in this case as preparation for prophecy, sins must first be purged. It appears deliberate that cleansing takes place in Isaiah’s vision by means of a burning coal from the altar. Yahweh takes the initiative, but the cleansing takes place by fire.

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<sup>17</sup> J.J.M. Roberts, “Isaiah in Old Testament Theology,” *Int* 36 (1982): 131.

<sup>18</sup> Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*, 41.



Nevertheless, the willingness of Yahweh to establish a relationship with humanity is an important aspect of the text's understanding of Yahweh's holiness. Despite Yahweh's awesome majesty, his righteousness, his universal rule, Yahweh is not just the Holy One, but the Holy One of Israel. This point, repeatedly made by Isaiah, is not clearly articulated in the inaugural vision, but is probably presupposed by the setting of that vision in the temple. The glory of Yahweh moves beyond the confines of Jerusalem and the temple, filling the entire world, but Yahweh himself is still enthroned there in the building, the city, and with the people, he has chosen. Baruch Levine sees that for Isaiah, "it is righteousness that sanctifies the holy God (5:16)."<sup>19</sup> Deutero-Isaiah conceives of God's holiness as active in the realm of history as a redemptive power. The "Holy One of Israel" is therefore the redeemer of Israel (41:14; 47:4; 54:15). Divine holiness is thus conceived less as a state of being than as an expression of the fulfilment of divine purpose. It manifests itself in divine judgment and destruction (1:4-9; 5:13) as well as in divine mercy and salvation (10:20-23; 12:6; 17:7-9).

## 7. Holy One of Jacob (קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל)

### 7. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 29:23        |                |              |

<sup>19</sup> Baruch Levine and Eliezer Schweid, "Kedushah," *Enc.Jud* 10:868.

## 7. ii. Meaning and Use

The term קדוש יַעֲקֹב or “Holy One of Jacob” only occurs once in the Bible in Isa 29:23. Williamson refers to the theory that “verse 16 was in place before the addition of 17-24, providing a peg, so as to speak, on which the remainder could subsequently be hung.”<sup>20</sup> The section where this term appears is evidently a later addition and serves the theory well. Adrainus van Selms gives the most concrete analysis of the text by seeing the variant as “due to the fact that in the parallel hemistich ‘the God of Israel’ is mentioned.”<sup>21</sup> This also bears the echoes of v. 22 where Yahweh is very definitely linked with the household of Jacob. Further exploration of the term is quite difficult as it is used nowhere else in the Bible.

## 8. King (מֶלֶךְ)

### 8. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 6:5          | 43:15          |              |
| 33:22        |                |              |

## 9. King of Israel (מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל)

### 9. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 44:6           |              |

<sup>20</sup> Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*, 63.

<sup>21</sup> Adrianus van Selms, “The Expression the Holy One of Israel,” in *Von Kanaan bis Kerala*, (Kevelaer. Germany: Butzon und Bercke, 1982), 258.

## 10. King of Jacob (מֶלֶךְ יַעֲקֹב)

### 10. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 41:21          |              |

### 8/9/10. ii. Meaning and Use

מֶלֶךְ is derived from the root מִלַּךְ which in both the verb and the noun state is generally taken to mean, “to possess,” “to reign,” inasmuch as the possessor is also “lord” and “ruler.” If, as has been suggested, the root idea of “king” were “counsellor” and not “ruler,”<sup>22</sup> then the growth of the monarchical role and power would be because of intellectual superiority rather than physical ability. Since the first form of monarchy was that of a “city-state,” the role of a king may have evolved from that of the chief, elder or the intellectual head of the tribe.

It is generally recognized that Israel was a singular community. From the commencement of its existence as a nation, it was a religious and moral community, a theocratic commonwealth, where Yahweh was the ruler. The theocracy was not a hierarchy and it is difficult to identify it with any modern type of political organization. It was rather something in addition to the existing system of government, and therefore that existed independently from any political association. It did not succeed the tribal society of Israel, but it

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<sup>22</sup> William Albright, “Some Canaanite-Phoenician sources of Hebrew Wisdom,” in M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas, eds., *Wisdom In Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (VTSup 3; Brill: Leiden, 1969), 15.

supplied the centralizing authority and established the nation of Israel. Instead of a deep-seated political core, the bond of the shared allegiance to Yahweh, or the widespread faith in the God of Israel, kept the tribes together. The idea that Yahweh was Israel's king was deeply rooted in the cultural mindset and was the motive for a sincere patriotism throughout the nation (Exod 15:18; 19:6; Judg 5). Yahweh's kingship was enhanced by the laws he gave to Israel, by the fact that justice was administered in his name (Exod 22:28) and by his leadership of and his siding with Israel in its battles (Exod 14:14; 15:3; Num 21:14; 1Sam 18:17; 25:28).

One of the most notable merits of kingship that exists even today in various societies is the perception of the deity as king, and the relationship of this heavenly king with the earthly monarch. Accordingly, the study of Yahweh's kingship has important implications for understanding the notions of king and kingship in Israelite thinking. The source and nature of the idea of Yahweh's kingship in Israel has been the cause of much discussion. From an early date, it was a matter of some disagreement as to whether or not the idea was a central characteristic of Israelite religion. References to Yahweh as a king in the Pentateuch and early portions of the Deuteronomistic History (Exod 15:18; Num 23:21; Judg 8:23; 1Sam 8:7; 10:19; 12:12) are particularly hard to date. It was a widespread concept throughout the ancient Near East that the god, or high god, was the king of the state. There was also the extensive belief that the idea of kingship pertaining to the deity was "closely linked up with the idea of the Divine Warrior, who defeats the forces of

chaos.”<sup>23</sup> This was a key constituent of royal ideologies, since it was taken that the king ruled as the earthly representative of his god. In general, it can be said that the earthly king’s rule, was simply a reflection of the heavenly king’s rule. In prophetic literature, the idea of Yahweh’s kingship can be seen to echo that held by the book of Psalms, especially in terms of the enthronement psalms which deal with Yahweh’s succession of his royal throne and use of royal power over the divine council, creation, and Israel. The intertextuality between the two sets of texts is very distinct and the developed ideas of divine kingship in the psalms will allow for a greater understanding of the five references to Yahweh as king in the book of Isaiah.

Ray Rosenberg justifies the link between the book of Psalms and Isaiah by highlighting how Deutero-Isaiah demonstrates a “direct literary dependence” on the kingship psalms.<sup>24</sup> In particular, Ps 96:1; 98:1 and Isa 42:10 all have the pronouncement, “Sing to Yahweh a new song” and Ps 98:3 and Isa 52:10 both have the assertion that “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” The theme of these psalms is the celebration Yahweh as a judge and king over the all the earth and all his subjects celebrating him as the creator.

Although this is not always explicit in various Isaian oracles, such ideas clearly underlie much of the prophetic material, especially in the book of Isaiah. The themes of Yahweh’s kingship, his victory over the ancient forces of chaos, the defeat of earthly enemies, and the salvation of Israel all feature in this literature. The concept of the Day of Yahweh, which has been acutely

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<sup>23</sup> Tryggve Mettinger, “In Search of the Hidden Structure: YHWH as King in Isaiah 40-55,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (eds. Craig Broyles and Craig Evans; Vol. 1; Leiden, New York: Köln, Brill, 1997), 144.

<sup>24</sup> Ray Rosenberg, “Yahweh becomes King,” *JBL* 85 (1966): 305.

contentious in biblical scholarship, deals with ideas similar to the hypothesis of Yahweh's kingship in the enthronement psalms. A notable feature of the use of these ideas on the prophetic literature and with the linking of oracles and later interpretations makes it particularly difficult to try to date individual passages.

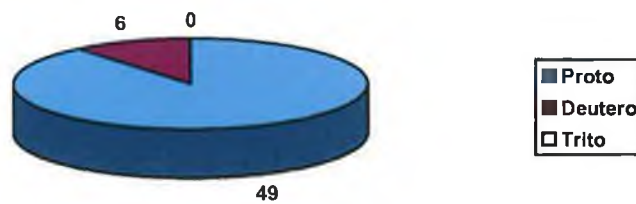
## 11. Yahweh (Lord) of Hosts (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) (Yahweh Sabaoth)

### 11. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah                 | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1:9, 24                      | 44:6           |              |
| 2:12                         | 45:13          |              |
| 3:1                          | 47:4           |              |
| 5:7, 9, 16, 24               | 48:2           |              |
| 6:3, 5                       | 51:15          |              |
| 8:13, 18                     | 54:5           |              |
| 9:7, 13, 19                  |                |              |
| 10:16, 24, 26, 33            |                |              |
| 13:4, 13                     |                |              |
| 14:22, 23, 24, 27            |                |              |
| 17:3                         |                |              |
| 18:7(x2)                     |                |              |
| 19:4, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 25 |                |              |
| 21:10                        |                |              |
| 22:14, 25                    |                |              |

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| 23:9      |  |  |
| 24:23     |  |  |
| 25:6      |  |  |
| 28:5, 29  |  |  |
| 29:6      |  |  |
| 31:4, 5   |  |  |
| 37:16, 32 |  |  |
| 39:5      |  |  |

Distribution of Yahweh Sabaoth



## 12. Lord Yahweh of Hosts (אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה צְבָאוֹת)

### 12. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah     | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 3:15             |                |              |
| 10:23, 24        |                |              |
| 22:5, 12, 14, 15 |                |              |
| 28:22            |                |              |

## 12. ii. Meaning and Use

One of the most striking features of the phrase **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** (or “LORD of hosts” in the majority of English Bible translations), is that any academic discourse on it has failed to determine whether the expression is a divine name, title or epithet. The discussion, as will be illustrated, still centres on the translation and meaning of the term. The translation preferable in this work is “Yahweh Sabaoth.” Modern research on the term is limited and is normally only conducted in exegetical work of a larger text. Choon Seow, sees the phrase as “one of the most enigmatic divine names in the Hebrew Bible.”<sup>25</sup> Bernhard Anderson categorises it as “a special epithet for the God of Israel.”<sup>26</sup> Blenkinsopp hesitates when settling on a term, using both “epithet” and “title” in his discussion of its use in Proto-Isaiah and terms it a “divine appellative.”<sup>27</sup> It is evident that a thorough examination of the phrase needs to be conducted so that it may be accurately categorized and its distribution throughout the book of Isaiah properly analysed.

Initially it is helpful to survey the notion of the “hosts” in the phrase “the hosts of heaven” as this is the most likely origin of the phrase. The term **צְבָא** (singular) as in Job 14:14 (**צְבָאִי**) or the plural form **צְבָאוֹת** would be primarily seen in the military sense as depicting an army or a group of soldiers, a meaning that would be consistent with its Semitic etymology from Akkadian, Old South Arabic, Ethiopic, and Ugaritic languages.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Choon Seow, “Hosts, Lord of,” *ABD* 3:304.

<sup>26</sup> Bernhard Anderson, “Lord of Hosts,” *IDB* 3:151.

<sup>27</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 108.

<sup>28</sup> E. Theodore Mullan, Jr., “Hosts, Host of Heaven,” *ABD* 3:301.



The term in its plural form occurs some 286 times in the OT, the majority of these (270) in reference to Yahweh. It is used to designate both human and divine armies, as well as celestial bodies. While detailed, it is interesting to note the distribution of the title throughout the OT.

| Book        | Occurrences of צְבָאוֹת |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| Exodus      | 1                       |
| 1Samuel     | 5                       |
| 2Samuel     | 6                       |
| 1Kings      | 3                       |
| 2Kings      | 1                       |
| 1Chronicles | 3                       |
| Psalms      | 15                      |
| Isaiah      | 60                      |
| Jeremiah    | 81                      |
| Hosea       | 1                       |
| Amos        | 6                       |
| Micah       | 1                       |
| Nahum       | 2                       |
| Habakkuk    | 1                       |
| Zephaniah   | 2                       |
| Haggai      | 12                      |
| Zechariah   | 46                      |
| Malachi     | 24                      |

As can be seen from this table, the term also has interesting associations with prophetic literature in general. The implication of the name **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** is discernable in its conspicuously uneven distribution in the OT. It does not appear at any stage in the Pentateuch, the book of Judges, the book of Joshua, or in Trito-Isaiah. A major conceptual background for Hebrew prophecy was formed by the idea of the prophet as the messenger for Yahweh (Hag 1:13; Mal 3:1) who had been privy to the council of Yahweh (Jer 23:18; Amos 3:7). For the prophets in general, **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** was envisaged as the leader of both the earthly and heavenly armies, the director of the affairs of history, (both earthly and heavenly histories) through the announcement of his divine judgment, given either by prophetic or heavenly messengers.

In the text of the book of Isaiah, as with that of Jeremiah, **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** was the God of Israel (Isa 5:16, 24; 21:10; 44:6), the one who gathered together and commanded the heavenly armies (13:4; 34:4; 45:12). The abstract nature that is normally associated with the phrase could perhaps be because of the LXX rendering of the term, as is evident in the NT in Rom 9:29 “And as Isaiah predicted, ‘If κύριος Σαβαώθ had not left survivors to us, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah.’” The passage in Romans is a quotation from Isa 1:9, though the LXX does not translate, but transliterates the Hebrew.

The noun **צְבָא** is used in a variety of ways including warfare, an army (earthly or celestial), luminaries of the sky and creation in general.<sup>29</sup> The

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<sup>29</sup> See Roger Whybray, *The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah XL 13-14: A Study of the Sources of the Theology of Deutero-Isaiah* (SOTSMS, Vol. 1; London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 42-44 for a more detailed overview.

majority of texts that display a large allocation of the term are military, in both context and tone, and several instances are connected with a holy war (Exod 12:41). Gerhard von Rad states, “the old tradition of the holy war once again had found a powerful speaker in Isaiah of the eighth century.”<sup>30</sup> In Ps 148:1-5, the heavenly hosts are ordered to praise Yahweh from their lofty position, “Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host.” The expression first appears in association with the central sanctuary at Shiloh where the ark of the covenant was located. Given the military connotations of the root **צָבָא** (to wage war with)<sup>31</sup> and the use of the ark as a war palladium, it appears likely that the phrase was first used at Shiloh in association with the ark. In this era, the ark would have been known by its full title, “the ark of **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** who sits enthroned above the cherubim” (1Sam 4:4; 2Sam 6:2; 1Chr 13:6; Isa 37:16).

Frank Moore Cross discusses the origin of the phrase **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** in this area in some depth, putting forward the idea that it would have been originally used to describe the divine warrior in Israel. He sees it as an “archaic epithet” that finds its original setting “in the liturgical setting of the ark.”<sup>32</sup> He draws much of his argument from the work of Benjamin Wambacq, *L'épithète divine Jahvé Seba'ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*. While the work is almost sixty years old, it remains one of the most exhaustive studies of the term **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** in the Hebrew and Greek

<sup>30</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (ed. and trans., Marva Dawn; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 107.

<sup>31</sup> Frances Brown et al, “**צָבָא**,” BDB 838.

<sup>32</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 65.

Bibles. After surveying the different interpretations of **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**, such as the purely military; God of the Armies of Israel or the more celestial God of the Stars or God of the Angels, Wambacq offers his own interpretation “A l’époque de Samuel et de David, Jahvé Seba’ôt était le Dieu protecteur de la nation.”<sup>33</sup> From the time of Samuel to King David, the expression emphasized the fact that Yahweh was the divine protector of this people. Amos stressed the fact that this same protector would also destroy his people due to their insurgence, and changed the weight of the designation from Israel to the universe (heaven and earth). This same divine protector of Israel is also designated by the prophets as the master of the universe, lord of all the earth and all heavenly forces. Therefore, there is a distinct change in the way in which the term was used, a change that may be explained by the adjustment in nature of the prophetic movement in Israel. Wambacq dismisses the theory that the term was connected with the ark of the covenant, a decision that is criticized by later commentators such as William Albright<sup>34</sup> and Frank Moore Cross, mainly in relation to the methodology that Wambacq uses in his exegesis to reach his hypothesis. In terms of this work, however, Wambacq’s work is crucial as he emphasizes the differences between the uses of **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** in Proto and Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>35</sup> He also surmises that the phrase was originally at home in very ancient litanies. This idea forms the foundation that later work on the link of the term with the ark of the covenant builds on.

<sup>33</sup> Benjamin Wambacq, *L’épithète divine Jahvé Seba’ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*, (Bruges: Desclée, De Brouwer, 1947), 200.

<sup>34</sup> William Albright, review of Benjamin Wambacq, *L’épithète divine Jahvé Seba’ôt: Étude philologique, historique et exégétique*, *JBL* 67 (1948): 377-381.

<sup>35</sup> Wambacq, *L’épithète divine Jahvé Seba’ôt*, 40.

### 12. iii. Yahweh Sabaoth as King

The Ugaritic texts portray *El* as a king in the divine council, surrounded by the minor gods. This is much the same view that is held of **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**. In Isaiah's call vision of chapter 6, he sees Yahweh enthroned in the palace or temple, presented as the triumphant king in the heavenly court. The prophet declares, "My eyes have seen the King, Yahweh Sabaoth" (6:5). It is productive to compare this call vision with that of the prophet Micaiah in 1Kgs 22:19 where he reports seeing "Yahweh sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him to the right and to the left of him." The royal imagery is unmistakable, but here, as in Isaiah, the military significance of **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** is evident. In both cases, war with Aram was imminent. This is also the case in Ps 89:5-11. Once again, the royal character of **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** is combined with a military figure. The king of the heavens is encircled by his heavenly host. He is clearly crowned by virtue of his defeat of chaos in heavenly combat. Images of *El* and Baal are combined with this representation of Yahweh as the God who has been enthroned as the heavenly king, but he is also the brave warrior who defeated the "raging waters" of the sea (Ps 89:9).

Theodore Gaster conducts an interesting discussion of the connection between the heavenly hosts with **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**. He sees the term as depicting Yahweh as the "leader of Israel's war-hosts on earth."<sup>36</sup> He supports this idea by highlighting how the Hebrew term for "host" is never used in the plural

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<sup>36</sup> Theodore Gaster, "Hosts of Heaven," *Enc Jud*, 8:1044.

form to signify a “heavenly array” and the term in Isaiah is “associated specifically with this bellicose activity.”<sup>37</sup> Gaster also looks towards Mesopotamian texts when some gods are described as lords of the hosts of “*kissatu*, i.e., of the total content of heaven and earth.”<sup>38</sup> He clarifies this notion by referring to the vague use of the term “host” in texts such as Gen 2:1, where it is translated as “multitudes,” and the LXX rendering of the term as “Lord of All.”

### 13. Mighty God (אל גבור)

#### 13. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 10:21        |                |              |

### 14. Mighty One of Jacob (אביר יעקב)

### 15. Mighty One of Israel (אביר ישראל)

#### 14/15. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah  | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah  |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1:24 (Israel) | 49:26 (Jacob)  | 60:16 (Jacob) |

#### 14/15. ii. Meaning and Use

The term אביר יעקב or “Mighty One of Jacob” is found only six times in the OT, in Gen 49:24; Ps 132:2, 5; Isa 49:26; 60:16; and Sir 51:12, whereas

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 1044.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 1044.

the term אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל or “Mighty One of Israel” is found only once, in Isa 1:24. The debate surrounding both terms is usually focused on the exact meaning of the term אֲבִיר especially in terms of its association with the image of a bull. Normally the term “Mighty One of Israel” is discussed after a close study of “Mighty One of Jacob,” but for the purposes of this exercise, both will be discussed in tandem.

An essential part of an investigation of the terms and their usages is a close study of their etymology. According to Kapelrud, the “root *’abhar* appears in Akkadian (*abāru*), Ugaritic (*abr*), and Aramaic (*’byr*).”<sup>39</sup> The basic etymological meaning of this word (in Hebrew and other Semitic languages) is “might” or “strength.” In the Ugaritic language, the term can also be used to denote a strong animal, and is normally translated into English as “bull” or “buffalo.” In the earthly domain, the expression אֲבִיר serves to designate war heroes, for example those in Ps 76:5, “The stouthearted (אֲבִירֵי לֵב) mighty of spirit) were stripped of their spoil; they sank into sleep; none of the troops אֲנָשֵׁי-חַיִל was able to lift a hand.” The אֲבִיר is in parallelism with the troops or “men of valour.” The term was also associated with animals, for example the pedigree stallions or steeds in Judg 5:22; Jer 8:16; 47:3; 50:11. The quality designated by אֲבִיר is embodied in the strength of a bull.

Martin Rose discusses the interesting association of the term with the cult, in particular with the Canaanite god Baal. He highlights how Jeroboam I was not seeking to introduce any new divinity into Israel when he erected the

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<sup>39</sup> Arvid Kapelrud, “אֲבִיר, אֲבִיר, אֲבִיר,” *TDOT* 1:42.

figures of bulls in Dan and in Bethel (1Kgs 12:26-30); rather, his act is to be understood as an attempt to give expression to an old Northern Israelite tradition of Yahweh as the Mighty One of Jacob (Gen 49:24).<sup>40</sup> The representation of the Canaanite god Baal may not have been differentiated from that of the God of Israel. As a result, as the polemical divisions began against Baal, the problem maintaining the old term אֱבִיר יַעֲקֹב but ensuring that the strength or might אֱבִיר of a bull was disassociated from the character of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

Attention is often drawn to the fact that within the OT, there are two forms of *byr*, one with the daghesh in the second radical and one without it. According to a common interpretation, this is an artificial difference which the Massoretes invented to avoid any misgiving that Yahweh was to be identified with the bull in the phrases אֱבִיר יַעֲקֹב “the Mighty One of Jacob” and אֱבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל “the Mighty One of Israel.” The form without the daghesh occurs only six times in the OT: in the phrase “the Mighty One of Jacob” in Gen 49:24; Ps 132:2, 5; Isa 49:26; 60:16; and Sirach 51:12 and in the phrase “the Mighty One of Israel” in Isa 1:24. It is significant that the form with *daghesh* occurs on some seventeen occasions, though with different meanings. The pointing without a *daghesh* in the middle consonant separates the term from the bull imagery of the northern Israelite cult, when it is used in relation to Yahweh. The differentiation appears too deliberate not to conclude that an attempt had been made to avoid confusion with Baal.

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<sup>40</sup> Martin Rose, “Names of God in the Old Testament,” *ABD* 4:1055.



With regard to the significance of the terms as divine designations in the book of Isaiah, it is helpful to examine how the term “the Mighty One of Jacob” is used in the Psalter. The book of Psalms mentions Jacob more than any other figure from Israel’s history. The 34 occurrences (which closely compares to the 40 in the book of Isaiah) of his name are more than double the total for Abraham, Isaac, and Moses. Psalm 132 is the only psalm in which the designation appears, though other psalms such as 20:2; 24:8; 46:8, 12; etc. use the term “God of Jacob.” Artur Weiser views the use of this expression as an attempt to link the traditions of northern Israel with those of the south.<sup>41</sup> Ben Ollenburger argues that the phrase the “Mighty One of Jacob” must have a particular connection with the Zion tradition and locates its origins in the ark tradition of Shiloh.<sup>42</sup> While his suggestion regarding the origins of this epithet may be hypothetical, it is clear that the phrase the “Mighty One of Jacob” became associated with the temple in Jerusalem. According to Leslie Hoppe, the title never occurs with *El* or Baal, so its origins “are probably Israelite and probably before the rise of the Davidic dynasty,” mainly because of the apparent lack of links between Jacob and Judah’s monarchy.<sup>43</sup> Psalm 132 underscores the role of the Davidic dynasty in Israel’s life. It traces divine support for that dynasty to David’s relocation of the ark in Jerusalem and his determination to have a temple built to house the ark, “I will not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for Yahweh, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.” To secure their future, the kings of David’s dynasty must be faithful to the Torah

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<sup>41</sup> Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 780.

<sup>42</sup> Ben Ollenburger, *Zion, the City of the Great King: A Theological Study of the Jerusalem Cult* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 41-42.

<sup>43</sup> Leslie Hoppe, *The Holy City: Jerusalem in the Theology of the Old Testament* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000), 35.

(132:12). Yahweh will defeat David's enemies and will bless the entire nation from Zion.

In the book of Genesis, the term occurs in the poetical passage 49:24 where Joseph bestows his blessing on his son Joseph, "So his bow remained supple, and his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the name of the shepherd, the rock of Israel," the phrase is linked with references to "God, your Father" in v. 25a and *El Shaddai* or אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי in v. 25b. This also echoes the preservation of another recollection of *El* as the god of Jacob<sup>44</sup> and emphasizes the deity's power to look after the patriarch.

It is important to note in a discussion of the term in the book of Isaiah, the words of warning issued by Albrecht Alt to avoid the "mania amongst modern scholars for seeing bulls everywhere."<sup>45</sup> In Isaiah, the unambiguous reference to Yahweh using the designation the "Mighty One of Jacob" indicates a reconciling of the tradition of the God of the patriarchs, (originally the native tradition of the tribes of the future Northern Kingdom as seen in Gen 49:24), with the Yahweh cult of the ark in Jerusalem. The designation inevitably highlights the matter of power and strength, or forceful power, due to its associations with the "bull." This association would most likely have been known to the writer or compiler of the texts in Isaiah. By utilising the term אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב the text reinforces the ideas of the other designations that have previously been connected with the ark, such as Yahweh Sabaoth. The same theological outlook, that Yahweh is the Lord of all and that he commands this power with the inescapable might of the great bull, is

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<sup>44</sup> John McLaughlin, "God in the Old Testament, Names of," *EDB*, 513.

<sup>45</sup> Albrecht Alt, *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (trans. R.A. Wilson; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), 26.

maintained. Nahum Sarna's theory that "there is no warranty for the widespread belief that the dagheshed form ever conjured up in Hebrew the specific image of a bull" does not appear valid.<sup>46</sup> The poetic imagery that is so prevalent in the OT would have made good use of such a positive link between the divine and earthly. The idea is then related to alerting the prophet's audience of the link between the God of the patriarchs, through the explicit reference to Jacob and the prophetic message that the prophets are attempting to relay to them. The use of the term "the Mighty One of Israel" solely in the book of Isaiah (1:24) is possibly a furthering of this idea to provide a link to the people of the time identifying themselves as Israel with the God of their ancestors. In 1:24, "Therefore says the Lord (יהוה), Yahweh Sabaoth, the Mighty One of Israel: Oh, I will pour out my wrath on my foes, and avenge myself on my enemies" the phrase is clearly linked with יהוה (the Lord) and Yahweh Sabaoth.

The distribution of the terms in this instance does not demonstrate any striking pattern. The "Mighty One of Jacob" is found once in Deutero-Isaiah and once in Trito-Isaiah and the phrase the "Mighty One of Israel" is found only in Proto-Isaiah. As the "Mighty One of Israel" is only found in this one instance in the OT, its absence in the other two sections is not a finding that could unsettle any future argument about the influences between any of the three texts. With the "Mighty One of Jacob," there is the strong possibility that Trito-Isaiah was inspired by the text of Deutero-Isaiah or indeed that it

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<sup>46</sup> Nahum Sarna, "The Divine Title 'ābhîr ya 'āqôbh," *Studies in Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2000), 7.

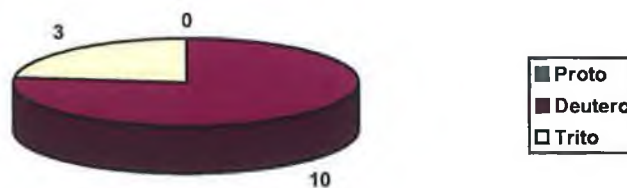
was edited by the same hand that edited Deutero-Isaiah, as the term is such an unusual one and its distribution throughout the OT so infrequent.

## 16. Redeemer (לַמְּשִׁיב)

### 16. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 41:14          | 59:20        |
|              | 43:14          | 60:16        |
|              | 44:6, 24       | 63:16        |
|              | 47:4           |              |
|              | 48:17          |              |
|              | 49:7, 26       |              |
|              | 54:5           |              |
|              | 54:8           |              |

Distribution of Redeemer



### 16. ii. Meaning and Use

The perception of “redemption” in the OT takes its origins from the consideration of property (Lev 25:26; Ruth 4:4). Money is paid to buy back something that must be released or rescued according to law (Num 3:51).

From this source, the term “redemption” is used throughout the OT with the general significance of deliverance. Yahweh is the Redeemer of Israel with the implication that he is the deliverer of Israel (Deut 9:26; 2Sam 7:23; 1Chr 17:21; Isa 52:3). This notion of deliverance includes liberation from all forms of evil, from nationwide hardship (Isa 52:9; 63:9), from plague (Ps 78:35, 52), or from tragedy of any sort (Gen 48:16; Num 25:4, 9). Naturally, the wide-ranging thought concerning the association of Israel with Yahweh was that Yahweh had both a claim on Israel (Deut 15:15) and an obligation towards its people (1Chr 17:21; Ps 25:22). Israel belonged to Yahweh, and he could become involved in the everyday lives of the Israelites, so that he could redeem them.

The actual term “redemption” is generally perceived as the conventional translation of the literal derivative of the two Hebrew roots פָּדָה and גָּאַל. The root גָּאַל “seems to be almost exclusively Hebrew.”<sup>47</sup> The participle form of the Qal stem of the verb has all but become a noun in its own right, though it may be accurately regarded simply as a form of the verb. The most important connotation of this root is the taking on of the role of a kinsman and therefore redeeming the family from difficulties. For example, a kinsman redeemer would buy back the forfeited inheritance for an Israelite who for example, through poverty, had sold his land or lost the land due to inheritance rights, as Boaz did for Ruth (Ruth 4:3-5). He would also hold land in tenure for a destitute kinsman until the year of jubilee, when it would revert to its original owner (Lev 25:10, 13-16, 24-28).

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<sup>47</sup> Helmer Ringgren, “גָּאַל *gā'al*; גָּאַל *gō'el*; גְּאֻלָּה *ge'ullah*,” *TDOT* 2:350.

## 17. Saviour (יִשְׁע)

### 17. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 43:3           | 60:16        |
|              | 45:15, 21      |              |
|              | 49:26          |              |

### 17. ii Meaning and Use

Many modern readers of the Bible would agree that one of the fundamental concepts of the OT is that “Yahweh is the deliverer of his people.” Nevertheless, the Israelites never seem to have felt that using a designation for Yahweh that would encapsulate this feature of the covenantal relationship was necessary. Closest to the more modern expression “Saviour,” is a participial form מוֹשִׁיעַ from the verb יָשַׁע. The Qal form of the verb is not used and the term would denote “save” in the hip’il form. Even this participle is not often applied to Yahweh, and the common concurrence is that it is used some thirteen times, seven of which are cited in the text of Isa 43-63. Generally, the term is related to Yahweh’s liberation of a people or an individual from a dangerous or threatening situation, from which the person or people cannot save themselves. The situation in question may vary from governmental oppression, unfair charges, disaster associated with military crusades, or mental torture and physical illness. The promise of salvation may include “assurance of divine protection and care, health, welfare, victory over

enemies.”<sup>48</sup> The mediator of this salvation may be a human such as the monarch or a judge. Nevertheless, this agent is provided by Yahweh, the one who ultimately saves.<sup>49</sup> This raises an interesting dimension to the study of the term when depicting Yahweh. Many designations are clearly only used for denoting Yahweh and his activities, for example Creator, or Mighty One of Israel. Others can easily be identified from their context, “king” being a good example of this, as it is relatively simple to ascertain from the context whether it is an earthly king or Yahweh as the divine king that is being referred to. In the case of Redeemer, and in this instance of “Saviour,” it is necessary to determine whom the term refers to and to identify any disparity between terms referring to the divine, and those that refer to human beings.

In prophetic literature in general, Yahweh’s salvation was anticipated into the future, a feature that was in contrast to the salvation depicted in earlier literature such as the Pentateuch. From the delivering of future promises to the patriarchs in the book of Genesis, the nature of salvation had an imminent nature, but the promises were never completely fulfilled. The restoration reinstated the importance of the temple, with all nations acknowledging the power of Israel (Isa 49). Nonetheless, Haggai and Malachi associate the restoration of the people to Israel and the reconstruction of the temple with an increase in frustration and disenchantment. As a result, Yahweh’s saving actions became situated in an imminent context with more clear-cut metaphors of salvation: where “the new heavens and a new earth” are to be created and the “former things” shall be forgotten (65:17).

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<sup>48</sup> Phillip Harner, “The Salvation Oracle in Second Isaiah,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 418.

<sup>49</sup> Gary Light, “Salvation, Save, Savior,” *EDB*, 1154.

## 18. The Living God (אלהים חי)

### 18. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 37:4, 17       |              |

### 18. ii. Meaning and Use

OT references to the “living God” belong primarily to the oath formula of “by the life of Yahweh/God.” The recurring form is **חַי־יְהוָה** (occurring 41 times in total, with 30 uses in Judges and 2Kings alone); also **חַי־אֲדָנִי יְהוָה** in Jer 44:26; **חַי הָאֱלֹהִים** in 2Sam 2:27; **חַי־אֵל** Job 27:2. “As I live” (**חַי־אֲנִי**) occurs 23 times as a divine self-declaration (Num 14:21, 28; Deut 32:40; Isa 49:18; Jer 22:24; 46:18 and 16 times in Ezekiel).

If the oath formula is excluded, there are only fourteen passages that portray Yahweh as **אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים** for example, Deut 5:26; 1Sam 17:26, 36; Jer 10:10; 23:36; **אֵל חַי** Josh 3:10; Hos 2:1; **אֱלֹהִים חַי** 2Kgs 19:4, 16 which are identical to Isa 37:4, 17. **חַי־יְהוָה** or “Yahweh lives” is found in 2Sam 22:47 and again is echoed in Ps 18:46. Interestingly, some of these passages are similar in content, particularly in texts from 1Samuel and 2Kings with diatribes against foreign adversaries who have insulted the God of Israel. The text of Jer 10:10, is also evocative of these particular texts since it articulates a polemic against foreign gods. The comparison to foreign gods dominates Josh 3:10 **אֵל חַי בְּקִרְבְּכֶם** where the “living God [who is] in



your midst” will drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites.

The impression that the “living God” is used in a hesitant manner is reinforced by considering the  $\text{חַיִּים}$  passages.<sup>50</sup> The text of the OT does not mention life or “living” as something that could be viewed as a divine attribute, normally due to Yahweh’s saving activity. OT language is distinct from that of the other nations of the ancient Near East, which freely talk about the life and vitality of their various deities. Importance is placed on the actuality that Yahweh gives life and has power over life, but not that he himself is involved in it. With Yahweh as the focus, “life” serves as the object of the following verbs. Yahweh is the “fountain of life” in Ps 36:9; the fear of the Lord brings life in Prov 19:23. One can ask him to grant life as in Ps 21:4 and not to take away the life of the petitioner (Ps 26:9). Repeatedly, the factitive and causative verbal stems are used in statements regarding Yahweh. Of the 56 pi’el passages, 26 have Yahweh as the subject (including 19 in the book of Psalms). Of the 23 hip’il passages, Yahweh appears as subject in only nine and never in the book of Psalms.

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<sup>50</sup> G. Gerleman, “ $\text{חַיִּים}$  *hyh* to live,” *TLOT* 1:416.

## 19. The Tetragrammaton (יהוה)

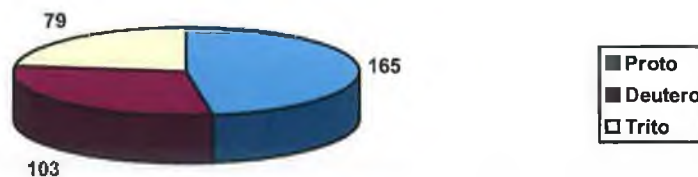
### 19. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah                         | Deutero-Isaiah   | Trito-Isaiah   |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1:2, 4, 10, 11, 18, 20, 28           | 40:2, 3, 5(x2), 7,<br>10, 13, 28, 31                       | 56:1, 3(x2), 4, 6(x2), 8                             |
| 2:2, 3(x2), 5, 10,<br>11, 17, 19, 21 | 41:4, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21                                   | 57:18  |
| 3:8, 13, 14, 16                      | 42:5, 6, 8, 13, 19, 21, 24                                 | 58:8, 11, 13, 14(x2)                                 |
| 4:2, 5                               | 43:1, 3, 10, 11,<br>12, 14, 15, 16                         | 59:1, 15   |
| 5:12, 25                             | 44:2, 6, 23(x2), 24(x2)                                    | 59:19(x2), 20, 21(x2)                                |
| 6:12                                 | 45:1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8,<br>11, 14, 18, 19, 21                 | 60:12, 6, 9, 14, 16, 19,<br>20, 22                   |
| 7:3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18           | 48:1, 14, 16, 17, 20, 22                                   | 61:1(x2), 3, 6, 8, 9, 11                             |
| 8:1, 3, 5, 11                        | 49:1, 4, 5(x2), 7(x2), 8,<br>13, 14, 18, 22, 23, 25,<br>26 | 62:2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12                          |
| 9:11, 14                             | 50:1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10(x2)                                   | 63:7(x3), 14, 16, 17                                 |
| 10:20                                | 51:1, 3(x2), 9, 11,<br>13, 15, 17, 20, 22                  | 64:8, 9, 12  |
| 11:2, 3(x2), 9, 15                   | 52:3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11,<br>12                            | 65:7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 23,<br>25                       |
| 21:1, 5                              | 53:1, 10   | 66:1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14,<br>15, 16(x2), 17, 20(x2), |

|   |                    |            |
|---|--------------------|------------|
|   |                    | 21, 22, 23 |
| 13:5, 6, 9  | 54:1, 6, 8, 10, 13 |            |
| 14:1, 2, 3, 5, 32                                     | 55:5, 6, 7, 8      |            |
| 16:13, 14   |                    |            |
| 17:6  |                    |            |
| 18:4  |                    |            |
| 19:1, 14, 20, 21 (x3), 22<br>(x2)                     |                    |            |
| 20:2, 3   |                    |            |
| 21:17   |                    |            |
| 22:17   |                    |            |
| 23:11, 17, 18(x2)                                     |                    |            |
| 24:1, 3, 14, 15 (x2), 21                              |                    |            |
| 25:1, 8(x2), 9, 10                                    |                    |            |
| 26:4(x2), 8, 10, 11,<br>12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21,       |                    |            |
| 27:1, 3, 12   |                    |            |
| 28:13, 14, 16, 21                                     |                    |            |
| 29:10, 22   |                    |            |
| 30:1, 9, 15, 18(x2), 26,<br>27,<br>29, 30, 31, 32, 33 |                    |            |
| 31:1, 4, 9  |                    |            |
| 32:6  |                    |            |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 33:2, 5, 6, 10, 21, 22   |  |  |
| 34:16  |  |  |
| 35:2, 10   |  |  |
| 36:7, 10, 15, 18, 20   |  |  |
| 37:1, 4(x2), 6, 14, 15,<br>17(x2), 18, 20(x2), 21,<br>22, 33, 34, 36 |  |  |
| 38:1, 2, 3, 4, 5,<br>7(x2), 20(x2), 22                               |  |  |
| 39:5, 6, 8   |  |  |

Distribution of Yahweh



### 19. ii. Meaning and Use

The Tetragrammaton or יהוה is often seen as the “proper name” for the God of Israel and occurs some 6823 times in the OT. This includes citations in verses where the term is used more than once, or where it is used in combination with other divine titles such as אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה. The term serves to distinguish God from the gods of other nations.<sup>51</sup> The original pronunciation

<sup>51</sup> George Buchanan Gray, “Divine Names,” *EB(C)*, 3:3320.

is uncertain, as the correct pronunciation of the name was lost from Jewish tradition some time in the Middle Ages but the pronunciation “Yahweh” has been recovered in recent times.<sup>52</sup> This is mainly due to inference from its contracted forms in compound names, as confirmed by testimony such as that of Clement of Alexandria to its transliteration as *Ιαουέ*. The term often appears as “YHWH” in languages that use a Roman lettering system,<sup>53</sup> but may also appear as *ὁ Κύριος* or “I am who I am,” or *qui est*. Thomas Aquinas argues that *qui est* the Vg.’s translation of יהוה is the most appropriate “*maxime proprium*” name for God.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the Greek vocative *κύριε* found its way into one part of the Latin Mass, but various inflections the word *dominus* were more commonly employed. This “hybrid” nature of the divine name provides a forewarning of the difficulties that are to be encountered when undertaking its translation.

### 19. iii. Meaning of the Name

The exact meaning or indeed definition of the term is unclear and the various explanations that have been presented are too numerous to cite here. The text of Exod 3:13-14 cannot be taken as an explanation:

But Moses said to God, “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He said further, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

<sup>52</sup> David Noel Freedman *et al*, “יהוה” YHWH,” *TDOT* 5:500.

<sup>53</sup> David Cunningham, “On Translating the Divine Name,” *TS* 56 (1995): 424.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q.13, a.11.

This text cited above is from the NRSV. The text itself is extremely difficult to translate as the HB has the name in the first person, אֲדֹנָי אֲשֶׁר אֲדֹנָי. The LXX renders the name as ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (I am the one who is) and the Vg. as *ego sum qui sum*.

Paul Haupt, in his work “Der Name Jahwe” in 1909 was the first commentator to suggest that the formula was originally in the third person and read *yahweh ‘āšer yahweh*.<sup>55</sup> Most modern scholars would connect the term with the verb *hāwā* that is the archaic form of the verb “to be.” William Albright insists that “Yahweh” is from the causative conjunction of this verb and means, “he causes to be.” He sees that the name “which occurs as a place name or tribal name in a list of settlements in southern or eastern Palestine from the thirteenth century B.C.,”<sup>56</sup> can only be derived from the verbal stem הִיָּה “to fall, become, come into existence.” Albright states how he and Freedman have highlighted that the name is a fragment of a longer name that translates as “he who brings into being whatever comes into being.” The name explained thus identifies Yahweh very clearly as the creator.

Frank Moore Cross has a variation on Albright’s thesis, as he thinks of “Yahweh” as part of a liturgical title *El*, e.g. El Yahweh Sabaoth, “El who brings into being the hosts.”<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, if some explanation similar to the translations of the LXX and the Vg. is accepted and more emphasis is placed on existence, then the name signifies that Yahweh is the one who certainly “is,” possibly the one who really is אֱלֹהִים, or God.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Haupt, “Der Name Jahwe,” *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 12 (1909), columns 211-214. See also: John McKenzie, “Aspects of Old Testament Theology,” *NJBC*, 1286.

<sup>56</sup> William Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1957), 15.

<sup>57</sup> Frank Moore Cross, “Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs,” *HTR* 55 (1962): 256.

Nevertheless, these theories on the etymology of the term “Yahweh” are deceptive; even if the original meaning of the name is definitively identified, there is still no assurance that the Israelites understood the name correctly. The use of the designation “Yahweh” in the Bible shows no recognition of the etymology of the term, and there is no indication in the OT of a theology being built around the meaning of the name.

#### **19. iv. Within the Context of the Covenant**

“The name is not a name like Elohim, which expresses God on the side of His being, as essential, manifold power; it is a word that expresses rather relation- Elohim in relation to Israel is Jahweh.”<sup>58</sup> Raymond Abba proposes a fascinating thesis regarding the significance of the divine name within the context of the covenant. In relation to Isa 52:6 “Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I.” According to Abba, the name expresses the covenant relationship of God with his people, Israel.<sup>59</sup> Within the covenant “name” is the impression of the continuance of the relationship, as the use of the imperfect tense expresses a kind of stability or eternalness. The never-ending position of Yahweh is in direct contrast to the hesitancy of the people of Israel. Abba identifies Yahweh as the covenant God with no suggestion of pantheism.<sup>60</sup> He works through the natural order, revealing his power and his glory, but he is never identified with it. Including the knowledge of Yahweh as the creator, he is always distinct from this natural order. He is also seen as an effective

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<sup>58</sup> Andrew Bruce Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1904(1907)), 56.

<sup>59</sup> Raymond Abba, “The Divine Name Yahweh,” *JBL* 80 (1961): 326.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 327.

presence, an idea that is developed with the knowledge that is embodied in the divine designation (name) of someone who is both personal and dynamic. Transcendence as well as immanence is implied. Yahweh repeatedly “visits” his people both in judgment and in salvation.

### **19. v. The Divine Name as a Form of Self-Revelation**

In the theology of the name of God, the revelation of the name Yahweh to Israel through Moses represented a new and fuller revelation of the personal reality of Yahweh. This is reflected in the exodus traditions where the name of Yahweh is associated with the origin of the covenant. The people of Israel know God by this name, and no further qualification or definition is needed. By this time, he is proclaimed as the personal divine being who has revealed himself to Israel and who has vindicated himself to Israel by the saving acts of the exodus and has established a covenantal relationship with the people he has created. The distinctive name יהוה indicates that he is a personal being whose essence and attributes can be shared by no one else.

Within Abba’s proposal is the important idea that the Tetragrammaton has a revelatory significance. The name of God primarily means his revealed nature and character.<sup>61</sup> The God of the people of Israel is the one who is known for what he is, (as the living God), and by what he does (in terms of creating, saving, redeeming, etc.). The imperfect tense of the verb יהיה is normally used to express an action. This action illustrates how Yahweh is present in history, manifesting himself to humankind, and especially to his

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<sup>61</sup> Raymond Abba, “Name,” *IDB* 3:502.



people, Israel. It is through his manifestations that Yahweh becomes known, with each appearance, some more detail of his character and plan is revealed.

Abba also states that it is in Deutero-Isaiah that the full revelatory content of the divine name is drawn out.<sup>62</sup> Yahweh is the Creator (Isa 40:28); the one who asserts his presence through his activity (Isa 43:13-21); beside him, there is no god (Isa 6:8). Within this sphere, his redeeming activity is foremost. He will deliver his people from spiritual bondage as he delivered them from their physical repression in Egypt. “As the Holy One of Israel, he is its Redeemer”<sup>63</sup> (Isa 43:14, 25; 44:6). Those who call on him will be rewarded with the forgiveness of their sins. Abba does not dwell on the significance of “calling” the name of God and thus rendering him present. This aspect of the divine name is quite complex and it is worthy of separate consideration as it has huge implications for not only the understanding of the oral traditions behind the written text but also the final form of the text. As demonstrated in his work, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament*, Oskar Grether highlights the fact that we can only name what we know. The self-revelation of God is declared in the Tetragrammaton and the Tetragrammaton is the name of the revealed God or *deus revelatus*.<sup>64</sup> Prominent also in Deutero-Isaiah according to Abba, are the eschatological and universal implications of the divine covenant name. Yahweh is the first and the last (Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). Through his covenant people, Israel, his redemptive presence, and activity will finally be manifested to the ends of the earth, (Isa 49:6, 26).

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<sup>62</sup> Abba, “The Divine Name Yahweh,” 329.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 329.

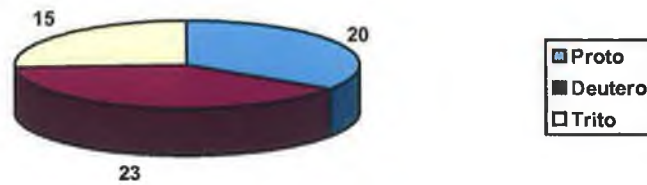
<sup>64</sup> Oskar Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (BZAW 64; Giessen: A Töpelmann 1934), 9 and Geoffrey H. Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh: The Divine Name in the Bible* (Waterloo: Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, c.1975), 11.

## 20. Elohim (אלהים)

### 20. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah         | Deutero-Isaiah    | Trito-Isaiah |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1:10                 | 40:1, 3, 8, 9, 27 | 57:21        |
| 2:3                  | 41:10, 13         | 58:2(x2)     |
| 7:11, 13             | 43:3              | 59:2, 3      |
| 13:9                 | 45:14, 18         | 60:9, 19     |
| 25:1, 9              | 48:17             | 61:2, 6, 10  |
| 26:13                | 49:4, 5           | 62:3, 5      |
| 28:6, 26             | 50:10             | 64:3, 4      |
| 30:18                | 51:15, 20, 22     | 66:9         |
| 35:2, 4              | 52:7, 10          |              |
| 36:7                 | 53:4              |              |
| 37:4(x3), 10, 16, 20 | 54:6              |              |
|                      | 55:5, 7           |              |

Distribution of Elohim



## 20. ii. Meaning and Use

The OT uses three different words for “God,” namely *‘el*, *‘eloah* and *‘elohîm*.<sup>65</sup> In general, words are interchangeable, as is clear from the following examples. In Ps 29:1 and 89:6, the phrase **בְּנֵי אֱלִים** or literally “sons of the gods,” in the RSV and NRSV translations it is “heavenly beings,” KJV, “sons of the mighty” and the NJPS as “divine beings.”

In Exod 34:14 the term **אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים** or “other god” is used. Psalm 18:31, **כִּי מִי אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלִעְדֵי יְהוָה** (“For who is God except Yahweh?”) is similar to 2Sam 22:32 **כִּי מִי־אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלִעְדֵי יְהוָה**. Exod 15:11 has

**מִי־כַמֶּנְךָ בְּאֱלֹהִים יְהוָה**, (“Who is like you, Yahweh, among the gods?”).

Psalm 86:8 expresses the same thought in this way:

**אֵין־כַּמוֹךָ בְּאֱלֹהִים אֲדָנָי** (“There is none like you among the gods, Lord”).

In Deut 32:17, the phrase **לֹא אֱלֹהִים** or “no god” and in v. 21, **לֹא־אֱלֹהִים** is found. No clear rule for the use of these words can be recognized in the OT, but *‘el* occurs mainly in poetic and archaic texts.

Of the fifty-seven occurrences of **אֱלֹהִים** (*‘eloah*), forty-one are found in the book of Job, predominantly in the Dialogue where Job and his companions, who are not Israelites and therefore do not know the God of Israel, use designations for God other than Yahweh exclusively. The form **אֱלֹהִים** occurs 2570 times in the OT, with both the plural (“gods”) and the singular (“a god,” “God”) meaning. Grammatically, the form **אֱלֹהִים**

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<sup>65</sup> Helmer Ringgren, “אֱלֹהִים *‘elohîm*,” TDOT 1:185.

contains the plural ending *-îm*.<sup>66</sup> The function of אֱלֹהִים as a true plural (“gods”) is reflected in numerous biblical texts (e.g. Exod 12:12 כָּל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם “all the gods of Egypt”). Freedman remarks on how until the tenth century the term was used as a plural for the “gods” and from the middle of the tenth century onwards, “its predominant use was as a designation of God.”<sup>67</sup> In this function אֱלֹהִים can be preceded by a definite article (“the gods;” e.g. Exod 18:11: הָאֱלֹהִים). In Hebrew *‘elohîm* can be accompanied by plural adjectives, for instance the phrase “other gods” occurs very frequently in Deuteronomy. It can also be construed with plural verbal forms, for example, Ps 97:7 כָּל־אֱלֹהִים הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ־לוֹ (“all gods bow down before him”).

One of the more prominent features of the OT is the use of this plural form in order to designate the one true God of Israel. There are two principle ideas with this characteristic. Critics such as Bernhard Anderson view this plural of majesty or *pluralis amplitudinis* as equivalent to “deity” or “Godhead,”<sup>68</sup> as אֱלֹהִים includes all gods; the fullness of deity is comprehended in him. This “plural of majesty” according to Anderson, did not first arise in Israelite tradition as a result of the identification of אֱלֹהִים with Yahweh, or the gradual development from the polytheistic thinking current in the ancestors of Israel to monotheism. On the contrary, this is an ancient pre-Israelite expression, which was used in Babylonia and Canaan

<sup>66</sup> Rose, “Names of God in the Old Testament,” 1006.

<sup>67</sup> David Noel Freedman, “Divine Names and Titles in Early Hebrew Poetry,” in *Magnalia Dei. The Mighty Acts of God. Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright* (eds., Frank Moore Cross et al.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 55.

<sup>68</sup> Bernhard Anderson, “God, Names of,” *IDB* 2:413.

even with a singular verb. Anderson gives the example how the Akkadians used the plural word *ilanu* “gods” in homage to a particular god, such as the moon god Sin, to express the worshipper’s view that he is the highest or greatest God, in whom the entire Pantheon is represented.<sup>69</sup> Walther Eichrodt uses this same example to demonstrate how the employment of *‘elohîm* was not the result of a slow process or a gradual unification of the local deities whereby polytheism was eventually overcome.<sup>70</sup>

Conversely, Rose focuses more on the latter aspect explored by Anderson. He sees the “plural of majesty” as “an intensification and eventually as an absolutization.”<sup>71</sup> In this sense Yahweh is “God of gods,” “The highest God,” “quintessence of all divine powers,” “the only God who represents the divine in a comprehensive and absolute way.”<sup>72</sup> Within this sense, Rose sees the term אֱלֹהִים as representing a replacement for the name of Yahweh as demonstrated in the Priestly source of Gen 1:1, “In the beginning אֱלֹהִים created the heavens and the earth.” In this sense, the term אֱלֹהִים is used in a systematic way instead of the divine name יְהוָה in one part of the Psalter (Ps 42-83); therefore, as Rose points out, it is known as the “Elohistic Psalter.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 413.

<sup>70</sup> Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 185.

<sup>71</sup> Rose, “Names of God in the Old Testament,” 1006.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 1006.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 1006.

### 20. iii. Etymology

There is no commonly accepted etymological explanation of the meaning of **אלהים**.<sup>74</sup> The majority of scholars connect the term with **איל**, meaning “power,” or “strength,” and it is likely that power was the fundamental and essential nature of the deity in the ancient Semitic world. Even if this were the most credible explanation, “power” is not reflected in the Hebrew usage of the term. The Hebrew language demonstrates several adjectival uses of the term **אלהים** in which a person or thing is said to be identical with, or belonging to **אלהים**. These ascriptions elevate the designated entity higher than the normal level of humanity and situate it on an almost “superhuman” level because in some way such as in its power or size it surpasses what is regarded as normal. According to McKenzie, with ancient Semitic language there was no division of the gods from other “superhuman” beings, in this way when the Bible when Yahweh is termed **אלהים**, he is raised above even this “superhuman” world to a level that belongs to him alone.<sup>75</sup>

In summary, **אלהים** as a designation of Yahweh characterized him as the absolute God. This use of **אלהים** is restricted to certain parts of the OT, especially the Pentateuchal Elohistic and Priestly sources, and the Elohistic portions of the book of Psalms. On the one hand **אלהים** is used conceptually as a substitute for the name of God (Yahweh). On the other hand, this classification concurs with a monotheistic concept that only when there is one

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<sup>74</sup> McKenzie, “Aspects of Old Testament Theology,” 1285.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 1286.

God and when he is recognised as the only God, is it significant to exemplify this particular God as the absolute God, אֱלֹהִים.

The following seven designations contain the term אֱלֹהִים and as such have been included together for examination, in the order in which they are cited in the book of Isaiah.

**a (21). The God of Israel (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)**

**a. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah**

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 17:6         | 41:17          |              |
| 21:10, 17    | 45:15          |              |
| 24:15        | 48:1,2         |              |
| 29:23        | 52:12          |              |
| 37:16        |                |              |
| 37:21        |                |              |

**b. (22) God of Jacob (אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב)**

**b. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah**

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2:3          |                |              |

**b. ii. Meaning and Usage**

As the term “God of Jacob” only occurs in one instance in the book of Isaiah, examination of the term has been included in an examination of 2:3 in chapter

four of this work so that its context may be considered. Elsewhere in the OT, the phrase occurs three times in the book of Exodus (3:6, 15; 4:5), where the term appears in the phrase “God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” There are also several instances of the term in the book of Psalms (20:1; 24:6; 46:7,11; 75:9; 76:6; 81:1, 4; 84:8; 94:7; 114:7; 146:5).

### c. (23) God of your Salvation (אלהי ישועה)

#### c. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 17:10        |                |              |

#### c. ii. Meaning and Usage

As the designation “God of salvation” only occurs once in the book of Isaiah, examination of the term has been included in the exegesis of 17:10 in chapter 4 of this work. The expression is linked with the idea of Yahweh as redeemer and saviour and due to the use of the possessive “your” in the phrase, it is necessary to examine the designation in context so that the referees may be recognised.

### d. (24) God of Your Ancestor David (אלהי דוד אביד)

#### d. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 38:5         |                |              |



#### d. ii. Meaning and Usage

There is only one occurrence of the designation “God of your ancestor David” in the text of the book of Isaiah and as a result, an investigation of the designation has been included in the context of an examination of 38:5 in chapter 4. The only other occurrence of the term is in 2Kgs 20:5, so without the background of a larger context in which to examine the designation, it is essential to examine it in the context of the verse in which it appears.

#### e. (25) Everlasting God (אלהי עולם)

##### e. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 40:28          |              |

##### e. ii. Meaning and Usage

The designation “everlasting God” only occurs in 40:28 in the book of Isaiah and in Gen 21:33 and Bar 4:8. With such a limited usage in the OT, it is essential that the term be examined in light of the context in which it occurs, as an etymological study will be unable to result in a wholly rounded view of the term.

#### f. (26) God of the Whole Earth (אלהי כל-הארץ)

##### f. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 54:5           |              |

## f. ii. Meaning and Usage

There is only one example of the phrase “God of the whole earth” in the OT, in Isa 54:5 and as it is a phrase rather than a particular term, etymological studies will not yield a great deal of valuable information. As a result, basing the study of the designation on the occurrence of the term in its context in 54:5 will improve the understanding of the designation. This study has been conducted in the exegesis of 54:4-6 in chapter 5.

## g. (27) God of Faithfulness (God of Truth) (אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֻן)

### g. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              |                | 65:16        |

### g. ii. Meaning and Usage

Again, this phrase only occurs twice in the OT and both instances are in Isa 65:16. Similarly to “God of faithfulness,” this phrase is better understood as divine designation if examined in its textual context, rather than its etymological history. Verse 65:16 will be examined in ch. 4.

## 28. Righteous God (אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיק)

### 28. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 45:21          |              |

## 29. Righteous One (צַדִּיק)

### 29. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 24:16        |                |              |
| 26:7         |                |              |

### 28/29. ii. Meaning and Usage

The two divine designations “Righteous God” and “Righteous One” are clearly connected by their use of the idea of צַדִּיק or justice and righteousness. The term is normally connected with the idea of kingship (i.e. a just ruler) or the legal system, but in the book of Isaiah in particular, it is associated with the idea of redemption. All three occurrences of the designations as listed above, are examined in the context of the verse within which they appear in chapter 4 of this work.

## 30. Shaddai (Almighty) (שַׁדַּי)

### 30. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 13:6         |                |              |

### 30. ii. Meaning and Use

According to the Elohist and Priestly sources, the divine name Yahweh was not known before Moses and “Shaddai” is the name by which the patriarchs invoke God in the Priestly Source. As a divine designation, “Shaddai” is used forty-eight times in the OT. In several versions, it is not translated and simply

transliterated, but in the KJV, it is translated as the “Almighty,” a rendition that has been used in most modern translations. It appears most often in patriarchal literature, the book of Job in particular, where it is used by the majority of the characters in the drama. It is one of a series of compound divine designations that begin with *'ēl* and this preface is used seven times in the OT: Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; Exod 6:3 and Ezek 10:5.

The translation “Almighty” goes back at least to the LXX, which translates the term as παντοκράτωρ “all powerful” or “to terrify,” signifying the God who is manifested by the terribleness of his mighty acts. “The Storm God,” from the Hebrew שֶׁפַךְ “to pour out,” has been suggested, but is improbable. Its use in patriarchal times highlights a development from slack Semitic conceptions towards a more stringent monotheistic idea of almightiness, and is in agreement with the early idea of deity as a God of dread, or even awe. Its monotheistic nature is in accord with its use in the time of Abraham and this is reflected in its translation in the Vg., *omnipotens*. More recently, these previous proposals have been all but discarded and new ones have replaced them. One of the more acceptable ideas is that the phrase is to be associated with the Hebrew verb שָׁחַת “to destroy,” consequently “my destroyer.” Another option that is probably the most widely accepted in modern times, is that *shaddai* is to be connected with the Akkadian word, *šadu* or “mountain.” Therefore, אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי would translate into something similar to “God/*El* of the mountain.” The ending *-ay* is to be appreciated as an adjectival suffix (and consequently the translation “of the...”).

As אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרַי Yahweh manifested himself to the patriarchs (Exod 6:3), particularly to Abraham in Gen 17:1; to Isaac in Gen 28:3; and to Jacob in Gen 35:11; 43:14; 48:3. The context for the majority of these references is the covenant, more accurately the demand for compliance and faithfulness on the part of the people toward their God. It is noteworthy that the faithful people do not look towards natural phenomena (the hills) for assurance but to the God of these hills, *El* of the mountain (Ps 121:1-2).

Frank Moore Cross observes that the designation “is not firmly fixed in cultic aetiology”<sup>76</sup> but does highlight Gen 48:3 as an example of how the Priestly source attaches the name to Bethel. William F. Albright has shown that the name derives from northern Mesopotamian roots and came to Canaan with the ancestors of the Israelites as a patriarchal family god. He translates the term as “mountaineer.”<sup>77</sup> Bernhard Anderson translates the term as “The Mountain One,” or an exalted deity who lives on a mountain. He indicates points of similarity between *Shaddai* and the Canaanites god *El*, but notes that theological differences in the nature of Israel’s God and the covenant relationship called for fundamentally different responses in worship and morality.<sup>78</sup> Roland De Vaux points to the enhanced qualities of Yahweh worship at cult sites formally used for worshipping *El* and highlights how the characteristics of the god *El* would have transferred to *Shaddai*, namely that

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<sup>76</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 47.

<sup>77</sup> William F. Albright, “The Names of Shaddai and Abram,” *JBL* 54 (1935): 192-93.

<sup>78</sup> Bernhard Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1986), 43.

he was the “one and only God, author and guarantor of the promises made to their race.”<sup>79</sup>

In the text of the book of Isaiah, the term only appears in one instance, Isa 13:6 “Howl, for the day of the Yahweh is near; it will come like devastation from *Shaddai*.” This is also the only occurrence of the term in any of the prophetic corpus. Some commentators would read its use here simply as a poetic display of assonance, but the more widely accepted viewpoint is that the author of the text wished to convey the more devastating and destructive aspects of the divine through allusion to its verbal stem.<sup>80</sup>

### 31. The Most High (עֶלְיֹן)

#### 31. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 14:14        |                |              |

#### 31. ii. Meaning and Use

*‘elyôn* is a common term in the book of Psalms as a divine designation (9:3; 21:8; 46:5; 50:14; 73:11; 77:11; 78:17; 83:19; 87:5; 91:1, 9; 92:2; 107:11) as well as in Num 24:16 and Deut 32:8 where it can also be translated as “highest.” As it only occurs once in the book of Isaiah, its use in this respect will be examined in the context of this single application.

<sup>79</sup> Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (trans. John McHugh; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968), 294.

<sup>80</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 279.

## 32. Your Husband (בעל־יָד)

### 32. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 54:5           |              |

### 32. ii. Meaning and Use

The use of the term “husband” in relation to God is a more common term in the Old Testament than many modern readers may think. In this sense in 54:5, it is important to note the possessive sense of “your” and the fact that a direct translation of the term yields more of a sense of “the one who will marry you.” The emphasis is therefore placed on the process of becoming husband and wife (in terms of an elaboration on the covenantal relationship) rather than on an existing husband and wife relationship. The use of the term is examined in chapter 5 in the context of 54:4-6.

## 33. Father (אב)

### 33. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              |                | 63:16        |
|              |                | 64:8         |

### 33. ii. Meaning and Use

The use of the term “father” in relation to Yahweh in the OT as a whole is quite limited and therefore its use in the text of the Trito-Isaiah warrants

attention. It is studied in detail in chapter 5 of this work, in the context of 63:15-19.

### 34. Rock (צֶוֶר)

#### 34. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 17:10        | 44:8           |              |
| 26:4         |                |              |

#### 34. ii. Meaning and Use

The term “rock” is the only purely metaphorical divine designation that features in this study. The meaning of the term is very much connected with the idea of Yahweh as a foundation and solid anchor for his people and their worship and it is occasionally translated as “mountain.” Investigations of the term will also lead to valuable insights into the poetic techniques of the writers of the texts in which it features. The term is studied in detail in chapter 5, in the context of 17:7-11.

### 35. First and Last

#### 35. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|
|              | 41:4           |              |
|              | 44:6           |              |
|              | 48:12          |              |



### 35. ii. Meaning and Use

The classification of “first and last” as a divine designation was the most problematic of the 36 designations, due to that fact that although the term is essentially different in terms of word order and context in the three instances cited above, the meaning of the three phrases is essentially the same. This designation has also been overshadowed somewhat by the use of the phrase “I am the alpha and the omega,” in Revelations (1:8; 21:6; 22:13) and its meaning is normally connected with the first and last letters of the alphabet. In order to understand this in context, the three verses will be examined in detail in chapter 4.

## 36. God-'el (אל)

### 36. i. Statistical Tables of Use in the Book of Isaiah

| Proto-Isaiah | Deutero-Isaiah    | Trito-Isaiah |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 8:10         | 40:18             |              |
| 10:21        | 42:5              |              |
| 12:2         | 43:12             |              |
| 14:13        | 45:14, 15, 21, 22 |              |
| 31:3         | 46:9              |              |

### 36. ii. Meaning and Use

The question of the relationship between the biblical use of אל and the Semitic concepts of *El* has received much attention particularly since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts, which have apparently established the fact that the term *El* was used in reference to a personal god and not merely as a

generic term in the ancient Semitic world. It is also the most widely distributed name among Semitic-speaking peoples for the deity, occurring in some form in every Semitic language except Ethiopic. Marvin Pope, in his study of the term in the Ugaritic, notes that it is the most frequently occurring name for the deity in proper name throughout the ancient Semitic world.<sup>81</sup> It is found throughout the OT, but most frequently in the book of Job and the book of Psalms. In the book of Job, the term is treated by Job and his friends as the common term for the true God and its use there, unlike other parts of the OT, far outnumbers the occurrence of Elohîm (אלהים). The term seldom occurs in the historical books, and not at all in Leviticus. The same variety of derivations is attributed to this term as to אלהים, the most probable of which is Hebrew: 'ul, "to be strong." The primary meanings of this root as used in biblical texts are "god" (pagan or false gods) "God" (the true God of Israel) and less frequently, "the mighty" (referring to people or angels).

The etymology of the word is obscure.<sup>82</sup> It is frequently combined with nouns or adjectives in order to express particular attributes or phases of Yahweh e.g. 'El 'Elyon, 'El-Ro'i, etc. Typically, 'el is an appellative, with roughly the same semantic range as the term אלהים.<sup>83</sup> The word can therefore be preceded by the article: ha-'el, "the [true] God" (Ps 18:31, 33, 48; 57:3). Like אלהים, אל can be employed in reference to an "alien god" (Deut 32:12; Mal 2:11) or a "strange god" (Ps 44:21; 81:10). It can also have the plural form אל, "heavenly beings" (Exod 15:11). Moreover, אל not

<sup>81</sup> Marvin Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, VTSup 2 (1955): 1.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>83</sup> Louis Hartman, "God, Names of," *EncJud* 7:674.

אלהים, is used when Yahweh is contrasted with his people, (Num 23:19; Isa 31:3; Ezek 28:9; Hos 11:9; Job 25:4).

Andrew Davidson has observed the pronounced tendency in Scripture to accompany אל with epithets. Indeed, as the word, as used in biblical texts, is studied, it must be concluded that it is usually qualified by words or descriptions that further define the word. This leads Davidson to conclude that these qualifications both elevate the concept of אל in Scripture and distinguish the term as used biblically from others who might be so named.<sup>84</sup>

The first the use of אל in terms denoting God's greatness or superiority over all other gods: האל הגדול "the great El" (Jer 32:18; Ps 77:13, 95:3);

אל אלים "God of the gods," (Dan 11:36). There are also the designations relating to El's position:

אל השמים "El of heaven" (Ps 136:26); אל ממעל "El that is above" (Job 31:28); ואל עליון "El most high" (Gen 14:18-19, 20, 22; Ps 78:35). Again,

as a precaution against over familiarity with God because of the use of a common Semitic term, God is described as אל מסתתר "El who hides himself" (i.e. known only by self-revelation as in Isa 45:15).

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<sup>84</sup> Andrew Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907), 61.

### III. Conclusion

Now that the divine designations have been detailed in a clear manner, interesting patterns have become immediately evident. There is evidence of designations that are present only in one section of the text (for example, “the Most High” which only appears in Proto-Isaiah). There are designations that appear in two sections but not in a third, most notably Yahweh Sabaoth, which does not feature in Trito-Isaiah and designations that are used infrequently in the OT (e.g. “the God of your ancestor David,” that only appears in Isa 38:5 and 2Kgs 20:5).

While recognising the criticisms that follow an etymological reading of a term, its inclusion in this work has been necessary in order to gain a better understanding of the term in its historical and literary context. The study has also given rise to the need for a more context-based approach as without reference to the text in which the 36 designations occur, their reference is merely part of an inexplicable statistical analysis of their distribution and contributes little, apart from solid groundwork, to the hermeneutical exegesis of the text.

While the data with regard to the text has been assimilated, the issue of a hermeneutical method with which to approach the exegesis of the designations has not yet been broached. It is beneficial at this stage to examine the designations in a more cultural and sociological light so that their influence on biblical texts, in particular that of the book of Isaiah, may be more fully understood.

## Chapter 3

### Names and Naming: Towards a Hermeneutical Model

#### I. Introduction

Following on from the presentation of the divine designations, in this section, three important stages have to be examined in order to proceed towards forming a hermeneutical model to examine the divine designations as they appear in the book of Isaiah.

The primary stage is to explore the significance of names and naming, including the human perspective of naming and some more complex issues involving the use of names that have been raised by the philosophical approach to language. Continuing in this framework is a focus on the work of Trygve Mettinger, which has raised some interesting questions, especially with regard to the historical development of Israel's religious institutions and theology with respect to the naming of God in Israelite religious texts.

Finally, the historical survey of the directions of research with regard to the book of Isaiah in Ch. 1 has raised a number of complex, and perhaps even insoluble, issues. Post-modern exegesis of the text has moved from a preoccupation with historical questions (diachronic) to questions that are founded on poetic and literary readings of the text (synchronic), prompted by modern exegetical methodologies. This in turn raises issues that are pertinent

to the nature of exegesis and hermeneutics. In the search for a paradigm for this research, the work of Luis Alonso Schökel may be particularly instructive given his interest in the book of Isaiah. The final section of this chapter will sketch briefly the main lines of his research of the hermeneutical, exegetical, and poetical issues of the text and the particularly useful distinction between the “micro” and the “macro” structures of the text as well as a focus on their interrelationship.

## **II. Names and Naming**

### **II. i. The Importance of Names and Naming**

The discussion of the importance of names, especially in relation to biblical names is a complex one. In our everyday lives, names are such an integral part of our thinking and more vitally, our communication with each other that their use is barely noticed, much less their importance. It is essential at the outset to closely examine the human process of allocating names to others and how these names are used to communicate. Naturally, one must assume the criticism that how humans name each other is entirely different to the divine designations. In response to this, it may be argued that the divine names are fundamentally an extension of how humans use names, as they are primarily used in a literary context and to communicate an idea of the divine from human to human. The thinking behind the names given to a divine entity is similar, if not identical, to how humans use names in communication with each other. This theory was touched upon in the previous discussion of semantics and language and will be elaborated on in this section.

When linguist A.P. Cohen highlights the “very different kinds of significance which naming has in different societies and cultures,” this must be taken as a warning of the complexity in a study of names, and naming, whether in the purely earthly realm or with divine names.<sup>1</sup> Even within one society, the process of naming can differ between small groups such as families, or in a temporal sense between generations. A simple modern illustration of this is the common practice in many Western societies of naming a child after a parent or grandparent. Irish families tend to name a first-born child after a parent; in particular, a boy is often given the first name of his father or his grandfather. In America, the practice of giving a male child the identical name to his father is commonplace, with the distinction made between the two by calling the father “senior” and the child “junior.” Arab fathers take the name of their first child with the prefix “the father of...” or “*abu*.” Placed in a wider cultural realm, there are wide variations to these practices. For example, the custom of first-born sons taking their father’s first name as a memorial name and using it as their first name upon his death is not confined to a particular religion or society. The process of naming therefore must be acknowledged as an inherently complex one and it requires a certain degree of anthropological and sociological understanding in order to fully comprehend the possibilities of its communications. There must also be a degree of acknowledgment of the social realm in which the names are being used, but also the fact that even in biblical times there will be outside influences and cultures that will inspire names and naming.

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<sup>1</sup> A.P. Cohen, “Naming,” *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics* 5:2674.

Ward Goodenough concludes in his study of names and naming, that names communicate ideas of the self and of self-other relationships.<sup>2</sup> Goodenough's anthropological approach to the process of naming is very interesting to include in this study. His work examines the customary practice in anthropology of naming and identity. This is the assumption of an isomorphism (the identity of form and of operations between two or more groups) between the conclusion of a particular anthropological reading, and the means by which the people named, made sense of, and gave meaning to, their existence and self-knowledge, their experience of being named. Therefore, if naming is a way of asserting and maintaining control of something, then it follows that any study of naming has tended to be an illustration of the controlling ways where people have produced images and cultures from their own cognisant thinking and from this developed a sense of "selves."

## **II. ii. Naming- The Human Perspective**

The idea of human names is sociologically and anthropologically universal. Names are normally seen as a proper noun, or a word or phrase "constituting the individual designation by which a particular person or thing is known, referred to or addressed."<sup>3</sup> A "common name" is a name for a plant or animal in the native language of its environment, often describing the item's appearance. For example, "daisy" may describe several unrelated plants with small white flowers in different parts of the world. There are millions of

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<sup>2</sup> Ward Goodenough "Personal Names and Modes of Address in Two Oceanic Societies," in Melford Spiro ed., *Context and Meaning in Cultural Anthropology* (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1965), 275.

<sup>3</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Edition, s.v. "Name." Online: <http://www.oed.com>



possible objects that can be described in science, too many to create common names for every one. A “personal name” is a proper name attached to a person, such as a given name or a family name. An “identifier” is another word for a name, used in technical terminology, and generally refers to a name that is unique within a certain namespace. Fredrick Mathewson Denny defines the phenomenon of naming very precisely as being “central to human symbolic and communicative processes. To be human is the name, and to be named, and thereby to possess full being and the ability to relate to the world in meaningful ways.”<sup>4</sup>

### II. iii. Philosophical Approach to Names

Proper names operate in a similar way to common nouns in many natural languages (or a person’s native language). Philosophers have thus often treated the two as similar in meaning. In the late nineteenth century, the mathematical philosopher Gottlob Frege contended that several perplexing features of both names and nouns could be resolved if the two aspects to the meaning of a name (and, by extension, other nouns) were recognized.<sup>5</sup> The first, a “sense,” which is equivalent to some sort of description, and the second a “referent.” Frege does not give a precise characterization of the category of “proper names.”<sup>6</sup> Rather, in keeping with the idea of “sense,” the sense of *dog* might be “domestic canine mammal,” and the referent would be all the dogs in this world. Proper names would then be special cases of nouns

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<sup>4</sup> Frederick Mathewson Denny, “Names and Naming,” *ER* 10:300.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* (London, Boston & Henley: Routledge & Kegan, 1980), 159.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Dummett, *Frege. Philosophy of Language* (London: Duckworth, 1973), 54.

with only one referent: the sense of *Aristotle* might be, “the author of *de Caelo*,” while its referent would be the one person, Aristotle himself.

Bertrand Russell rejected Frege’s thinking, and instead maintained that “true” names must never be equivalent to a description.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, he accepted that most of the “names” in English were actually correspondent to descriptions, particularly definite descriptions or descriptions that only apply to one object. If any real names existed, they were almost certainly more like “this” and “that.” This belief is more practically interpreted as the observation that there are two different functions nouns can serve, namely describing (and perhaps indirectly referring); and referring (directly, without description); and that all or almost all names in the English language really do the former. This position came to be known as “Descriptivism” with respect to singular terms, and was prominent through much of twentieth-century analytic philosophy.

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* sets out his theory of language, namely that language provides a way of coping with, what one might call, “everyday purposes,” and it works well within that context. However, when everyday language attempts to explain something beyond what it is capable of, problems tend to arise. Primarily, this is what is known as the “say/show distinction:” that which can be said can also be shown but there is that which can only be shown, not said. In other words, that which can only be shown “we must pass over in silence.” At the core of Wittgenstein’s philosophy, for this work at least, is the idea that:

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Beary, “Russell and Frege,” in Nicholas Griffin, *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell* (Cambridge: University Press, c2003), 166.

...the individual words in language name objects---sentences are combinations of such names.-----In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.<sup>8</sup>

Essentially, what Wittgenstein wishes to emphasise is that one may associate the use of a word with the word's referring to an object, but the kind of reference is already agreed.<sup>9</sup> He also reiterates throughout his work the connection between the reference of a name and its bearer. When the bearer of a personal proper name dies, the name does not lose its reference. This has repercussions for the biblical, and indeed modern, practice of memorial names, where a person takes or gives a name in remembrance of someone who has died. The name lives on.

Interestingly for the focus of this work, Wittgenstein quotes Augustine to contrast the word-based interpretation of language with the approach that he himself will develop (subsequently called "Ordinary Language Philosophy"). After his conversion to Christianity, Augustine actually gave up his first attempt at reading the book of Isaiah as he "did not understand the first passage of the book, and thought the whole would be equally obscure," so he left it aside until he "had more practice in the Lord's style of language."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; trans. G.E.M. Anscombe; Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 2e.

<sup>9</sup> Fergus Kerr, *Theology after Wittgenstein* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: SPCK, 1997), 70.

<sup>10</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* (trans. Henry Chadwick; Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 163 (IX, V). "*verum tamen ego primam huius lectionem non intellegens totumque talem arbitrans distuli repetendum exercitior in dominico eloquio*" James

In 1970, Saul Kripke gave a series of lectures arguing against Descriptivism or “private language,” and maintaining, amongst other things, that names are inflexible designators or expressions that refer to their objects independently of any properties those objects have.<sup>11</sup> Unquestionably, descriptions are often used to select references, to explain to others what object is being talked about, by reference to some property or characteristic that both parties agree it has; but it does not follow that any of these characteristics represent the meaning of the name. Kripke's work led to the development of various versions of the causal theory of reference, which in various forms, claims that our words mean what they do, not because of descriptions that are associated with them, but because of the causal history of our acquisition of that name in our vocabulary.

## II. iv. A Christian Approach

A more recent philosophical report on the use of divine names in the particular setting of Christian dialogue is useful to introduce at this point. Carlo Huber follows the lines of the philosophical methods known in linguistic analysis and phenomenology to address the theological problem of “the meaningfulness and reasonability of that which Christians say about God.”<sup>12</sup> Huber identifies “three distinct linguistic levels: the human, the religious, the Christian.”<sup>13</sup> The human level refers to the significance for the

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O'Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions, Introduction and Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 108.

<sup>11</sup> Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language. An Elementary Exposition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Carlo Huber, *Speaking of God* (Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000), 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

“lay” community. The religious level has consequences for the transcendent significance and finally the significance that is particular to the Christian experience. Huber’s work is essential as it is yet another layer of context that must be recognised when analysing the divine designations. This designation is one that is present outside of the text itself and is more correctly connected with the reader and their response to the text as well as the meaning of designation for a wider community. With the level of the “lay” significance, Huber highlights how the religious meaning is only indirectly introduced into human language.<sup>14</sup> He discusses the important point that must be included in this study, namely that there are negative as well as positive implications. This is relevant in particular with familial terms such as “father” but may also hold true for expressions such as “king” or “judge.” In relation to the religious transcendent meaning, Huber stresses that “the meaning of a phrase to be used in speaking about God must be capable of being gradually stretched to infinity.”<sup>15</sup> In this instance, infinity is a sense of the everlasting property of the name and the name cannot be taken away once it is designated. It also signifies the fact that the name designates an absolute. If God is termed the father, for example, he is *the* father, above all others. In terms of the attributes of God, Huber intends them to be seen in “a logical sense...as any *predicate* (function) that can be united with the subject ‘God’.”<sup>16</sup> Huber also emphasises the need to use our own human language when we speak of God. These words already have a meaning, through their everyday use. Huber calls the change that they undergo when used as a designation for God “specific

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 49.

shading” and ultimately the “*non-religious significance* of a word constitutes the *model* for it (*sic*) use in speaking about God.<sup>17</sup> The terms used for God must have three characteristics:<sup>18</sup>

1. A *positive* connotation, by which Huber means that it must express a meaning of a moral, social, or economic order. Terms that are not positive must be in the negative, simply put; they should be of the form “God is not evil.”
2. “a horizontally analogical meaning” at the human or “lay” level of significance where only expressions that can be used analogically in dialogue that is not religious can be used as designations for God.
3. There must be *graduations* of significance already existing at the level of human use. This is associated with the notion that the meaning of the word must be able to exist and be comprehended for all time.

## II. v. The Function of a Name

A human name essentially has two functions in western culture. The first is to distinguish one person from another. Shakespeare famously wrote:

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other word would smell as sweet;”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>19</sup> William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, (ed. Brian Gibbons; London; New York: Routledge, 1991), II, ii, 43-44. Many editions of this work replace “word” with “name” in

In the same way that if each human were to be given a number, this number would serve the same purpose as a name; to tell us apart from one another and in terms of oral communication, to signify ourselves as an entity to others. The second function of the name has the opposite task from distinguishing ourselves from others, that is, to form an association with a familial group or a community or a lineage. A clear example of this is in northern European languages where the patronymic was indicated by adding the father's given name to *-son* and *-dotter* in Sweden, *-son* and *-datter* in Danish and Norwegian. The importance of this association can be seen in the tradition of females taking their husband's family name on marriage as a designation of joining a new family unit.

Linguistic scholars who have studied proper names usually emphasise that such names have referential, denotative meaning, but no connotative meaning. In our circle of people we are familiar with, we know who is meant by "Mary" or "Peter" as the names have a reference value. We also know whom "Mr Smith," "The Minister for Foreign Affairs," and "the President" are if our communicable context is taken into account. For example, George Bush would be "the President" if we were American or if we were a newscaster reading a piece on American politics. To change the context is to shift the referential meaning of a name. This simple example is well worth keeping in mind when the biblical texts are examined. The context from which the text is based needs to be appreciated otherwise we run the risk

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this line. The majority of scholars prefer to rely on the Second Quarto rendition that reads "word."

of failing to deduce the meaning of the name, either incorrectly or failing to realise it at all.

Ordinarily, there is no special significance placed on the names themselves. Some may choose to name their children after a family member or a person they admire. Some may choose to create their own name, usually by altering the spelling of an existing name or amalgamating two or even three names. The names themselves are very rarely significant in themselves; the referent makes them important. Only those who study onomastics or etymology would have an interest in the word that is the signifier.

It is worth noting that in Hebrew, the situation is changed somewhat and there is one more characteristic of a name, i.e. a name may denote some feature considered fundamental to what is designated. For example, the root meaning of a given Hebrew word is often apparent, no matter how the word is inflected. Therefore, in the majority of cases, Israelite proper names were fully comprehensible to the Israelites. In the ancient world in general, a name “was not merely a convenient collocation of sounds by which a person, place or thing could be identified; rather a name expressed something of the very essence of that which was being named.”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, they included more than simple reference content. Normally these names would have had a connotative meaning and it is easy to divide them into their linguistic component parts and as a result to settle on their meaning, such as “Isaiah” would have been fully understandable to Israelites as “the Lord saves.” This is also applicable with Hebrew divine names. The result of this is that any

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<sup>20</sup> Karla Bohmbach, “Names and Naming,” *EDB*, 944.



attempt to determine their linguistic derivation and etymology is well founded, and will allow for a thorough examination of the name. Furthermore, it is a logical belief that the etymology of a divine name would have had clear associative potential for the people of Israel and would be necessary in disclosing the true essence of the person to whom the name referred.

### **III. Names and Naming in a Biblical Context**

There has been a considerable amount of written work based on the significance of names and naming in the Bible, and in the OT in particular. As Wesley Fuerst prompts the reader, it is important to remember that, “how Israel conceived of and addressed God, and how God was conceived of and addressed in the Old Testament, are two quite distinct questions.”<sup>21</sup> Discerning the meanings of names in the Bible, much like counting them, is difficult. The meanings of names are sometimes doubtful or contested. Occasionally the text itself provides more than one meaning for a name. Alternatively, more often, no meaning at all is provided, forcing us to depend on our knowledge of biblical languages, as well as their cognates, for derivation of a name’s meaning. In addition, a certain name may have originally had a specific allusion attached to it that is now lost, or it may have had none at all. Given these difficulties, caution must be taken in examining the names in the biblical context. Although precise details cannot always be provided, general patterns and trends can be identified with some conviction.

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<sup>21</sup> Wesley Fuerst, “How Israel Conceived of and Addressed God,” in *Our Naming of God: Problems and Prospects of God-talk Today* (ed. Carl Braaten; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, c1989), 61.

In general, it is seen that “in biblical thought a name is not a mere label of identification.”<sup>22</sup> Names “often carry enormous significance, being inextricably connected to the very nature of that which is named. Hence, to know the name is to know something of the fundamental traits, nature or destiny of the name’s bearer.”<sup>23</sup>

The actual term “name” deserves some examination as it occurs 643 times in the OT.<sup>24</sup> The common Hebrew term for “name” is the noun שֵׁם. The derivation of שֵׁם which is an ancient term, is uncertain and obscure. It may be derived from the root שָׁמַר, “to be high,” and hence have the primary meaning of “monument” or “memorial” (e.g. Isa 55:13).<sup>25</sup> This would imply the sense of “majesty” and “excellence” (Ps 54:1). Another possible derivation is from the root שָׁם, “to brand or to mark,” in which case the original meaning would be “sign” or “token.” שָׁם is also translated “renown” and “well-known” in various English Bible translations, for example “renown” in Gen 6:4 (NRSV) and Num 16:2 (KJV).

A lesser-used term is the noun זָכַר (literally “remembrance” or “memorial”), derived from the verb זָכַר “to remember.” It is translated “name” in Ps 30:4; 97:12; 102:12; Hos 12:5. It is used as a parallel to שָׁם in

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<sup>22</sup> Abba, “Name,” 500.

<sup>23</sup> Karla Bohmbach, “Names and Naming in the Biblical World,” in Carol Meyers ed., *Women in Scripture. A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> In the NRSV edition. The term “name” occurs 939 times if all English translations of the OT are taken into consideration.

<sup>25</sup> Abba, “Name,” 501.

Exod 3:15; Job 18:17; Ps 135:13; Prov 10:7; Isa 26:8 (in the ASV it is rendered “thy memorial name”).

With so much importance placed on the giving of a name, the study of onomastics, or the science of names should be included at this point. This branch of social science covers a wide range of names such as personal, place, brand, pet, yacht, and team. Within the Bible, onomastics, though it is rarely termed as such, concentrates on place names, personal names (both given and family names), the divine designations. Through this research a vast amount of work on the science of onomastics can be found, but very little on this discipline actually applied as such to the Bible, much less the OT.

There is a consensus among onomatologists that proper names can be derived, both semantically and morphologically, from an appellative (or common noun) or some other “per-individualizing” ground form.<sup>26</sup> Initially the proper name and the ground form from which it is derived are homophones. The range of their use, however, is markedly different. Any appellative has both a content and an area of employment. The more precise the semantic content of the word, the more reserved its use is. Since a proper name has an exceedingly rich content, its range of applicability is reduced to a minimum.

In English, names are usually associated with nouns, both common and proper. A common noun is one that does not state the name of a specific person, place etc. In English, a common noun begins with a lower case letter. These nouns are sometimes termed substantive. A proper noun is one that

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<sup>26</sup> Scott C. Layton, *Archaic Features of Canaanite Personal Names in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta, Ga., Scholars Press, 1990), 1.

states the name of a specific person etc. In English, this type of noun is capitalized. Nouns generally have the same function in Biblical Hebrew as they do in English. Since capitalization is not a phenomenon in Biblical Hebrew, common and proper nouns are not distinguished in writing. This is relatively simple and there is little argument with those names or titles that are designated by a noun. Those titles that are formed using an adjective or a verb usually cause disagreement among commentators and as such deserve significant consideration.

An important point, which many commentators do not focus on, is that “knowledge of the name facilitates community”<sup>27</sup> and if the name of a person or deity is known, they may be summoned or “invoked.” In this context, awareness of the name indicates a level of influence over the person, then the person’s name also has corresponding effect and can be used both for good as well as evil objectives. John Sawyer also notes that: “there is often a perceived connection between bearing a name and existing.”<sup>28</sup> He refers to the ancient Sumerian creation epic *Enuma elish*, in particular the opening words of the first tablet “When on high the heaven had not been named, Firm ground below has not been called by name.”<sup>29</sup> He sees the term “named” as representing the creation of the heavens and the earth. Sawyer infers that the process of naming, especially in terms of naming newborns and children, ensures “their very existence as well as their identity.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> A.S. van der Woude, “𐤊𐤍 šēm name,” *TLOT* 3:1351.

<sup>28</sup> John Sawyer, “Names: Religious Beliefs,” *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics* 5:2672.

<sup>29</sup> “The Creation Epic,” translated by E.A. Speiser (*ANET*, 61).

<sup>30</sup> Sawyer, “Names: Religious Beliefs,” *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics* 5:2672.

### III. i. Naming The Divine

The exercise of examining the divine designations is naturally quite complex, though not as difficult as commentators such as Herbert Chanan Brichto might presume. Chanan Brichto sees the “problem” of examining the names as “so complex that movements toward the solution may be impeded, distorted, or even blocked by its formulation in the singular.”<sup>31</sup> Admittedly, the task is large as both literal and metaphorical terminology is dealt with.<sup>32</sup> In the OT, as well as in other traditions, the name of the deity is believed to have special significance. Firstly, it is important to remember that in relation to the name of God that the people of Israel probably “did not think in any fundamentally different way than in respect to *human* personal names.”<sup>33</sup> A second point to take into account is that the Israelites would have been heavily influenced by neighbouring cultures and societies as well as by other religions in how they chose names to designate their deity.

Martin Rose highlights how Israel’s God could be referred to by using a number of “names, titles, and epithets in the Hebrew Bible.”<sup>34</sup> Some of the designations are used in both the generic and specific sense. Others are used only as the personal name for Israel’s God. Most these terms were also used by the Canaanites in reference to their pagan gods. This is not surprising as the early Israelites “spoke the language of Canaan” (Isa 19:18). The designations are significant as indicators of the developments in the course of

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<sup>31</sup> Herbert Chanan Brichto, *The Names of God. Poetic Readings in Biblical Beginnings* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

<sup>32</sup> John Gabel et al., eds., *The Bible as Literature. An Introduction* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.; New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 313.

<sup>33</sup> Rose, “Names of God in the Old Testament,” 1002. Emphasis Rose’s.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1001.

Israel's religious history as expressions of concepts of the divine held by the ancient Israelites. They cannot be referred to as original attributes of the Israelite worship of God, rather both as a collective unit and individually, they reflect the history of the dialogue between the OT faith in God and the surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures.

Othmar Keel describes how these early Israelites would have also borrowed from surrounding cultures their "conceptions of the cosmic system, the institutions of temple and kingship, and numerous cultic forms."<sup>35</sup> Even though the Israelites would naturally have put their own "stamp" on these traditionally held views and adapted them for their own language and religious viewpoints, Keel is keen to point out that they would have their own experiences and consequently concepts of God that they would have brought to this new setting.

### **III. ii. Limits of Language**

"Nothing in the world - no kin, no animal (bull!), no constellation of stars - can adequately embody Yahweh."<sup>36</sup> Repeatedly the texts of the OT raise objections to any ideas that God can fully be comprehended through images of him as father, king, judge, etc. The OT is a collection of texts that are written by humans for communication to humans. The texts may be inspired but that does not diminish the limitations that humans will have in expressing their thinking and representations of the divine. Describing God is similar to recounting a colour to a blind person. Other senses can be elaborated on;

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<sup>35</sup> Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World. Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. Timothy Hallet; New York, N.Y.: The Seabury Press, 1978), 178.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

“green” may be associated with the feel and taste of fresh shoots but it cannot be described accurately as it is a concept that is unique to each person and a result of their lived experience. Humans have limits in the use of language in describing something that is not physically concrete and not visually experienced. No human possesses anything that could be remotely seen as a universal language, and even within our own language, we have a limited vocabulary and are technically inadequate in our use of this vocabulary. For example, the poet Seamus Heaney may have more success in describing the colour green but the description and explanation would still be specific to him and his experience. How would a Bedouin tribesman who lived a nomadic life in a desert describe green? The same difficulty would be present in a writer who lived in a republic with a democratically elected government, for example, America, describing his god as a king. With intelligence, there is also the conviction among humans that “we have the unwitting conviction that if something is there, we should see it, that is something is explained, we should understand it.”<sup>37</sup> This inversely follows that if something cannot be understood, then its significance tends to be diminished.

### **III. iii. Anthropomorphism**

This limitation of language gives rise to the problem of anthropomorphism, applying to God the meaning of words as they apply to us, as we are the only beings of whom we have firsthand knowledge. This is trying to understand God as if God were patterned on us rather than the other way around. Nonetheless, as we are made in the image of God as Gen 1:27 states “so God

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<sup>37</sup> William O’Malley, *God. The Oldest Question* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2000), 13.

created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” In the same way as we can find out something about the artist by looking at their paintings, by understanding the essence of humanity we can try to form a clearer idea of God. God is therefore not anthropomorphic; rather as human beings, we are theomorphic. When we consider the elements in human nature that make us distinct from animals then we can begin to develop a remote insight into God. In fact, the OT never speaks of God without attributing human traits to him. There is scarcely any OT anthropomorphism that cannot be paralleled in other Semitic literature, as the gods of other ancient Semitic groups were personifications of natural forces or social realities to which human features and behaviour were attributed.

Harry Orlinsky conducted a survey of anthropomorphisms in the LXX of Isaiah. He concluded that, leaving aside chapters 36-39 as they require separate study, the writers of the LXX did not find the use of anthropomorphisms offensive and “reproduced the Hebrew terms literally and correctly.”<sup>38</sup> Edwin Yamauchi investigates the contrasting concepts of deity that are visible in the OT through use of anthropomorphisms. He uses an examination of mainly pagan religions, in particular Egyptian, to illustrate his argument and his work provides a good insight into how “foreign” worship would have influenced the authors of the text of the book of Isaiah, particularly with respect to designations that would indicate a monotheistic

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<sup>38</sup> Harry Orlinsky, “The Treatment of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms in the Septuagint of Isaiah,” *HUCA* 27 (1956): 200.



belief.<sup>39</sup> This is important as “the epithets which the Egyptians applied to their gods also bear valuable testimony concerning the ideas which they held about God.”<sup>40</sup>

#### **IV. Categorising the Designations**

In order to systematically study the divine designations in the book of Isaiah it is necessary to comprehensively categorise the thirty-six principal designations that have been located in the text, under the three headings: name, title, and epithet. This is essential, as a systematic study of the designations cannot be conducted without identifying which heading they come under, as each category will have its own theological implications as well a different approach in terms of etymological and grammatical analysis. The insistence on this cataloguing also comes from the fact that many discussions and surveys of the divine designations do not succeed in communicating a successful argument as a direct result of a degree of ambiguity with regard to defining what are the appellations they refer to in their study. Often there are examples of arbitrary usage of the terminology and some commentators will switch back and forth between the categories, for example referring to “Yahweh Sabaoth” as a name for Yahweh in one section and a title in another. Many even switch intermittently between the three classifications when even talking about divine designations in general.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Edwin Yamauchi, “Anthropomorphism in Ancient Religions,” *BSac* 125 (1968): 34.

<sup>40</sup> Ernest Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Religion: Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life* (New York: Bell Publishing Company, 1975), 35.

<sup>41</sup> The most recent example to hand is Daniel O’Kennedy, “The Use of the Epithet יהוה צבאות in Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi” (paper presented at the International

There are such underlying conceptions regarding the classifications in modern society and a general lack of comprehension of the role they played in ancient and biblical societies that there is an inherent need for clearer divisions. Having previously discussed the implications of “name,” it is now necessary to explore the grammatical and historical uses of title and epithet.

### **a. Title**

In modern societies a title is normally viewed as a formal appellation in the form of a prefix or suffix to the name of a person or family by virtue of their office, rank, hereditary privilege, noble birth or attainment. It is usually seen as a mark of respect and the list of titles present in different historical periods and societies is exhaustive. To give a short example in current usage, titles for a head of state can be divided into those for appointed heads of state; those elected or popularly proclaimed (chairperson, Colonel, Pope, Regent); those that are inherited (Chief, Duke, Emperor, King, and Prince). It is noteworthy that there is varied usage of these titles with the person’s name. For example, the President of a country is usually given their title in conjunction with their family name. Modern monarchical systems work with the title and the person’s first (given) name. This classification goes against the grain of the usual use of the family name, as monarchies are based on an inherited position and therefore the family name is taken as given, as in the Windsor family of Great Britain. In relation to what this study can bring to the examination of divine titles, it makes any examination and definition of the titles more

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Meeting of the SBL, Edinburgh, Scotland, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2006). O’Kennedy terms **תְּהוּהָ צִבְאוֹת** a name and epithet interchangeably throughout the paper.

straightforward, if the premise that the titles are essentially an identifying appellation in the form of an address that signifies status or function is adopted.

## **b. Epithet**

An epithet (from the Greek and Latin *epitheton*, literally meaning “imposed”) is a descriptive word or phrase. It has various degrees of meaning when applied to linguistics and religion.

In linguistics an epithet is often metaphoric, essentially a reduced or condensed appositive. Epithets are sometimes attached to a person’s name, as what might be described as a glorified nickname. Not every adjective is an epithet, even worn clichés. An epithet is linked to its noun by long-established usage and some are not otherwise employed. Some epithets are known as *epitheton necessarium* because they are required to distinguish the bearers, e.g. an alternative to ordinals after a king’s name such as Richard the Lionheart. The same epithet can be used repeatedly, in different spheres of life or joined to different names, a common example being Alexander the Great as well as Catherine the Great. Other epithets, *epitheton ornans* can easily be omitted without serious risk of confusion, thus Virgil systematically called the arms-bearer of Aeneas, his principal hero, *fidus Achates*, the epithet being *fidus*, which means loyal or faithful.

In ancient pagan religions, for example, Greek, Roman, and Egyptian, a deity’s epithet (or rather each one, as the principal gods often had many) generally reflected a particular aspect of that god’s myth and role. For example, Apollo *Musagetes* is “Apollo, [as] leader of the Muses” and

therefore patron of the arts and sciences, while *Phoebos* Apollo is the same deity but as a sun god. The epithet may also identify a particular and localized aspect of the god, sometimes already ancient during the classical epochs of Greece and Rome, such as a reference to the mythological place of birth or another origin. It often appears to refer simply to a main centre of worship and possible cultic tradition there, but often this is actually the result of an intercultural equation of a divinity with another, who is usually older. Therefore, most Roman gods and goddesses, especially the twelve principal gods, had traditional counterparts in Greek, Etruscan, and most other Mediterranean pantheons. For example, Jupiter as father of the Olympian gods with Zeus, but in specific cult places there may even be a different equation, based on one specific aspect of the divinity. Thus, the Greek *τρισημεγιστος* was first used as a Greek name for the Egyptian god of science and invention, Thot.

## V. Tryggve Mettinger

Mettinger is the Professor Emeritus of OT at Lund Universitet and is one of the few scholars to place any great emphasis on a systematic study of the divine designations. He differs in this respect from the two scholars that have been previously referred to in this regard, (Bonnard and Blenkinsopp), as he looks at the designations within both their biblical and extra-biblical contexts, not merely in one particular text. While his focus from this study principally rests on the contribution to “name theology,”<sup>42</sup> his work is important in this

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<sup>42</sup> The theory of “name theology” originated with Gerhard Von Rad in *Studies in Deuteronomy*, (trans. Davis Stalker; Studies in Biblical Theology 9; London: SCM Press,

work as it allows a prototype of how the designations may be successfully studied (once the emphasis is placed on the particular context), and how this study can bring a meaningful contribution to the study of a theology.

In terms of the book of Isaiah, Mettinger has focused his work on this text predominantly on the subject of the Servant Songs,<sup>43</sup> though of course he does refer to the text in other works, particularly in his work on Yahweh as King in Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>44</sup> In this work, he examines the idea of a text (such as 52:7-10) being a part of a “macro-context”<sup>45</sup> and by examination of the designation “king,” not just in its immediate context but in the context of the immediate text, a fuller understanding of the term may be determined. This idea of contextualised study is a prevailing theme through much of Mettinger’s work on the divine designations, not only in the medium of the biblical text but on external influences, such as historical and cultural settings. Two of Mettinger’s principal works will now be examined with a view to locating a model of hermeneutical approach to the divine designations in the book of Isaiah.

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1959), 33-44. Von Rad suggests an evolutionary development, whereby material presence of Yahweh was replaced by a more sophisticated tendency toward hypostasis for all these concepts: the ark, the angel of the Lord, the face of the Lord, the glory and name of God are presented as representations and pledges of Yahweh’s presence. A modern study is Sandra Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: lēšakkēn šēmo šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (BZAW 318; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2002).

<sup>43</sup> Trygve Mettinger, *A Farewell to the Servant Songs: A Critical Examination of an Exegetical Axiom* (Scripta Minora: Regiae Societatus Humaniorum Litterarum Lundenis 1982-1983:3; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1983).

<sup>44</sup> Trygve Mettinger, “In Search of the Hidden Structure: YHWH as King in Isaiah 40-55,” in Craig Broyles and Craig Evans eds., *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah, Studies of an Interpretative Tradition* (Vol 1; Leiden/New York/Köln; Brill, 1997), 143-154. This article is an updated version of the essay published under the same title in *SEÁ* 51-52 (1986-87), 148-157. This article has been updated with an excursus on the Servant Songs issue.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

### a. *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*

The principal issue addressed by Mettinger in *The Dethronement of Sabaoth. Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* is why the term Yahweh Sabaoth which was the principal divine designation used in the temple theology of the Jerusalem cult tradition was substituted in the deuteronomistic and priestly materials and in the book of Ezekiel by the šēm and kābôd theologies respectively. Mettinger surmises that this “dethronement” or substitution was the result of “cognitive dissonance”<sup>46</sup> that was created by the circumstances affecting the exiles, where the idea of the enthronement of Yahweh in the temple was no longer a satisfactory one.

Mettinger allows for an overview of the Zion-Sabaoth theology of the Jerusalem cult tradition with the fundamental theory of the enthroned God and his actual presence in the temple. He associates the cultic symbols of the cherubim (whose wings made Yahweh a throne) and the ark (his footstool) with the “original and complete title,” יְהוָה יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרֻבִּים or the essential term for the divine presence. Mettinger also asserts that “the enthroned king and the coming God” were originally “two diametrically apposed aspects of God,” but that they were combined into “a *complementary*, rather than a contradictory, relationship” with the temple theology and consequently “are by no means to be played off against each other.”<sup>47</sup> Mettinger goes on to discuss the “name theology” of the Deuteronomistic School, and the kābôd theology of the Priestly source and of Ezekiel. He

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<sup>46</sup> Tryggve Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth. Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (ConBOT 18; Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 36. Emphasis Mettinger's.

reviews the biblical name formulae and preceding critical work of von Rad and van der Woude amongst others, asserting that there is a systematic “name theology” in the deuteronomistic history, which is a determined amendment to the Zion-Sabaoth theology. The Deuteronomist is conceptual in comparison to other biblical writers, emphasising the transcendence of Yahweh.<sup>48</sup> The Deuteronomistic version of the ark and the cherubim represents a “conscious suppression of the notion of the God who sat enthroned in the Temple.”<sup>49</sup> Mettinger uses the texts of 1Kgs 8:14-66 and 2Sam 7:5, 13 as evidence to support his claims. He considers that the development of the name theology occurred after the Babylonian takeover of Jerusalem in 597 B.C.E.<sup>50</sup> and that there is no evidence for a pre-exilic name theology in Jer 62-66. Proposals are also made that the “dethronement of Sabaoth” as articulated in the name theology is also echoed liturgically, in the change in prominence from the autumn festival to Passover that occurred during the Josianic era. The move represents a swing from the mythical concept of divine kingship (*Chaos kampf* and creation) to one of *Heilsgeschichte* (exodus and the formation of a nation).

Mettinger builds on the “Yahweh Sabaoth-the Heavenly King of the Cherubim Throne” philosophy, or more accurately the term “Sabaoth” which he views as the key indicator of this profound theological shift of ideas in ancient Israel. The Sabaoth designation “played an important role during the Davidic-Solomonic era”<sup>51</sup> but is rare in the literature that is concerned with

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 13.

the history of the monarchy, as it is principally associated with the ark traditions. The term is “the pre-eminent term employed in the Jerusalem tradition for the God who dwelt in the Temple...indeed the key-word in the classical Jerusalemite theology of the Presence.”<sup>52</sup> This specific realization of the divine presence is fundamentally altered in the “programmatically abstract” deuteronomic tradition which “shattered this unitary conception by emphasizing the transcendence of God,” so that “God became ‘relocated’ to the heavens above.”<sup>53</sup> In the work of the Deuteronomist, “it is only the Name which ‘is’ in the Temple, and ...the Temple was constructed ‘for the name of the Lord,’ and not as a dwelling place for the enthroned God himself.”<sup>54</sup>

### **b. *In Search of God***

This book is a theological work that builds on Mettinger’s previous historical work. The text is not directed to a purely academic audience (for example, there is a glossary of technical words and phrases) but it presents the reader with a thorough argument as to the historical and theological importance of the divine designations in the Old and New Testaments. Its aim is to “offer an exegetical treatment of the most representative divine names, with a view to revealing the underlying theological conceptions.”<sup>55</sup> The first half of the book focuses on the importance of names in ancient Israel and in particular the divine name, Yahweh. He moves chronologically from the divine

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

<sup>55</sup> Tryggve Mettinger, *In Search of God: the Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (trans. Frederick H. Cryer; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c1998); trans. of *Nament och närvaron. Gudsnamn och gudsbild i Böckernas Bok*. (Ölibris, 1987). xi. Interestingly, in light of the work on Alonso Schökel, the only other language this work has been translated into was Spanish.



designations in the patriarchal narratives, such as “the god of the fathers,” “’ēl shadday,” through designations that were created in reaction to the Canaanite religion, such as “the living God.” The latter half of the book focuses on the roles of Yahweh, as a king, as the Lord of the Hosts (which Mettinger associates with “king”), Redeemer, Saviour, and Creator. Prominence is always placed on the dynamic and contextual characteristics of the OT’s understanding of God.

Mettinger notes that the ultimate concern of biblical texts is to understand theologically the divine plan. These biblical (con)texts provide the framework for a proper understanding of the divine designations. He observes the clear differences between Yahweh and other deities (such as those of the Canaanite religion). For example, Yahweh does not die and he is not portrayed as having sexual relationships. Mettinger poses the question as to whether this is something that is ingrained in the Israelite religion or whether it is a later development of Israel’s understanding of Yahweh.<sup>56</sup> This particular aspect of Mettinger’s work is somewhat problematic as he does not appear to compare “like with like,”<sup>57</sup> namely the Canaanite religion was a fertility religion (and therefore sexual charged images of the deity would not be unusual), whereas the Israelite religion was very much an historical one.

Mettinger does not accept Mowinckel’s theory regarding a festival celebrating the royal enthronement of Yahweh in Israel, but believes in an over-reaction to the concept, many commentators have failed to adequately take account of the ideas that it highlighted. He does however recognise the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>57</sup> In agreement in this regard, Mark Smith in his review of *In Search of God*, *JBL* 109 (1990): 314.

term “king” as a root metaphor on which many other divine designations are based.<sup>58</sup>

Mettinger’s work is very important for this study, especially in relation to its historical and archaeological aspects. The book makes use of non-biblical texts and iconographical materials from the ancient Near East. Mettinger often makes use of Israel’s adaptations of symbols, ideas and ideologies that were prominent in other contemporary cultures.

### **V. i. Mettinger’s Contribution to the Hermeneutical Model**

Mettinger primarily establishes the importance of the divine designations in biblical literature and theology. This is mainly done with a view to the exploration of name theology, but his study validates the theory that the designations may be used as a valid hermeneutical key for an examination of a biblical text. His assertion that it is “a reasonable supposition that the etymology of a divine name held certain associative possibilities for the Israelites”<sup>59</sup> underlines the need for an etymological study to be an inherent part of the hermeneutical model, at least at the groundwork level. Mettinger also allows for a preliminary idea of the importance of studying the divine designations not only in the “macro-context” of the chapters and verses that surround it, but also in the context of the historical, cultural, and political influences that may have been prevalent at the time of writing and redaction. This idea of “context” and “structure” is very important for the study of the divine designations and needs to be more fully addressed.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 12.

## VI. Luis Alonso Schökel

Luis Alonso Schökel was born in Madrid to a Spanish father and German mother in 1920. He became Professor of Biblical Interpretation at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome in February 1957 and continued an auspicious teaching career there until his death in 1998.

During his career, Alonso Schökel published dozens of books and many articles (there are 290 articles under his name in the catalogue of the Pontifical Biblical Institute alone). He published his first major work, *Historia de la literatura griega y latina* in 1945 and *La formation del estilo* (The formation of style) in 1947. His 1959 work, *El hombre de hoy ante la Biblia* (The person of today in the presence of the Bible) shows his keen understanding of the changing currents in biblical criticism. He published his doctoral thesis in 1963, *Estudios de poética hebrea*, a work that would form the basis of his work for the rest of his career and would be revised and republished in 1987 as *Hermeneútica de la Palabra II: Interpretación literaria de textos bíblicos*.

Evidently, with such an impressive bibliography, it would be impossible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the catalogue of Alonso Schökel's work. Instead, there will be a more general focus on his contribution to biblical poetry, Catholic biblical exegesis, and Spanish language biblical studies with a view to composing a hermeneutical model. To link in with the subject of this work, particular attention will also be paid as to how Alonso Schökel uses Isaiah in his work, whether in a general discussion of the text or as an example in an examination of various literary techniques.

**a. "Hermeneutics in the light of language and literature" (1962)**

This paper was delivered to the Catholic Biblical Association of America in 1962. Alonso Schökel's aim in this paper was to classify the intrinsic ideologies in a hermeneutical examination of any text, even a text that is extra biblical. He identified the core problem, namely that many biblical scholars have arrived at a situation where they perceive hermeneutical theory as something that can be applied to any piece of literature, for example, the written work of Shakespeare, Dylan Thomas or T.S. Eliot, and in so doing, disregard the spiritual aspect of the work. He made the point that "if there is anyone who is able to speak with absolute lack of ambiguity and to make himself understood with irresistible efficacy"<sup>60</sup> it is Yahweh. Therefore, if there were any text that would not necessitate the use of hermeneutics to construe the meaning, it would be the inspired texts of the Bible, where Yahweh speaks without ambiguity. It is nonetheless because this word of God is conveyed to its audience through the words of humans, that it needs a hermeneutic to make certain that the word of God is understood in its fullest and most articulate way.

In order to investigate this more deeply, Alonso Schökel concentrated on the nature of language and literature. For him, "language is itself a complex hermeneutic activity,"<sup>61</sup> where the external world is put into human terms and contexts and consequently into a form that is communicable to humans. Through this very practice, an act of interpretation is being

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<sup>60</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, "Hermeneutics in the Light of Language and Literature," *CBQ* 25 (1963): 371.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

performed. Through language, humans are also capable of expressing and communicating their interior selves. By interpreting their own inner thought-process and articulating it as language by means of verbal communication, humans make known themselves to others and for that reason exhibit the hermeneutic function of language.

Certainly, the contrary procedure of comprehending what other humans communicate to us is also an interpretative one. Alonso Schökel identified that in every day circumstances, “this twofold and correlative hermeneutic operation takes place without tensions or problems; it is a hermeneutic process, and a highly complex one, but without the hermeneutic problem.”<sup>62</sup> This hypothesis is also applied to the reading and understanding of a literary work, in terms of an approach to the text, the pre-knowledge of the author, their objective, and most significantly, the literary form of the text. “By transposing religious facts and experiences into literary forms, the biblical writers make them communicable and permanent. By giving them a form, they do not deform them, by interpreting they do not falsify.”<sup>63</sup>

The principal difficulty identified by Alonso Schökel in the hermeneutics of the OT is not the Hebrew language, but the poetical language that is so often used in the text and how to switch the literary language of the Bible into the technical language used by theology. There is also the issue that the language that God’s self-revelation is imparted to the reader in is “ancient and alien;”<sup>64</sup> while it asserts its intention to speak to all generations its language, style and form are very much fixed in a specific historical period.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 376-77.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 377

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 382.

Alonso Schökel did not propose a solution to the problem in this short piece. Rather, by elucidating the problem he could highlight the notion of language as the ideal starting point in which to begin to explore the text hermeneutically using the insights and techniques of artistic investigation. To commence a “coherent theory” an “efficacious methodology”<sup>65</sup> should be formulated so that the literary reality where Yahweh’s word is personified is interpreted and understood.

### **b. *The Literary Language of the Bible* (1963)**

This work is very text specific and tends to elaborate on the technical aspects of biblical hermeneutics only in the particular textual instances it discusses, rather than a general review. The key question that Alonso Schökel poses throughout the text is: “in current biblical exegesis, we dedicate much space and time to identify the author or authors of a text, the sources with their authors, the successive hands with their authors. Is this concern proportionate?”<sup>66</sup> If an understanding of the text is reached whereby the author may be identified the text may be then understood. Alonso Schökel seemed to suggest that these are, to a degree, extra-textual issues, and that too much concentration on them might risk obscuring what might be learned from a more specific concentration on the language of the text and its play. Both these explanations are theoretically probable and plausible and often they are, as Alonso Schökel stated, “dialectically intertwined.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 386.

<sup>66</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, *The Literary Language of the Bible: The Collected Essays of Luis Alonso Schökel* (BIBAL Collected Essays 3; North Richland Hills, Texas: BIBAL Press, 2000), 10.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 10.

In terms of this work on the divine designations in the book of Isaiah, his analysis of Jesus Christ as redeemer is interesting. He poses the question, “is Jesus Christ the redeemer because he has redeemed us, or has he redeemed us because he is a redeemer?”<sup>68</sup> In this first instance, the act is the medium for the title, as when Yahweh is termed the Creator for having created as described in Genesis. In the second case, the term designates an office that necessitates or allows the carrying out of an action, for example the person who judges because they are a judge or nurses because they are a nurse (it is their designated job). Alonso Schökel discusses which of these two explanations is preferable. Dogmatic theologians would normally opt for the first as reading into the term “redeemer” the more general definition, “saviour.” Dogmatic theology applies the same scheme to both terms. In OT theology, according to Alonso Schökel, the second explanation is preferred as the texts *impose* it.<sup>69</sup> He sees the distinction between the two as significant for two reasons. Initially, it can help the reader to clearly understand a christological title and secondly, the way in which the OT reacts to the choice shows that a significant feature of redemption has been ignored. Rationally speaking it would appear as if the two eliminate each other. Alonso Schökel would rather see them as complimenting each other “in the profound view of the mystery”<sup>70</sup> and sees the designation as being used of Yahweh in the OT as a symbol that is open to mystery. “In dogmatic theology, ‘redeemer’ is a concept that is defined with respect to other related notions. In the Old Testament, ‘redeemer,’ as applied to God, is one of a number of symbols that

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>69</sup> Emphasis mine.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 79.

is open to mystery.”<sup>71</sup> Alonso Schökel makes clear that he does not wholeheartedly agree with the stance of dogmatic theology in this regard.

### **c. *Estudios de Poética Hebrea* (1963)**

In this work, Alonso Schökel attempts to consider how the inspiration of biblical writers relates to their texts. He surmises that if knowledge of rhetorical and stylistic studies in various literatures ancient and modern and the intuition properly applied, their findings can yield valuable insights into the biblical text.<sup>72</sup> This work does not cover a wide range of Hebrew poetry; it is limited primarily to the book of Isaiah, with few but well chosen examples from other prophetic texts. His most important contribution lies in his demonstration of an objective approach. He addresses a number of subjects in great depth, namely rhythm and parallelism, synonymy and antithesis, imagery and versification, poetic clichés and the artistic use of sound in assonance, alliteration, and onomatopoeia. His conclusions in these areas form the basis for a careful consideration of the literary importance of selected texts from the first thirty-five chapters of Isaiah.

### **d. *Isaías* (1968)**

This book is part of a series that was welcomed upon publication as being a new and fresh translation of the Bible into Spanish. Over half of *Isaías* devoted to introduction, notes, and commentary. The notes abound in stylistic

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>72</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, *Estudios de Poética Hebrea* (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1963).



and poetic analysis.<sup>73</sup> Alonso Schökel saw his readers as being predominately Catholic, and while respecting the liturgical and theological uses of certain well-known texts in Isaiah, he is also careful to draw the reader's attention to the literal meaning of the text. For example, in 7:14, the young woman (*la joven*) is the king's young wife and the son is Hezekiah, but that through the Jewish tradition of the LXX, the Church has discussed here a deep prophetic level of which ultimately Christ is the object. Similarly in dealing with Isa 52:13-53:12 he points out that while Christian tradition sees Christ as the servant the passage originally referred to an anonymous Jew of the Exile. In Isa 2:3 the "mountain of the Lord" is seen in strongly Christological terms, obliterating the distinction between what the prophet said and how the Church has come to see it.

#### **e. "Is Exegesis Necessary?" (1971)**

This article provides an interesting examination of the tensions between what Alonso Schökel describes as "scientific exegesis" and the tradition of the Catholic Church. "Is scientific exegesis necessary or does the Church possess a prior, broader understanding of Scripture than that provided by exegesis?"<sup>74</sup> The friction between the two is mainly due to what Alonso Schökel describes a "terminological barricade"<sup>75</sup> or technical language of exegesis and the question of whether "specialist" study of the Bible can enhance the pastoral experience of the text.

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<sup>73</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, *Isaías (Los Libros Sagrados)*; ed. Luis Alonso Schökel, Juan Mateos, José María Valverde; Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1968).

<sup>74</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, "Is Exegesis Necessary?" in *Theology, Exegesis, and Proclamation*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971): 30.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

#### **f. "Hermeneutical Problems of a Literary Study of the Bible" (1974)**

This was a paper presented to the Eighth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the OT in Edinburgh 1974. It is a general examination of the merits of "literary science," and the effect that this has on the study of biblical texts. "If literary form is pure form, irrelevant and extrinsic to the meaning, then it does not interest us for the study of the Bible."<sup>76</sup> He highlighted the importance of form, as "in literature the form is meaningful."<sup>77</sup> In terms of interpretation, the "reader and interpreter of a text have only the text before themselves, not a pre-existent or underlying meaning."<sup>78</sup> It is therefore the charge of the reader and the interpreter to perceive and explain all the noteworthy symbols and characteristics present within the text as well as its arrangement and structure.

#### **g. *Literary Guide to the Bible* (1988)**

In *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, edited by Robert Alter, to which Alonso Schökel contributed the chapter on the book of Isaiah, he stated that Isaiah is "one of the richest and most important books of the Old Testament."<sup>79</sup> By way of introduction to the text, Alonso Schökel offers some general notions on fundamental concepts in the study of Hebrew poetry such as poetry as "the formal correspondence of two consecutive brief utterances"<sup>80</sup> and

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<sup>76</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, "Hermeneutical Problems of a Literary Study of the Bible," *VTSup* 28 (1975): 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>79</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, "Isaiah," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (eds. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode; London: Collins, 1988), 165.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

onomatopoeia, “a form of description in which the arrangement of phonemes in a given language imitates in sound the meaning of words.”<sup>81</sup> In terms of the book of Isaiah, Alonso Schökel focuses on the imagination of the poet in creating images from “nature, domestic or city life.”<sup>82</sup> These imaginative aspects are often not instantly visible in the poetry; the ease with which the reader or interpreter assimilates the concept behind the creations renders what could be seen as fantastical and whimsical as in fact quite unambiguous. To this end, metaphors are rarely employed while similes are used frequently in order to enhance the theological message of the text. For Alonso Schökel the most interesting literary aspect of the text of Isaiah is “the transformation of an experienced reality into a new, coherent, poetic universe.”<sup>83</sup> This experienced reality is the visionary encounter of the prophet and it is through his skill of poetic technique that this vision is made “real” for his audiences. Portraying the experience as a reality is only one layer of the prophetic process; the coherency necessary for audiences to fully comprehend the message gained through the “experienced reality” is more difficult to achieve. One of the most successful methods for achieving this is to use the medium of the familiar, by conveying the message in terms that would be known to the audience and by possibly relating it to historic, yet well-known situations. Again, this link with reality and known images would have made the message that the prophet wished to convey more easily communicable to his audience. Obviously modern readers will experience a certain degree of difficulty in deciphering the message without prior knowledge of certain historical and

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 172.

geographical markers. Rather than see this as an obstacle, the modern reader should therefore seek to educate themselves on certain contextual facts of the texts which they wish to examine, for example something as simple as knowing the monarchical structure of ancient Israel will open the text, and bring its prophetic message to the fore.

#### **h. *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (1988)**

This is a translation by Adrian Gaffey of material in Alonso Schökel's *Hermeneútica de la Palabra II: Interpretación literaria de textos bíblicos*<sup>84</sup> with adaptations by the author. It is based on his 1957 doctoral dissertation. The text is a manual that initiates the reader into the stylistic analysis of Hebrew poetry. It is not a reference work but a "hands-on" type of introduction. Alonso Schökel "closes the circle" to use his own words, on a subject that first engaged his attention close to forty years previously when he began his doctoral dissertation, subsequently published as *Estudios de poética hebrea*.<sup>85</sup> This volume goes over some of the ground covered in the 1963 study, but it gathers into the discussion many of the insights relating to poetics and stylistics that were features of the author's OT commentaries and other writings. While the purpose of the volume is not to convey information on Hebrew poetics as practiced previously, some account is taken of the work of other scholars, and the text pauses every so often to note relevant literature. Alonso Schökel's aim is to initiate his readers into the stylistic analysis of

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<sup>84</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, *Hermeneútica de la Palabra II: Interpretación literaria de textos bíblicos*, (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1987).

<sup>85</sup> Alonso Schökel, *Estudios de poética hebrea*.

Hebrew poetry. He encourages his readers to think about questions of context and function, as against plunging into ever more subtleties of classification in a quest for “geometric perfection”<sup>86</sup> in the uncovering of Hebrew poetic form and style.

In describing the stylistics of biblical poetry, Alonso Schökel regularly emphasises examples over precepts. If he sometimes finds it useful to classify certain aspects of Hebrew verse, he is foremost committed to the accurate reading of the poetry itself. In his conviction that the most felicitous way for students to learn about the stylistics of Hebrew verse is for them to study and imitate how “clear-sighted and experienced experts analyze poems,”<sup>87</sup> he sides with the opinions of Alter. By opening with the claim that ancient Israel cherished its texts for both their sacred and literary merits, he offers a brief historical sketch of dominant literary approaches to the Bible. He next focuses on poetic genres both “according to the Hebrews” (inspecting various Hebrew nouns for different literary forms and regarding them as too imprecise to be helpful) and according to 20<sup>th</sup> century literary theory. Aware that several critics can virtually assume that biblical texts should be “seen and not heard” or rather studied as purely text and not associated with the oral tradition from which they are derived, Alonso Schökel redresses this misappropriation through an instructive chapter on the sounds of poetry. Several commentators, including Edward Greenstein<sup>88</sup> note that the work would have benefited from reference to Adele Berlin’s work on phonology in

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<sup>86</sup> Robert Gordon, Review of Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, VT 40 (1990): 379.

<sup>87</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (trans. Adrian Gaffey; *SubBi* 11; Rome: Editrice pontificio biblico, 1988), 200.

<sup>88</sup> Edward Greenstein, review of *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, JAOS 114 (1994): 507-508.

biblical texts. This is rather unfair considering that the greater part of Berlin's work was not published until the early 1990s. Berlin discusses phonology in the context of parallelism in biblical Hebrew poetry and therefore focuses on the concept of "sound pairs," the repetition and contrast of sounds in parallel lines and more specifically consonant sounds in the text. In terms of parallelism, Berlin notes that "phonologic equivalences and contrasts are often present in parallel lines and they contribute to the perception of correspondence between the lines."<sup>89</sup> In this context, Alonso Schökel does refer to "word pairs,"<sup>90</sup> noting that Deutero-Isaiah, who was skilled at four line structuring of poetics was also able to broaden the range of word pairs that were typically used by the prophets. In terms of Alonso Schökel's focus on the necessity of poetry, particularly that of biblical poetry to be understood in terms of its oral tradition and to be heard, rather than read, the study of Alonso Schökel's view of parallelism should be juxtaposed with that of Berlin's.

Some of Alonso Schökel's best work is seen in the chapter on images that are "the glory, perhaps, the essence of poetry."<sup>91</sup> The concluding chapter considers various figures of speech, dialogue and monologue and the evolving stages of "development and composition" that proceed from the poet's initial grasp of a theme to the finalizing the poem as a unified whole. This is an important line of reasoning in light of any examination of the book of Isaiah. The theme of a section, especially in terms of poetical texts should be

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<sup>89</sup> Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 103.

<sup>90</sup> Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 61.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

traceable through the lines of poetry and in such cases; the unified structure of the piece should be able to be more easily identified.

The *Manual* is often compared with Wilfred Watson's *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Technique*.<sup>92</sup> Alonso Schökel himself often quotes from or alludes to Watson's text and the book itself occurs frequently in the bibliographies at the end of the individual chapters. The *Manual* is also compared with the work of Robert Alter, especially his work, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*.<sup>93</sup>

Alonso Schökel sees Alter as "insufficiently technical"<sup>94</sup> and Watson as "overly technical."<sup>95</sup> With this, one would expect Alonso Schökel to use a poetic device such as parallelism as an interpretative tool for generating meaning, rather than seeing the juxtapositions of sense in a parallel couplet as an interplay of repetition and difference.<sup>96</sup> Instead, like Alter, he treats parallelism more as a structuring tool that he distinguishes from synonymy, a technique in which an idea is prolonged for the purposes of emotional effect and "contemplation."

Alonso Schökel looks at the ancient Hebrew poem as a whole, a complex composition of many and varied conventional components, purposely arranged in an original way. Certain repeated phonemes and rhythmic patterns convey meaning apart from the sense of the words that

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<sup>92</sup> Wilfred Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Technique* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1986). Greenstein, review of *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*: 507-508.

<sup>93</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

<sup>94</sup> Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 4.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>96</sup> For example, James Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

embody them, for example, “an accumulation of iambic feet gives a sense of urgency and speed” in Isa 1:10-20.<sup>97</sup>

### **i. The Book of Isaiah in *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics***

Parallelism serves to “amplify the picture given”<sup>98</sup> in Deutero-Isaiah and in Proto-Isaiah it serves the purpose of concentrating attention. Alonso Schökel puts forward the theory that the reverse of this situation may also be true, namely that the poet wishes to move away from describing something in grand and epic terms and instead wishes to encapsulate it in a few characteristics. Proto-Isaiah shows “the value of parallelism as a mould which compresses and constricts, as a structure which provides greater tension and as a creative poetic technique.”<sup>99</sup>

The fact that Alonso Schökel uses so many texts from Isaiah to illustrate his text and theories, such as repetition, parallelism, antithesis describing a changing situation, exclamations, inanimate beings behaving like men, personification of death etc., only serves to highlight the poetic range and skill of the authors of the text of Isaiah. He refers to Ludwig Köhler, who in his study of Deutero-Isaiah, comments on the frequent instances of synonymy; “abundance replaces exactness,”<sup>100</sup> “he has need of volume...the form must say more than the contents.”<sup>101</sup> In relation to the overall benefits of synonymy, Alonso Schökel deduces that “poetic synonymy is a technique for

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<sup>97</sup> Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 38.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>100</sup> Ludwig Köhler, *Deuterojesaja (Jesaja 40-55) stilkritisch untersucht* (BZAW 37; Griesen: A. Töpelmann, 1923), 80.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.



presenting variety in equality”<sup>102</sup> and by expressing a range of emotions in one sentence. Good technical poetry is about a depth of expression in its brevity of language and a developed skill in the use of synonymy allows this depth of expression to flourish. Isa 30:8-14 is one of the finest examples of parallelism in Hebrew poetry, according to Alonso Schökel, in terms of its use of a “branching out” process<sup>103</sup> whereby the normal technique of parallelism is made more complex by taking up the subject of a previous line and repeating it, often many times over to create a tree-like effect. This adds substance and lucidity to the original and core idea behind the text of the poem.

The text of the book of Isaiah is frequently referenced during Alonso Schökel’s discussion of “polarized expressions,” when a poet uses two extremes such as Alpha and Omega (e.g. “I am the Alpha and the Omega”) he is in fact encompassing everything in between, i.e. all the letters of the alphabet, the entirety. With a polarized expression, the focus is on what these two extremes have in common (as opposed to an antithesis where we look at them as opposites). In Isa 8:14, the polarity is in the change of attitude, and is expressed through the polarity of an image. For example, the rock is an unassailable place of refuge, a guarantee of security as the stone offers a firm foundation. Yahweh, however, will be “a rock one stumbles over-- a trap and a snare for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”<sup>104</sup> Alonso Schökel uses Isaiah to examine how biblical poets use this technique to represent God. “God is above and outside both human and cosmic extremes. However, the poet of

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<sup>102</sup> Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 71.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

the exile can only express this using a series of polarisations: first and last, before and after, near and far, hidden and present.”<sup>105</sup>

In chapter eight, which is based on the function of imagery, Alonso Schökel uses detailed analyses of Isaiah in “visions or intentions” techniques. In prophetic texts, the poet attempts:

a description of something in the future, something unknown. He must describe it, but he does not know what it will be like. He must proclaim it without precise details. This is when his creative imagination must come into play, combining and transforming known facts.<sup>106</sup>

This technique is used in the prophetic eschatologies, and is a useful tool for examining the unity of a text. As Alonso Schökel highlights, Isa 34 is short and therefore can achieve unity and coherence through the ability of the author to discipline his imagination.<sup>107</sup> Isaiah 24-27 is the opposite case, as the length of the text in this instance does not lend itself to maintaining a coherent and unified image “great imaginative blocks follow each other leaving some space for pieces of different types.”<sup>108</sup> In Isa 34, according to Alonso Schökel, the poet composes a catastrophe and its devastating consequences. The structure of the chapter is very deliberate with the four-fold use of the participle *kî* to introduce the anger of Yahweh, his sword, the slaughter he will conduct and the day of vengeance that Yahweh will have.

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 118.

The structure of the chapter is therefore logical and proves no difficulties for the poet in its composition or for the reader in following the text.

Alonso Schökel examines very thoroughly the representation of Yahweh in the book of Isaiah. For him, “biblical poetry is basically religious poetry. It speaks of God through the human experience of God. It sets forth revelation in human form. Its theme is transcendent; its means of expression are human.”<sup>109</sup> Broadly speaking, anything we say about Yahweh is humanizing him. This form of anthropomorphism is the means by which humans attempt to understand Yahweh and to communicate their understanding to others. Formulating his divine characteristics into oral form or indeed into written form is for the overwhelming majority of humans next to impossible. Due to that fact that we are human means that we can never fully understand Yahweh. Instead, to be able to communicate to others our attempts at understanding we place human characteristics on him. As Rémi Lack states, “l’anthropomorphisme tente d’humaniser le mystère de Dieu.”<sup>110</sup> For example, that he is male, that he has a place of residence, and if asked what our image of Yahweh is, we often describe him with human characteristics, for example having a heart. Biblical texts talk about the hand of Yahweh and describe his relationship with humanity. These metaphorical terms and imagery are not harmful and do not detract from Yahweh, rather they serve to enhance our perception of him and thus enhance our relationship with him. Alonso Schökel highlights how Yahweh cannot be “contained” in a

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>110</sup> Rémi Lack, *La Symbolique du Livre d’Isaïe* (AnBib 59; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973), 21.

temple or human dwelling and this “spatial concept”<sup>111</sup> is used to express his transcendence. The human body on Yahweh indicates the imagination of the poet, “by surprise and strangeness what cannot be expressed is put into words” and Yahweh is given “superhuman dimensions.”<sup>112</sup> There is also the important element of Yahweh as the centre of family life. He is denoted as a father, a mother, and a spouse. The “conjugal symbol” is frequent in prophetic literature as Alonso Schökel highlights, “I do not think it is right to consider this conjugal symbolism as a secondary expression of the covenant. I believe it is autonomous.”<sup>113</sup>

One of the most enlightening aspects of Alonso Schökel’s studies for this work was his discussion of the “offices and occupations” that are used symbolically of Yahweh in terms of the examination of anthropomorphism.

1. King
2. Sovereign “This is implicit in the symbol of the covenant”<sup>114</sup>
3. Warrior
4. Craftsman
5. Judge or someone taking part in a trial
6. Avenger (*gō’ēl*) “The symbol recurs in Second Isaiah”<sup>115</sup>
7. Shepherd
8. Farmer
9. Animals
10. The elements (light, fire, water)

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 135

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 136. He cites Isaiah 1:21-26 and chapters 49; 51-52; 54; 62, and 66 as examples.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 137.

Alonso Schökel also discusses the importance of dialogue, addressing the question of if there is no dialogue present in the text, is this theologically significant? “This is a developed use of the technique precisely by not using it.”<sup>116</sup> Yahweh invites the people of Israel to debate with him and he awaits their response. The gods of Babylon do not respond, as they do not exist. The lack of response when the dialogue is scarcely begun reveals that the idols are of little, if indeed any, significance. This is a prevalent theme in Deutero-Isaiah.

Another aspect of the poetical techniques that Alonso Schökel discusses is inclusion, which “defines the limits of a poem and in this sense contains the poem and brings it together.”<sup>117</sup> The function of the inclusion is to bring forth the essence of the poem. In Isa 1:21-26, repetition of the “faithful city” and “righteousness” give an outline and meaning to the poems. He highlights how the book of Isaiah is enclosed in a large inclusion.<sup>118</sup> About fifty words of the first chapter are repeated in chapters 65-66. This means that the final author desired to edit the work as a book; it does not mean that the inclusion has brought about a unity of composition throughout the book.

## **VI. i. Microstructure and Macrostructure**

Alonso Schökel engages with the idea of a “context” and “structure” in a biblical setting. He prefers not tie himself to one particular literary theory,

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 192.

choosing to engage with many of the more modern approaches to hermeneutics such as reader-response theory and the sociology of interpretation. He uses the theories of literary critics such as Paul Ricoeur to emphasize his theories that are ultimately founded on the premise of biblical texts as literary texts that have a particular meaning to particular people in a given context.

One aspect of Alonso Schökel's work that is beneficial in giving further substance to the use of the divine designations as a successful hermeneutical key is his work on the structure of a text. While he does not adopt a structuralist viewpoint, he does discuss the notion of a text as a *macrostructure* and a sentence as a *microstructure*. In perceiving the overall text as a macrostructure he sees that "the total unit affects the meaning of its parts, and that we cannot understand the meaning of each part if we do not refer to the totality."<sup>119</sup> This is in agreement with what was stated earlier. If we do not look at the book of Isaiah as a whole, then each given "section" of the text, no matter what division we adhere to, cannot be properly understood. Quite simply, there is a reason, no matter how trivial, why the books appear together and this must be acknowledged when an analysis of the text is being conducted.

Alonso Schökel's point about sentences as microstructures is the most interesting. He emphasises how the meaning of each individual word should be ascertained, then the meaning of the word within the context of the sentence. The meaning of a sentence or verse is gleaned from its component

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<sup>119</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hermeneutics* (trans. Liliana Rosa; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 127.

parts. The meaning of the complete text depends on all the verses together and the meaning of each verse depends on the whole poem, a verse-by-verse exegesis runs the risk of losing the whole unit or macrostructure from sight. When commentators search for the meaning of a particular sentence, they think that perhaps “ as a mere addition at the end, the meaning of the whole will emerge.”<sup>120</sup> As readers however, we link each element to its referent- its exterior object, without first paying attention to its connections within the text and its function in the literary unit. A sentence or verse is not to be reduced to a list of words that can be “explained” by using a dictionary or lexicon and a biblical text is not to be reduced to a list of successive sentences or verses.

Following on from the critique of redaction criticism, the principle of the whole unit that affects each part is applied. Often, this is to the detriment of the microstructures of the text and a wholly rounded meaning or theological dimension of the text may not be fully explored as a result. The principles within redaction criticism are not comprehensive enough and are often too zealously applied. Redaction criticism has been developed into an entirely new critical theory to deal with the demands posed by the Synoptic Problem and the text of the OT should not be made to “fit” the text into the critical theory. The text is that which remains static; it is hermeneutical exegesis that should be flexible.

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 128.

## **VI. ii. Alonso Schökel's Contribution to the Hermeneutical Model**

Primarily the work of Alonso Schökel has highlighted the fact that no single section of the text of the book of Isaiah may be examined in complete isolation, nor can it be made reliant on the other two sections. The aim of this study is therefore to continue to use the "compare and contrast" method. This may appear somewhat simplistic, as any concept, whether literary or theological that explored in one section would have to be compared to those which appear elsewhere in the OT and considering the centuries old theory of messianic prophecy in the book of Isaiah, particularly in Deutero-Isaiah.

Any further analysis of the text must therefore look at both sides of the redactional coin, namely at both the macrostructure and the microstructure. In terms of the macrostructure, a close examination of the formation of the book of Isaiah must be conducted with particular attention paid to the ways in which the formation has been commented on over time. With regard to the microstructure, an approach must be formed that takes account of all three sections of the book of Isaiah. A microstructure must be selected that can be analysed over the three sections, whether in terms of distribution, frequency or omission. A hermeneutical model of approach must be identified and the parameters of the study must be defined, taking care that the rigidity and limitations that redaction criticism often leads to are not encountered.

Alonso Schökel uses certain techniques of intrinsic literary criticism. He attempted to anchor the intrinsic meaning of the text in the external world



of the author's mentality<sup>121</sup> and views the job of the literary critic as "to uncover the literary and even pre-literary history of the original text, a work which is necessary if the text is to be interpreted correctly."<sup>122</sup> With these aims in mind, his use of the macro and microstructural literary approaches to the biblical text will form the core of the hermeneutical approach to the examination of the divine designations. The designations will not only be examined in the context of the microstructure they are a part of (such as the verse and chapter that they appear in) but also in their place in the macrostructure of the text (section of text, the book of Isaiah, prophetic literature etc.).

## VII. Visually Representing the Classifications

As previously acknowledged, the process of naming is a complex one, and it follows that the classification of the divine designations in the book of Isaiah is also complicated. To attempt to combat this, the classifications have been illustrated with three diagrams to better understand the process and the links that emerge between the three classifications. It also serves to highlight how many of the designations are linked and how many are "stand alone," particularly among the epithets. In total, the 36 divine designations in the book of Isaiah have been represented in their most simple form, preferably using the English translation of the designation and a short form where possible, omitting the definite article and possessive determiners where necessary.

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<sup>121</sup> Robert Bruce Robinson, *Roman Catholic Exegesis since Divino Afflante Spiritu: Hermeneutical Implications* (SBLDS 3; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988).

<sup>122</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, *Understanding Biblical Research* (trans. Peter McCord; New York: Herder & Herder, 1963), 3.

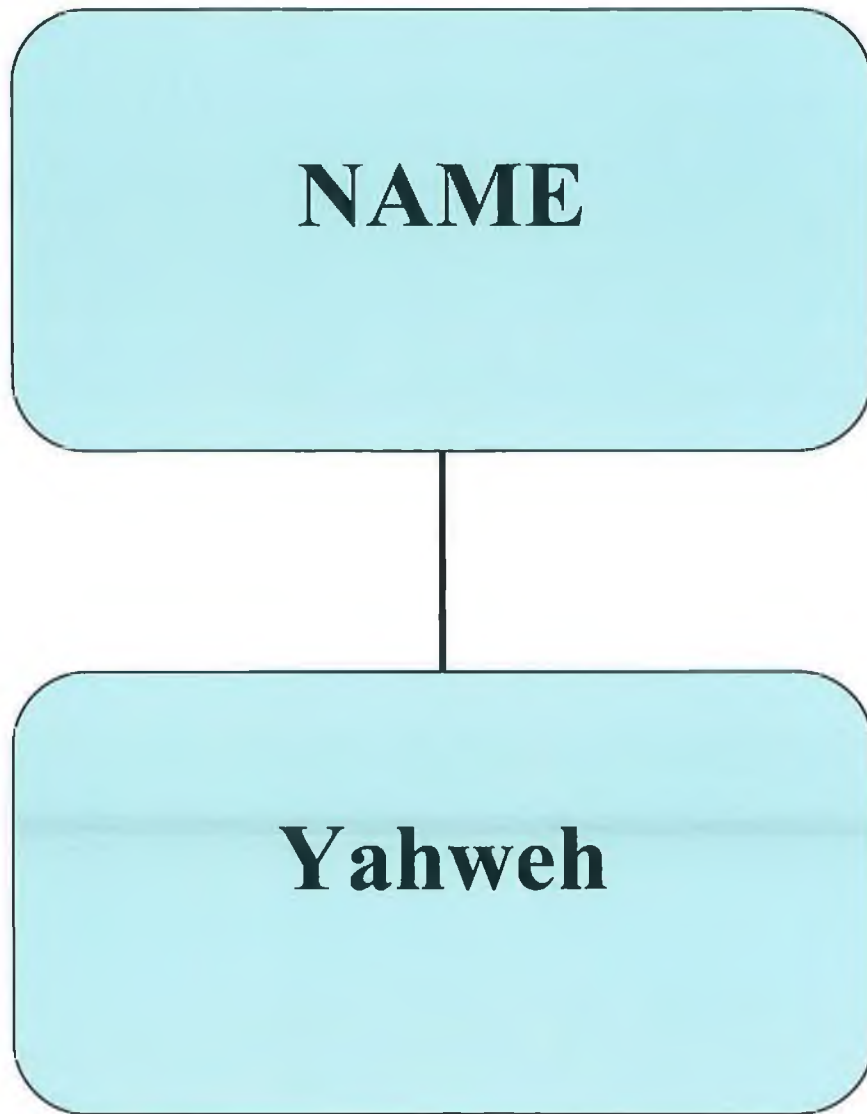
## VII. i. Explanation of Charts

There is only one “name” for God in this instance, identified as Yahweh. There is a reluctance to include any other titles associated with God in this section as the “name” of God is unique to him and immediately identifies him as set apart. The term is different to other designations that set up a relationship, such as “lord of hosts,” which associate him with the heavenly bodies or even “creator” or “maker” where there must be relationship, however tenuous, with what has been created. Expressions such as “king” are not distinctive, even “king of Israel” could refer to an earthly character. There are five main titles; *elohim* is set apart as it has such unique characteristics and theological connotations. The titles were the most difficult of the three groups to classify as many of the phrases could also be classified as epithets for their descriptive qualities. Instead, the classification of the titles is based on the element of the designation bestowing a certain role on the holder with certain duties. Again to focus on the negative, “Holy One of Israel” is not a title, as it does not indicate a societal role, rather it is noteworthy for its descriptive elements. “Creator” and “maker” have been placed on the same level, as the role that Yahweh plays in both instances is the same. With “king” there is the term “king” on its own, referring more to the attributes of Yahweh and the sub-titles of “king of Israel” and “king of Jacob” which clearly place Yahweh in a geographical context. “Yahweh Sabaoth” and “lord Yahweh of hosts” are also in the same section and “redeemer” and “saviour” have been placed together in much the same way as “creator” and “maker” as role can be seen as similar. It is interesting to note from this classification that on first drawing out the chart the “uniqueness” of each of the titles is immediately striking as

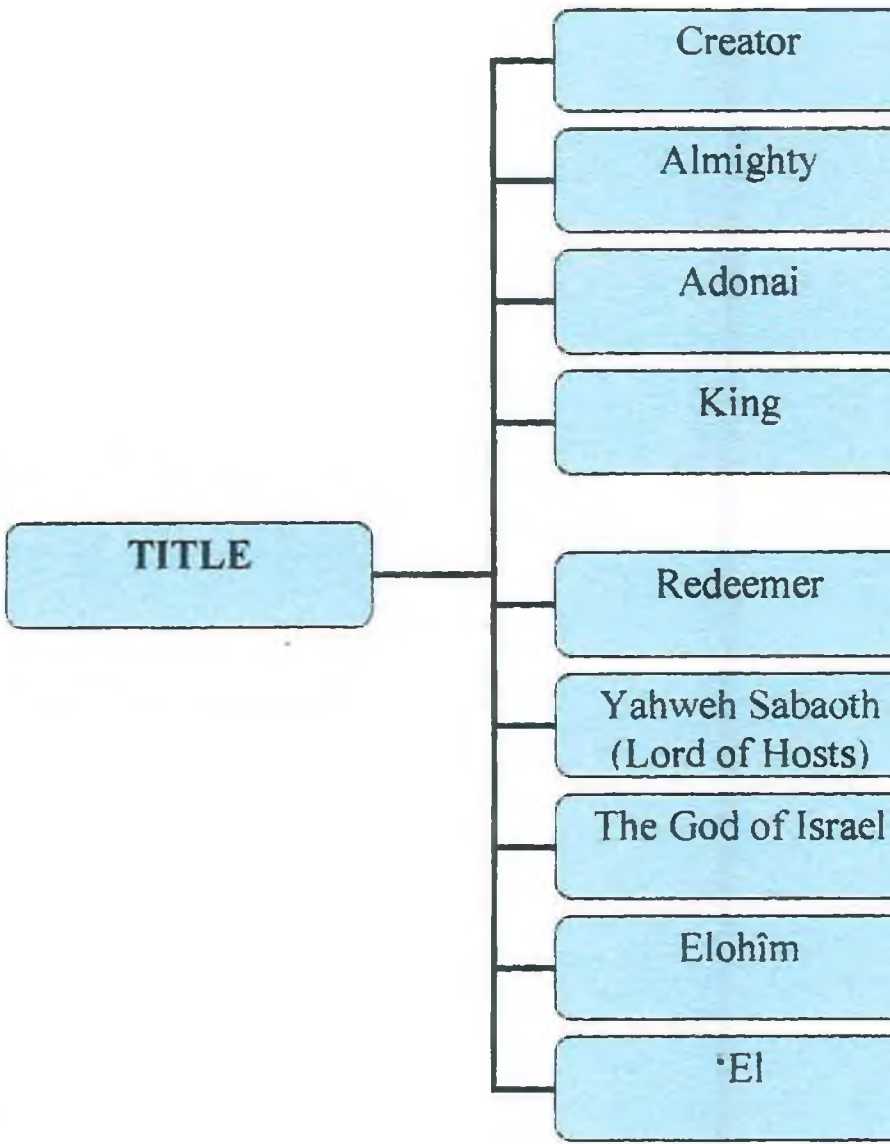
well as the fact that all ten depict a role with a very precise “job description.” In terms of “uniqueness,” in an earthly society there can be only one king in a country, just as only one person can be “lord” of a particular area (in this case there can be only one lord of the heavenly hosts). The very definition of creator, maker, redeemer, and saviour mean that only one person can be classified as such; multitude hands are not involved in the redemption. In terms of the “job description,” all ten titles come with clear specifications. There are ancient rites associated with the role of the king or lord in a society. A creator and maker must see an end product; something must be made or created for them to be termed as such, and with redeemer and saviour a process must be followed for these redemptive and saving acts to take place. All ten are significant and imposing roles to be allocated to an individual and indicate a thought-provoking insight into the God that the authors of the book of Isaiah were attempting to communicate to their audience.

In terms of the epithets, there are eight clear individual epithets. The remaining eight have been divided into four groups. Those associated with the term “holy;” “the holy god,” “the holy one of Jacob,” and “the Holy One of Israel.” Those that refer to the “might” of God; “the mighty one of Jacob,” and “the mighty one of Israel.” The term the “rock” is one that may seem inconsequential but in this study, it required a section, as it is the only one of the designations to not to be anthropomorphical. As the rest of the designations have been taken as anthropomorphical in character and as they all depict God in a role associated with an earthly function, the term “rock” has been depicted as metaphorical. The fourth section of “familial associations” may seem rather disjointed but when compared with what

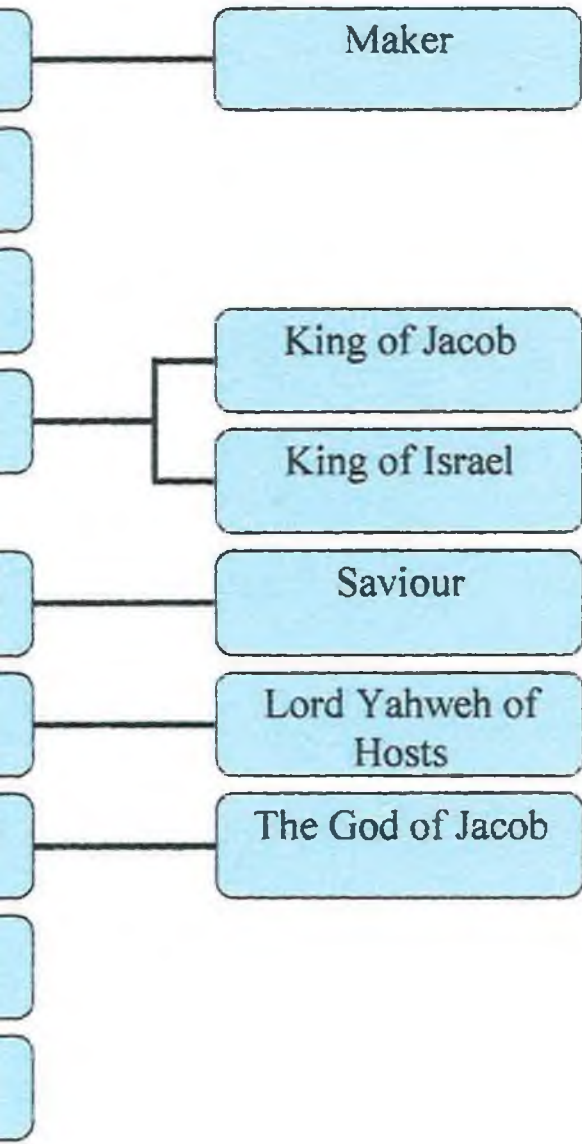
designations could be in this section if the rest of the OT was taken into account, it is worth taking note of the fact that the book of Isaiah has such a small amount.



*Figure 1: Divine Name in the Book of Isaiah*

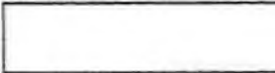


*Figure 2: The Divine Titles in the Book of Isaiah*



**EPITHET**

- First and Last
- God of the whole earth
- The Most High
- Living God
- God of your salvation
- Everlasting God
- Righteous One
- God of faithfulness
- Familial*
- Metaphorical*
- Might*
- Holy*





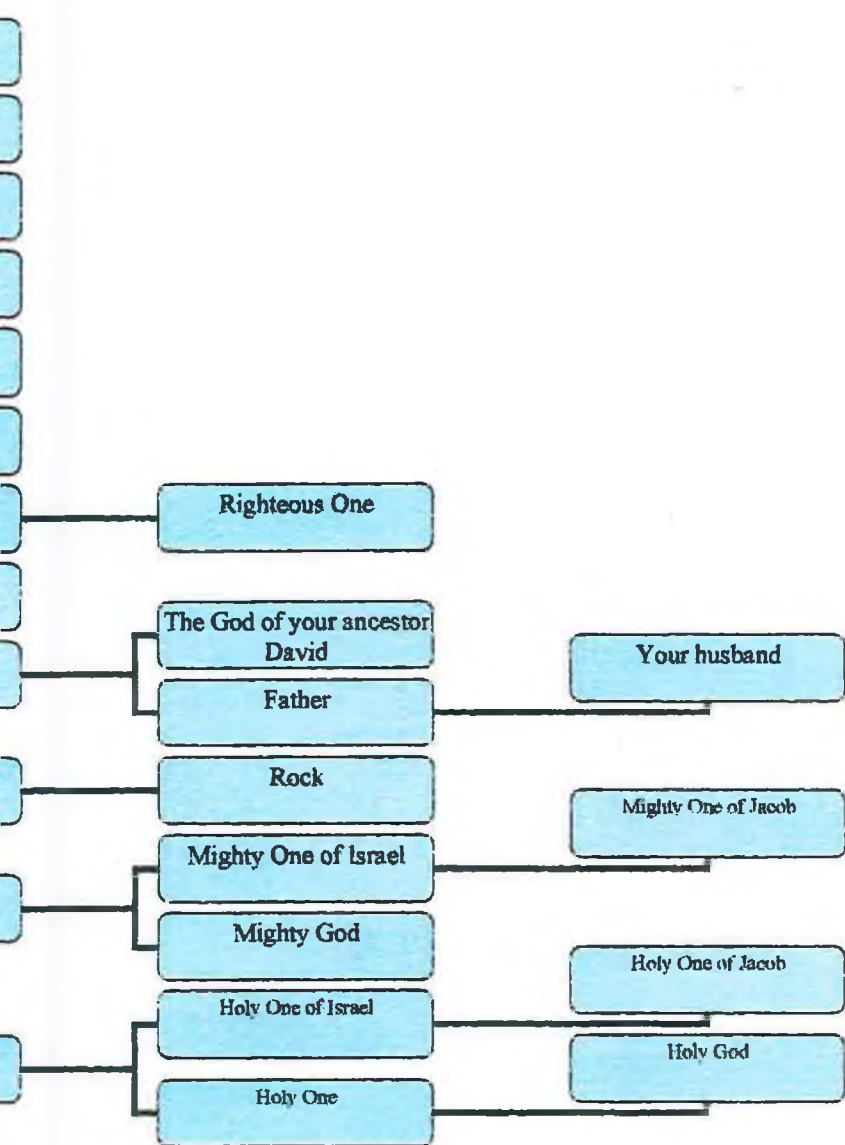


Figure 3. Divine Epithets in the Book of Isaiah

## **Chapter 4**

### **An Overview of the Use of the Divine Designations in the Book of Isaiah**

#### **I. Introduction**

The primary aim of this chapter is to continue the exploration of the divine designations by examining them in the context of the book of Isaiah, as opposed to the broader settings explored in the second chapter. Not all thirty-six designations will be examined in this fashion, but rather sixteen have been selected for focus. These designations were selected mainly because there was an identifiable interest in their distribution throughout the text of the book of Isaiah, as classified in ch. two. Care has been taken when making the selections to appreciate both ends of the distribution scale, meaning that the focus is not merely on the designations that were prevalent throughout the entire text but also on designations that were “missing” as it were, from a particular text, especially in the case of Trito-Isaiah. The Tetragrammaton will be omitted from further investigation as its distribution does not highlight any major discrepancies or patterns of interest and for the simple reason that it is so broadly used that it would be difficult to examine accurately. This means that the primary focus of this thesis will therefore be on the titles and epithets of God. This exercise is merely a step in the process of examining the final form of the book of Isaiah and any further study must bear this in

mind. This will allow for a selection of texts to engage in a more detailed exegesis, that pays particular interest to the broader contextual issues, and to their place within the book of Isaiah as a whole.

## II. The Designations

### 1. Maker (עֹשֶׂה)

There is just one instance of the term in Proto-Isaiah, in 17:7 and four in Deutero-Isaiah; 49:9, 11; 51:13, and 54:5. Verses 17:7 and 54:5 will be included in a more detailed exposition of the texts and the other three occurrences more briefly at this stage.

**Isaiah 45:9** *Woe to you who take issue with your Maker, earthen vessels with the potter! Does the clay say to the one who forms it, "What are you making?" or "Your work has no handles?"*

**Isaiah 45:11** *Thus says Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Will you question me about my descendents, or command me concerning the work of my hands?*

As the vv. 45:9 and 45:11 form part of the same textual unit of vv. 9-13, it is useful to discuss them side by side and in context. The disputation contained in 45:9-13 opens on a general note with v. 9 and the image of a potter and his work. The people of Israel, as the audience of this text, would have already been familiar with this imagery from its use in the preceding sections of 43:1; 44:2, 9, 11, and especially with the questioning form of 29:16. Yahweh has formed, created, made, sustained, and chosen Israel. Many translations of the verse give rise to a very awkward reading as they try to make sense of the final form text and also by paying close attention to the variations in different

forms of the text. Blenkinsopp's reading of "hāyārîb > rîb for MT hōy rāb"<sup>1</sup> which follows the textual emendations proposed in the apparatus of the BHS<sup>2</sup> as "Should one take issue with one's Maker, one sherd among the others made of earth?" is perhaps the most favourable. This reading also finds support in v. 12, "I made the earth, and created humankind upon it" in the most general sense of the Genesis creation accounts. The text is in a larger context of Israel and its Maker, appropriate to Yahweh's calling of Cyrus. Yahweh's freedom to form Israel from the womb and to encourage its people on that ground (44:2), gives rise to a further implication that Israel had apparently not expected. The questions posed in 9b would not traditionally apply to Israel. As Israel had been formed (or "made") by Yahweh in a certain way, and for a particular purpose, they should not question how that way and purpose are progressing.

**Isaiah 51:13** *You have forgotten Yahweh, your Maker (עֹשֶׂה), who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. You are in constant fear all day long because of the rage of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction. But where is the rage of the oppressor?*

This verse is often translated with the term "the one who made you" instead of the NRSV "your Maker." This term has been included in this study as it is presented as a title, "Maker," to enhance the parallels with the title "Creator," and reads with similar connotations in either translation. Yahweh continues the theme of earlier chapters by appealing to his power as cosmic creator to strengthen the faith of a dispirited and disoriented people. Baltzer sees the addressees of this speech as the people of Jacob and Israel.<sup>3</sup> The theme throughout the rest of the text has been that the people of Jacob and Israel are

<sup>1</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 251.

<sup>2</sup> BHS 672.

<sup>3</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 361.

symbolic of Yahweh's creation of the whole world, so this interpretation rings true in this context. Here the idea of Yahweh as the creator or "maker" of the entire world; the people, the heavens, and the physical earth, is reiterated. Baltzer terms the use of the verb עִשָּׂה as "colorless"<sup>4</sup> in the light of the terms used in 43:1. Rather it is keeping in line with poetic and descriptive language of this particular verse. Yahweh "forms" in the sense of the potter creating a piece of art. It is a physical exercise and exertion is required in the process of formation. The audience of the text would have been familiar with the work involved in making pottery, and would have associated the moulding of the clay with the "stretching" that Yahweh would have conducted to make the skies so vast, and the literal laying down of foundations, similar to that of building a structure such as a wall or house. This terminology would also have been recognizable from its use in the book of Psalms (for example Ps 11:3; 18:7; 18:15; 82:5).

## 2. The Holy One of Israel (קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל)

In Proto-Isaiah, Yahweh is both King and Holy One, but his holiness is clearly marked out as the primary feature. "He is the sovereign Holy One."<sup>5</sup> What gives substance to Proto-Isaiah's theology of holiness is the method by which traditional motifs that are associated with the concept of holiness such as fire, jealousy, wrath, etc., are reformulated. There is clear evidence of fire symbolism in 10:16-17; 30:27-28; 31:9, "His rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the standard in panic," says Yahweh, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem." The cultic influence is also

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 361.

<sup>5</sup> Muilenburg, "Holiness," 1:621.

predominant in these passages. This would also give credence to the idea that the Holy One of Israel, for Proto-Isaiah, is very much associated with the sanctuary and the holy city of Jerusalem as it is always discussed in the context of these motifs.<sup>6</sup>

The text of Deutero-Isaiah is just as radical in its reformulation of the contexts and dynamic qualities of the idea of “holy.” The idea of redemptive activity (41:14; 43:3, 14; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5) is more prevalent, and many commentators would agree that Deutero-Isaiah’s treatment of the term is substantially different to that seen in the text of Proto-Isaiah. Approaches to this discussion should be noted, as most analyses begin with the thesis that the term can be used to explore the unity of the book of Isaiah, principally due to its prevalence in both Proto and Deutero-Isaiah. From this standpoint, the “sticking point” as it were, in any argument, is that the treatment of the term in these Proto and Deutero-Isaiah is actually quite different. Rolf Rendtorff is quick to highlight this issue. Although as Blenkinsopp notes, Rendtorff’s discussion of the theme of the Holy One of Israel, weakens his argument that “the central themes of chapter 40 are all to be found in the first and third parts of the book.”<sup>7</sup> This would dismiss the idea that Deutero-Isaiah would have anything more to add to the theological message of the book as a whole, especially in light of the treatment of the idea of Yahweh as “holy.” John Peter highlights the traditional view taken of this aspect of this idea of “holiness” for Deutero-Isaiah in that the author of the text “gives a new and distinctly ethical sense to the conception of holiness.”<sup>8</sup> In the past,

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<sup>6</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 109.

<sup>7</sup> Rolf Rendtorff, “The Book of Isaiah: A Complex Unity-Synchronic and Diachronic Reading,” *SBL Seminar Papers, 1991* (SBLSP; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1991), 19.

<sup>8</sup> John Peters, “The Hebrew Idea of Holiness,” *The Biblical World* 14 (1899): 346.

commentators would have viewed the nature of Yahweh for Deutero-Isaiah as being inherently moral, the more modern viewpoint would be that it is identified as something “being wholly Other, apart from anything profane.”<sup>9</sup> These issues have considerable influence on the idea of the distribution of the terms throughout the three texts. In the examination of the terms in question, while the distribution of the terms may have been uneven throughout the three texts, the treatment, whether theological or not has never been at odds. This will have bearing on the texts selected for further examination, as a close assessment of the treatment of the terms is necessary.

There are only two uses of the term in Trito-Isaiah, 60:9c, and 60:14. Chapter 60 has many reflections of texts from other parts of the book of Isaiah, a good example of this being the opening verse, “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of Yahweh has risen upon you,” that mirrors 49:18 and 49:20.

60:9c לְשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי פָאֵר is difficult to translate accurately, principally because פָאֵר is often seen as reading, “has made you beautiful.” Looking to 55:5 for confirmation that a more accurate translation would be “for the name of Yahweh your God and for the Holy One of Israel as he has glorified you.” This idea of glorifying or setting apart from the ordinary is therefore continued on from Deutero-Isaiah. This is also the case with 60:14, “they shall call you “the City of Yahweh, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” This is a very clear indication of the furtherance of the idea of the Holy One of Israel as being associated with the themes of Zion and of Jerusalem as the Holy City. As there seems to be such a large quantity of

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<sup>9</sup> Gregory Polan, “The Call and Commission of Isaiah,” *The Bible Today* 43 (2005): 350.

evidence in the surrounding verses of ch 60 of influence from Deutero-Isaiah, it would appear that the use of the title in this instance is “lifted” from Deutero-Isaiah, in both form and theological significance and used in the text of Trito-Isaiah to continue on the similar theological ideas illustrated in Deutero-Isaiah. Further examination of this view is essential and for this reason 60:14 has been included in the texts for further exegesis.

### 3. King (מֶלֶךְ)

There are only five instances of the term “King” in reference to Yahweh in the book of Isaiah, and it is worthwhile examining each of them to gain a greater perception of how complex the usage is.<sup>10</sup> The texts of 6:5 and 43:15 will be examined in greater exegetical detail at a later point in ch. 5, and are therefore excluded from this section; the others will briefly be covered at this stage.

**Isaiah 33:22** *For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our ruler,  
Yahweh is our king; he will save us.*

Childs highlights the debate on the interpretation of the term “king” in Isaiah 33:17 in the context of the entire chapter.<sup>11</sup> A number of commentators insist that the “king” in this verse is Yahweh, and look to v. 22 as their strongest mode of proof. Additional support for this justification looks to an historical argument, namely that in the late postexilic period, trust in the coming of a human messianic king had failed, and now rested exclusively with Yahweh as the eschatological sovereign. Childs does not see either of these arguments as convincing and views the reference to a king in v. 17 as an intertextual reference to 32:1, “See, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will

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<sup>10</sup> The five verses are 6:5, 33:22, 41:21, 43:15 and 44:6

<sup>11</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 247.



rule with justice.”<sup>12</sup> Physical beauty is a traditional kingly attribute in ancient Near Eastern royal ideology, which is prevalent in Ps 45 & 72. The vv. that then follow portray an earthly kingdom and continue to utilize the language of “peaceful habitation” that is found in 32:17 and following. The sovereignty of the person that Yahweh has anointed will not be burdened with the pursuit of military power as be seen in v. 18, “Where is the one who counted the towers?” nor by a period of peace that is settled through the negotiations of treaties. The rule of this king will not be put at risk by an insolent foreign people who speak a foreign language. This reference is to the Assyrians of 28:11, but may have assembled complementary descriptions from the speech of the Rabshakeh in Isa 36. The actions of this “chief steward” were usually seen as being disrespectful and arrogant (37:23 “Against whom have you raised your voice and haughtily lifted your eyes?”).

The interest of this text is therefore to offer a distinct interpretative clarification on forthcoming events. Unquestionably, there will be the anticipation of the messianic language, but the purpose of the human king in the here and now will be to serve for eternity as ambassador on earth for Israel’s divine king. The city of Jerusalem and its people will surely be transformed, since Yahweh will be “for us” in all his nobleness. Yahweh in this instance is Israel’s judge, ruler, and expressly, their king. This reference includes the prophet’s vision of Yahweh’s regal reign over that which he has created. He truly is the king of all that he surveys (6:1-13).

Joseph Jensen focuses on the idea that if v. 17 is seen as referring to Yahweh himself, then it “is strange that the article “the king” is missing in

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 248.

Hebrew.”<sup>13</sup> The majority of Bible versions translate מֶלֶךְ as “the king” but there is no definitive article in the Hebrew. Blenkinsopp sees the title as “deliberately traditional and archaic.”<sup>14</sup> He points to Exod 15:18 “Yahweh will reign forever and ever.” By making this allusion to the other long-established titles, such as “judge or ruler,” and “leader or clan leader,” that the decisive salvation articulated in the verses is therefore expressed in terms intended to evoke traditional and primordial Israelite philosophies and realities.

It is vitally important to remember that Israelites had developed the idea of kingship before the establishment of the human monarchy.<sup>15</sup> For hundreds of years, the only kingship that was recognized as an institution in Israel was the kingship of Yahweh. In the context of the five references in the book of Isaiah, all its uses are diverse, but they do serve to remind the audience of the authority of Yahweh. The uses of “King of Israel” and “King of Jacob,” in this context clearly display geographical references and highlight groups of people who see Yahweh as their leader. The titles work both ways, just as a covenantal relationship does. Yahweh has responsibilities as ruler of his people, as their king and monarch and in turn, his loyal subjects, the Israelites, must pay him the respect and loyalty that his divine office commands. All five instances of the phrase are used in conjunction with other divine titles and epithets. This both adds to the poetics of the prophetic prose and serves to expand the idea of divine kingship that is presented in the book of Isaiah. Yahweh encompasses the traits of an ideal king. He is wise in

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<sup>13</sup> Joseph Jensen, *Isaiah 1-39* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier Inc., 1984), 258.

<sup>14</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 447.

<sup>15</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, “Covenant,” *EncJud* 5:1019.

his role as judge and maintains a tight rein on his heavenly council. He looks to his people and is readily identifiable as their leader. He has created all things that he reigns over and in short, is better or higher than any king that will go before him.

#### 4. King of Israel (מֶלֶךְ-יִשְׂרָאֵל)

**Isaiah 44:6** *Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Yahweh Sabaoth: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.*

In 44:5, Yahweh is Israel's king. "This one will say, "I am Yahweh's," another will be called by the name of Jacob, yet another will write on the hand, "Yahweh's," and adopt the name of Israel." Two things are bound up with this assertion. When the royal title is given to the deity, it means primarily that he is "king over the gods." In 44:6, Yahweh decides that he alone is Israel's king, redeeming his people. The gods do not exist and the people only worship Yahweh. The literary form of this text is often disputed, ranging from a trial scene, which is the general viewpoint, to more in the genre of an oracle. If Yahweh himself is Israel's king (see also 41:21-22; 43:15; Zeph 3:15) then no human king for Israel can be expected. It is Cyrus, the foreign ruler, who is sent to Babylon (43:15) to bring about the liberation but Yahweh has his own battle (43:16-21).

Westermann does not see the introduction as a trial speech, rather it is a "genuine, authoritative oracle introduced by the messenger formula."<sup>16</sup> The superscription of v. 6a is actually an introduction to an oracle of salvation. The impressive opening gives its speaker three predications: the King of Israel, the Redeemer of Israel, and Yahweh Sabaoth. Westermann views

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<sup>16</sup> Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary* (OTL 14; London: SCM Press, 1969), 139.

Deutero-Isaiah's use of Yahweh Sabaoth as being intended to highlight the majesty of Yahweh. The author uses the term "without attaching any particular signification to the designation,"<sup>17</sup> in this case linking it with the term "the King of Jacob" in 41:21. Childs goes one step further with this idea, seeing the term as "a series of familiar epithets,"<sup>18</sup> that would have been known to the prophet and his audience, probably from their use in 1 and 2 Kings, and would therefore already have a literary intent. Blenkinsopp's thinking on the connection between this term and "king of Jacob," is that Yahweh has already been established King of Jacob in 41:21 and creator and king of Israel in 43:15. The proclamation of Yahweh's rule as king will be made at the later point of 52:7.<sup>19</sup>

Baltzer sees two key ideas associated through the notion that is Israel's king. When the royal title is given to the deity, it fundamentally means that he is king over all the gods. A god proves his kingship by acting as judge over the gods. The gods, however, do not exist (44:6 "besides me there is no god"). Only Yahweh's people stand before him.

The use of the terminology of Israel/Jacob is not depicting a political standpoint; rather it is a confession of faith as a follower of Yahweh. While many may question the idea that it reflects a stance of being part of the community and country of Israel, it has to be noted that the emphasis on the term as "not a foreigner" would naturally depend on whether it was being used before or after the exile. This should be considered if viewing the term as a later inclusion and should be kept in mind when determining the theology of the text.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>18</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 342.

<sup>19</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 235.

## 5. King of Jacob (מֶלֶךְ יַעֲקֹב)

**Isaiah 41:21** *Set forth your case, says Yahweh; bring forward your defences, says the King of Jacob.*

The term “King of Jacob” is only used once in the OT, in book of Isaiah in 41:21. The context of the verse is the beginning of a new trial scene that ridicules the Babylonian idols and their worshippers and the verse forms part of the unit depicting the futility of idols of 21-29. The term “says the King of Jacob” introduces a divine oracle<sup>20</sup> that, with the opening tone of “setting forth a case,” sets the scene of a process, a trial with legalistic language. The trial issues the ruling that the other gods are “empty wind” (41:29). In the introduction, Yahweh is introduced with the title “king.” Baltzer asks whether in view of the context of the following text, one may ask whether here the term for God (*el* or *elohim*) was not originally used, as in 40:18; 43:12 etc. This could also be indicated by the LXX’s reading κύριος ὁ θεός. Duhm sees this as an “embellishment” in the Greek as discussed by Torrey.<sup>21</sup> The title anticipates the complexity of themes involving kingship, victorious combat, and creation, developed as a mirror image of Babylonian imperial ideology expressed in the cult of Marduk and specifically in the *akitu* festival and the creation myth *Enuma Elish*. To counter this ideology of power, the author expounds an argument from prophecy.<sup>22</sup> Baltzer concludes that, because of the context, this leads to the phrase “Jacob’s king,” an expression

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<sup>20</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 84.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 317.

<sup>22</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 205.

that occurs nowhere else in the OT, and that proclaims “God’s relationship of sovereignty and protection towards his people.”<sup>23</sup>

The description “court scene” makes it easy to overlook the fact that the present text is picking up age-old motifs about the assembly of the gods.<sup>24</sup> This means that the pointer to Ps 82 is important, even if the psalm is talking about a different kind of trial. As king, Yahweh is also a judge. That is evident even from the external framework. According to v. 21, he summons, pronounces judgment, and according to v. 28, declares the proceedings to be ended. “Gods” are explicitly named as one party to the action in v. 23. The plural is used on Yahweh’s side too. There is no doubt that this is supposed to be the description of a scene in heaven. The place of the action is the “palace” of the king, the “highest god,” and it is to him that the other gods have to come. If the text is read in light of the idea of human kingship, then the notion of the location as the palace gate is even more pronounced. An ascent to the throne would take place in the palace.

No commentator gives any particular focus to the use of “Jacob” in this instance and the significance, if any, of the fact that the term does not appear anywhere else in the OT. The only way to further examine the term is to view it in the context of the parallel in which it occurs. The term is obviously linked through parallelism with the preceding term, Yahweh. If Baltzer’s idea is valid, it still leaves the question of why “Jacob” was included. It would appear that the key to the phrase as a whole is the ambiguous term “Jacob.” As it is not immediately inferred from the term what group of people or indeed what geographical setting the term refers to it

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<sup>23</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 116.

<sup>24</sup> Frank Cross Moore, “The Council of Yahweh,” *JNES* 12 (1953): 274.

leads the reader or the audience to presume that it could be used as the collective reference for Israel, denoting either the people, the nation or indeed the religious community, (Deut 32:9; Jer 10:25; Isa 10:21). This is the case in Deutero-Isaiah, where Yahweh addresses Jacob/Israel directly by using the two terms in parallel in 40:27; 41:8, 14; 43:1, 22; 44:1, 2, 21, 23; 44:4; 48:12, 21; 49:5. In Deutero-Isaiah, Yahweh also speaks of having given Jacob over to disaster in 42:4; 43:28 it would seem that the presumed exilic setting of Deutero-Isaiah lends itself to a retrospective look to the experience of exile and the hope for return. The assertion by Deutero-Isaiah of the presence of Yahweh with his people in 41:10; 43:2, with his promise to be with Jacob and not leave or abandon him is a motif that is distinctive in the two Jacob stories, especially in Gen 28:10-22 and in 32:1-2. The wealth of retrospection that would have occurred in the readers and audience would at first, seem to lead to confusion, but in fact, when the prophet's skill at ambiguity as concealment for a wealth of meaning is taken into account, the use of Jacob is not baffling but rather all-encompassing. Yahweh is king of everything that the term "Jacob" may stand for.

## 6. Yahweh Sabaoth (יהוה צבאות)

An examination of the use of the term יהוה צבאות in the book of Isaiah will be of particular interest because of its uneven distribution throughout the three sections of the text. As previously illustrated, the term occurs in relation to Yahweh 49 times in Proto-Isaiah, six in Deutero-Isaiah and does not occur in Trito-Isaiah. In general, as the term occurs predominantly in prophetic literature, this may be taken as a clear indication that in the vocabulary of the

prophets, the idea of צְבָאוֹת was not synonymous with the armies of Israel.

The prophets did not abandon the idea of Yahweh participating in world affairs in a military fashion, but rather, as Anderson describes, “inverted” it by insisting that Yahweh was turning military forces against his people in order to judge them for their sins.<sup>25</sup> Whenever the term Yahweh Sabaoth is used by pre-exilic prophets, it regularly has the forceful connotations it previously attained, namely “Yahweh of hosts acts in the historical arena.”<sup>26</sup> The aim then for this examination of the term in the book of Isaiah is to see primarily in what sense the term is used in Proto and Deutero-Isaiah, and then to compare this with Trito-Isaiah. Ultimately the theologies of each section will require examination.

### ***Proto-Isaiah***

There are 49 occurrences of Yahweh Sabaoth in Isa 1-39 and while an examination of each of the contexts of the usage would be valuable, it would be at this stage more helpful to view them in the light of the theology that they deliver. In general, Proto-Isaiah sees Yahweh as a king (6:1), not simply of Judah (3:8) but of the whole earth (13:5). Added to this is the notion that he is the Holy One of all of Israel and the Lord of all Hosts. Other nations, even the mightiest, are subject to him and do his bidding when he summons them to do so. Moreover, he does not merely react to the needs and wants of humanity but has power over history and has plans (14:26) and policies that he implements. As a result, attempts to restrain events through use of military power or formation of allegiances with foreign countries will ultimately be destined to fail unless Yahweh wills it otherwise. This can be seen where

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<sup>25</sup> Bernhard Anderson, “Hosts, Host of Heaven,” *IDB* 2:655.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 656.



Isaiah vigorously opposes both Ahaz's appeal to the Assyrians for help at the time Judah was invaded by Syria and Israel in 735 B.C.E. and Hezekiah's plans to revolt against Assyria in 705 B.C.E. In either case, it was an issue of attempting to organize events through human forces without consideration to what Yahweh could, and indeed would, do.

The notion of Yahweh as King is also important in this context. All the explicit references to Yahweh's enthronement on the cherubim are associated with his role as king and warrior. This is probably because Yahweh's presence was believed to accompany the ark and was therefore highly valued in wartime, often accompanying the Israelites during their military campaigns (1Sam 4-6). At issue in Hezekiah's petition is the kingship of Yahweh. Sennacherib had dared to call himself "the great king" (הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל Isa 36:4). In Zion theology, that title was reserved for Yahweh Sabaoth, who was perceived as the "Highest One" in the divine assembly.<sup>27</sup> Sennacherib had come to Jerusalem to "mock the living God" (37:4). Consequently, Yahweh was asked to vindicate his honour and deliver the city of his dwelling. For Proto-Isaiah, Yahweh Sabaoth was both a king and a warrior who would fight on Zion's behalf and protect the city of Jerusalem from attack. In the Zion tradition therefore, the name Yahweh Sabaoth served to justify Jerusalem as Yahweh's chosen city. The term is a theologically loaded one.

This can be demonstrated in the text of Isa 13, which purports to be an oracle against Babylon. It is replete with literary and historical problems. Nevertheless, it is clear that it speaks with the idioms of the Zion tradition

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<sup>27</sup> Seow, "Hosts, Lord of," 3:307.

about a holy war, an eschatological battle on the Day of the Lord (13:9). The God of Zion has gathered “his consecrated ones” (13:3) and his warriors for a holy war. Yahweh Sabaoth is gathering a host for battle (13:4). The army will be comprised of troops from the nations, as well as from the ends of heavens; terrestrial and celestial ranks of Yahweh’s hosts are gathered at his command. In the so-called Isaianic apocalypse, Yahweh Sabaoth is expected to punish the “host of heaven in heaven” (24:21). Afterwards, he will reign once more on Mount Zion in all his glory (24:23).

For Proto-Isaiah, Yahweh Sabaoth denotes Yahweh as a victorious warrior who is enthroned as king of the divine council. He is always ready to fight battles with the forces of chaos. As Yahweh Sabaoth fought and won the cosmogonic battle, so he fights the battles of his people in the historical realm and will fight the ultimate battle at the end of time.

### ***Deutero-Isaiah***

There are six occurrences of Yahweh Sabaoth in Isa 40-55<sup>28</sup> compared to the 49 in Proto-Isaiah. It is a useful exercise to examine the texts containing the six citations in Deutero-Isaiah in detail and to compare this with the overall use in Proto-Isaiah. With this information, the important task of the assessment of why the term does not appear in Trito-Isaiah may be more accurately conducted.

**Isaiah 44:6** *Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Yahweh Sabaoth: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.*<sup>29</sup>

While there is often debate over the separation of the three core texts in Isaiah, often very little dispute occurs over internal divisions. The context into which

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<sup>28</sup> 44:6; 45:13; 47:4; 48:2; 51:15, and 54:5.

<sup>29</sup> This verse has previously been examined in relation to its use of the King of Israel, so a limited amount of repetition will occur.

the verse is read is particularly important and is a key factor to keep in mind when studying a particular commentator's analysis of the verse. For example, Torrey discusses 44:6-23 as one unit; Baltzer and Brueggemann discuss the verse in the context of 44:6-8, John McKenzie in 44:1-8, and Seitz in 44:6-20. John Scullion examines 44:1-8 and then moves straight on to vv. 21-23.

As previously noted, IQIsaiah<sup>a</sup> adds *semo*, "Yahweh of the heavenly hosts is his name" to the reading of the verse that modern readers would be familiar with. Torrey advises to omit the first יהוה which is wanting in the Greek and is "metrically superfluous."<sup>30</sup>

There is some debate as to who is speaking in the verse, this is important in light of an examination of the titles, especially with Yahweh Sabaoth as the person or people who use the title will lend more information to the use of the term. Torrey sees Yahweh as the speaker throughout<sup>31</sup> and vv. 6-8 may even be viewed as a brief introduction before he asserts his absolute supremacy and defends his claim to be the one and only god. Baltzer is of the opinion that in this trial scene, Yahweh is probably represented by a spokesman, as the introductory formula "Thus says the Lord" shows.<sup>32</sup> Whatever the interpretation of the formula, it is clear that the text is attributed directly to Yahweh, whether read by a representative, or uttered directly.

Yahweh has already been presented in Deutero-Isaiah, as king of Jacob (41:21), and creator and king of Israel (43:15), and the proclamation of his rule as king will be made in solemn fashion as a later point in 52:7. Many critics, Blenkinsopp in particular, highlight the link between the image of king

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<sup>30</sup> Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 345.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 324.

<sup>32</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 342.

and that of Yahweh Sabaoth. Blenkinsopp points to the “theologumenon of divine kingship,” which is common in the ancient Near East and problematic for many in the modern world, it also appears in chs. 1-39, most obviously in the report of the throne vision (6:5, 24:23, 33:22).<sup>33</sup> The common opinion is that it draws on the ancient liturgy of Jerusalem. This view is supported by its frequent use in the psalms, most particularly those that contain explicit references to divine kingship (Ps 29, 47, 95, 98, 99). Blenkinsopp refers to these and other psalmic compositions to demonstrate how the author of Deutero-Isaiah has drawn on the themes that have been richly developed in the temple liturgy. For instance the affirmation of Yahweh’s incomparability as seen in Exod 15:11, “Who is like you, Yahweh, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendour, doing wonders?” and the association of kingship with the divine glory (Isa 40:5; 42:8; 42:12; 43:7; 48:11).

The essential assertion from v. 6 is that Yahweh is Israel’s king and there are two elements bound up with this claim. Primarily the royal title is given to the deity; it means firstly that he is “king over the gods.” A god proves his kingship by acting as judge over the gods. However, as these gods do not exist, “I am the first and the last, and there is no God but me,” it is only humans who stand before God. If Yahweh is Israel’s king, then no human can be the king of Israel. The phrase also seems to extend Yahweh’s domain over the sun, moon, and stars, imparting a sense of power and majesty (40:26; 45:12). In the present setting, however, Yahweh discredits the heavenly hosts,

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<sup>33</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 236.

worshipped by the Babylonians and thereby claiming a “cosmic sweep of power.”<sup>34</sup>

**Isaiah 45:13** *I have aroused him in righteousness, and I will make all his paths straight; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward, says Yahweh Sabaoth*

This verse is part of a larger section of vv. 9-19 forming a disputation speech,<sup>35</sup> similar in this sense to 40:12-31 and 49:14-26. The section of text has a clear message: that as the creator and lord of history, Yahweh can save the people of Israel in whatever way he chooses. The background to the text is important. By appointing Cyrus, Yahweh has met with much opposition. The oracle in 9-13 does not move immediately to address this, but allows a more wide-ranging condemnation to set up the particular grievance. In v. 13, the rousing up of “him” can be no one else but Cyrus. The NRSV goes as far as to insert his name into the text “I have aroused Cyrus in righteousness,” even though it does not appear in the original Hebrew, though is used in v. 44:28 and 45:1. Brueggemann makes the interesting suggestion that the “sweeping claims” of creation, that were made in 44:24-28, are now attributed to Cyrus.<sup>36</sup> He will liberate the exiles by an act of power, not spurred on by the thoughts of a bribe or a ransom. The honourable nature of this choice was also a theme predicted in the hymn seen in 45:8. The more detailed task of building Jerusalem, the “my city” of v. 13 that is also mentioned in 44:28, is combined here with the freeing of the exiles that Cyrus is renowned for. For further explanation on the verses, it is useful to look to the view of Cyrus depicted in 1 and 2 Chronicles. The two major tasks that are cited in 45:13

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<sup>34</sup> Louis Hartman, ed., *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1963), 1031-1032.

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Seitz, “The Book of Isaiah 40-66,” *NIB* 6:399.

<sup>36</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 80.

are also discussed in these two texts. The proclamation circulated by Cyrus all over his kingdom (2Chr 36:22-23) specifies that Yahweh “has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem” (36:23), before any reference has been made to the liberation of the exiles. The same announcement serves to reintroduce Ezra-Nehemiah, though it adds that the returning exiles will “rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel” (Ezra 1:3). This possible confusion may well be deliberate, as it sets up the subsequent narrative sequence (out of order in strict chronological terms) remarkably well. The explanation of the Chronicler and of Ezra-Nehemiah are in all probability later than this Isaian discourse, and they may represent an effort at harmonization with it. Furthermore, the concept that Cyrus would rebuild the temple and the city is not taken as rhetorical exaggeration and may well be rooted, and realistically so, in discourse such as this. It clearly augments the popular picture of Cyrus as primarily concerned with the return of the exiles. Equivalent to this is a concern with Cyrus as a second David: the anointed one, the person who will re-establish the city of Jerusalem and its cultic centre (44:26-28; 45:13). The princes of the sanctuary were dismissed by Yahweh, and Jacob (in this case, Israel) was destroyed in a “former” day. Cyrus, however, will rebuild Jerusalem, restore the ruins of Judah to their former glory (44:26), and see to it that the temple foundations are laid.

This background information is vital for understanding the final verse “not for price or reward.” Liberation and rebuilding will not cost anything (55:1). Both were costly in the first exodus, for example the Egyptian desecration and the deaths of the firstborn. The sanctuary was also provided for by freewill offerings. Neither is going to be necessary in this case. With

this concluding statement, the move to the following unit is precisely accomplished.

The use of Yahweh Sabaoth in this instance is particularly interesting as the verse appears in the unusual context of a fierce doubting of Yahweh's actions. The selection of Cyrus as the "hero" for the exiles has always been an action that has not sat well with commentators and indeed with the majority of readers of the Bible. Perhaps because Yahweh gives no reason why Cyrus will be his "anointed one," and is to carry out his instructions, especially in a duty as important as the rebuilding of the temple. Yahweh shows his annoyance at being questioned in 45:9, "Woe to you who take issue with your Maker, earthen vessels with the potter! Does the clay say to the one who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles?'" and in doing so reasserts his role as creator. The annoyance can be seen in the translation of יָדַי as "hands." This conveys the idea of clumsiness, as if Yahweh would make something with imperfections or in a clumsy manner. The significance of Yahweh Sabaoth in this instance is therefore important. Yahweh is Lord of all, heaven, and earth, and his actions need no explanation. Rather, it serves to show how Yahweh can select someone who would not be considered as a front-runner for the position and still see success. Objections set forth about Cyrus do not impinge on the Yahweh Sabaoth.

Childs takes an appealing stance on this subject. He sees the reading of the text as a disputation evoked by Israel's objection to God's unusual plan to use a foreign king to deliver Israel as a "quasi-psychological" one and unsupported by any close reading of the text.<sup>37</sup> The oracle, according to

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<sup>37</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 354.

Childs, is directed to the nations, as Israel is only addressed in the third person. Yahweh is defending his sovereign right as creator against their recriminations. Roy Melugin also discusses the use of disputation speech elsewhere in Isaiah, in 10:15 as a “disputation proper” and 29:15-16 to “lend weight to a woe sentence used as a prophetic indictment.”<sup>38</sup> Childs highlights how the attacks are rejected wholeheartedly and the disputation form is transformed with a messenger speech that affirms what will indeed take place, “he shall build my city and set my exiles free.”<sup>39</sup> The motivation is clearly one of free will and not one determined by price or reward.

Baltzer contributes to the debate by examining the grammatical aspects of the text in detail. He sees the transition from the general legitimating of the divine authority to the decision arrived at in the consultation is “clearly marked by the change to the future tense in v.13aβ.”<sup>40</sup> Cyrus is not named but he is the subject. McKenzie elaborates on this point in his work in the Anchor Bible commentary. He sees v. 13 as a “reaffirmation” that Yahweh has motivated Cyrus.<sup>41</sup> Yahweh is involved in the process for “his glory,” which is not for profit but so that he may be acknowledged for what he is. Baltzer is of the opinion that part of the resolve is the decision that there is no bribe or purchase price paid.<sup>42</sup> Many commentators have difficulty with the phrase “not for price or reward”<sup>43</sup> and see it as a later addition to the text. McKenzie discusses the idea that an Israelite prophet should view the conquests of Cyrus purely concerning the restoration of Israel as an

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<sup>38</sup> Roy Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55* (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1976), 36.

<sup>39</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 354.

<sup>40</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 237.

<sup>41</sup> John McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, (AB 20, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), 79.

<sup>42</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 237.

<sup>43</sup> The most prominent being Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja, übersetzt und erklärt*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922), 309.



intolerably narrow view of history. He sees it as a fact that the restoration of the Jewish community in Palestine has a more lasting effect than anything else accomplished by Cyrus. Bearing in mind the resulting developments, the prophet does not demonstrate narrow vision; according to McKenzie, he shows an “astonishing insight into the meaning of history.”<sup>44</sup> Bruce

Naidoff sums up the idea of the four verses as based on the control of world history.<sup>45</sup> The proof therefore, that Yahweh Sabaoth offers, is not his power in nature or creation but his action in on-going history, in particular, the rise of the Persian king. The use of the Yahweh Sabaoth in conjunction with the notion of the power of the Creator is one that occurs throughout the text of Deutero-Isaiah. The author of the text is using a mirroring technique to highlight the almighty power that Yahweh Sabaoth possesses. Yahweh is creator and ruler of all of creation, as humanity knows it and ruler of the heavens or the hosts, those unseen by earthly beings. The insertion of the term in the final line of v. 13 is particularly appealing, in that it forms a link with the start of the section in v. 9 with the idea of Yahweh as the potter or literal creator. Blenkinsopp’s highlighting of the seven different verbs in the passage to express divine intervention with humanity only serves to endorse this theory. He cites “form” (9a, 9b and 11a), “work” (9b, 11b), “beget” (10a), “give birth (10b), “make” (12a), “create” (12a) and “arouse, incite” (13a).<sup>46</sup> The phrase Yahweh Sabaoth should therefore be considered to have a link with the idea of Yahweh and his role as creator.

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<sup>44</sup> McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 79.

<sup>45</sup> Bruce Naidoff, “The Two-Fold Structure of Isaiah VLV 9-13,” *VT* 31 (1981): 182.

<sup>46</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 254.

**Isaiah 47:4** *Our Redeemer (Yahweh Sabaoth is his name) is the Holy One of Israel.*

This verse is set within a section that, in form-critical terms, might be termed a ‘Lament for Babylon:’ from the perspective of the author and his readers, this is, however, an ironic lament. McKenzie, Scullion, Brueggemann, and Seitz all place it within the unit of 47:1-15.

Baltzer perceives these verses as one of Isaiah’s “enchanted miniatures.” He translates the verse as “A man/ a human being: Our Redeemer?- Yahweh Sabaoth is his name, the Holy One of Israel.” Everyone can understand the situation, even children have no need to be afraid, even if what follows is somewhat “hellish.”<sup>47</sup> At the same time, the scene is completely serious, for it contains an entire message of hopefulness in a single phrase. Baltzer, following his thesis that the text of Deutero-Isaiah forms a drama, sets the scene of the verse at the gateway to the underworld and comments on the rare stage direction that is required in order to rule out any misunderstandings. The speaker who otherwise explains what is going on is not available, because in the wake of the rapid change of scene he has to change his position. The person who comes on to bridge the interim and draw the attention of the audience to himself (since there is no curtain) is “a human being.”<sup>48</sup> He says something before he has even been asked, thereby signalling his haste: גַּאֲלֵנוּ “Our Redeemer?” (Qal active participle, first person plural suffix. This must be understood as a question in response to another question that is required here: “Who is your Redeemer?”

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<sup>47</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 272.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

Nonetheless, he knows the correct password at the “gateway;” he knows the name Yahweh Sabaoth and with these words he can pass with courage.

Seitz, who uses only NIV and NRSV texts in his work on the text, sees the verse as a striking final confession, presumably made by Israel, in the light of the strong preceding statement that no one is to be spared. The use of the plural “our,” points to those who have been redeemed through similar trials but have not been obliterated.<sup>49</sup> Those who have passed through rivers ahead of Babylon know that the Holy One of Israel redeemed them, and here their confession drives home the still greater severity of Babylon’s punishment.

Brueggemann observes that the reason the context of the verse is identified within a song of grief, using familiar genres of lament as parody, or a “ploy,” is that the vigour that is contained in vv. 3b-4. The agent of devastation is Yahweh, the one who had refused any longer to protect Jerusalem because of the people’s rebellion. The God who could renounce beloved Jerusalem to a state of suffering is the one who will work against Babylon; Yahweh will this soon. He will retaliate without compromise or compassion, “For Yahweh has a day of requital, a year of vindication by Zion’s cause” (34:8). The one who is about to act is the one already known in the poetry of Isaiah as the redeemer of Israel, Yahweh Sabaoth, and the Holy One of Israel. The poetry builds up the most remarkable, formidable phrases so that there will be no mistake. The redeemer will act for the sake of Israel. The avenger will reassert the monarchical rule that Babylon has overthrown. The redeemer will make wide-ranging alterations in geopolitics that had been massively distorted through Nebuchadnezzar. The question now arises as to

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<sup>49</sup> Seitz, “The Book of Isaiah 40-66,” 6:411.

who would have the faith possible to believe that this would happen, simply those who speak the name of the Holy One of Israel. Israel's poetry is saturated with hope and expectation over the ruin of the oppressor such as Jer 50:2 and Ezek 33:21.

**Isaiah 48:2** *For they call themselves after the holy city, and lean on the God [elohîm] of Israel; Yahweh Sabaoth is his name.*

Baltzer and Seitz place the verse within the context of 48:1-11, Brueggemann within 48:1-13 and Scullion and McKenzie 48:1-22. Torrey focuses on the section 48:1-9 but does not comment specifically on v. 2.

This section of poetry has an introductory summons to hear in verses 1-2, a concluding summons to hear (vv. 12-13), and three intermediate units concerning "former things" (vv. 3-5), "new things" (vv. 6-8), and an affirmation of Yahweh's self-regard (vv. 9-11). The "hear this," שְׁמַעוּ-זאת of v. 1 has a counterpart in v. 16 and summons Israel to hear, or rather to listen, obey and trust. There the main content of what is to be heard is supplied immediately, while here the readers listen first to a series of predictions for the "house of Jacob." The "holy city" is of course, Jerusalem. The phrase is rare in the OT and reappears in 52:1. Here the prophet turns from addressing the Israelites to talking about them in the third person. In this poem, there is a reversal of tone<sup>50</sup> and the prophet's reprimand becomes noticeably sharper than in previous chs., such as 42:18-25 and 43:22-28.

Most interpreters divide the chapter into several poems, and this is recommended to some extent by the diversity of topics and the ambiguity of the speakers. Yet, there seems to be a unity of theme that is pursued through reflections on several related topics. The unity is less well organized than in

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<sup>50</sup> McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 96.

the other poetical texts in Deutero-Isaiah, and this lends strong support to Duhm's theory that the poem is heavily glossed, although his identification of the glosses appears to be insufficiently founded.

The textual arrangement of the NRSV judges the content as provided in part within the predictions themselves (vv. 1-2), while the NIV understands "this" as Yahweh's word, beginning in the third verse, that concerns the former things (vv. 3-6a) and new things (vv. 6b-11). The problem is an old one<sup>51</sup> and involves the proper interpretation of ׀ at the beginning of v. 2 and an investigation of how the lines within the first two verses are to be divided.

The NIV correctly identifies a series of predictions interrupted by the parenthetical "but not in truth or in righteousness." The ׀ here follows the negative ׀ in a concessive sense and in this way, the affirmative sense of predictions is maintained, even when subverted by the people of Israel, for example with their worship of idols. In other words, no causal connection is implied by the use of ׀ and the preceding "not in truth" (NRSV). This translation would seem to imply that calling oneself by the holy city and a reliance on the God of Israel are negative, examples of "not in truth or right." The NIV translation seems to capture the sense of the text here, as all predictions are positive. "But not in truth or right," asserts that all of Israel's connections with Yahweh are not done in good faith, so that the positive nature is once again subverted. Commentators vary on their interpretation of this assertion. Westermann prefers to say that the negatives are late

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<sup>51</sup> Seitz, "The Book of Isaiah 40-66," 6:417.

additions.<sup>52</sup> James Muilenburg simply concludes that “the contradictions are more apparent than real.”<sup>53</sup> There is no clear way to resolve this question, except to notice that the affirmations are at least placed in question by the negatives. The relationship to Yahweh may be definitive, but is neither easy nor settled. Paul Hanson states that in Isa 48:

The prophet addresses a human condition that is filled with ambiguity. Even the promises of God at a time of renewed hope retain a bittersweet quality given the inconsistency of human commitment. The ebb and flow of this chapter skilfully reflect the prophet’s realistic awareness of the convolution of the human response to divine initiative. Any attempt to sort out pure promise from pure judgement tears apart a skilfully balanced message.<sup>54</sup>

The only modification to the words of Hanson suggested here is that the text is not addressed to “a human condition,” but specifically to an Israelite community about to be liberated.

In short, Yahweh addresses the people as Jacob, Israel, and Judah. These three names have ancestral, religious and a geographical history in the tribal sense, as well as associations with election, blessing, solidarity, and promises for the future.<sup>55</sup> The names have been used frequently in the preceding poems. The context of Israel’s long tradition of cultic worship is important here. The Israelites, “swear by the name of Yahweh,” i.e. they make religious vows; they “invoke” or “call to remembrance” the God of Israel. Many interpret this that liturgically, as they make active in the present

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<sup>52</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, 197.

<sup>53</sup> James Muilenburg, “The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66,” *IB* 5:553.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Hanson, *Isaiah 40-66*, (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 123.

<sup>55</sup> John Scullion, *Isaiah 40-66* (OTM 12; Ailmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1982), 91.

Yahweh's great deeds in the past. Clearly, the people place large amounts of trust in Yahweh, but they have no right to do this because their worship through the centuries has not been "in truth or right," their lives have not been lived in accordance with the spirit of their worship.

The prophet sees Israel as a community that will enjoy an historical permanence; the generation that he addresses is the inheritor of Israel's past with its saving actions and its misdeeds. His contemporaries could scarcely have called themselves by the name of "the holy city," and he demonstrates that they were slow to believe in the restoration of the city of Jerusalem. The safety that had been given to the holy city before the exile is described in Jer 26. Jeremiah was threatened with death because he predicted the fall of Jerusalem and of the temple. This false security would have been shattered by the Babylonian wars, but the generation of Deutero-Isaiah retained that type of superficial religion that was the cause of the ancient security in the holy city, a religion that demanded no more than cultic practices and assumed Yahweh had no moral will. The closing line of v. 2 is a common invocation of praise; it is both a prayer of the prophet and a satirical echo of the disingenuous cultic praise practised by Israel.

**Isaiah 51:15** *For I am Yahweh, your God [אלֹהֶיךָ], who disturbs the sea so that its waves roar, Yahweh Sabaoth is his name.*

Baltzer and Seitz discuss this verse within the immediate context of 51:12-16 that forms an oracle of consolation, notable in particular for its complex poetical form. Torrey places the verse in the context of vv. 1-16 and Brueggemann within vv. 9-16. Both Scullion and McKenzie examine the verse within the framework of vv. 51:1-23 and include vv. 1-12 of ch. 52.

The circumstances of oppression are once again very vivid in vv. 51:7 and 50:4-9, though particularly in the preceding v. 14, where the more detailed description is slightly obscured. The NIV thinks concretely of “prisoners...in their dungeons,” while the NRSV speaks of “the oppressed...down to the Pit.” At 63:1 the same rare Hebrew term **צִנְעָה** appears to refer to the great weight endured by one with bloodstained battle attire, or to one who is “stooped.” “Release” in the NRSV is only a possible interpretation of the Hebrew **הִפְתָּח**, the variant term **פָּתַח** (“to open”), is used in the charge to the servant Israel in 42:7; there quite clearly the reference is to the liberation of prisoners from the dungeon. If that same context is to be inferred in this instance, then the servant, through whom Yahweh speaks, here follows through on the charge given earlier to servant Israel. This would make the personal address to the servant in v. 16 by no means out of place.

Torrey doubts whether the conjunction at the beginning of the verse is original.<sup>56</sup> He points out that it is unnecessary, and ׀ is the last letter of the preceding word **לְהַנְוִי**. This introduces the possibility that the verse was not composed in chronological order from the preceding one and that the assumption of redaction is now prevalent. The idea that the latter part of the verse, from **וְנָע** on, is repeated in Jer 31:35 reinforces this idea. Stuhlmüller sees it as “slavishly added”<sup>57</sup> by a later scribe without adapting the Hebrew text and points out that the point of reference slips from plural to singular in v.

<sup>56</sup> Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 402.

<sup>57</sup> Carroll Stuhlmüller, “Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah,” *NJBC* 341.



12, and that the various translations of v. 14 in ancient versions is further proof of this redaction.

McKenzie sees Yahweh as the speaker in this verse, who identifies himself at the very beginning of the line by the unusually emphatic use of the first personal pronoun.<sup>58</sup> The emotion opposed to hope is fear and Zion must learn that it has no one to fear. People die, but Yahweh who is the Creator is eternal. He is ready to admit that the fear of the Israelites is a reasonable one; they have known oppression, they have known what it means to live in constant terror of a power they cannot resist. However, they have been slow to admit the supreme power, which is directed to save and not to terrify. The power of Yahweh is exhibited in the theme that was employed in v. 10, his dominion over the sea. Let Zion be assured that Yahweh will save it; in v. 16, the prophet echoes the ancient covenant formula, "You are my people and I am your God." He who stated these things is he who created the heavens and the earth.

Brueggemann sees that this concluding doxology looks back to vv. 9b-10 concerning Yahweh's management of the chaotic waters.<sup>59</sup> The one who can manage these waters is all-powerful, the Yahweh Sabaoth. As in 40:10-11, the assertion of Yahweh's power (v. 15) is followed in v. 16 by an assertion of Yahweh's attentive fidelity towards Israel that is also identifiable in Deut 1:30-31. The verse has Yahweh recognize the fragility of Israel, who must be held gently and acknowledged as Yahweh's treasured people; in the midst of that, however v. 16 has at its centre yet one more doxology to the creator. Verse 9 presents a character of Yahweh that is dormant. In v. 15,

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<sup>58</sup> McKenzie, *Second Isaiah*, 126.

<sup>59</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 132.

Yahweh is roused, ready to act and to demonstrate his awesome power. The people of Israel do not have to fear as they belong to Yahweh and are safe and redeemed.

The final occurrence of the term is in 54:5. This has been included in the more detailed exegesis of this text in ch. 5, to ensure that the phrase is examined in its immediate as well as in the large-scale context.

### *Trito-Isaiah*

As it is not the norm to conduct an examination of a text to ascertain what is missing from the text as opposed to a fruitful investigation of what is actually present, it is useful to begin to consider the absence of **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** in Isa 56-66 in the context of the other books in the OT where the phrase does not materialize, such as Deuteronomy, Daniel, and Ezekiel. One of the first, and remaining the most thorough, investigations of the phenomenon is W. Kessler's article, "Aus welchen Gründen wird die Bezeichnung 'Jahwe Zebaoth' in der späteren Zeit gemieden?"<sup>60</sup> His premise was that the polytheistic suggestions that were implicit in **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** went against the characteristic monotheistic emphasis of those books. The only other authors to attempt to account in detail specifically for the absence of the phrase from Trito-Isaiah are Aimo Murtonen and Christopher Begg.

Murtonen begins with the thesis that Deutero-Isaiah also wrote Trito-Isaiah. He attempts to explain the title's absence in the latter by noting that in Isa 40-55 **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** is used "only in very solemn contexts where the immense superiority of Yahweh's might is emphasized," whereas in Trito-

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<sup>60</sup> W. Kessler, "Aus welchen Gründen wird die Bezeichnung 'Jahwe Zebaoth' in der späteren zeit gemieden?" in *Gottes ist der Orient: Festschrift für Otto Eissfeldt zu seinem 70. Geburtstag am 1 Sep 1957*. (Berlin: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 1959), 79-83.

Isaiah, “there is not much occasion for this.”<sup>61</sup> Alternatively, he suggests that the form **יְרַפְּאֲתִיו** in the phrase **אָמַר יְהוָה יְרַפְּאֲתִיו** in Isa 57:19 could be an error for **צְבָאוֹת** so that, in fact, the term would be used in chs. 56-66 at least once.

Christopher Begg gives a much more in depth and plausible argument for the absence of the term from Trito-Isaiah. He instantly dismisses the idea that the author of Trito-Isaiah would not have known of the existence of the phrase and sees its omission from the text as “conscious avoidance.”<sup>62</sup> Begg looks to the representation of Yahweh as an divine being with a powerful effect on world history and who mediates this power through intermediaries, for example Cyrus, as previously discussed. In contrast, these divine agents play no role in the announcements concerning the future destinies of the nations and of Israel that comprise such a large part of the text of Trito-Isaiah. The author of Trito-Isaiah is always at pains to highlight how Yahweh works alone there is no one else who can aid him, for example, 59:16 “He saw that there was no one,” and 63:3 “I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me.” As has been discussed, the central idea of the “hosts” is a group that aids Yahweh and is ultimately under his control. As Begg suggests, “the title cannot but militate against TI’s [Trito-Isaiah’s] insistence on Yahweh as the sole active agent in the events he announces. His recognition of that fact was...one factor prompting TI [Trito-Isaiah] to avoid our title.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Christopher Begg, “The Absence of YHWH Sebā’ôt in Isaiah 56-66,” *Biblische Notizen* 44 (1988): 10.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

Begg focuses on the work of Tryggve Mettinger with respect to the **שם** and **כבוד** theologies of the divine presence that are seen in both the Deuteronomistic and Ezekiel-Priestly traditions.<sup>64</sup> Mettinger's opinion is that the two traditions, neither of which uses the phrase **יְהוָה זְבָאוֹת** developed their theologies in a direct reaction to an earlier "Zion-Sabaoth tradition" and the destruction of the temple. This tradition is evidenced in 2Sam 6-7, the royal psalms and Isa 6, which celebrates Yahweh's presence and his dwelling in the temple.<sup>65</sup>

While Mettinger does not refer to the absence of the term **יְהוָה זְבָאוֹת** from Trito-Isaiah directly, Begg utilizes his core ideas on this "presence theology" to further investigate why the author of Trito-Isaiah, like the Deuteronomist and Ezekiel (P) authors, exclude the phrase **יְהוָה זְבָאוֹת**. Begg's work, though at first appearing lengthy and detailed, is well worth a thorough analysis.

Begg is keen to highlight the fact that the text of Trito-Isaiah does not display any systematic inclination to disassociate itself from the Zion-Sabaoth tradition, i.e. Zion (59:20; 60:14; 62:2; 64:10; 66:8). Begg also refers to the terms **שם** and **כבוד**, that Trito-Isaiah uses with some frequency. Deuteronomy and Ezekiel (P) use these terms to explain what one finds in the temple. Yahweh does not live in the temple, and is not present there. Rather it is his **שם** and **כבוד**. Trito-Isaiah seems to differ in this instance by using

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>65</sup> Tryggve Mettinger, "YHWH SABAOTH-The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and other essays. International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 1979* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1982), 125.

them in parallelism with “mentions of Yahweh himself”<sup>66</sup> שׁם (56:6; 60:9; 65:1) and כְּבוֹד (60:2; 66:18). For Trito-Isaiah therefore, “the glory of the Lord” and “the name of the Lord” are “simply paraphrastic equivalents of ‘the Lord’.”<sup>67</sup> Similar to Deuteronomy and Ezekiel (P), Trito-Isaiah was not in disagreement with Zion-Sabaoth theology. Begg deduces from this that rather than having issues with the Zion-Sabaoth theology, Trito-Isaiah was keen to dissuade his audience from forming too close a link between Yahweh and the temple. That concern is evident in a series of passages where Trito-Isaiah refers to the “place” of Yahweh’s “residence” (57:15; 63:15; 464:1; 66:1) “Thus says Yahweh: Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting place?” These verses are in direct contrast to the various texts that exemplify the Zion-Sabaoth tradition in which Zion (or the temple, or the ark) is spoken of as the “dwelling place” שֵׁכֶן (Isa 8:18; Ps 46:5; 84:2; 132:5,7). It is worth noting the Deuteronomist’s key pronouncement concerning this “dwelling place” (1Kgs 8:27 “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built!” and 8:30 “Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling place; heed and forgive.”). Begg suggests that Trito-Isaiah has been influenced to some extent by Deuteronomy’s reaction against the Zion-Sabaoth tradition. The author therefore insists that “heaven” is Yahweh’s only true “residence.” Begg proposes that Trito-Isaiah’s “avoidance of the characteristic title YS [Yahweh

<sup>66</sup> Begg, “The Absence of YHWH Sebā’ōt in Isaiah 56-66,” 12.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 12.

Sabaoth] of the Zion-Sabaoth tradition is another reflection of that same influence.”<sup>68</sup> Trito-Isaiah refrains from using the term lest it would evoke the notion of Yahweh indissolubly linked to Zion and its temple as his place of residence.

## 7. Lord Yahweh of Hosts (יְהוָה־אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת)

To add to the interest surrounding the term יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת in the book of Isaiah, it is also necessary to look at the usage and distribution of the term יְהוָה־אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת or “Lord Yahweh of hosts” in the text. The term is only present in Proto-Isaiah and appears eight times, 3:15; 10:23; 10:24; 22:5; 22:12; 22:14; 22:15 and 28:22. E. Theodore Mullen sees the phrase as “a secondary interpretation that developed when the name Yahweh was seen as only a proper name,”<sup>69</sup> Blenkinsopp translates the term as “the Sovereign Lord Yahveh of the hosts.”<sup>70</sup> While he does not elucidate on this translation, it seems fitting in light of its association with kingship.

The term therefore is best read in the light of the sections of text in which it appears, principally chs. 10 and 22, which show evidence of later redaction or editing to include this term.

## 8. Redeemer (גֹּאֲלִי)

As previously illustrated, there are ten instances of the term גֹּאֲלִי in Deutero-Isaiah and two in Proto-Isaiah. There are no occurrences of the term in Trito-

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>69</sup> E. Theodore Mullen, “Host, Host of Heaven,” *ABD* 3:303.

<sup>70</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 331.

Isaiah. Due to the widespread use of the term in Deutero-Isaiah, it is worth carefully examining use of the term in chs. 40-55.

### ***Deutero-Isaiah***

This legal procedure of redemption provides the biblical authors with one of their more fundamental images for describing Yahweh's saving activity towards humanity. Formerly a secular idea, it took on immense theological significance in the OT, particularly in the book of Deuteronomy and the psalms, as well as the book of Isaiah. As the fundamental principle of a redemptive act is to deliver a person or thing from imprisonment or injury, it becomes a fitting representation of Yahweh's saving activity. Against the backdrop of Hebraic law, the representation had a lucidity that cannot be thoroughly appreciated outside of its sociological context. Nonetheless, it is vital to note that when applied to any divine action a minor shift occurs in the nuances of the term's definition, principally with regard to its usage. The verb פָּדָה takes on the broad meaning of "deliver" and does not comprise the idea of the recompense of an equivalent. Yahweh is, in any case, the Lord of the universe and everything belongs to him. In fact, it is significant that the only place where the likelihood of such an exchange is even suggested is in Isa 43:3-4:

For I am Yahweh, your God [*elohyeka*], the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. Because you are precious in my eyes, and honoured, and I love you, I give mankind in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life.

Yahweh's purpose is not to preserve the right of ownership, but to free his people, both individuals and groups, from their misfortunes. Though **גאל** like **פדה** loses its austere juridical undertones when recounting divine activity, and merely takes on the sense of "deliver," it still retains some of its fundamental implications even when used in reference to Yahweh. What better way is there for a prophet to restore confidence in his people that Yahweh has an exceptional reason to redeem them, for he is their **גאֵלֵךְ** (Isa 41:14; 43:14; 44:6; 44:24; 47:4; 48:17 etc.) and a personal relationship exists between them and their God (41:8-9; 43:10; 43:20; 44:1-2; 45:4; 54:10; 55:3)? It seems intentional that the text of Deutero-Isaiah only uses the term **פדה** on two occasions, in 50:2 and 51:11. In both perspectives, it appears with expressions that are connected with the exodus event. Even though the two terms were used interchangeably, when removed from their human context, the author of the text was conscious of their wider implications and made use of them to produce a more amenable disposition for the message he was to convey. Perhaps he wished to differentiate between the earlier redemption from Egypt and the later one to come, by utilising a term for the latter that had only rarely been associated with the exodus (Exod 6:6; 15:13).

In Deutero-Isaiah, it is essential to examine the term **גאל** in accordance with Yahweh's deliverance of his people from their suffering during the Babylonian exile. The title of "redeemer" is often used in reference to the deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians (Exod 6:6; 5:13 where **גאל** is used and Deut 7:8; 9:26 where **פדה** is used), so it is an appropriate



term to use to portray Israel's comparable liberation from their second period in captivity. Redemption is therefore one of the indispensable concepts of the text of Deutero-Isaiah as can be seen in the uses of "redeemer" as a title for Yahweh (41:14; 43:14; 44:6; 44:24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 49:26; 54:5; 54:8). The term *go'el* is most often used, almost certainly due to its connotations of an intimate relationship with Yahweh and a sense of personal responsibility. The term points not only to the fact that Yahweh delivers his people, but also that he has an obligation to do so because of having adopted them for his own. He is their "next of kin." The notion of a redemption charge or penalty is expressly excluded in Isa 45:13; 52:3. In 43:3, it does not appear as something that should be treated seriously.

It is interesting to examine Helmer Ringgren's analysis of the term specifically in Deutero-Isaiah. In Ringgren's view, the prophet perceived the release from captivity in Babylon as a new exodus. To encapsulate this idea, he employs the root *g'l* to depict it.<sup>71</sup> In addition, he applies the root to communicate the idea of restoring a covenantal relationship that has become exhausted. In Isa 51:10, the term גְּאוּלִּים, "the redeemed," evidently refers to the people who had been liberated from Egypt, and in 48:20 the redemption is illustrated as coming out from Babylon, and being piloted through the desert in v. 21, accordingly recounting a new exodus. In 44:22 according to Ringgren, the redemption would seem to be more intertwined with the idea of forgiveness of sins. In 44:23 "For Yahweh has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel," the act of redemption is selected as praise of Yahweh that summons all nature to rejoice. In 52:9, this celebration is depicted as

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<sup>71</sup> Ringgren, "גְּאוּלִּים *gā'al*; גְּאוּלִּים *gō'el*; גְּאוּלִּים *ge'ullāh*," *TDOT* 2:351.

rejoicing before the king, welcoming the return of a triumphant Yahweh and his redeemed people. 43:1 speaks once again of the restoration of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel, incorporating the idea of Yahweh as Creator with Yahweh as Redeemer. Ringgren also states that the “ptcp. *go'el*, ‘redeemer,’ appears as an epithet of God nine times in Deutero-Isaiah.”<sup>72</sup> Upon additional examination he surmises that seven of these cases utilise the term as an expansion of the messenger formula, “thus says Yahweh.” He also highlights 41:14 and 54:5 as occurrences of the term in relation to the phrase “fear not.” In 49:26, Ringgren identifies the term as being used in conjunction with the idea of “saviour.”

The text that elaborates on this point is rather ambiguous and may lead the reader to form a negative opinion of the *go'el* as Ringgren appears to term it “a stereotyped divine epithet.”<sup>73</sup> The ambiguity of this phrase may be solved somewhat by reverting to the original German of the text which reads “Auf Grund der Gesamtanschauung von DtJes ist also *gō'ēl* zum stehenden Gottesepitheton geworden, das auch ohne direktn Zusammenhang mit einer im Kontext erwähnten Erlösung gebracucht werden kann.”<sup>74</sup> The phrase “stereotyped divine epithet” would be better translated as a more of a “stock phrase” or a term that has become formalized as opposed to using the term “stereotype” which by definition describes something that conforms to an unjustifiably fixed mental picture. The translation of the term as such has led

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 354 “ptcp.” = participle.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 355.

<sup>74</sup> Helmer Ringgren, “גַּאֵל גַּאֵל גַּאֵל,” *ThWAT* 1:890.

to some commentators adopting the phrase “stereotype”<sup>75</sup> and only adopting Ringgren’s second point, whereby the use of the term in Deutero-Isaiah does not have any explicit connection to any particular situation. Presumably from the context of both articles, it is meant that when the term “redeemer” is a divine designation, and when not explained in the context of a particular *act* of redemption, then the term becomes “stereotyped” or standardized. This seems a rather curious interpretation in light of the idea of an epithet as describing a quality or an attribute. One does not have to be engaged in a redeeming act to be termed a redeemer, or to be reminded of a previous act. The very fact of using an epithet for Yahweh is to highlight an aspect of his character. Not to see the terminology in this way is not to witness the ongoing nature of Yahweh’s actions. Just as he is Creator from the time he created the world and all living creatures, as well as Creator in the sense of creating and continuing a world history, he is Redeemer in an ongoing sense. By continuing the covenantal relationship, Israel will always be a party to Yahweh’s redemption and the possibility of redemption will always be to the fore. To suggest that Yahweh cannot substantively be called גאל unless the term is linked with a particular act is to ignore the ongoing act of redemption that all of humanity is privy to if they enter into a relationship with Yahweh.

This idea of גאל as a “stereotypical epithet” is further rebuffed in more recent readings of Deutero-Isaiah. Blenkinsopp pays particular attention to the use of the term “Redeemer” to depict Yahweh in Deutero-Isaiah. He does not identify the term as a title or attribute and focuses on its usage second

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<sup>75</sup> E.Theodore Mullen, “Go’el גאל,” *DDD* 706-707. Mullen does not attribute his reference to Ringgren although the *TDOT* article is cited in his bibliography.

only to that of the term “Creator.” His references to the occurrence of the term in Deutero-Isaiah are identical to those of this study<sup>76</sup> and he emphasizes how the term is completely absent from Proto-Isaiah.<sup>77</sup> He discusses the idea of the “language of redemption”<sup>78</sup> that is associated with the exodus from Egypt. Blenkinsopp examines this link in closer detail than any previous commentators, and concludes that the account of the escape from exile in Exodus does not actually feature significantly in the text. Rather the term פִּדְיוֹן is “the standard Deuteronomic term for divine intervention during the Exodus.”<sup>79</sup> It would appear according to Blenkinsopp, that the language of redemption in Deutero-Isaiah has been mediated through usage in Deuteronomy. He also puts forward the notion that נִאֵל would have been preferable to פִּדְיוֹן “because of the associations with land and indentured service,”<sup>80</sup> a theme that is nonexistent in the text of Proto-Isaiah. It is only when conducting his exegesis of the text that Blenkinsopp puts forward his most contentious idea, namely that the author of the text of Deutero-Isaiah conceived or “created” the term. Blenkinsopp at this stage refers to the term as a title.<sup>81</sup> His basis for these assumptions regarding the origin of the term is based in the context of an exegesis of 41:8-16. He surmises an Isaian innovation of the term as “the title *gō’ēl* also appears frequently in chs. 40-66, rarely elsewhere (Jer 50:34; Pss 19:15[14]; 78:35), and not at all in Isa 1-

<sup>76</sup> 41:14; 43:14; 44:6. 44:24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 49:26; 54:8; 54:8.

<sup>77</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 110.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

39.”<sup>82</sup> It must be presumed that Blenkinsopp is referring to the use of the term as a title for Yahweh rather than the actual “invention” of the expression. This is in agreement with J.J. Stamm’s analysis that concludes, “The original sense of *g’l* and its derivatives *gō’ēl* and *ge’ullâ* appears unmistakable in Lev 25”<sup>83</sup> but that the author of Deutero-Isaiah was “the first to apply this attribute” to Yahweh and sees it as a “new” term. Stamm goes on to support with the idea that “Deutero-Isaiah appropriated the term introduced by Deuteronomy, except he used *g’l* rather than *pdh*.”<sup>84</sup> He links the idea of redemption, not only with the exiles in Babylon, but with the wider Diaspora and also to the nations. The nations themselves, as eyewitnesses to the liberation from exile by which Yahweh restores his people, will acknowledge Yahweh for who he is and will become aware of his power over even the idols that they have worshipped. According to Stamm, by using the term “redeemer,” the author of Deutero-Isaiah contrasts Yahweh’s saving activity with the act of a human redeemer. With this, he “anchors the end of Israel’s history in its beginning.”<sup>85</sup> It would seem therefore that if the term is omitted (which must be presumed to be because of lack of knowledge of the term rather than deliberate non-inclusion) in Proto-Isaiah, then its inclusion in Deutero-Isaiah must presume some advancement in a theological idea of Yahweh. While of course there is mention throughout the entire text of the book of Isaiah of the saving nature of Yahweh, the term “redeemer,” with its connotations of land ownership would have been of importance to the exiled people. The temporal aspect of the term would have had greater resonance

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>83</sup> J.J. Stamm, “גאל *g’l* to redeem,” *TLOT* 1:289, 294.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 294.

with the people than the idea of salvation as redemption and would have given them greater hope for the future, signifying a move away from the “former things.”

A. R. Johnson in his article, “The Primary Meaning of גִּאֲלוֹ,” develops this idea further by highlighting how Yahweh is the “true guardian King” of the people who had been freed from the Babylonian exile.<sup>86</sup> Johnson looks to 43:1 and 44:6, translating גִּאֲלֵתִיךָ and גִּאֲלוֹ respectively as “protector,” and therefore views the verses as stressing how Israelites would have pleaded with Yahweh to support them. He incorporates the idea of “protector” from his translation of both terms as “to cover.” For Johnson, the term has associations with the idea of covenant by perceiving Yahweh and his chosen people as “one.”<sup>87</sup> He develops Ringgren’s thesis in that the Israelites are Yahweh’s “protégés” and as such, Yahweh has the authority to defend the honour of the individual and that of society, in both spiritual and material ways.<sup>88</sup>

### ***Trito-Isaiah***

There are three incidences of the term “Redeemer” in relation to Yahweh in Trito-Isaiah. In Isa 59:20 and 60:16 this term occurs in an eschatological context; in 63:16 the expression is in parallel with “Father,” but in a wider sense it includes deliverance from Egypt, salvation in the present, and salvation in the future. These three verses need further study, and therefore will be included in the more detailed exegesis in ch. 5. The term גִּאֲלוֹ in

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<sup>86</sup> A.R. Johnson, “The Primary Meaning of גִּאֲלוֹ,” VTSupp 1 (1953): 76.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 76.

Isa 51:10 refers to those whom Yahweh saved at the Red Sea. The author of the text of Trito-Isaiah appropriated the expression in 62:12, although in this particular context, it refers to the members of the people who returned home from the Diaspora (62:11). The author of the apocalyptic verses in chs. 34 and 35 uses the term **נְאוּלִים** in 35:9b and 35:10a. Stamm supposes that these texts are “imitating Deutero-Isaiah” but that on this occasion the redeemed are those who return from the Diaspora.<sup>89</sup> The concept of “return” tends to mean the restoration of what had been lost, and therefore, is essential to the concept of **נָאֵל**. Consequently, the deep-rooted significance of the verb is still flourishing in the passages that have been cited above, possibly no longer with its legal connotations but still such that a necessary feature of **נָאֵל**, the liberating reinstatement of the original, attains a clearly identifiable representation. In order to further this investigation it would be useful to include 60:16 in a more thorough and far reaching exegesis.

## 9. Saviour (ישׁע)

There are four uses of the term **ישׁע** in Deutero-Isaiah and only one in Proto-Isaiah. The term does not occur in Trito-Isaiah. It is a difficult task to study the occurrences of the term “saviour” in the book of Isaiah as the term is naturally linked with the idea of salvation and it is hard to distance the two. In this case, the distinction is necessary, as this study is concerned with the term **ישׁע** as a title and the contexts in which it occurs as distinct from the notion of salvation in the text. This is why this study has not begun with an obvious

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<sup>89</sup> Stamm, *TLOT* 1:294.

examination of the so-called Oracles of Salvation, where Yahweh may not necessarily be called “Saviour” as is the case in particular in the “salvation for the nations” oracle of 45:20-25.

Restoration now becomes the dominant theme in Deutero-Isaiah. According to John McKenzie, Deutero-Isaiah is the greatest of all the texts of the OT in its elaboration of the theme of salvation, frequently alluding to the power of Yahweh in connection with salvation.<sup>90</sup> Bernard Wodecki notes how he cannot identify the use of *שׁוּעַ* in Deutero-Isaiah “dans un sens profane.”<sup>91</sup> The restoration of Israel is an innovative demonstration of Yahweh’s power as a creator and is comparable in this regard to his creation of Israel during the exodus. While Yahweh’s saving actions during the exodus were made apparent to the Egyptian people, the restoration of Israel is made apparent to the whole world. He has as Antje Labahn states, “formulated a new programme for Israel’s future.”<sup>92</sup> The author of the text of Deutero-Isaiah highlights the theme of the new exodus to almost the same degree that he emphasises the new creation.

**Isaiah 45:15** *In truth, you are a God who hides himself, O God [elohey] of Israel, the Saviour.*

One of the most interesting occurrences of the term “saviour” is in 45:15 and it is worthwhile investigating the verse in some detail. It is usually accepted that this verse does not extend to the confession of faith heard in v. 14, but is an observation; either by the author of the section of text from chs. 40-48, or by a later scribe. Westermann describes this as an “Amen” gloss or “words

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<sup>90</sup> McKenzie, “Aspects of Old Testament Thought,” 1308.

<sup>91</sup> Bernard Wodecki, “*שׁוּעַ* dans le livre d’Isaïe,” *VT* 34 (1984): 485.

<sup>92</sup> Antje Labahn, “The Delay of Salvation within Deutero-Isaiah,” *JSOT* 85 (1999): 72.



added by a reader...saying an Amen to what he had heard.”<sup>93</sup> The fact that Yahweh as Saviour or מוֹשִׁיעַד is a relatively common designation in chapters 40-48 does not answer the problem. The usual hypothesis would be that it was proposed as an observation on the preceding announcement, possibly also expanding on the confession of faith, rather than as a stray remark regarding the Cyrus poem. Baltzer actually translates the term, as “The God of Israel is the one who helps!” and endeavours to solve the predicament of how the foreign nations can know that the God of Israel “helps” or “saves.”<sup>94</sup> The saviour of Israel is the one who delivers the people from defeat and internment, and in this instance Cyrus is the agent who has been selected. Yahweh’s actions are visible to Israel in a new way. These actions are still concealed from the nations who only come to know Yahweh and his ways as they observe his actions with the Israelites, ironically achieved through Cyrus, a foreign ruler. The distinction between this and the exodus is unusual. Here is a foreign liberator, depicted as not following Yahweh. His liberation of Israel leads to the acceptance of Yahweh by the foreign nations, but who is met with opposition by Yahweh’s own people.

Arvid Kapelrud’s article on “The Main Concern of Second Isaiah”<sup>95</sup> deals with the subject of salvation in Deutero-Isaiah in a very thorough manner and his observations on the subject are worth careful examination. He views salvation and redemption as second only to consolation among the main themes of the preaching of the prophet. He focuses on the method by which the prophet underlines how Yahweh was the “God of salvation,” the only one

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<sup>93</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 171.

<sup>94</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 242.

<sup>95</sup> Arvid Kapelrud, “The Main Concern of Second Isaiah,” *VT* 32 (1982): 50-58.

who could save his people from the discontented state of affairs in which they lived. Undoubtedly, according to Kapelrud, the kind of salvation that the prophet is referring to is the deliverance of the people from their oppressors in Babylon.<sup>96</sup> The prophet was logically conscious of the fact that there might have been an issue of distrust among the people as to whether or not this message of hope could actually be believed. He resisted this suspicion by repeating his message. For Kapelrud, the liberation from captivity in Babylon was the principal concern for the Jews living in the great foreign centre. While they did hope and pray for a new exodus, they did not anticipate one, though they may have been justified in doing so, for it had materialized for their ancestors. The author of the text was very clear in stating that it was not necessary to dwell on these past events however as a new exodus was approaching, and Yahweh was to save his people. There is no doubt for Kapelrud that the “deliverance and salvation meant release from captivity in Babylon.”<sup>97</sup> Help from Yahweh was coming to people who still had stubborn hearts and the emphasis on salvation in Zion, is interesting in this regard. It may be a suggestion that the prophet spoke to a certain degree to his peers in Jerusalem. The main concern in the text is that the actual approaching salvation is part of the impending permanent salvation as revealed in Zion. Since salvation, according to Kapelrud, principally represents liberation from imprisonment, it is not surprising to him that salvation and redemption appear to be the same thing for the preaching of the prophet. Salvation is seen as redeeming the exiles, who would now be liberated from their repression and re-established in their ancient rights.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 53.

Salvation and redemption are central notions for the author of Deutero-Isaiah being seen as something real and “actual.” Through this, they have acquired a deeper meaning than they had in previous times, but at the same time salvation and redemption characterize the actions of Yahweh, with everything they contained: “Blessing, peace, happiness, harmony, light on the road and hope for the future.”<sup>98</sup>

## 10. God of Jacob (אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב)

**Isaiah 2:3** *Many peoples shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God [elohey] of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For instruction comes from Zion, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.*

This verse reflects the Zion theme that is prevalent through much of the book of Isaiah. The verse is part of a larger context of 2:2-5 that describes the pilgrimage that the nations will make to Zion. The pilgrims are not identified by their nationality and this leads to a sense of universalism. The geographical location is clear however. Jerusalem is the celestial mountain, forming the centrepiece of the earth. The temple, the house of Jacob’s God where he dwells, is at the heart of Jerusalem. The tone of the pilgrimage is interesting as the people go willingly “up” the mountain, in fact they “stream” (נָהַר) towards it (2:2). This is linked with the refrain to the “household of Jacob” to accept the request that was made to the nations. Now the focus is on the internal population, to the people of the God of Jacob. Both terms “God of Jacob” and “household of Jacob” became popular in the Second Temple period.<sup>99</sup> As with much of the references to Jacob and Israel in the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>99</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 191.

book of Isaiah, it is difficult to ascertain whether the term refers to the geographical situation or to the historical sense of Jacob as an ancestor. In the situation of 2:3, it seems to be a combination of both references, linking Yahweh with the historical and the known, and with the current population.

## 11. God of your Salvation (אֱלֹהֵי יְשׁוּעָה)

**Isaiah 17:10** *You have forgotten the God of your salvation, and have not remembered the Rock of your refuge. Therefore, though you plant attractive plants and plant alien shoots.*

Brueggemann highlights how the rhetoric of 17:10 makes clear the characteristic prophetic linkage between *theological commitment* and *military-political policy*.<sup>100</sup> Disregard of Yahweh leads to the formation of self-destructive policy. Israel had forgotten its identity and therefore its true support for life in the world. This is poetic language; its reasoning does not fill in all the intermediate steps between commitment and policy; it simply assumes that they are close and self-evident, even to Israel in its amnesia. Verses 10 and 11 continue the theme of Israel's loss of memory regarding what Yahweh has done for his people. This idiom is most common in Deuteronomy (6:12; 8:11) and the theme of the text is a warning against the worship of foreign idols. The verse refers to pagan practice; apparently that of Adonis, the god who was thought to die at the first coming of the summer heat. The key point being made here is that the worship of foreign gods is as unproductive as this practice and worse still, merits a punishment, "the harvest will flee away in a day of grief and incurable pain." Joseph Jensen surmises, "These verses could be from Isaiah, brought here because of the reference to

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<sup>100</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 149.

the harvest in vv5-6, though they could more easily have been addressed originally to Judah than to Israel.”<sup>101</sup> Blenkinsopp also follows this idea, seeing the verse as coming from “a time when the fate of the kingdoms of Syria and Israel lay in the distant past.”<sup>102</sup>

## 12. God of Your Ancestor David (אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אֲבִיךָ)

**Isaiah 38:5** *Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says Yahweh, the God of your ancestor David: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life.*

Blenkinsopp designates the author of 38:5 as an “historian”<sup>103</sup> because of the account of Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery, introduced by a vague temporal indication of “in those days.” He supposes that the “historian” had drawn on narrative material that had originally been circulated orally and that profiled a prophet that was very different from the Isaiah of the diatribes and the threats of imminent disaster. Hezekiah is a man of prayer (37:14-20; 38:3). The language of his brief prayer when at the point of death is characteristically Deuteronomistic, as to be “wholeheartedly” true to Yahweh is a criterion by which kings are judged (1Kgs 8:61; 11:4; 15:3, 14). It therefore suited the author’s idealized portrait of Hezekiah as a devout and just ruler after the manner of David. The term also highlights an awareness of the relationship that was believed to exist between Yahweh and the Davidic dynasty, which forms a central feature in the explanation of why Jerusalem was saved in 701 B.C.E.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Jensen, *Isaiah 1-39*, 161.

<sup>102</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 303.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 484.

<sup>104</sup> Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 290.

In relation to the account of this scene in 2Kgs 18, it is considerably longer in Kings than in Isaiah, comprising of 37 verses. It is unclear as to whether any specific editorial intent exists in the Isaianic abbreviation. The shorter Isaiah account does not really intensify the speed of the divine response, but only shortens the portrayal of the reversal of the divine will with respect to Hezekiah.

### 13. Everlasting God (אלהי עולם)

**Isaiah 40:28** *Have you not known? Have you not heard? Yahweh is the everlasting God [elohey], the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable.*

This term in 40:28 is difficult to translate accurately, as it is unclear as to whether it is Yahweh or *elohîm* that term “everlasting” is directly connected with, and many commentators give their own translation. The NRSV translates the phrase, as “The LORD is the everlasting God.” For the translation here, the term has been linked primarily with *elohîm* as the in the book of Isaiah, it appears less common to link adjectives with “Yahweh.” The implications remain the same however, and Blenkinsopp translates

עולם יהוה as “Yahveh is God from of old.”<sup>105</sup> The Hebrew for the term is literally “the God of an indefinitely long time.”<sup>106</sup> Blenkinsopp sees the term as highlighting how Yahweh’s presence is atemporal, extending over the past, the present, and the future times and over the entire world. “The reality of God as creator and redeemer is everywhere present and known.”<sup>107</sup> As creator, Yahweh has a limitless extension in time, or is everlasting. This

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<sup>105</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 189.

<sup>106</sup> Louis Hartman, “God, Names of,” *EncJud* 7:676.

<sup>107</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 311.

aspect is also expressed in the phrase translated as “eternal God” by both the LXX (αἰωνίου θεοῦ) and Jerome (*Deus sempiternus*).<sup>108</sup> In this context, the function seems to be an establishment of a link with the past. It recalls the way Abraham called upon the name of the Lord at Beer-sheba in Gen 21:33. Here Abraham planted a tamarisk and invoked the name of Yahweh, “the everlasting God.” It is an oblique reference to the patriarchal days, similar to 51:2-3 and presumably in circulation at the time the writing of the text of Isaiah. The vastness of the power of the Creator, in terms of both timescale and geographical influence is in contrast to the rather narrow fortunes of Israel and the challenges that face her people.

#### 14. Righteous God (אֱלֹהֵי צְדִיק)

**Isaiah 45:21** *Declare and present your case; let them consult together! Who has announced this from the beginning? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, Yahweh? There is no other god besides me, a righteous God [elohîm] and a Saviour; there is no one except me.*

This verse is addressed to the survivors of the exile (v. 20) and is the high point of the unforeseen salvation that was brought about by Yahweh, through Cyrus. Here, the nations are called upon to attend court and present their case to defend themselves from the accusations being presented to them: that contrary to Yahweh’s clear role in creation, the people appear to have no “knowledge” of it. It appears that they have no defence. The three rhetorical questions posed are worthy of note in terms of their literary contribution. They do immediately appear to be exasperated in tone, as they might, being addressed to a people who have just escaped from near devastation but are still hauling their idols with them. They still worship these idols, knowing

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 194.

that they have not and will not save them. Speaking to the unconvinced, the tone is almost one of pride, as Yahweh will not tire of pointing out the obvious. His word will not change, as he is the only righteous God, the only God who can redeem the people, in the same way that he is the only God who can save them.

## 15. Righteous One (צַדִּיק)

**Isaiah 24:16** *From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One. But I say, I waste away, I waste away. Woe is me! For the treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal very treacherously.*

Many commentators translate צַדִּיק in 24:16 as “the Just One” and indeed there is still debate as to whether it can actually be classed in this context as a divine epithet.<sup>109</sup> The term primarily honours Yahweh as the vindicator of the divine right and that of Israel through victory in battle. Just as the judgment of Yahweh will be universal, so also will the acclamation of praise, which affirms that it is righteous, will also be worldwide. There is conflict between this idea of universality and the emphasis upon “glory to the Righteous One.” There is a “counternote” in this verse, according to Brueggemann to the massive devastation seen elsewhere in the chapter.<sup>110</sup> It is not immediately clear who is singing the songs of praise, but it is evident that they are part of the community that worships Yahweh, perhaps an exilic one. They break into a doxology, giving honour and praise to the “The Righteous One” or rather the one who will act decisively to impose righteous order on their ambivalent society.

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<sup>109</sup> William Irwin, “The Punctuation of Isaiah:14-16a and 25:4c-5,” *CBQ* 46 (1984): 218.

<sup>110</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 193.



Blenkinsopp translates the verse as “From the ends of the earth we hear the refrain ‘Glory to the Conquering One!’” as צַדִּיק is never used as an epithet and it seems to fit the context better to take it in relation to a victory.

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**Isaiah 26:7** *The path of the righteous is straight; Righteous One, you make smooth the path of the righteous.*

Verse 26:7 is a difficult one to translate. As Blenkinsopp points out “the line is overloaded.”<sup>112</sup> The יִשְׁרָאֵל is omitted in the LXX, and it is only more recent translations, such as the RSV and NRSV that use the term in this manner. Isaac Seeligmann, in discussing how the translator of Isaiah may have introduced various terms into the religious terminology of Hellenistic Judaism, highlights how the translator chooses εὐσεβής as rendering צַדִּיק twice in 24:16 and 26:7, “intentionally avoiding the usual δίκαιος; and once (32:8) the same word as a translation of נְדִיב”<sup>113</sup> Childs asserts that the word יִשְׁרָאֵל is not “to be contrived of as a vocative, “O straight one,”<sup>114</sup> and translates the verse as “The way of the righteous is level, smooth the path of the righteous which you lay.” Clements prefers the rendering of צַדִּיק not as a noun but as an adjective, that describes the nature of the path.<sup>115</sup>

The verse provides a basic affirmation of faith that introduces a lament. The lament begins by asserting that those who speak are “the

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<sup>111</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 352.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>113</sup> Isaac (Isac) Leo Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 269.

<sup>114</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 188.

<sup>115</sup> Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 214.

righteous,” who are contrasted with “the wicked,” and that the speakers are very sure that God reliably attends to the needs, hopes, and prayers of the righteous. “The Righteous” are probably to be viewed as the most intense followers of the Torah and those in the postexilic Israel who trust most zealously in Yahweh. By establishing the “right-ness” of Yahweh, an important premise of Israel’s faith<sup>116</sup> a follower could then proceed to set his complaint before Yahweh, showing that such an affirmation of faith was being set in doubt. Yahweh will not act on behalf of those that are not righteous but those that are righteous and faithful “may depend upon him in patient hope.”<sup>117</sup> The idea of the way of the righteous echoes the imagery that can be found in Ps 1, but was in any case a very common metaphor. The author of the text seeks to establish the principles by which Yahweh’s rule over the world will be the judgment that will leave only a few remaining in v. 6.

## 16. God of Faithfulness (אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֵן)

**Isaiah 65:16** *Then whoever blesses himself in the land shall bless by the God of faithfulness, and whoever takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of faithfulness; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes.*

The translations of אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֵן in 65:16 vary. Blenkinsopp translates it as “god whose name is Amen.”<sup>118</sup> Amen is one of the most easily recognised words built on the root אֱמֵן. The term itself only appears thirty-two times in the OT, 14 of these in Deut 27 alone so it is quite difficult to provide an

<sup>116</sup> Jensen, *Isaiah 1-39*, 205.

<sup>117</sup> John Oswalt, “God’s Determination to Redeem his People,” *RevExp* 88 (1991): 161.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 280

accurate definition of the term in relation to אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֵן. The MT of 65:16 is difficult to translate so “*be’lohe ‘amen* is often emended to *be’lohe ‘emun* or *be’lohe ‘omen* both times this expression appears in 65:16.”<sup>119</sup>

## 17. The Most High (עֲלִיּוֹן)

**Isaiah 14:14** *I will go up to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.*

The Hebrew term עֲלִיּוֹן is found only once in the book of Isaiah, in 14:14. The term is an adjective normally meaning “high” or “upper.” When used in reference to Yahweh, the word can be translated as “Most High.” When used in reference to Yahweh, עֲלִיּוֹן is never preceded by the article הַ (the), it must have been used a proper noun, or a name for Yahweh meaning “the Most High” or in parallelism with the tetragrammaton, especially in the book of Psalms (9:3; 21:8; 46:5; 50:14; 73:11; 77:11; 78:17; 83:19; 87:5; 91:1; 91:9; 92:2; 107:11).

The term “elyon” was originally used as a qualifying word with “el” by the patriarchs and was worshipped in Jerusalem.<sup>120</sup> Childs sees a parallel with Canaanite mythology after the discovery of Ugaritic texts. These depict how when Elyon was defeated by Death, possibly after a cosmic battle with Helel, his throne was left vacant after his descent to Sheol.<sup>121</sup>

In 14:14 Yahweh is seen as literally “the Most High,” as the king intends to climb above the clouds to the heavens to make himself “like the

<sup>119</sup> Alfred Jepsen, “אֱמֵן ’āman; אֱמֹנָה ’ē mūnāh; אֱמֵן ’āmēn; אֱמֹת ’ē meth,” *TDOT* 1:322.

<sup>120</sup> Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 47.

<sup>121</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 126.

Most High.” Yahweh is once again connected with the heavenly rule and his role as the unique leader is reiterated, no earthly king can compare.

## 18. First and Last

The only examples of the term “first and last” in the OT occur in the text of Deutero-Isaiah in 41:4; 44:6, and 48:12. As the term is so infrequently used, it is useful to examine these texts briefly to see how the three verses treat the term.

**Isaiah 41:4** *Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning? I, Yahweh, am first, and will be with the last.*

41:4 depicts the verdict of Yahweh, posing the rhetorical question of “Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning?” and providing the answer **אֲנִי יְהוָה רִאשׁוֹן וְאַחֲרָיִם אֲנִי הוּא**, he is at the beginning of every event, no matter how universal or immense (40:12-13), and indeed the opposite event that is customary and almost insignificant (40:27-28). Yahweh is also present at the conclusion to these events and in the spirit of creation; it is easy to see how Yahweh ensures the “perfect fulfilment of his designs.”<sup>122</sup> The term here supports the key ideas of Deutero-Isaiah’s theology; that Yahweh is the supreme and unique god and that he is creator. Few other designations for Yahweh have this much scope.

**Isaiah 44:6** *Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Yahweh Sabaoth: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.*

In the trial scene of 44:6, Yahweh declares that he alone is Israel’s king, redeeming his people **אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן וְאַחֲרֹן**. With these two theologically significant designations in parallel, this text warrants a more

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<sup>122</sup> Stuhmueller, “Deutero-Isaiah,” *NJBC* 334.

detailed exegesis. In this setting, Yahweh is discrediting the heavenly hosts, and is therefore positioning himself as the supreme cosmic leader. No human king is comparable. 48:12 is typical of the style of Deutero-Isaiah, showing both prophecy and fulfilment. The rule of Yahweh in this instance embraces both time and space. Williamson adds the idea that this term would be an “accepted characteristic of God” on which the prophet would build his new revelation.<sup>123</sup>

The focus of Julian Morgenstern’s article is the terminology אֲנִי יְהוָה and how this should be translated as “I (the universal) God.”<sup>124</sup> Morgenstern focuses on 41:4b as “a chiasmic 3/3 distich, with complete parallelism of the members and effective chiasm” and translates the verse as “I, Yahweh, am the first; and with the last ones I am He” though it is difficult to see how he arrives at this translation as *Aharon* is singular and there is no indication of a preposition<sup>125</sup> With regard to the implication of אֱלֹהִים, Morgenstern sees “He” as only a literal translation of the pronoun “but as such is almost meaningless.”<sup>126</sup> Rather the author must have had something specific in mind when using the pronoun in this context. As suggested by the use of אֱלֹהִים in parallel with the tetragrammaton יְהוָה, the term is used in exactly the same way, and with precisely the same implication as יְהוָה. While Morgenstern looks to “abundant evidence” in terms of close examination of a number of texts within Deutero-Isaiah, he fails to explore the techniques of parallelism in

<sup>123</sup> Hugh Williamson, “First and Last in Isaiah,” in *Of Prophets’ Visions and the Wisdom of Sages* (eds. Heather McKay and David Clines; Sheffield: JSOT Press, c1993), 99.

<sup>124</sup> Julian Morgenstern, “Deutero-Isaiah’s Terminology for ‘Universal God’,” *JBL* 62 (1943): 269.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

quite the same depth. Parallelism can also be used to add emphasis and to continue an idea further, rather than to exactly mirror it. In this case, the emphasis could be said to be in the uniqueness of Yahweh as the first, and the last. There is no “tie” for position. Just as Yahweh is the Lord above all others, he inhabits a position above all others, one that no one, no other god can attain or even aspire to.

Stuhmueller identifies “nine or ten” passages that refer to “first and last” in his 1967 article; 40:21; 41:4; 41:22-29; 42:8-9; 43:8-13; 43:18-19a; 44:6-8; 45:20f; 46:9-11; 48:1-16. He judges the tenth passage, 52:3-6 as unauthentic.<sup>127</sup> He associates “first and last” with the “former things” that are so after referred to in the text of Deutero-Isaiah. Stuhmueller poses the question “because Dt-Is reflects frequently upon “first things” at “the beginning” is he therefore thinking primarily of first creation at the very beginning of time?”<sup>128</sup> He answers this by reference to creation, but does not clearly state why the “former things” come under this heading, especially if creation is seen as an ongoing act and one that is atemporal.

In his 1970 publication, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, Stuhmueller elaborates on his theory. He defines the phrase in general terms as “‘First’ applies to prophecies already fulfilled, ‘Last’ refers to prophecies still awaiting fulfilment.”<sup>129</sup> He sees Yahweh’s summons to the entire heaven and earth to witness that he alone is the “First and Last,” as the main concern for Deutero-Isaiah, especially in relation to 48:12-19, “the only one clearly announcing and efficaciously fulfilling the salvation and prosperity of

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<sup>127</sup> Carroll Stuhmueller, “‘First and Last’ and ‘Yahweh-Creator’ in Deutero-Isaiah,” *CBQ* 29 (1967): 495-511.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 496.

<sup>129</sup> Carroll Stuhmueller, *Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah*, (AnBib 43; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 136.

Israel.”<sup>130</sup> He goes on to conclude that the victories of Cyrus can be transferred to a new creation.<sup>131</sup> A theory that can be linked with 48:12 and 41:4, but there is no apparent connection in this regard with 44:6.

Paul Del Brasseley takes up Stuhlmüller’s argument regarding “the connection...in Isaiah 44 between the identification of YHWH as “first and last” and the polemic against idol manufacture and worship” which he sees as possibly having a broader significance than Stuhlmüller would allow.<sup>132</sup> Del Brasseley links the term with a rhetorical question “involving YHWH’s unique ability to foretell events.”<sup>133</sup> With regard to the use of the term in 44:6, he sees it as linked with the dismissing of any god other than Yahweh, or as Del Brasseley terms it, “the rhetorical annihilation of the gods,”<sup>134</sup> or the rejection of other gods that would have been worshipped at the time in the form of a polemic against idols.

### III. Conclusion

The most far-reaching conclusion with this examination is that the divine designations are the key to the theology of the book of Isaiah. The theology in this case is the depiction of Yahweh and his message, which the prophet wishes to convey to his particular audience. With this in mind, therefore, the designations must be examined in larger context, both to learn more about the designations themselves from the contexts in which they are used and to learn to what extent the designations themselves influence the macrostructure in which they are contained. Two key areas must be kept in mind in this

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>132</sup> Paul Del Brasseley, *Metaphor and the Interpretation of God in Isaiah 40-55*, (Texas: BIBAL Press, 2001), 51.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 51.

examination; namely that the theology of the text must be acknowledged and the designations must be scrutinized in light of their conjunction or opposition with each other. While it is beyond the scope of this work to examine each and every occurrence of the divine designations, the microstructure of each of the sections of the book of Isaiah must be considered and from this, sections of text that lend themselves to further inspection must be identified.

The designations are not wholly understood in isolation. It is valuable to examine them in their verse format as well as in a wider macrostructural context of the larger framework in which they occur. This must include where they occur in the individual verse, the section of text for selection, where they occur in the section of the book of Isaiah (Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah) and in the text as a whole.



## Chapter 5

### **A Microstructural Examination of the Divine Designations in the Book of Isaiah**

#### **I. Introduction**

While it is beneficial to examine the divine designations in light of their contexts within the OT in general, as well as in the wider extrabiblical context of ancient Near Eastern literature and traditions, it is necessary to apply the information learned from this to more closely examine the text of the book of Isaiah. There are two principal reasons why a close exegesis is necessary. Firstly, one of the main arguments against the findings of this work may be that a study of the divine designations focuses too much on the “microtext” in its most negative of connotations, and as such, leaves itself open to the negative aspects that may be associated with textual and form criticism. The principal negative aspect is that the findings do not take the wider framework of the entire text of the book of Isaiah into account, nor the aspects of prophetic literature and the OT in general that would naturally come to bear on any analysis on the text. By incorporating the analysis of the divine designations into an exegesis of the text that takes into account this wider setting, this can counteract the criticisms of a focus on the microtext by showing how the microtext, as Alonso Schökel advocated, works in conjunction with the macrotext. Secondly, while it is always useful to

examine the designations in isolation so that the implications of the individual designation may methodologically learned, but one of the more significant aspects of the designations is how they work in unison with each other. The majority of the terms are used in a poetic setting and as such work either in parallel or in conflict with one another. The examination of how the three textual blocks in the book of Isaiah treat the designations in relation to one another, in terms of theological outlook and stylistic features, is the predominant interest in this chapter.

One of the most important things to achieve in this chapter is to highlight how the method of interpretation with which one approaches the text is imperative in determining how the text is viewed. This may seem like a rather obvious observation but many commentators do not outline the philosophy of their method of approach to an exegesis of the text, and as a result, their preconceived ideas about their approach are either unidentifiable to the reader, or their exegesis has to be carefully examined for it to be adequately recognized.

## **II. Exegesis of the Book of Isaiah**

With a text that is as large and complex as the book of Isaiah and including thirty-six divine designations, a scientific, methodical approach must be adopted. Furthermore, there is the issue that many scholars who conduct exegesis on various texts do not actually outline their mode of interpretation and exegesis with the texts, making a comparison between the results quite difficult. As the aim of this section is to explore the theories presented earlier in this work with regard to the distribution of the divine designations, several

comparisons must be achievable and therefore, a clearly laid out methodology must be illustrated.

Exegesis is generally perceived as a systematic process by which a reader arrives at a reasonable and coherent sense of the meaning and message of a biblical passage. In the case of this work on the divine designations, account must be taken of the micro and macro structures of the text and these must be carefully acknowledged before exegesis proper can begin.

The macrostructure of these texts encompasses several elements. Primarily the principal “macro” is the entire text of the book of Isaiah, divided typically into Proto-Isaiah, chs. 1-39, Deutero-Isaiah, chs. 40-55, and Trito-Isaiah, chs. 56-66. Further to this segmentation is acknowledgement of the fact that these sections are made up of smaller segments of text (or verses) that, by their literary composition, form natural divisions in the text, whether by genre, layout or theme. Within the sections, the microstructures of the book of Isaiah may be found, namely the individual verses and on a more “micro” level, the divine designations within the verses themselves. All of these levels must be acknowledged in order to make the exegesis successful. In order to maintain this study, a scientific methodology must be undertaken so that the exegesis is clear, encompassing, and systematic in its approach and findings.

### **III. Text Selection**

In maintaining the scientific approach to this process, mainly in order to sustain clarity, three texts in each of Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah have been selected. From even a brief reading of the material on the

distribution of the divine designations in the book of Isaiah, it may be seen that there is a much greater quantity of terms and greater frequency of “clustering” in Deutero-Isaiah than in the other two texts. Taking more texts from this section may have made for an interesting examination but there should be an equal amount of “test cases” from each section. By adopting the methodology here, it is hoped to negate the problem that arises in the distribution of the designations throughout the text, as the book of Isaiah is not neatly divided into thirds. By taking three examples from each text, this will allow for an overview of the uses of and stylistic approaches to the use of the designations in each section. There are two main questions to be addressed in choosing the texts:

1. Are there interesting clusters of divine designations in the text? The examination of whether some particular designations are grouped together and possibly not grouped with others is interesting with regard to the idea of any theological significance that this may highlight.
2. Are the divine designations set in a prose or poetic setting? With poetry in particular, it must be examined whether the evidence of the designations being used by author, is to enhance the poetic nature of the text or if there is a more significant theological aspect.

Within each macrostructure of the three sections of the book of Isaiah, the reasons for selecting each text were varied. In Proto-Isaiah there is a large amount of examples to choose from as there are thirty-nine chapters, and also because, as previously illustrated, the text of Proto-Isaiah displays such a wide and varied amount of divine designations. Isaiah 6 has always been of interest

both to general readers of the Bible and to those with a close interest in prophetic literature. This, combined with the clear depiction of Yahweh as a king and the use of divine designations in tandem with this, such as Yahweh Sabaoth, makes the passage an attractive one for further explanation. Isaiah 17:7-11 was selected as the use of the term "Maker," which is not widespread in the text of the book of Isaiah and in this case, it appears in the same verse as the term the "the Holy One of Israel." The terms "God of your salvation" and "rock" also appear in the text selected and the use of these terms is not widespread in the OT as a rule. Their position in a text that deals with agricultural images immediately striking, as is their comparison the images presented in ch. 6. Does this difference in image change the perception of the divine designations or indeed the theology that they are to convey to the readership? The final section of text in Proto-Isaiah for detailed exegesis is 29:22-24. This text was chosen for its contrast with the previous structures, mainly due to its reference to Abraham and Jacob.

In Deutero-Isaiah, 40:21-31 was chosen primarily because it is the first section of text that uses a large range of divine designations in chs. 40-55. It was essential to take a closer look at the idea of Creator in the text of Deutero-Isaiah. This term appears in this section amid imagery of Yahweh creating the heavens and the earth. The smaller section of text, 43:14-15 was chosen as there are many designations occurring in the same two verses. These verses should easily lend themselves to furthering the examination of how the designations work in harmony (possibly through parallelism) and in opposition to each other. The final section of text for selection, 54:4-6 was opted for, in order to examine the difference in the use of divine designations

from the early chapters of Deutero-Isaiah, and those that occur in the later stages of the text. The use of the term “husband” is immediately striking and warrants further examination and explanation. This coupled with the large amount of divine designations in this small section of text makes it very suitable for further study.

Choosing texts in Trito-Isaiah is in one way much easier, mainly due to the fact that there are fewer occurrences of divine designations, though as already mentioned, in another way this leads to a difficulty as it is quite not easy to find three fairly large sections of text that have a substantial amount of designations. 59:19-10 is immediately salient as the text speaks of “fearing” the name of Yahweh and the use of the term “redeemer” in lone contrast to such recurring use of the divine name. 60:14-16 is also striking in its dissimilarity with the rest of Trito-Isaiah, as it includes four designations in a cluster in a single verse and there appears, on a casual glance, to be a parallelism between the terms “the Holy One of Israel” and “the Mighty One of Jacob” due to their position in the text. 63:15-19 is a larger section of text but is fascinating as the rarely occurring term “father” in relation to Yahweh appears in this instance. This coupled with the term “redeemer” makes the text unavoidable for additional examination.

#### **IV. Proto-Isaiah**

##### **1. Isaiah 6:1-5**

These five verses have been taken from the context of ch. 6 (vs. 1-13) as, primarily, there would be too much material to closely analyse all thirteen verses and it would be preferable to compare the five selected verses within

the larger context. The five verses below also form the actual visual representation of Yahweh that the prophet describes. The remaining verses depict the conversation between the prophet and Yahweh. In this section therefore, the focus is on the visual portrayal of Yahweh and how the divine designations as the microstructures of the text either compliment or oppose this visualisation.

6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up; and the skirt<sup>i</sup> of his robe filled the temple.

2 Seraphim were flanking him. Each had six wings; with two, they covered their faces, and two covered their feet, and with two, they flew about.

3 And one called to the other and said: "Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh Sabaoth. All the earth is filled with his glory."

4 The pivots<sup>ii</sup> of the threshold trembled at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

5 And I said: "Woe is me! I am cut off, because I am a man with unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh Sabaoth!"

#### Notes:

- i. There has been considerable debate concerning the translation of the term שָׂרָיִל. NRSV translates it as "hem," ASV as "robe," the ESV as "train," and the JPS "skirts." The term "skirt" has been used in this translation but the basics of drapery are not important, more the image created that the clothing worn by Yahweh is so immense and grand that it appears to the beholder as filling the space surrounding him.
- ii. The Hebrew אַמּוּת is difficult to translate and is mainly rendered as "cubits" or "pivots." This may be another of Isaiah's techniques of using a term with several meanings to convey a more multifaceted

image.<sup>1</sup> In this case, the modern phrase of “shaking to the very foundations,” could be used as every measure of the building shakes with the sound of the voices.

This passage is generally seen as the commissioning of a prophet in the framework of a throne scene. It is also seen as a first person memoir and as distinct from the rest of Proto-Isaiah.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to compare the passage with 1Kgs 22:19-22 in which Micaiah is depicted as stating that he “saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him to the right and to the left of him.” What is instantly attractive about these five verses is the wealth of imagery and its compact nature in such a short amount of text. Using a combination of earthly images (the king on his throne with his regal clothing, combined with the setting of the temple) and the supernatural or divine images (the seraphim), the author of the text conveys the sheer majesty and power of Yahweh.

The depiction of Yahweh as king, “my eyes have seen the King” in Isa 6:5, is a beautifully apt vision in the wider narrative of 6:1-13. At its onset, the scenario appears to be set in a throne room. Yahweh is sitting on an elevated throne, wearing a robe of such grandeur that his clothing appears to fill the entire temple. The image is at once one of dominance and power, highlighted by the fact that the narrative takes place in “the year that King Uzziah died;” Yahweh the King still reigns even though earthly kings have passed away. Blenkinsopp makes the interesting point that the author of the text may have been inspired by the depiction of Assyrian kings of gigantic

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed in depth by J.J. Glück, “Paronomasia in Biblical Literature,” *Semitics* 1 (1970): 50-78, J.J.M. Roberts, “Double Entendre in First Isaiah,” *CBQ* 54 (1992): 39-48.

<sup>2</sup> Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, 53-53.



proportions compared to those of pygmy size who attended the prisoners that were marched in front of them.<sup>3</sup> Also noteworthy is the fact that the prophet looks at Yahweh, and despite his awe, remembers a significant amount of detail about the building, the seraphim, the clothing etc., but has nothing to include about how Yahweh looked. There is no description of his physical characteristics.<sup>4</sup> There are a number of reasons for this and not all can be used as proof that the vision is purely of literary invention. This passage would be more beneficially viewed as one of the most helpful in an attempt to dispel the negativity that surrounds the use of anthropomorphism in any text that attempts to convey some sort of information about God. It is important to remember that not all texts that speak of God can be interpreted as theologically significant and correct in all aspects. For instance, the majority of biblical texts can be seen as using God as a character. In the book of Ruth, God is the instigator of the action; he is the character that moves the action forward. In the book of Job, God is seen in conversation with, and interacting with the satan, and as the controller of the disasters that befall Job. The images presented are generally not consistent and therefore it cannot be assumed that everything in the OT about God that it is necessarily “true.” Rather, as in the case of ch. six, the prophet is trying to tell his audience something about God through the use of identifiable images, such as that of the king, and the idea that he is set apart and different, by the association with seraphim. To make God identifiable and to make what the prophet wishes to convey more easily understood; the prophet does not have to use a human being, but human roles,

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<sup>3</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 225.

<sup>4</sup> Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 74.

such as that of being a king. It is understood that the prophet is trying to convey the majesty and power of Yahweh but a description of a wise old king is not required to fully adopt this image. Good literature never has to use painstaking detail, just as a good painter does not have to illustrate every detail of a landscape they are painting. Broad brushstrokes allows an audience to interpret the image for themselves, and to identify with what they see as familiar. Just as the author calls God a king, he is not setting him out as the leader of a country with a crown and palace; rather he is assigning a role and identifiable qualities to his character that his audience and readership will recognise. In this way, the focus of this chapter is not on what is learned about the prophet from 6:1-5, which serves as the focus for the majority of commentaries, but what the prophet can tell us about God.

The presence of the seraphim makes for a remarkable image. The origin of the term שָׂרָפִים is uncertain and only occurs in this plural form in Isa 6:2. שָׂרָפִים (Saraph) in Num 21:6 and Isa 14:29 for example, signifies a fiery serpent. The equivalent English term would be “griffin.” A Babylonian name for the fire-god, Nergal, was *Sharrapu*. In Egypt, the eagle/lion-shaped figures guarding a grave are termed *seref*. The seraphim are an important link with the notion of divine kingship, as winged serpents often surround the throne of the Pharaoh in ancient Egyptian art.<sup>5</sup>

It is probable enough that popular mythology connected fire with the attendants of the deity in various ways among different cultures, and that “burning” is the core of the idea in all these suggested etymologies. It

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<sup>5</sup> William Nelson, “Seraphim,” *EBD*, 1186.

remains, however, that in Isaiah's use there is little trace of this popular legend or superstition. These seraphim have six wings: two for covering their faces for fear that they would look directly at Yahweh; two for flying and two for covering their feet. This is a euphemism for the genitals, which speaks of modesty and may be a warning against the Canaanite fertility cult. When the prophet complains about his "unclean lips," the seraphim purify him with a hot coal taken from the altar.

The acclamation of the seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord (Yahweh) of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," from which the *Sanctus* is derived, proclaims the abounding holiness of the king. Its theophany is compounded by the tectonics of the drama that results from Yahweh calling Isaiah, whose natural human reaction is to turn guiltily to his personal failings when faced (literally) with the might of God. The use of the term "king" in this instance is noteworthy as it is linked with the title, "Yahweh Sabaoth." The prophet has seen not just any deity, but the king, the lord of the hosts of heaven. Isaiah is not a preacher of morals,<sup>6</sup> but rather a human being who speaks of judgment, based on his experience of being terrified when he was in the presence of Yahweh.

In general, in this section of text, the linear aspects of Proto-Isaiah's use of divine designations can be seen. The piece begins with reference to an earthly king and Yahweh is depicted as  $\text{יְהוָה}$ , a common term and not one that would give rise to much immediate imagery. By using the title Yahweh Sabaoth initially, and then filling the gap with kingship imagery the author of

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<sup>6</sup> Wildberger, *Isaiah 1-12*, 269.

the text sets the scene for the climatic use of the terms Yahweh Sabaoth and King together. By using them in line with one another the characteristics of both almost become amalgamated and the uniqueness of Yahweh as Yahweh Sabaoth is combined with the idea that he has taken on the role of King of his people, far surpassing any earthly king in terms of his rule and his majesty. The two designations work in harmony with the imagery that surround them and serve to enhance it. The title “King” goes beyond this and puts a cap on the image, it is as if the prophet cannot be imagining what he saw. Yahweh is indeed the king and what is to follow, the teachings of the prophet and reports of Yahweh’s will, must be treated with the same validation.

## **2. Isaiah 17:7-11**

In the context of the larger macrostructure of this section of text, namely ch. 17, which is an oracle against Damascus, there are clear textual markers, especially in vv. 3 and 6 with the use of Yahweh Sabaoth leading to the separation of v. 7 from rest of the text. The theme of this microstructure is one of an urging to turn away from idolatrous worship, with a prose element in vs. 7-9 culminating in the more poetic nature of vs. 10 and 11. The start of v. 12, with the particle interjection of **וַיִּהְיֶה**, means that there is a clear textual marker allowing vs. 7-11 to be examined together, in conjunction with the overall macrostructure of the oracle.

<sup>7</sup> In that day, he will turn to his Maker, and his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel.

8 He will not have regard for the altars that their own hands made; he will not regard sacred Asherim and incense altars, which their fingers have made.

9 In that day, his fortress cities will be like deserted sites that the Amorites and the Hivites abandoned because of the descendents and there will be desolation.

10 You have forgotten the God of your salvation, and have not remembered the Rock of your refuge. Therefore, though you plant attractive plants and plant alien shoots,

11 Though you make them sprout on the day you plant them, and on the morning of planting them you force them to blossom; yet the harvest will disappear on the day of grief and great pain.

Interpreters are very much divided on the reading of these verses. Wildberger follows the older literary analysis in fragmenting vs. 1-11 into a variety of smaller units, though he does view them as a “kerygmatic unity.”<sup>7</sup> This text as presently constituted forms part of an oracle concerning Damascus and Israel in 17:1-11. Clements sees vs. 1-6 as being the original prophecy and belonging to the time of the Syro-Ephramite war, but at what exact point in that struggle is not made clear.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Clements argues for a complex redactional growth of the chapter as a whole, assigning vs. 12-14 to a Josianic redaction and v. 9 to a subsequent aetiological text. In general, it is thought that vs. 1-6 are Isaianic and the present editorial shaping is derived from a much later period. John Barton views vs. 7-11 as “ethical material” but doubts their authenticity.<sup>9</sup> Marvin Sweeney’s work on the passage is interesting, as he demonstrates the over-arching structure of the unit, which in his opinion stretches from 17:1 to 18:7.<sup>10</sup> His main argument in this regard is that the superscription in 17:1 נשׂא extends to 19:1 and is not evident

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<sup>7</sup> Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 161.

<sup>8</sup> Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 157.

<sup>9</sup> John Barton, *Isaiah 1-39*, (Old Testament Guides; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, c1975), 46.

<sup>10</sup> Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 252-62.

anywhere in ch. 18. The two chapters are also very similar in themes with their use of agricultural and horticultural imagery (17:4-6, 10-11; 18:3-6).

**Vs. 7 & 8.** Many critics, for example Clements, regard vs. 7 and 8 as later additions to the section, most probably in a post-exilic setting. These verses depict the punishment that Israel received “on account of the illicit cultus”<sup>11</sup> such as worshipping the altars and the Asherim (idols). The verses offer an eschatological word of hope, in the type of language of hope that is most often associated with Deutero-Isaiah such as in 41:6-7; 43:2; 44:2; 51:13; 54:5. It is important to note that these phrases are not confined to the text of Deutero-Isaiah as many also appear in Proto-Isaiah such as 1:4; 2:6-22, etc. Childs makes the tempting argument that:

The pattern of shifting without meditation from judgment to eschatological salvation is used so frequently as an editorial technique especially in First Isaiah that it tends to support a redactional shaping of the larger passage.<sup>12</sup>

It seems hasty at this juncture to use a technique that is applicable to the entire of Proto-Isaiah to just this one passage, but the ideas that Childs puts forward can be tentatively added to the arguments surrounding the late addition of v. 7 and 8. These verses are a prophecy of salvation, declaring that the unidentified person **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ** will turn to his “maker,” **עֵל-עֹשֵׂהוּ** who is also identified as the Holy One of Israel, away from altars, idols, sacred poles, and altars of incense: allusions to the trappings and practices of fertility religions that were associated with Northern Israel. The prophetic announcement that

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>12</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 137.

the people will recognize Yahweh is based on a two-fold structure, contrasting the positive statement of what humanity will do in v. 7, the person turning to his Maker, with a negative statement of what he will not do, as in regarding the sacred altars in v. 8. The text focuses on humanity's recognition of Yahweh: 17:7 states that humanity will look to its Maker, the Holy One of Israel, while 17:8 states that it will not look to the idolatrous objects of pagan worship that people build with their own hands. It is not explicitly stated but it is evident that Israel's strife has come about because of turning their backs on Yahweh and disregarding the fact that he is displeased with them as well as ignoring his requests. The theme of repentance and returning to Yahweh is striking as the Israelites must literally refocus their gazes and turn to face their Holy One.

**V. 9.** In the first line of v. 9 two of the words are unintelligible in Hebrew (הַתָּרֵשׁ וְהָאֲמִיר) and most translations follow the LXX οἱ Ἀμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Εὐαῖοι. There is clear use of a covenantal formula with בַּיּוֹם or “on this day” adding to the likelihood that this verse formed part a later addition commenting on the preceding vs., 7 and 8. In fact, vs. 9-11 are in stark contrast to the depiction of idolatry in vs. 7 and 8. The references to altars and Asherim had highlighted the fact that these would have been used during the cultic worship of the Hivites and the Amorites (the pre-Israelite occupants of Israel, Gen 15:16 and Gen 34:2).

V. 10. With regard to v. 10, Wildberger does not rule out a derivation of this and the following verse from Isaiah.<sup>13</sup> He does admit that it is unlikely, as it is seemingly derived from a scribe of a much later age who has sought to elaborate further on the theme of the evils of idol worship previously mentioned in vs. 7 and 8. The text moves from the poetry of the preceding verses to prose. This change is to highlight the reasons for the imminent devastation. The motive is a simple one. The people of Israel have forgotten that Yahweh provides their refuge and their focus or “regard” has slipped to concentrate on idols and cultic worship. The text seems to endeavour to condemn the garden, which is often seen as the “garden of Adonis.” Here plants grew more quickly than in a natural environment due to the presence of nature and where the fertility of the god which was made available to those who worshipped him (Isa 65:3 “a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and offering incense on bricks”). Its prevalence into Hellenistic times where it was associated with the god Adonis may have been why it was included in this instance, but the origin goes much further back, both in Canaan and Mesopotamia. The phrase *וְזַמְרֵת זָרָה* of v. 10 is often translated as “alien gods” (NRSV etc.) but it is better rendered in the horticultural context as “alien (or strange) shoots” in the sense of not belonging in the setting or being out of place, much like a rose bush in a herb garden. In this instance, it would refer in this instance to the cult following of Adonis.

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<sup>13</sup> Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 181.



The term “rock” (וּצְוֵר מְעֻזָּה) as a divine epithet in this verse is interesting, as it appears only once more in Proto-Isaiah, in 26:4 “Trust in Yahweh forever, for in Yah you have an everlasting rock,” and only once in Deutero-Isaiah in 44:8, “Do not fear, or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses! Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one.” This evidence is a sticking point in the argument that the text uses much of same themes as Deutero-Isaiah, as clearly from the statistics of distribution, the term appears more frequently in Proto-Isaiah and the terming of God a rock could never be called a theme of Deutero-Isaiah. In the OT in general, some of the most striking and beautiful imagery is based upon rocks (סֶלֶע and צוּר).

1. They are a symbol of God: “Yahweh is my rock, and my fortress” (2Sam 22:2; Ps 18:2; 71:3); “God, the rock of my salvation” (2Sam 22:47); “my God the rock of my refuge” (Ps 94:22); “the rock of your strength” (וּצְוֵר מְעֻזָּה) (Isa 17:10); “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (Ps 61:2); repeatedly in the Song of Moses (Deut 32:3,4,18,30,31).
2. Rocks are also a refuge, both figuratively and literally (Jer 48:28; Song 2:14); “The rocks are a refuge for the conies” (Ps 104:18). Many travellers in Palestine have felt refreshed in “the shade of a great rock in a weary land” (כַּצֵּל סֶלֶע-כְּבֹד) (Isa 32:2). A very different idea is expressed in Isa 8:14, “And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence.”

3. A rock can also be seen as a symbol of hardness and solidity (Jer 5:3; compare with the image of flint in Isa 50:7). Therefore, the breaking of the rock exemplifies the power of God (Jer 23:29).
4. The rock is also a symbol of that which endures, “Oh that they...were graven in the rock for ever!” (Job 19:23, 24). A rock was an appropriate place for offering a sacrifice (Judges 6:20; 13:19). A rock provides a solid foundation, protection, and security.

Much of the OT imagery in this regard has the desert as its backdrop. The sight of a rock offering shade from the heat of the sun in a barren, sun-parched wilderness lifted the spirits of the hot and weary traveller. The princes of the righteous king in Isa 32:2 will be “like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.” The hunted, whether animal or human, could find a hiding place in the rocks (1Sam 13:56; Ps 104:18). Isaiah reveals a horrifying picture of people trying to hide from Yahweh among the rocks in Isa 2:10, 19, 21.<sup>14</sup>

Ideally, a rock formed a sound foundation much like a fortress or refuge as in Isa 28:16 “a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.” In this instance, inspiration for v. 10 seems more likely to have come from the book of Psalms, where the term is used more frequently in a variety of contexts to depict divine comfort and salvation (18:46; 31:2; 89:26). The contrast to the unchanging strength and stability of the God of Israel is made with the seasonal changes experienced by plants; they are affected by seasonal and climactic changes, in a similar way, the gods of the Adonis cult are transient and short lived. This is in direct contrast with

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<sup>14</sup> Leland Ryken et al., eds., “Rock,” *DBI*, 733.

the might of a rock that can offer shelter and refuge to a group of people, a place where they can feel safe and secure, protected by the knowledge that the rock is unchanging and will withstand the depredation of the passing of time. The Israelites had experienced God as utterly dependable, a safe and secure refuge.

Overall, in this passage, there are clear indicators, in terms of the divine designations, that the passage has been edited at a later stage than the rest of Proto-Isaiah. The term “maker” is not used anywhere else in the text but is used on four other occasions, in similar contexts in Deutero-Isaiah. The term “rock” goes against the grain of the rest of the designations in that it is an inanimate metaphor and is also used in parallel with the designation “God of your salvation.” Refuge and salvation are obviously linked with the technique, but there seems to be no furthering of the character of Yahweh by placing them in such close proximity. This does not concur with what is known about the techniques of Proto-Isaiah and, as such, would indicate that there may have been a later redactional hand at work.

### **3. Isaiah 29:22-24**

The three vs. 22-24 are set in the larger macrostructural context of ch. 29, which is principally concerned with the deliverance of Jerusalem. These three verses form the final section of the chapter, marked off from the rest of the text by the use of the phrase “Thus says Yahweh,” thereby almost forming a “summing up” of the previous text. The tight structure of the poetic text that follows, immediately identifiable by the parallelism in the text, means that

these three verses must be examined together, with an account of the preceding verses in the chapter.

22 Therefore, thus says Yahweh (who redeemed Abraham), concerning the house of Jacob:

“No longer will Jacob be ashamed  
and no longer will his face grow pale.

23 For when he sees his children, the work of my hands, in his midst, they will consecrate my name;

they will make sacred the Holy One of Jacob,  
and will look in awe of the God of Israel.

24 And those who err in spirit will come to understanding,  
and those who grumble will accept instruction.”

V. 22. The “therefore” and the formula for the words of Yahweh introduce the final unit in this section: another announcement of salvation concerning “the house of Jacob” (v. 22). The introduction sets the text apart from the preceding verses of 17-21 and Clements insists that the verses must be interpreted in relation to the preceding verses “since the great eschatological turning-point which these described is presupposed.”<sup>15</sup> Yahweh is identified as the one “who redeemed Abraham.” This is an unusual term as this is the only time that Abraham is mentioned by Proto-Isaiah (he is mentioned by name in 41:8, 51:2 and 63:10). This would lend credence to the view that this text comes from the Babylonian exile or indeed even later. The phrase itself does not appear anywhere else in the OT and as a theological statement, it is less concerned with Abraham and more so with making an affirmation, that it is Yahweh who is the one who redeems. The JPS translation of this term suggests that the phrasing can be amended to read “their fathers,” substituting אֲבוֹתָם reading אֲבֹתָם, which would seem a more reasonable reading and

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<sup>15</sup> Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, 242.

furthermore would not take from the importance of the patriarchal references. This emphasises the “continuity of the divine core from the earliest ancestor to the present day”<sup>16</sup> and, when linked with the term “Jacob,” it may serve to accentuate the harmony between the Israelites. The term “Jacob” in this text is interesting; it is used twice in this verse and in v. 23. The term may refer to the entire people of Israel as the traditional descendants of that particular patriarch’s twelve sons or in a more narrow sense to the geographical Northern Kingdom. Both of these meanings occur in Proto-Isaiah (9:9 and 10:20 are two of several examples). Normally in Deutero-Isaiah, the term refers to the nation or the people as a whole. Brueggemann notes that this reference “plunges us into the memory of the ancestral narratives of Genesis and the recurring problem of securing an heir and therefore a future.”<sup>17</sup> This idea is further validated by the two-fold use of the phrase **לֹא עֲתִידָהּ** or “no longer” that links this text with an ancestral narrative. The language of the piece in general is therefore very much of the prophecy of salvation. It is not political in tone, but rather religious and spiritual. The basis of the indignity experienced here, lies in the religious question about whether Jacob has been abandoned by Yahweh or if he is subordinate to the gods of Babylon.

**V. 23.** In this verse, the “children,” the addressees of these verses, will acknowledge the Holy One of Jacob as worthy of awe. Here, hopelessness now turns to possibility and the idea of reversal is prevalent. The things that Yahweh is about to do will bring about the conversion of those in Israel who are in need of it and his name will be consecrated or sanctified. The name and

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<sup>16</sup> Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, 248.

<sup>17</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 238.

the person who bears it are identical and so to make Yahweh's name holy is to make Yahweh himself holy. Several interpreters would follow the theory that "no mortal can add anything to God's holiness."<sup>18</sup> It is more accurately described in the sense that the people who make holy his name are setting him apart and revelling in his unique position as their God. Included in this also is the notion of praising him, in terms of both public and private worship, as well as the behaviour of the individual. The term קדוש יַעֲקֹב or "Holy One of Jacob" only occurs once in the Bible in Isa 29:23. Williamson refers to the theory that "verse 16 was in place before the addition of 17-24, providing a peg, so as to speak, on which the remainder could subsequently be hung."<sup>19</sup> Adrainus van Selms gives the most concrete analysis of the text by seeing the variant as "due to the fact that in the parallel hemistich 'the God of Israel' is mentioned."<sup>20</sup> This also bears the echoes of v. 22 where Yahweh is very definitely linked with the household of Jacob.

V. 24. The theme of wisdom is established in this final verse, principally conveyed by the use of language that is very much associated with Wisdom, such as "understanding" and "instruction." The final phrase of לְמַדְרֵי-לֵקַח is loaded with meaning. The implication is not just of those who grumble and moan having to "learn their lesson," as with much of the imagery in Proto-Isaiah, there is an idea of a two-way action. Someone, in this case Yahweh, has to have the knowledge to instruct and must engage in the process of teaching and educating. In turn, the term לְמַד is very much associated with

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Jensen, *Isaiah 1-39* (OTM 8; Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier Inc., 1984), 232.

<sup>19</sup> Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah*, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Van Selms, "The Expression the Holy One of Israel," 258.

the idea of receiving teaching or instruction. The dual action of this process evokes the covenantal relationship that Isaiah wishes to highlight to the people of Israel.

Yahweh is rather discretely addressed by use of the divine name and as “redeemer” by reference to Abraham or the Fathers. This frames the text that follows by forming a link with the two designations that occur in v. 22, in which the titles, “Holy One of Jacob” and “the God of Israel,” occur in parallel with each other. The idea of consecrating the name of Yahweh makes him Holy and sets him apart. In this point, Proto-Isaiah is quite distinct from Deutero-Isaiah, instead of relying on the technique of ambiguity in relation to the use of the term “Jacob,” Proto-Isaiah combines the term with a reference to Israel, and in so doing, highlights how Yahweh is God of all the nations and of all the people.

## **V. Deutero-Isaiah**

### **1. Isaiah 40:21-31**

40:21 Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not understood how the earth was founded<sup>i</sup>?

22 It is he, who dwells above the circle of the earth<sup>ii</sup>, and its dwellers<sup>iii</sup> are like locusts; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in;

23 who brings rulers to nothing and makes the earthly lawmakers<sup>iv</sup> as nothing.

24 They are hardly planted, hardly sown, hardly have their stem rooted in the earth when he blows on them and they wither and the storm wind carries them away like chaff.

25 “To whom then will you compare me or who is my equal?” says the Holy One?

26 Lift up your eyes to high above and see who created these; he who brings out their hosts and numbers them, and calls them all by name. Because of his great strength and mighty power, not one is missing.

27 Why, Jacob, do you say and why, Israel, proclaim<sup>v</sup>, “My way is hidden from Yahweh and my judgment is ignored by my God.”

28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? Yahweh is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

29 He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless.

30 Even youngsters will faint and be weary and the young men will fall,

31 but those who wait for Yahweh shall renew their strength. They shall be brought up with wings (pinions) like eagles<sup>vi</sup>. They shall run and not grow weary. They shall walk back and forth and not faint.

#### Notes:

- i. Here the MT which is supported by the LXX (τὰ θεμέλια), Vg. (*fundamenta terrae*), and the Tg., rather than the temporal translation that more modern versions use is retained. The addressees were not expected to have understood everything that has occurred since the formation of the earth. Rather, this will form a more concrete link with the idea presented later in the text of Yahweh as the creator of the earth.
- ii. The translation of this text is difficult in that to carry out the exercise accurately, assumptions have to be made about how much the author, and indeed his audience, would have known about cosmology. This will be discussed in detail below.
- iii. The same term  $\text{יָשָׁב}$  is used three times in this verse and by using the translation of “dwell” in all cases, there has been an attempt to highlight the skill of the poet at work.
- iv. Most translations render this as “rulers,” but the sense of  $\text{מְשֻׁבֵּי}$  is more focused on the one who governs and makes the rules for the people. It forms a link with the call of the people in v. 27, in which the rules and



judgments that are made by the people are apparently ignored by Yahweh.

- v. Use of the LXX (μή γάρ εἶπης Ιακωβ καὶ τί ἐλάλησας Ἰσραηλ) in this instance makes for a more straightforward reading of the text and, at the same time, does not lose its sense.
- vi. In the sense that the eagle, like all birds, moults and renews its feathers, and that the wings of the eagles are viewed as a symbol of protection, in terms of their span.

These verses form part of the opening chapter of Deutero-Isaiah. A significant proportion of the second section of this chapter, vs. 12-31, establishes Yahweh as the Creator, and there is no one who he can be compared with, so in fact there are two macrostructures as well as the larger context of Deutero-Isaiah influencing this piece. Commentators such as StuhlmueLLer normally group vs. 18-20 with this section.<sup>21</sup> Westermann believes that vs. 21-24 are to be read as the direct continuation of the questions that are posed in verse 18.<sup>22</sup> Mettinger states that vs. 18-20 are “an integrated part of the context.”<sup>23</sup> The principal reason most commentators give for this inclusion is that these verses form a link with the question in v. 18 and those in v. 25 as they both contain the element of comparison. The comparison, in v. 18, that the audience is provoked into making is solely concerned with visual imagery and examples are given, such as an idol cast in

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<sup>21</sup> StuhlmueLLer, “Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah,” 333.

<sup>22</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66: A Commentary*, 55.

<sup>23</sup> Tryggve Mettinger, “The Elimination of a Crux? A Syntactic and Semantic Study of Isaiah XL 18-20,” *VTSup* 26 (1974): 77.

precious metal or wood are given. The comparison in v. 25 is wholly about finding an equal for the Holy One and the question is asked in the popular form of the rhetorically negative; the person posing the questions already knows the answer, i.e. there is no person comparable to God but a reiteration of the fact is needed from the addressees. Blenkinsopp goes as far as to transpose 41:6-7 between vs. 20 and 21, as the “anti-idolatry polemic” does not in his opinion fit in its original position and is better suited in this setting.<sup>24</sup> In addition, vs. 12-20 only contain the common designations of Yahweh and *elohîm*, so in order to conduct a more detailed examination of more relevant themes; the analysis has been based on vs. 21-31. As there is such a bulk of pertinent and theologically significant material in these eleven verses, it is worth conducting an initial verse-by-verse exegesis.

**V. 21.** A distinguishing characteristic of this piece of text is the propounding of questions, the answers to which are not so much given, as already apparent to the audience. The four rhetorical questions in v. 21 demonstrate a principal trait of Deutero-Isaiah’s style, namely intensification, by placing sentences with a similar meaning directly after the other, where the opening one normally being the shortest and the final the longest. The method validates the emendation made to the text in the final section of v. 21. Here the questions in v. 21, as well as in v. 27, are not in any sense purely rhetorical queries; they are posed with the expectation of an answer. Within the meaning of the verbs used here, there is an implied action, for example, when you hand something to someone that they will take it, thus there is a reciprocal

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<sup>24</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 188, 192.

action of giving and receiving in turn. The first two verbs, “Have you not known? Have you not heard?” describe the first action of the giving, and the third, “has it not been told to you from the beginning?” that of receiving. The verse appears to have its key response in the subsequent v. 22 and to a less direct sense in the text that follows. At this point, it is made clear in a hymnic style that is evocative of the language that is used in the book of Psalms. In this text, Yahweh is depicted as the creator of the earth, a long-established fact that should have been acknowledged since the beginning of time at the foundation of the earth.

**V. 22.** The main focus of commentary on v. 22 is the translation of הָאָרֶץ כְּחֵמְלָה as “circle of the earth.” The text of 40:22 in the KJV asserts that the Creator sits upon the “circle of the earth,” a rendering retained by the ASV, RSV, and JB. The NAB has, “He sits enthroned above the vault of the earth,” which the NEB amplifies as “the vaulted roof of the earth.” NIV: “He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth.”

The poets of the OT describe their universe phenomenologically, i.e., as it appears to them standing on the earth and looking above and around. Some have held that v. 22 implies the spherical shape of the earth. It may, but it may also refer only to Yahweh enthroned above the earth with its obviously circular horizon. Both explanations form a definite link with cultic traditions, despite the absence of a formulaic description for the creation of the earth.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Theodore Ludwig, “The Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah,” *JBL* 92 (1973): 348.

According to Seybold, it is the image of “two horizontal circles”<sup>26</sup> and this idea of two concentric circular coastlines, that of the earth disk and that of the heavenly mountains, “is directly evident in the Babylonian cosmology, as reflected, for example, in the Sippar world map (6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. with earlier prototypes).”<sup>27</sup> Seybold bases a substantial amount of his theory on the work of Othmar Keel. Keel’s text is interesting as it illustrates a Babylonian map of the world,<sup>28</sup> derived from the sixth century B.C.E. and which may have developed from older models for the cosmic horizon, as Mesopotamia was substantially larger than what is represented on the tablet. On the tablet the earth is depicted as being surrounded by the ocean “with a mountain range to the North (above).”<sup>29</sup> With this in mind, depending on the particular context, the term can be seen as indicating a raised or prominent part of the earth, such as depicted in Ps 48:1-2.

Baltzer examines the text in detail and comes to the conclusion that the circle that is spoken of is in fact the earth’s equator as in Job 22:14 and Sirach 43:12 which speak of the “circle of heaven.”<sup>30</sup> BDB translates it as the “vault” of the earth that would lend itself to the image of God installed in the heavens, separate and apart from humanity and this is reiterated by the use of the title, “the Holy One,” in v. 25.

**V. 23.** The focus in this verse shifts from creation to the lawmakers of the earth, those who make the rules and judgments. While the earth and the

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<sup>26</sup> Seybold, *TDOT* 4:247.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>28</sup> Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 21.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>30</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 79.

heavens are instituted by the very power of Yahweh, the rulers are negated. They become just like the gods that they serve, i.e., “nothing.”

**V. 24.** Many scholars and Bible versions such as the NRSV translate *vq*; as “stubble,” which is inaccurate in this instance as stubble is rooted in the ground, and does a disservice to the previous image of a rooting plant. The fate of Assyria is depicted with much of this same language as in ch. 10. No sooner does Assyria “take root” in the earth for the task of administering God’s justice against Israel, than its boughs are lopped off with terrifying power (10:33).

**V. 25.** This verse begins with another series of rhetorical questions, similar to those in v. 21. Here the only possible rival to God’s incomparability lies in the astral powers that are so widely respected in the ancient Near East.<sup>31</sup> The heavenly bodies have dependency on Yahweh and respond immediately to his will. The final section, consisting of vs. 25-31 offer the closest formal parallel to actual disputation, with reference to Israel’s complaint against God.<sup>32</sup> Up to this point, there has been no indication as to Israel’s specific state of mind. This offers among other things, a “brilliant transition from the speech of the heavenly council”<sup>33</sup> made on behalf of God, to the trial proper that opens in ch. 41. That intermediary nature is further emphasised with the advent of the first person speech in v. 25. It is the only such speech of its kind in this pre-trial statement from the heavenly council. There has been much debate as to whether the quote is directly from Yahweh, or “the Holy One” as he is termed here. While an interesting exercise in itself, the focus here is on the

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<sup>31</sup> Conrad L’Heureux, “The Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim,” *HTR* 67 (1974): 269.

<sup>32</sup> Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, 35-36.

<sup>33</sup> Christopher Seitz, “The Book of Isaiah 40-66,” *NIB* 6:343.

designation that is given to Yahweh, rather than whether the statement is vocalised or not. The term “holy” is used here with the implication that which is holy is separate and apart. Baltzer is firm in his stance that “this verse is *not* a direct divine speech”<sup>34</sup> rather it is the author of the text placing it as if it were a direct quotation, and goes on to describe it as an announcement.

**V. 26.** This verse is worth comparing with Gen 1 as neither text uses the technical terms for the astronomical figures they are describing, though “stars” are depicted in Gen 1:6. In v. 26, the NJB uses a very military image “...leads out their army in order, summoning each of them by name. So mighty is his power, so great his strength, that not one fails to answer.” Similar imagery and language occurs in the Aramaic *Wisdom of Ahiqar* of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E.<sup>35</sup> By giving the stars of the heavens their names, Yahweh gives them their future and has command over them. Calling them by name can either mean allocating them a name for the first time or summoning them by calling out their given names. The word בְּרָא is used for the first time in the book of Isaiah as a technical term in the theological sense. It is noteworthy how the prophet moves from nature to history throughout the text and the universe and the earthly world are the stages where Yahweh acts and where in turn, history unfolds. In 14:12, Babylon is identified as the Day Star, son of Dawn, a familiar Canaanite astral deity. As Baltzer points out “one positively waits for the name Yahweh Sabaoth.”<sup>36</sup> These several descriptions are to be fitted together, in the final unit it is made clear that the

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<sup>34</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 80.

<sup>35</sup> “Aramaic Proverbs and Precepts,” translated by H.L. Ginsberg (*ANET*, 429).

<sup>36</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 81.

host of heaven is fully under the control of the Holy God, the creator of the earth and of the heavens. Yahweh calls them, having been the one who first gave them a name. The prominence that is placed on Yahweh's total awareness of every star in the sky (note that not one is overlooked on the roll call) is meant to anticipate the concern of Jacob and Israel that somehow Yahweh has disregarded or forgotten about the way of the people. It also follows on from 40:11 in which Yahweh leads out his sheep like a shepherd. Blenkinsopp elaborates on the idea that this verse may be part of a larger polemic against idolatry, giving more credence to his inclusion of 41:6-7 in this section. He notes that "the subtext of the invitation to consider the objects visible in the sky by day and night...is the scrutiny of heavens by the Babylonian sages, their naming of the constellations and stars, and the calculations based on their movements that were thought to control human destiny."<sup>37</sup> The people are therefore not urged to turn away from looking at the heavens and cast their eyes downwards, but rather they should view the heavens as created and controlled by their own creator, Yahweh.

**V. 27.** Vs. 27-31 introduce for the first time Jacob and Israel as the implicit addressees of the entire oracle and the interrogative used in this instance is "why?" Israel's voice comes as a citation from the prophet and forms only one line in v.27b. Blenkinsopp notes, "The complaint is couched in language borrowed from liturgical hymns of communal lamentation."<sup>38</sup> Westermann thinks that the complaint of exiled Israel in v. 27 forms the centre of the entire unit and the preceding sections serve only as groundwork for the real purpose

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<sup>37</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 193.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

of the contention. The addressees are all mentioned by name and are depicted as the self-pitying exiles that lament that they have been overlooked and positively ignored. The “way” is the fate that Yahweh cannot see. Yet, Yahweh has not forgotten them. In the complaint, the past and the future are linked as נִסְתָּרָה and can be translated as niphal perfect 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular (“is hidden”) and in that case the following imperfect would have to be rendered as subsequent.

**V. 28.** This verse is placed in the centre of a polemic about Yahweh’s creation and control of the celestial bodies. It serves as a conclusion to the arguments against idolatry that would have been wholly appropriate in the context of the astral worship and influence of astronomy in Babylon. There is almost an invitation to the audience in this piece to look up to the night sky and to acknowledge Yahweh as their creator. The sense of creation as continuous, as Yahweh forming and shaping history, is all too apparent, as even though it is clearly stated what he has created in the past, he is also at work in a creative and transforming way in history, principally within his chosen people (41:20; 43:1). While both the creation accounts in Genesis speak of Yahweh forming the universe out of a seemingly chaotic nothingness, here the calling of the people of Jacob and Israel is said to be an act of creation. Reference is made to an extreme ordeal, a trial that seems as if it could be the undoing of creation itself: a passing through the waters of chaos in 43:2. This underlines the notion of creation, not as a once-off historical event, but as a continuous activity of Yahweh in opposition to the extreme challenges to his divine rule. It also highlights how the tradition of the struggle with chaotic forces and the ordering of the cosmos provided a



theological basis for Deutero-Isaiah for the proclamation that “in the continuing struggle taking place in the exile, Yahweh is the one who is victorious over chaos and establishes cosmic order.”<sup>39</sup> In other words, he fulfils his purpose for Israel and for the entire earth. Brueggemann highlights that “the answer to the alleged complaint of Israel begins in sweeping monotheistic faith.”<sup>40</sup> In vs. 21 and 28, a plea is made to what the people of Israel already know and have been already told. Once more, Israel should have remembered the way in which Yahweh has created the world, along with the crucial fact that the destinies of nations and their rulers are under the authority of Yahweh. The affirmation of this fact from the divine council is obviously being made in the face of a challenging viewpoint of the subject. A better understanding of this view may be achieved by examining appropriate ancient Near Eastern literature, with its rival cosmogonies. Otherwise, a partial picture can be gained by examining the OT’s own original comprehension of the assertions that were validated by foreign powers. In Isa 14, Babylon is addressed as an astral deity that climbs back to heaven, having won forceful victories (14:12-13). Reaching the very height of the clouds, all the military victories find that their core impetus has been at last revealed (14:14). The one who calls each of the host of the heavens by name and who can tell if even one is missing must therefore have knowledge and understanding that can be safely deemed “unsearchable.” The idea of “unsearchable” (אֲרֻכָּיִם אֲדָמָה) is complicated, and may be better rendered as unfathomable; as the deep waters of the sea that cannot be explored for the

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<sup>39</sup> Ludwig, “The Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah,” 357.

<sup>40</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 27.

purposes of learning about them and understanding them, neither can the depths of Yahweh's understanding and knowledge be searched for meaning (Job 38:16). Yahweh is also depicted not as the God of a single moment, but very much as the eternal God. As Childs stresses, "The reality of God as creator and redeemer is everywhere present and known. Israel only has to listen, look and remember."<sup>41</sup>

**V. 29.** The issue in v. 29 is not Yahweh's knowledge and understanding, but Israel's weariness and exhaustion. The final verses of this section of text allow Yahweh to reach the true issue under debate, by ignoring the context of the disputation in the name of addressing the real underlying problem, namely Israel's exhaustion and weariness, which have been incorrectly interpreted as Yahweh neglecting his people. All this is still a preface to Yahweh's larger plan, which will be to address Israel's concern in the context of a massive trial before all the nations. Seitz is keen to point out that "this is neither a sentimental not an intramural problem."<sup>42</sup> It has to do with how Israel understands itself within the greater sphere of the created world order and how it correctly comprehends God's supervision over that particular order, which has up until now been misinterpreted.

**V. 30.** The structure of v. 30 appears meticulous. The two statements about "youngsters" and "young men" are contrasted with four statements about "those who hope for Yahweh." What is especially striking about v. 30 is that in contrast to the almost staccato rhythm in v. 31b, constructed from the series of verbs עלה, רויץ, and הלך, v. 30 is full of almost languid description about

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<sup>41</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 311.

<sup>42</sup> Seitz, "The Book of Isaiah 40-66," 344.

the “weariness” of the people. Even the complication of matching the verbs in each verse, i.e. what the restorative strength in v. 31 is linked with in 30 only underlines the despair and draining nature of the weak and faint.

**V. 31.** There is no place for despair in v. 31. If the exiles wait for Yahweh, the God who created them, they will surely rise to great heights that have previously been unheard of. Those who are waiting are contrasted with the young men and have nothing to their name, they have no material possession are at this stage devoid of strength. The theme of “waiting for God” is used more than once in Proto-Isaiah (8:17; 25:9; 26:8; 30:18; 33:2). It is worth noting that biblical Hebrew differentiates between waiting as a neutral activity, something that must be endured (Qal and Piel) and waiting with hope and anticipation of a positive outcome, which is what is meant in here.

The translation of **עָלוּ אֶבְרַת כְּנָשִׁים** deserves more attention than that given previously in the notes of this translation. The verbal form **עָלוּ** can be rendered both as Qal, as in “they will go up” and Hiphil, “They will bring up.” In the overall context of this verse, it seems to be an intentional ambiguity and not an alternative. The causative meaning of the Hiphil fits the imagery of “wings.” This imagery is particularly spectacular and worth exploring. The power of an eagle’s wings is of course considerable and once an eagle has unfurled its wings, they can fly to great heights. As such, the temporal aspect of Yahweh’s action is made clear again, it is instantaneous. Once he comes to his people they will have immediate strength and power capable of reaching great heights, the restoration will not be gradual. There is also the less dominating image of the eagle’s wings as protecting the people,

giving them the shelter and protection that they may be restored. The representation of Yahweh in Ezek 17:3 as “A great eagle, with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colours” and Exod 19:4 serves to further this idea. The ambiguity of the language in this instance is not meant to confuse and render the arrival of Yahweh as an event that will be unclear in its consequences, rather it is the multifaceted element to this relationship that should instil hope in the waiting people.

Turning exclusively to the use of the divine designations in this section, the most striking example is in v. 28, in which the tetragrammaton יהוה, the epithet “the everlasting God” and the title “the Creator” are used. There may be the temptation to focus solely on this verse, such is its wealth of illustration, but this method does appreciate the context that has been created by the two previous instances of the prophet using divine designations. The first is in v. 25, where Yahweh is depicted as the Holy One, set apart from any earthly or heavenly being by the sole virtue that he is incomparable. There is no equal to Yahweh and no one can possibly take on the roles that he carries out. This sets the scene, as it were, for the theologically significant statement of v. 28. The second instance of the divine designations in this section is in v. 27. There are two designations used, the tetragrammaton, יהוה and אֱלֹהִים, used in the possessive sense of “my God.” It is interesting to look at how the two are used in parallel. 27a and 27b form a parallel, as both Jacob and Israel are being questioned as to why they make the statements they do. This is followed by the placing of the three sections in each of v. 27c and 27d in parallel so that Yahweh and “my God” are placed together. The audience and

the reader are clearly meant to see the name and the title as referring to God, but also allows for insights into different aspects of his character. The possessive element to this title is important to mention as it is not commonly used in the book of Isaiah,<sup>43</sup> and as the term is used in 49:5 where “my God has become my strength,” it can be seen what a vital role the title plays in this text. It also goes some way to highlighting the selfishness of the people of Jacob and Israel; the possessive sense is used three times in this one verse. Its use serves to portray the people as being selfish and almost childish, they are only concerned with themselves and what their God can do for them, rather than taking the time to appreciate him and worship him as their leader and saviour. The information that follows in v. 28b switches the focus back to Yahweh. The two questions seem almost exasperated in tone and the facts are laid out simply by the prophet to a people that seem to have difficulty in comprehending the status of Yahweh, rooted as they are in their petulant state.

As stated earlier, through the apt quote of Baltzer’s, there is no mention of the term **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**. While this should not be particularly striking, as the term only appears a total of six times in chs. 40-55, the text almost seems to build up the use of the word. There has been use of the Tetragrammaton, and the reference to the hosts in v. 26 seems an apt build-up for the first use of the term, which does not in fact occur until 44:6. Clearly then the term is not seen as theologically significant for the prophet to use at this point. The most obvious explanation for this would be that Deutero-Isaiah would prefer to stay focused on the idea of Yahweh as the singular,

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<sup>43</sup> Isaiah 7:13; 25:1; 40:27; 44:17; 49:4; 49:5; 57:21; 61:10.

incomparable God and would not even introduce the idea of the “hosts” of heaven in terms of the heavenly council of which Yahweh is the leader. The prophet wishes to depict Yahweh as a lone operator and to worship him. All idol worship should be abandoned as futile and the people of Jacob and Israel should focus solely on following Yahweh and appreciating his role as creator. This is merely a hypothesis at this stage as there must be a more in-depth analysis of the use of the term in both Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah. This will also give us valuable groundwork in a study of why the term is not used in Trito-Isaiah.

Yahweh as the creator is incomparable and singular, but the prophet is keen to highlight, as Bruggemann illustrates, that his work as creator is “not a one-time deal”<sup>44</sup> rather it is an “everlasting” process. The people are reassured that Yahweh is not a god who will become weak, his strength fading over time. Rather the energy for the never-ending process of creation will be everlasting and will not wane. Even more encouraging is that fact that Yahweh will not expend all his energy on creation; he will also devote time to strengthening and invigorating others. Nevertheless, the verse ends with a note of caution, the primary reason why it is separate in this translation. The caution is that while the attributes of Yahweh may be mighty and everlasting, they will be of no use to those who do not “wait” for him. Those who worship other gods or who do not acknowledge the creative power of Yahweh will have no access to the great heights and protective span of Yahweh’s power.

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<sup>44</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 27.

Generally in this lengthy passage, Yahweh is depicted as the ultimate creator of both the heavens and the earth. The interesting verse for summing up the findings of this passage is v. 28, where the title *elohim* is almost subdivided into the epithet of “everlasting Yahweh” and the title “creator.” It is particularly noteworthy in this instance that Deutero-Isaiah uses his oft-practiced technique of drawing out an image and adding to it with further description. While Proto-Isaiah normally ties the designation in with a surrounding image, Deutero-Isaiah enhances the designation. Yahweh here is not just the Creator, he has created the ends of the earth, and he is not merely “Yahweh” but the “everlasting Yahweh.” The two designations then almost “bounces off” one another as they protract the character of God that Deutero-Isaiah wishes to portray by not being in exacting parallel but by bringing out difference aspects of each designation. When “everlasting” and “ends of the earth” are combined, it may be seen how they reflect what has been said in the previous verses and how they take this imagery onboard. In combination, they then highlight how because God is the Creator of the ends of the earth, they shall endure and be everlasting.

The reason that this piece of text has been selected for an examination of the divine designations is that v. 28b forms the introduction to the theology of Deutero-Isaiah. The opening refrain of comfort sets up this piece, but it is by using the divine designations that the theory is made clear. This verse is the answer to the many questions that have been posed and is the platform for much of the theological thought that will be developed throughout the text of Deutero-Isaiah. The fact that Yahweh is the sole God, the incomparable God and the creator of all of the heavens and earth, spanning time past and the

future, is the core teaching that the prophet desires his people to learn. With this knowledge, the comfort that Yahweh is eager to bestow, can be given.

## 2. Isaiah 43:14-15

The larger macrostructure of vs. 14-15, is in the first place ch. 43 which speaks of how the Israelite's are Yahweh's witnesses and how their redemption is promised by him. The smaller macrostructure is vs. 14-21 where the new exodus from Babylon is described. Due to the complex nature of the two verses, so heavily loaded with divine designations, it would be more helpful to examine the two in detail in terms of their own microstructures, but due to the limited nature of two verses, the wider setting should be taken into account.

43:14 Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, "For your sakes I am sending to Babylon, and break down all the bars, and the joyful shouts of the Chaldeans<sup>1</sup> will be turned to lamentation."

15 "I, Yahweh am your Holy God, the Creator of Israel, your King."

### Notes:

- i. In its widest acceptance, Chaldea is the name of the whole of Babylonia, owing to the fact that the Chaldeans had given more than one king to the country. In the strict sense, however, their domain was the tract at the Northwest end of the Persian Gulf, which was often called by the Assyro-Babylonians *mat Tamtim*, "the Land of the Sea," a province of unknown extent.

A great deal of attention is paid to the theory that this section of text cannot be viewed as a separate unit, as it is too short when compared to the speeches



that precede it; 5-9 and following it in 16-21. Baltzer follows the idea that the two verses cannot form a stand-alone unit and adds vs. 8-13 to complete the section.<sup>45</sup> Blenkinsopp argues that there is a section of text omitted after v. 15, whether accidentally or deliberately by editors.<sup>46</sup> The idea that the original text, which spoke of an outcome for the Babylonians that did not actually happen or was negative in approach to the outcome of the exiles, (which would follow on from the ideas presented in vs. 14-15), was deliberately omitted seems plausible but hinges on what the omission was, which is not known.

This oracle is addressed to Israel and the speech is introduced with a conventional prophetic superscript of **כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה**. The phrase “your redeemer” **נִאֲלָכֶם** in v. 14 has been prepared for through the catchword “redeem” in 43:1-7, as has also the title “the Holy One of Israel” (43:3) and Israel’s creator (43:1). It is noticeable that vs. 14 and 15 use the plural form of address, “your redeemer,” “your Holy One,” “your King” which often points to an interpretation that is related to every individual and warrants further discussion.

Babylon is mentioned here by name for the first time and this paves the way for 46:1-47:15. Torrey sees the mention of Babylon and the Chaldeans as a later interpretation.<sup>47</sup> This view does not do justice to any specific historical aspect the text may aim at. The text does not explicitly name who or what is being sent to Babylon. Baltzer states that this “mystery

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<sup>45</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 161.

<sup>46</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 227.

<sup>47</sup> Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 339.

man” should be read as Cyrus,<sup>48</sup> after reading the text in the context of the surrounding passages and the majority of commentators share this view. The hopeful aim of the sending Cyrus to Babylon is that he will nullify the Babylonian power and that the fall of the city will mark the beginning of Israel’s path to redemption. The MT, endorsed by the LXX,<sup>49</sup> reads, “I will bring down the refugees, them all.” Baltzer alters the vocalization to “bars,” following the Vg. when it translates *vectes* (“bolts”) *universos*. This means that all the bars will be broken down. The temporal aspect of this is noteworthy as it refers back to 45:1-2, “I will go before you and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron” but it is clear that the text is making oblique reference to future events. The historical accuracy of the declaration and the most important assurance the exiles could hope to hear is framed by two defining claims. The first is that the sending in v. 14 is framed by a cluster of names in 14a and 15, and the second, the fact that the change in direction of world history is about to occur because of Yahweh’s attentiveness to the exiles from Israel.

The third statement of **וּכְשָׁדִים בְּאֲנִיּוֹת רְנָתָם** is problematic, probably due to corruption of the text during transmission.<sup>50</sup> There is a wide range of translations, such as NRSV; “the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentation,” ASV; “I will bring down all of them as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships of their rejoicing.” The JPS translates as “I will bring down all of them as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships of their

<sup>48</sup> Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 169.

<sup>49</sup> καὶ ἐπεγερῶ πάντας φεύγοντας καὶ Χαλδαῖοι ἐν πλοίοις δεθήσονται

<sup>50</sup> See Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*, 138.

shouting,” and the NIV as “{14 Or Chaldeans} in the ships in which they took pride.” Blenkinsopp, whether deliberately humorously or not, surmises that the “Tg. goes overboard”<sup>51</sup> with the translation “For your sins’ sake you were exiled in Babylon, and I have brought down all of them rudders, even the Chaldeans in the ships of their praise. There is of course the possibility of and intentional dual meaning, a literary device that is relatively common in Deutero-Isaiah.

Overall, in vs. 14 and 15 a dramatic build-up may be seen as well as a description of the events that form the background to the text. The function of the text is to be the driving power for events that are about to happen. The term “king” in v. 15 is used as a royal title for the deity and attested his dominion over the other gods. In this context, the non-existence of the gods has previously been unequivocally attested and the kingship of Yahweh is now related to his role over Israel, leading up to the use of the title “king of Israel” in 44:6.

One of the most striking things about 43:15 is the use of the plural form of address “your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.” This often points to an interpretation related to every individual. What applies to the people of Israel also holds true for all individuals. It is promised to everyone. It is rather difficult to examine this verse in an overall context, as v. 14 and 15 are a fragmentary oracle, “corrupt beyond restoration.”<sup>52</sup> The saying is introduced as being the words of Yahweh, but it is no longer part of the divine speech as it is now conveyed through a messenger. The phrase can still be

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<sup>51</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 226 speaking about the Targum (Tg.) translation.

<sup>52</sup> Scullion, *Isaiah 40-66*, 52.

described as “self-identification”<sup>53</sup> and it is important to note this in an examination of the verse as it forms the only phrase of this form in relation to divine kingship. It is as if Yahweh is reasserting what all Israelites know and should respect, Yahweh is the divine ruler and Creator. The language reasserts the covenantal language that is associated with the terms and makes it personable. Yahweh holds his role, and more importantly the relationship of this role with his chosen people as something that must be continually reasserted, both in the political sense of there being no other god higher than Yahweh and in a reassuring sense whereby the Israelites can be comforted in the knowledge that their God is all-powerful and on their side.

This verse is contained in a section of text where the author affirms the historic mission that Cyrus will undertake to conquer Babylon and the fall of the city, forming the opening act in the drama of Israel’s redemption. As creation occupied such a prominent position in Babylonian theology and rituals, Deutero-Isaiah’s strongest argument would have come from the fact that Yahweh alone is the world’s creator. Creation in this particular instance includes transformations brought about in the physical sense and in history, especially the history of Israel. The repetition of the plural form of address underlines that the message concerned is for every individual. The singular sense of “the Creator of Israel” stands out as an exception to this but what applies to Israel is true for every individual. Yahweh was responsible for the creation of his people and for the creation of the entire world.

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<sup>53</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 227.

The emphasis in chs. 40-55 on Yahweh as the universal creator seems to have been dictated by a polemic against the more powerful gods of imperial Babylon. Blenkinsopp notes that “with the fall of Babylon, the rise of the Persian Empire, and the official acceptance by the court at Susa of the Zoroastrian state religion”<sup>54</sup> emphasis on Yahweh as the Creator lessened as an important issue. In Trito-Isaiah therefore, in place of the creation of the existing world, Yahweh will create new heavens and a new earth, replacing the “former things” that can now be forgotten (65:17-18).

In Deutero-Isaiah, Yahweh demands an answer for the current Israelite situation. The author of the text demands his contemporaries to measure Yahweh’s works in the heavens or on the earth by using their cupped hands, measuring out the soil of the earth and weighing the hills and mountains (40:12). The obvious answer expected from Deutero-Isaiah’s audience is that if you cannot grasp this task, then you should not dare to challenge any of Yahweh’s other actions throughout history. With this, Deutero-Isaiah enhances the close relationship between the “heavens and the earth” with the history of humanity and Israel’s redemption from their exile.

### **3. Isaiah 54:4-6**

The wider context for vs. 4-6 in Deutero-Isaiah demonstrates the theme of promises of reassurance to Jerusalem. While the three verses are very much interlinked with the text that precedes and follows them, they are the only ones that mention a female, a character that has not yet been examined in

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<sup>54</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 32.

relation to the uses of the divine designations. It is useful therefore, to take these three verses as the initial microstructure.

4 Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;  
do not be humiliated, for you will not be disgraced;  
for you will forget the shame of your youth,  
and the disgrace of your widowhood you will remember no more.

5 For your Maker is the one who marries you (your husband בַּעַלְיָדָי), Yahweh Sabaoth is his name; your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, the God (*elohîm*) of the whole earth he is called.

6 For Yahweh has called you back, like a wife once forsaken and pained in spirit, like the wife of a man's youth when she is rejected, says your God.

V. 4. The phrase “do not be afraid” marks the beginning of a text that contains five messages directed to the female that heralds her “lord.” There are generally no major problems identifiable in this text, which is assigned to the “priestly salvation oracles”<sup>55</sup> of Deutero-Isaiah. The divine predictions in v. 4 are in tradition of a call vision of the prophet Isaiah, according to Isa 6. What is of major concern to the majority of commentators on the piece are the “two metaphors to indicate the same reality.”<sup>56</sup> The passage as a whole speaks of “un autre aspect de la détresse de la ville de David et ses habitants, l’humiliation.”<sup>57</sup> The term וְחַרְפַּת אֱלֹמְנוּתֶיךָ in v. 4 has a negative nuance. The term was used “for the woman who had no financial support from an adult male member of her family (husband or grown son).”<sup>58</sup> Brueggemann sums it up very well, describing them as people who “are endlessly in jeopardy.”<sup>59</sup> In the text of the OT however, widows are considered to be under the special care of Yahweh (Ps 68:5; 146:9 and Prov 15:25).

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<sup>55</sup> Baltzer, *Isaiah 40-55*, 437.

<sup>56</sup> A. Schoors, “Two Notes on Isaiah XL-LV,” *VT* 21(1971): 505.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Martin-Achard, “Esaïe liv et la nouvelle Jérusalem,” *VTSup* 32 (1980): 250.

<sup>58</sup> Harry Hoffner, “אֱלֹמְנוּתָא ’almānāh,” *TDOT* 1:289.

<sup>59</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-55*, 152.

Sympathetic regard for them comes to be viewed as a mark of true religion (Job 31:16). In this way, when Yahweh is seen to forsake the people of Israel, they can thus be regarded as “widowed” אֵלֶּמְנָה (Isa 47:8). Here the poem continues to speak of a bereft woman as a figure for Israel bereft in exile, echoing the marriage-covenant idea from Hos 2:4-25. Here the image concerns a widow. The force of the metaphor, however, is nearly the same, because in a patriarchal society, both barren women and widows are endlessly in jeopardy; they have no male guarantee in social transactions. This vulnerable woman is here addressed by a salvation oracle, a rhetorical form that is also seen in 41:8-13. While the image of Israel as the widow and the situation as widowhood may seem like a straightforward image once properly addressed, it is nonetheless quite difficult to reconcile the image of the husband כִּי בַעַלְיָךְ עֲשִׂיךְ or “One who marries you” (qal participle) in v. 5. The importance for the author of the text of Deutero-Isaiah now, is not the careful illustration of a family tree but the portrayal of an image of God that would have been identifiable to the audience. The “role” of the widow and husband in society would have been easily identified by all. The state of the widow as being without social protection highlights the terrible situation that the people of Israel find themselves in. The “husband” image in Deutero-Isaiah is therefore links Yahweh with the historical past. A widow is termed as such because of her relationship with her husband. The image is not as abstract as it would at first appear, especially if Jer 51:5 “Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, Yahweh Sabaoth, though their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel” is taken into account.

V. 5. The most striking feature about the verses surrounding v. 5 is that the imagery is altered from previous verses. Yahweh is referred to by six designations in v. 5 but is not mentioned at all in v. 4. The build-up in v. 4 corresponds to that in vs. 1-3. Baltzer assumes that the “do not be afraid”<sup>60</sup> is actually “an internal signal in the text” that serves to announce a new course of action in the text. The idea of the shame of youth in v. 4 is very much an historical concept that may be viewed in this context as the “youth” of the people of Israel at the beginning of their captivity in Egypt, until the present day with the destruction of Jerusalem and their exile.

The concept of Yahweh as a “husband” must be understood primarily within the context of the text within which it appears. In 54:5, Yahweh is expressly not “a” husband, but a direct relationship is established with a “wife.” In the context of the larger image of a wedding, Baltzer translates the term **בַּעַל** as “the one who weds you” as, in his opinion, vs. 6-10 make clear that the subject is “marriage.”<sup>61</sup> In the case of ch. 54, the wife is Jerusalem, or “Zion,” a childless wife who is encouraged to break into song as Yahweh has announced that she is to have more children or offspring than a married woman does. The “desolate woman” of v. 1 is an allegorical figure for Jerusalem and its period of the Babylonian exile. Its population in v. 3 will spread out (as in Gen 28:14) to the “desolate towns” where the exiled people had lived. The reoccupation shall therefore come about peacefully. Once more Zion is urged, “do not fear” (41:10; 41:13; 43:1 etc). She will not be ashamed of her life before the exile and will not forget the reproaches given to

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<sup>60</sup> Baltzer, *Isaiah 40-55*, 483.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 441.



her widowhood in exile (v. 4). Her husband is none other than her Maker, Yahweh Sabaoth, the Holy One of Israel, and her Redeemer (v. 5). This should be assurance enough for her. Yahweh reiterates the idea that he has not divorced his people; their relationship is clearly not over. As Blenkinsopp identifies, “The prospect is for the reestablishment of a broken marital relationship (54:6a) rather than a marriage (5a).”<sup>62</sup> The notion of *hesed* (חֶסֶד) is prevalent in this section and is the theological undercurrent for the use of the term. While the term is not explicitly used, the compassion that is indicated in v. 7 is tantamount to the expression evoked by *hesed*. “The state of forsakenness, loneliness and shame is past, and she who was solitary is given back the happiness and honour of the married state and status.”<sup>63</sup>

Christopher North highlights how “the thought is upon the natural increase of Zion’s children *in* rather than upon the return of her exiled children *to* the homeland.”<sup>64</sup> The terminology of Genesis, already seen in the idea of the people of Jerusalem “spreading out” is once again recalled in this instance where there is a renewed promise of an everlasting covenant. Yahweh takes the grieving and desolate woman back again so that she once again has a husband.

Yahweh, the husband, has summoned the woman back to the relationship, treating her with tenderness like a distraught widow. The patriarchal quality of the imagery is evident. It is the husband/ Yahweh who has been free to reject and now is free to restore as in Deut 21:1-4. In context,

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<sup>62</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 363.

<sup>63</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 273.

<sup>64</sup> Christopher North, *Isaiah 40-55: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1952), 142.

however, the summons is nonetheless immense. It assures the woman of restoration to dignity, to security, and to well being. Thus, although the imagery of vs. 4-6 is somewhat different from that of vs. 1-3, the two units together make poignant use of a most intimate metaphor that has huge social implications. The metaphor in itself may be affirmative, but the use to which it is put here is a stunning assurance of rehabilitation at a time when the barren woman/Israel must have no longer expected any gesture of support from the husband who had scorned her.

The text of v. 5 is focused on pointing out to the reader that “husband,” “Maker,” and “Yahweh Sabaoth” are the same. Not all translations use “your Maker” in this verse. Some translations such as the NLT and the NJB use “Creator.” The concern here of the text is twofold. Firstly, the emphasis lies on Yahweh as the one who creates, who forms and shapes the world and its people. Secondly, there is the intent on highlighting how “Maker,” “husband,” “Yahweh Sabaoth,” and “Redeemer” are one and them same. What is immediately striking is the carefully constructed parallelism that the author of the text uses to connect the terminology. Internally within the sections, it is clearly stated that “Maker” and “husband” are the one and the same as is the case with “Holy One of Israel” and “Redeemer.” While “husband” and “Redeemer” also signify different roles to that of the “Maker” and the “Holy One of Israel,” there is also the continued sense of connection whereby the roles are intermingled and the total sphere of Yahweh’s almighty power is made clearer to the audience. With the parallelism between “Yahweh Sabaoth” and “God of the whole earth,” the notion of Yahweh as Lord of all the heavens and the earth is intensified. He

controls all the physical earth and also, cannot be seen on earth, and indeed, cannot be completely comprehended. The terms that are used are all familiar and help the reader recall the nature of the redeemer and redemption that has been developed by the prophet since ch. 40. The verse encompasses three identifying statements, firstly the “one who redeems you” which is a parallel to the “one who marries you” in v. 5. The idea of redemption in this context has been read in the situation of a wife/husband relationship as opposed to a more legalistic sense. In such a close relationship, the redemption would be seen as “the renewal of a previous order, the restoration of a lost unity.”<sup>65</sup> In this idea of familial law, the idea of restoration would be a reinstatement of the original unity of the marital relationship. This abstract idea and image is thus made a theological one by the inclusion of the idea of redemption. The second identifying statement is the “Holy One of Israel,” and the reference to Israel concretes the relationship. Yahweh will only enter a relationship with Israel; they are, after all, his “chosen people.” The third and final identifying statement urges the people to invoke Yahweh as the God of the entire earth. This epithet serves not only to show the encompassing nature of Yahweh’s power on earth but also that it is a literary device in opposition to the “hosts” of v. 5a. Yahweh has control over the heavenly and earthly bodies.

**V. 6.** The woman who is pained in spirit, in v. 6 may give rise to the idea of the presentation of a divorce. If the earlier idea that the images are in fact the figurative roles adopted by Israel and Yahweh was continued, it would be unproductive to try to work legalistic marital rites into the piece. Rather, the

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<sup>65</sup> J.J. Stamm, “ג’ל ג’ל,” *TLOT* 1:291.

beauty of the text is in the description of the pain and suffering that the wife (Israel) has suffered. Many critics, particularly those using feministic approaches to the text, query the use of a widow in this section. Katheryn Pfisterer Darr supposes it is because the term “is a word associated with both women and vassal cities in Israel’s ancient Near Eastern world.”<sup>66</sup> It may be more probable to surmise, that because in a literary setting at least, the female character is normally viewed in a more sympathetic light, especially a character such as a widow or in this case the woman who has been “cast off” by her husband, ‘*azubah* is also used in this sense in Isa 60:15 and 62:4. She is the forsaken wife who has literally been rejected by her husband for someone younger and who as a result is pained to her very spirit (in a more modern parlance it would be “to have suffered heartache”) and it is therefore much more evocative of the distress that Israel has suffered.

In this section of text, the literary technique of Deutero-Isaiah’s use of a multitude of designations in a cluster can easily be viewed. In a mere two verses, the author of the text uses eight different designations. The terms “Maker” along with “husband” form a parallel with “redeemer” and “the Holy One of Israel.” In turn, Yahweh Sabaoth and the God of the whole earth are thrown together. All of these designations serve to enhance the one that they are partnered with, both in the sentence they are contained in and in parallel, although it is more apparent when they are placed in parallel. The idea of creation and redemption being interlinked through the figure of Yahweh is illustrated, as well as the multifaceted aspect of his relationship with his

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<sup>66</sup> Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, *Isaiah’s Vision and the Family of God* (Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 180.

people, both as their Maker and as their “husband.” Yahweh is so close to his people that his role in their lives covers all aspects of every earthly relationship. The parallel linking of “husband” and the “Holy One of Israel” furthers this idea and it takes into account the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and his people. The prophet Hosea’s use of marriage as a covenantal metaphor is so easily recalled in this instance and the author’s take on it in this passage highlights how the relationship between the husband (Yahweh) and the people of Israel can be reinvigorated through the process of redemption.

## **VI. Trito-Isaiah**

### **1. Isaiah 59:19-20**

The overall theme of the macrostructure of ch. 59 is that Yahweh’s grace will save Israel who has sinned. Vs. 15b-20 depict Yahweh’s reaction to the sinfulness of the people of Israel while v. 21 speaks (in a text that is more prose in form than the rest of the chapter) of the covenant that Yahweh has established with his people. In vs. 19 and 20 their context is in the larger structure of the section, they form their own segment in that 19 refers to the people, as opposed to the previous verses which speak of Yahweh. V. 20 continues this vein of thought, as there is a view to the future outcome.

19 So those from the west will fear the name of Yahweh,  
and those in the east, his glory.

He will come like the pent-up waters of the river<sup>1</sup> that Yahweh's breath drives on.

20 So he will come to Zion as Redeemer,  
for those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says Yahweh.

#### **Notes:**

- i. It is difficult to convey the nuances of the image conveyed by the phrase **כְּנַהֲרֵי**. Essentially, the phrase illustrates a river, possibly swollen due to seasonal changes or weather that is restricted to a narrow channel. The power that has built up is immense and added to this the energy from the almighty breath of Yahweh; the latent force of the water is both dangerous and fear inducing.

V. 19. The idea of fearing Yahweh's name was previously evident in Deut 28:58 and Ps 102:15. It is worth examining Ps 102:15; 59:19 and 86:11, as these are "practically identical."<sup>67</sup> The Tg. version softens the strong apocalyptic tone, "for those who distress will come like the overflowing Euphrates river by the Memra of the Lord they shall be plundered" possibly due to political implications.<sup>68</sup> The term **כְּנַהֲרֵי** may be taken as the Euphrates, it is normally called "the river," or "the great river," as being the largest with which Israel was acquainted, in contrast to the soon drying up torrents of Palestine (Isa 8:7; 11:15; 27:12; Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7). It is the largest and longest of the rivers of western Asia.

As Childs highlights, the focus of the chapter is the summing up the theology, particularly concerning the outcome of being influenced by sin and evil.<sup>69</sup> The citizens share Israel's guilt as can be seen from the fact they literally throw themselves at Yahweh to experience the compassion without even attempting to offer an excuse. Yahweh's response establishes finally

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<sup>67</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 55-66*, 199.

<sup>68</sup> Bruce Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, c1990), 115.

<sup>69</sup> Childs, *Isaiah*, 490.

that only he has the ability overcome this offence and offer salvation and justice to the people in the city of Zion who have endured so much suffering. Once again, it is clearly underlined that Yahweh is the only one who holds this role. There is nobody else to whom the people can turn to and no one else who has the ability to give them the help they need.

**V. 20.** In this verse, the LXX and the Hebrew text mentions Zion by name, “καὶ ἤξει ἕνεκεν Σιων ὁ ῥυόμενος καὶ ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ἰακωβ.” Critics, as far back as Duhm, adopt this reading as being the more original, but it is in order to correspond with v. 18 that the context demands the MT reading of “for Zion.” These two translations appear to agree that Yahweh’s redemption brings about a separation. In v. 20, the arrival of Yahweh in Zion means that Israel in its entirety will be redeemed and delivered. The latter part of the verse states clearly only those who turn away from the “transgression” who will be redeemed.

It is immediately apparent on reading the text of Trito-Isaiah that the author of the text does not have the same fascination with the divine designations as Deutero-Isaiah, or even Proto-Isaiah. The designations are few and are sparsely scattered throughout the text with no apparent pattern or intent. Here, for example, in v. 20, the reason for the use of the designation is clear; Yahweh is the Redeemer. He is the one who redeems. There is no contrast to any other god who might have been suspected as having been involved in redemption, nor is there any attempt made to persuade the people of Yahweh’s redemptive qualities. The use of the term in such a matter of fact manner seems almost like a reminder to the people. Yahweh will come to

the people in Zion to redeem them and he will redeem “those in Jacob” if they turn away from sin. The theological outlook is straightforward.

## **2. Isaiah 60:14-16**

In ch. 60, the macrostructure of this section can be read as a song of triumph for the people of Zion, with vs. 1-22 depicting a vision of Jerusalem’s coming exaltation. Vs. 9, 14, and 16 are the only verses that use divine designations other than Yahweh. As v. 14 changes the viewpoint of the text from speech that is directed at the inhabitants of Jerusalem to that of the future of their descendants, it would seem appropriate to examine the three verses together as a microstructure.

14 The sons of those who oppressed you will come to you bending low and all those who despise you will do homage at the soles of your feet. They shall call you “the City of Yahweh,” the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15 Instead of being forsaken and hated with no one passing through, I set you in a position of majesty forever, exulted by all generations.

16 You will suck the milk of nations, you will be suckled at the breast of kings, and you will know that I, Yahweh, am your Saviour, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

Most commentators on Isa. 60 regard chs. 60-62 as the core of Trito-Isaiah.

Close thematic and linguistic links have also been identified with the text of Deutero-Isaiah. The tone of chs. 60-62 is overall upbeat, a fact that is not entirely consistent with the material in Deutero-Isaiah. Blenkinsopp also points out that there is no idea put forward as to what the fate of the Servant may have been, a rather obvious theme to develop if Trito-Isaiah was originally intended as the conclusion, or even the sequel, to Deutero-Isaiah.<sup>70</sup>

Blenkinsopp also points out “There are, needless to say, exceptions to the

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<sup>70</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 55-66*, 207.



quasi consensus on 60-62 as the Trito-Isaiah core, especially among the scholars addicted to the redactional investigation at the microtextual level.”<sup>71</sup> In terms of the investigations on the “microtextual level,” this would at once seem to be in opposition to focusing on the microstructure as suggested by Alonso Schökel. On closer inspection, Blenkinsopp views redaction on such a microstructural level as being purely concerned with scribal additions, in particular the case of 60:12, a verse that is widely held as being a later addition to the verse. The focus on the microstructural level is rather more concerned with the final form of the text, rather than the redactional process towards this final form.

Vs. 14-16 can be seen in the broader context of vs. 10-16, where the term of the reversal of fortune with regard to the condition of the city after the return is prevalent. In v. 14, the temple is depicted as Yahweh’s footstool (as in 66:1; Ezek 43:7) and it is there that the descendents of the foreigners who oppressed Israel will give homage. It is interesting to look back to 49:23, “So kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your wet nurses. With their faces to the earth, they shall bow down to you, and lick the dry earth from your feet. Then you will know that I am Yahweh; those who wait for me shall not be ashamed.” Here, Yahweh’s decisive intervention on behalf of Jerusalem and the faithful core of the people is clearly depicted and these predictions seem to form the catalyst for the action in ch. 60. Both sections close with an acknowledgement that Yahweh is the one who can bring about change (49:23 and 60:16).

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 208.

The idea of female royalty serving as wet nurses is intended as a literal image in 49:23 but is more metaphorical in 60:16. Here the modern idea of “milking” something of its resources or goodwill is more to the fore, in this case, it is the Gentiles and their rulers who are being “milked.” The kings and queens are foster fathers and nursing mothers in 49:23. There are mythological undertones to this idea of a rather rich and satisfying image of the future. Scullion sees the image as having its background “in the *Keret* poem from Ugarit in the 14<sup>th</sup> century”<sup>72</sup> in the ANET:

“She shall bear Yassib (*yšh*) the Lad,  
 Who will draw the milk of A[she]rah,  
 Suck the breasts of the maiden Anath,  
 The two wet nurs[es of the gods]”<sup>73</sup>

There is also evidence of influence from the Baal and Anat cycle “(The gods) eat (and) drink/ And those that suck (the breasts are nourished).”<sup>74</sup> Gordon interprets “those who suck” in the light of a carved ivory panel portraying two royal children who are suckled at the breast of a goddess. With these possible influences in mind, the image is not only a symbol of prosperity but it also points to royalty being nourished by the gods. In the context of 60:16, it appears that Zion will enjoy royal success, granted by Yahweh. There is also the issue raised by Seitz that Zion must recognise Yahweh’s redemption,<sup>75</sup> which had previously been promised in 59:20 “And he will come to Zion as Redeemer, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says Yahweh.”

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<sup>72</sup> Scullion, *Isaiah 40-66*, 174.

<sup>73</sup> “The Legend of King Keret,” translated by H.L. Ginsberg (*ANET*, 146).

<sup>74</sup> Cyrus Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature: A Comprehensive Translation of the Poetic and Prose Texts* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1949), 30.

<sup>75</sup> Seitz, “The Book of Isaiah 40-66,” 509.

In fact, ch. 60 keeps the city of Zion at the centre of its focus. The concern, therefore, is not with the present citizens and inhabitants of Zion but rather with Zion's children who are in the process of being gathered. The feet that are mentioned belong to Zion, and the image is thus placed to highlight how Zion is Yahweh's special, holy place of dwelling. As in 60:4-9, Zion's identity is linked with that of Yahweh. This is "climactically brought out"<sup>76</sup> in v. 14. Previously, the identity had almost been hidden, as the figure was bent low, but it has now been exalted and is Zion of the Holy One of Israel. This is the first time the term "Zion" is used in ch. 60 (and indeed in Trito-Isaiah).

Here the author of the text of Trito-Isaiah adheres to his philosophy of keeping his theological outlook straightforward. Yahweh and the Holy One of Israel are paralleled in v. 14 and the flourish of the final citation of designations in v. 16 seems to sum up what the author wishes to convey about his interpretation of the character that is Yahweh. Some critics of this argument may see the abundant use of the designations in this instance as going against the grain of the earlier argument that Trito-Isaiah feels the need to simplify his theology and his view of God. The idea that these verses may have been influenced by, and indeed imported from Deutero-Isaiah has to be addressed alongside this criticism. It is preferable to side with the generally accepted view that these verses form part of the core of the Trito-Isaiah and, as such, contain the core of his theological outlook. This is Trito-Isaiah's only

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<sup>76</sup> Gregory Polan, "Zion, the Glory of the Holy One of Israel: A Literary Analysis of the Isaiah 60," in Lawrence Boadt and Mark Smith, eds., *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature. Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald*, F.S.C. (CBQMS; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2001), 66.

grand display of designations, and even so, they do not appear in a poetical setting to rival that of Deutero-Isaiah or in a text rich with glorious images like those of Proto-Isaiah. Rather, “Holy One of Israel” and “Mighty One of Jacob” form a simple outline to the piece and the terms enclosed, “Yahweh,” “Saviour,” and “Redeemer” could hardly be termed as introducing anything new to the character of Yahweh that has been already presented in the book of Isaiah.

### **3. Isaiah 63:15-19**

In the macrostructure of ch. 63, the opening theme of vs. 1-6 shows the triumphant return of the Divine Warrior. Vs. 7-19, the remaining verses of the macrostructure, form a communal psalm of lament; based on Yahweh’s previous saving activities, the community appeals for mercy and help in what are now miserable circumstances. The structure can be further reduced for examination as v. 15 begins with a clear plea for action. As vs. 15 and 16 contain the divine designations, it would appear logical to limit the microstructure to the five verses.

15 Look down from heaven and see, from your holy and glorious dwelling. Where is your zeal and your strength? The yearning of your heart and your tender mercy? They are withheld from me.

16 For you are our father though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. Yet you, Yahweh, are our father, “our Redeemer from of old” is your name.

17 Why Yahweh, do you make us err from your ways and harden our hearts, so that we do not revere you? Return for the sake of your servants, for the sake of the tribes that are your heritage.

18 Your holy people took possession for a little while<sup>1</sup>; but now our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary.

19 We have long been like those over whom you have never ruled, like those not called by your name.

**Notes:**

- i. The translation of לְמַצֵּר יְרֵשׁוּ עִם־קֹדֶשׁ has proved difficult and varied. The NAB translates “Why have the wicked invaded your holy place,” the NIB as “or a little while your people possessed your holy place” and the JPS Tanakh as “Our foes have trampled Your Sanctuary.” Blenkinsopp translates it as “Why have the reprobates made light of your holy place?”<sup>77</sup>

This text is “an interweaving of characteristic themes of complaint, petition, confession of sin, and confession of confidence in Yahweh”<sup>78</sup> and is often characterized as a carefully constructed communal lament in terms of its language and layout.<sup>79</sup> It is clear from the outset that Yahweh is given a rather distant position in heaven, which will form his lasting dwelling place as in 40:22 and 66:1-2. The people implore him to look down to earth and in so doing to acknowledge their suffering. The questions posed in the opening verse (v. 15) may be viewed as both a terse reproach and as an incentive; the inducement can be more clearly seen in v. 16 where the readers are reminded (as Yahweh is) of the “intimate and enduring connection between YHWH and

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<sup>77</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56-66*, 253.

<sup>78</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 231.

<sup>79</sup> Grace Emmerson, *Isaiah 56-66*, (Old Testament Guides; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 28.

Israel.”<sup>80</sup> The idea of hardening one’s heart in v. 17 is similar in theme to that of blindness in Deutero-Isaiah.

Evidently, the most interesting aspect of this text for this work is the fact that Yahweh is termed as the father of the Israelites. The comparison between God as the father and Abraham, the ancient paternal figure, is interesting. The parallel is not immediately obvious in the layout of the verse as Abraham is linked with Israel more so than with Yahweh as father. This would appear to suggest that the more attractive choice is not the historical relationships but a relationship with a God that is present in all temporal senses and in fact straddles the ages, being present in the here and now and being the redeemer “of old.” The Israelites have come to realise that the characters from the past and the traditions that have been carried on cannot help them in their present problems. They now realise that if petitioned correctly, Yahweh can adopt the new role of the protector and guardian of the people of Israel. Many commentators, for example Seitz,<sup>81</sup> highlight the fact that the term “father” is rarely used of Yahweh in the OT, in fact the other use in Isa 64:8 and Deut 32:6, “Do you thus repay Yahweh, foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?” appear to be the only other usages of the term in this way. Seitz links the usages in the book of Isaiah with the widespread use of the term in the book of Genesis (though not necessarily as a term used in relation to Yahweh). Several commentators address the idea that the term is used here

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<sup>80</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 231.

<sup>81</sup> Seitz, “The Book of Isaiah 40-66,” 527.

in an anthropomorphic sense<sup>82</sup> and makes for “uncomfortable” reading. Several commentators limit their arguments with the idea of father as someone who bears children and complicate matters further by discussing the use of the term in this instance with the use of the epithets of “husband” and “mother.”<sup>83</sup> These arguments bypass the fundamental reason that the term was used in this instance and in 64:8. The name is not stridently theological in the sense that it does not reveal a huge amount about the character of the prophet’s God, but it does provide a valuable link or anchor with the historical past. It also succeeds in painting an image that surpasses the historical fathers and gives hope (and comfort) to the listeners.

Abraham does not have to be built up by the prophet to any greater heights. His inclusion in this passage marks an immediate link with the ancient fathers, but it also serves as a reminder that these fathers will not be able to help the people in their current crisis.<sup>84</sup> There must be a deliberate move therefore away from the traditions of the past and to a new, “living” relationship with God, used here in the sense that Yahweh will be eternally present. Brueggemann terms it well when he calls the reference to Abraham a “foil for the positive point insisted on.”<sup>85</sup>

If the opening of v. 15 were read after a close study of Proto-Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah, it would tempt the reader to insert a “Yahweh Sabaoth” or at least a “Holy” of some variation. On the contrary, Trito-Isaiah sticks to his style of using as few designations as possible and using only the familiar, for

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<sup>82</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 55-66*, 262. Unusually for Blenkinsopp he appears to avoid the complicated issue.

<sup>83</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 393.

<sup>84</sup> Helmer Ringgren, “אֲבִי, ’ābh,” *TDOT* 1:18.

<sup>85</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 232.

example, “redeemer.” The use of “father” goes against the grain somewhat in that it is not used often in the OT and not at all in Proto-Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah but it still anchors in with the familiar, for example the reference to “Abraham” or the “fathers.”

## **VII. Conclusion**

The principal difference that is identified after examining the use of divine designations in the three sections of the book of Isaiah is that they reflect the differences in the literary style of each section that may not be immediately evident if the macrostructure of the text is the only aspect that is appraised.

For the most part, Proto-Isaiah uses linear imagery in relation to the divine designations. This means that each designation in a particular microstructure is tied in with the others, and they interplay amongst each other. This is in contrast to the text of Deutero-Isaiah in which the designations serve to enhance and expand the theology and character of Yahweh that has been expounded by the first. This deduction holds true for the designations in relation to the imagery in each of the two sections of text. In Proto-Isaiah, the designations serve to compliment the text; they back up what images have been presented to the audience. In Deutero-Isaiah, the designations serve to enhance the imagery in which they are featured. In both Proto-Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah, there appears to be an attempt to work through, both for the author of the text and for his intended audience, the idea that Yahweh is “holy” in the sense that he is set apart and unique. While Trito-Isaiah does use this phrasing in relation to Yahweh, it is not to the same



extent in terms of the designations. Rather, it is in the context of a reiteration of a lesson that has already been learned.

## **Chapter 6**

### **The Contribution of the Study of Divine Designations to the Theology of the Book of Isaiah**

#### **I. Introduction**

The results from this study of the divine designations in the book of Isaiah now need to be gathered together and evaluated. The results stem from the initial location and identification of the thirty-six divine designations in the book of Isaiah. The level of diversity among such an amount of designations demonstrates the literary merit of this prophetic text as well as the importance of a clear understanding of the designations for any study of the text. The statistical analysis of the distribution between the three traditional sections of the text and their visual presentation is the core finding of this study, as these findings highlight notable patterns in the distribution of the designations, which are useful in establishing possible editorial additions to, or alterations of the text. The examination of the etymological background of the designations, their use in the macrostructural setting of the prophetic literature, and the OT in general, as well as each individual occurrence in the book of Isaiah allows for a methodical investigation of these results. With the conclusions of this evaluation, the significance of this research for the study of the theology of the book of Isaiah as a whole may be assessed.

## II. Evaluation of the Methodology Used

The use of the divine designations as a hermeneutical key for the exegesis and general study of the book of Isaiah has been successful, as it has allowed a clear and methodical exegetical model with which to approach the text of the book of Isaiah. The information that may be gained from studying the divine designations, in their etymological and historical context, their setting in the context of the OT as a whole, and their position in the religious and cultural world of the ancient Near East, promises to be beneficial to a study of the text. With this information to hand, a fuller significance of the text may be uncovered, which was often largely ignored in previous studies as the divine designations were not regarded as particularly significant in the text as a whole. When their significance, both in terms of their impact on the literary style of the text and on the view of God that their use conveys, is evaluated, it may be concluded that the use of the designations brings a new dimension to the study of the text.

This idea of “dimensional influence” of the study has been furthered by the inclusion of the hermeneutical perspectives of Mettinger and Alonso Schökel concerning the significance of the divine designations and the micro and macro structures of the text respectively. By examining the impact of the literary use of the designations on the various levels of the text that have been identified, the idea that they have a dimensional impact is expanded. The methodology has been successful in this regard, as it has managed to avoid the common problem in biblical exegesis of an uneven focus, either on the individual words and verses, or on the greater part of the book of Isaiah and the prophetic literature overall. By clearly identifying the place of the

designations within the overall structure, the various levels of significance can be clearly identified and a logical, uniform overview of the implication of the divine designations has therefore been conducted.

A potentially negative aspect of this study that has been previously highlighted is that the statistical analysis cannot be mathematically accurate as the traditional divisions of the book of Isaiah are not precisely even in terms of word-count. In this case, the emphasis must be on the fact that this work is not a numerical, scientific study, but rather an examination of the distribution of the divine designations, which highlights interesting clusters and incidences of use, that may not have been readily identifiable with a typical reading of the text. The statistical distribution of the divine designations in percentage form is not used as proof of any argument in this work, unless there is evidence that the term in question only appears in one section or does not appear at all in a particular section.

### **III. Evaluation of the Contribution of the Study to Research on the Book of Isaiah**

In concluding the study of the divine designations in the book of Isaiah, it is now necessary, to evaluate the contribution of this study to the scholarship of the book of Isaiah. When studying any biblical text, one important aim is to produce a hermeneutically grounded exegesis of the text that in some way contributes to a more rounded and clearer view of the text's theology, the main message that the text sought to convey to its audience and its later redactors. Later redactors of the book of Isaiah have constructed what may be termed the "inadvertent theology" of the author, dominated by certain words,

such as the divine designations. With regard to the “message” that the author wishes to convey, it is crucial to define this further.

The “theology” is not easy to define, not because of its complexity but just as with the divine designations, because of the larger contexts in which it must be investigated. Here again, the levels of macrostructure are vital to the investigation. The theology of the book of Isaiah may be discussed on many levels. At the level of the macrostructure is firstly the text itself as a unit of sixty-six chapters, and then there is the place of this unit in the prophetic corpus and finally in the OT as a whole. The hermeneutical exegesis of the text should lead to an insight beyond the theology of these sixty-six chapters one that takes account of, and is applicable to, the theology of the other macrostructures, namely the prophetic corpus and the OT. By applying Alonso Schökel’s theory of micro and macrostructures once again, the requirement of including the macrostructural context into the theology also highlights the reverse, and more complex situation, namely that of the microstructure. If the sixty-six chapters of the book of Isaiah were taken as the starting point, then working from these to the microstructure, in the form that was taken for the examination of the divine designations, the theology would have to encompass the three traditional sections of Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah. Within this are the various sections, the chapters, the individual verses, and finally (in this study at least), the divine designations. With the assumption that these three blocks of text reflect three distinct historical situations, it became traditional to treat the theological message of Isaiah in terms of the distinct theologies of Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-

Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah.<sup>1</sup> Childs argues that the book of Isaiah was accepted into the Jewish and Christian canons as a unified whole, as a single text<sup>2</sup> and as such there should be an “over-arching” view of the text and of the theology that is presented in it. He agrees with the opinion that the material in chs. 40-66 suggests a much later historical context than chs. 1-39, but he does contend that, “the theological context completely overshadows the historical.”<sup>3</sup> His view coincides with the growth of interest in the final form of the book of Isaiah in much of current biblical scholarship.

This approach may give rise to the idea that there are several “theologies” of the book of Isaiah or even that there must be one “ultimate” theology that would suit all levels of the structure. Neither of these options excludes the other, nor is it even desirable that they should. Preferably, and even essentially, is once again the idea that the theology must take account of all the levels of the structure of the text and encompass any theologies apparent within.

Within modern biblical scholarship, considerable efforts are undertaken to insure that this “over-arching” view is maintained and assurances are consistently made that this viewpoint will not be ignored in a study of the text. In many commentaries, though the aim may be to research or identify the theology of the book of Isaiah, the focus appears to be coloured by an over-concentration on the theology of Deutero-Isaiah. If an “over-arching” theology is examined, it is usually in light of the influence of

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<sup>1</sup> Roberts, “Isaiah in Old Testament Theology,” 130.

<sup>2</sup> Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 311-338. His view is clearly illustrated by the fact that his 2001 commentary on the text forms one volume, simply entitled *Isaiah*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

Deutero-Isaiah on Proto-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah, and a comparison between two or more of the sections. It would seem therefore that the most productive conclusion of the microstructural work on the divine designations actually influences the macrostructure, the way that the three texts and their theologies interact, contradict, and in an overall sense, why they are formulated into one canonical text. This influence is quite substantial and elaboration of it should help to counteract the theory that work on the microstructure of a text is not conducive to articulating any major theological insights into the text.

#### **IV. Theology of the Book of Isaiah**

This still does not define the “theology” that the hermeneutical exegesis will locate. The phrase “theology” means many things to many disciplines but in terms of Scripture, Anselm’s classical definition of theology as *fides quaerens intellectum* (“faith seeking understanding”) would appear apt. The biblical author as a theologian therefore seeks to convey an understanding of who God is, his relationship to his people (and the world in general), and most crucially, his plan for them for the future. In this sense, the prophet and subsequent redactors may (and often do) bring presuppositions to the text. They bring the traditional language of Israel’s belief and worship to the text. They demonstrate the unique situation of time where the text is being received and lived and the author or redactor’s religious and poetic aptitude. This “way with words” brings about the need for a more “objective” control, ideally at the linguistic level of the text. The tools for exploring this textual language include philology, grammar, linguistics, and comparative studies, but also at

the literary level of the text, require the application of poetics, narrative, symbolism, metaphor, and rhetoric; the language of the text.

It is important to note that the “character” of God in the book of Isaiah is not comparable to an actor in a drama or a character in a novel or poem. He cannot be manipulated by external influences and regardless of the genre of literature in which he or his words appear, and what redaction and structural changes may have taken place they remain the sole property of God. In the book of Isaiah, religious language makes certain claims about the lives not just of individuals but also of entire nations. The reader sees God through the literary perspective of the prophet and subsequent editors of the text. We learn about God through language, and the language of the book of Isaiah is theological and poetic, honed in the experience of the prophet.

It may appear to be a rather simplistic venture to examine the idea or picture of God revealed in the text of the book of Isaiah but as has been previously stated, the fact that the theology of Deutero-Isaiah is normally given precedence in an examination of the theology or theologies of the traditional sections, makes the process more complex. Chapters 40-55 appear to many commentators to be the starting point of not just the next level of macrostructure; the prophetic corpus, but of the entire OT, as Yahweh is finally seen as the “one” God and Deutero-Isaiah denies even the existence of other gods.

To formulate therefore the approach to evaluating the theology of the book of Isaiah as it has been received in its final form, it is necessary to look individually at the theology or view of God that is presented in each text. Looking at the theology of the text essentially means examining the prophet’s



shaping of the “word” that has been divinely transmitted, with regard to his style and his depiction of God as a character. As it has been acknowledged throughout this work, there has been substantial creative redactional activity to produce the text that formulates part of the canon and because of this a comparison and contrast of the theology of the three sections of text must be conducted to identify distinctions and overlaps. With this excursus complete, a common theology can be deduced and clearer insight gained into the reason why the text exists as a unity.

### **a. Proto-Isaiah**

It is important to remember that Proto-Isaiah did not simply initiate a theological message in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. that was completely new and original: it was one that was already rooted in several traditions. Proto-Isaiah has a distinctive theology, in terms of the book of Isaiah, the prophetic corpus, and the OT in general, especially in terms of the ideas of a chosen king and a chosen city as part of an ancient faith and way of thinking.

The city of Jerusalem was selected as the “sacred place,” as its centre, Mount Zion, was the area where Yahweh would meet his people in the temple. Proto-Isaiah experienced the presence of the Yahweh in the temple (Isaiah 6). The prevalent expectation was that Yahweh would protect Jerusalem (1:8; 3:17; 4:5; 10:24). This idea was firmly rooted in the cultural and religious mindset, for example Exod 15, where in the Song of Moses, the holy place is the goal of the exodus (15:17). Zion is praised and celebrated in worship (Ps 48:1-3; 52:2; 74:2). In the new era of peace, Zion will be raised up and visited by all the nations as in Isa 2:1-4.

The prophetic motif of condemnation of the people of Yahweh (as well the people of other nations) for their sins is a key theme in Proto-Isaiah, and there is a wide range of accusations made throughout the text. It shows many common themes with the preaching of slightly earlier prophetic preaching of Northern Israel. The people have rebelled against Yahweh (1:2-3) by failing to acknowledge him (1:2-3). They have rejected the law of Yahweh, and the word of the Holy One of Israel (5:24). They are preoccupied with the trappings of worship where they should be looking for justice, and turn to their own moral obligation in terms of care of the poor and underprivileged (1:10-17). They take part in unjust economic, judicial, and social activities (5:8-24; 10:1-4). In terms of the leaders of the people, they are not responding to the situation (3:1-15), and the foreign powers (such as the King of Assyria) have become arrogant as a result (10:5-19).

Yahweh will come in judgment, and this divine intervention may be illustrated as inflicting punishment for various offences (5:1-7; 3:1-5). Often the judgment is characterized in the traditional phrase, as the coming of the “day of the Lord” (2:12; 2:20; 4:1; 7:20; 13:6 “Howl, for the day of Yahweh is near; it will come like destruction from Shaddai”). This “wrath” includes foreign nations (Isa 13-23), the hosts of heaven (24:2), and indeed the entire world (24:1-23). On a more positive note, Yahweh will transform, redeem, and save. Here is where the two themes of the Davidic dynasty and Yahweh’s choice of Zion are clearly seen. The reign of a son of David will inaugurate a transformation in the relationship among all of humanity (11:1-9). The city of Jerusalem will be protected from the Assyrians (31:4-5; 37:6-7) and the exiles will return there.

In ch. six, the prophet makes the claim that he “saw” Yahweh (6:1-5), which is a most remarkable statement from the one “who emphasizes more than any other prophet the holiness of God.”<sup>4</sup> As previously highlighted, the title, the Holy One of Israel, is Proto-Isaiah’s most frequently used term for God, and it is used to designate both the oneness and power of Yahweh. The imagery of ch. 6 as previously examined, serves to emphasise the absolute difference between the divine and the human, one of the principal themes in Proto-Isaiah. The difference is one of power, wisdom, and goodness. “It is an understanding of God that Isaiah shares with other OT writers, but he has distinctive ways of emphasising it.”<sup>5</sup> One of these ways is by the use of the term “holy” as in 6:3, another is by rejecting the difference between Yahweh and human beings (2:6-22) and finally by the explanation of the claim that Yahweh is the king over all of nature (heaven and earth) and every human system and endeavour.

## **b. Deutero-Isaiah**

“Nothing certain is known about the author of Isaiah 40-55 except for the prophet’s beliefs about God.”<sup>6</sup> There are additional aspects to the theology of Deutero-Isaiah than the beliefs of God that the author holds, for example, the relationship between Yahweh and the Israelite people is also of considerable concern.

The author of the text makes it clear that it is Yahweh has summoned Cyrus to end the Babylonian empire, because the exile (or period of

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<sup>4</sup> Tucker, “The Book of Isaiah 1-39,” 61.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Gowan, *Theology of the Prophetic Books. The Death and Resurrection of Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 61.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

## **V. Defining the Religious Outlook**

The importance of looking at the theologies of the three sections of the book of Isaiah as distinct as well as overlapping entities is made more prominent when their religious outlooks are addressed. The three outlooks represented in the text of the book of Isaiah are polytheism, henotheism, and monotheism. These three belief systems are represented in different ways, for instance, polytheism is not presented as a viable outlook and is roundly dismissed, while monotheism is taken as an integral part of Deutero-Isaiah.

### **a. Polytheism**

The expression “polytheism” has been used supposedly to refer to religions that recognise and worship many gods. It is a major and indeed widespread phenomenon of world religions, particularly in the historical sense where it was a prevalent belief in China, India, Greece, Rome and, of course, the ancient Near East. An important element of polytheism that should be considered in the light of this study of the divine designations is that although the major deities that were worshipped in the hierarchical structure of polytheism were viewed as powerful, no one god could be all-powerful or omnipotent. This religious outlook would therefore have been in direct contrast to the ideas of God as unique and all powerful presented in all three sections of the book of Isaiah, with designations such as “Holy God,” “Yahweh Sabaoth,” and “Mighty God.”

## **b. Henotheism**

The term “henotheism” was originally coined by Max Müller<sup>10</sup> and is taken to mean devotion to a single god while accepting the existence of other gods. It is derived from the Greek εἰς Θεός “one god” and is according to Müller, monotheism in principle and a polytheism in fact. Henotheism is similar to, but less restricted than monolatry, because a monolator only worships a single god, while the henotheist may worship any god within the pantheon. In a number of belief systems, the option of the supreme deity within a henotheistic structure may be determined by geographical, cultural, or political reasons.

## **c. Monotheism**

Monotheism is generally taken to be the belief in the existence of one deity or God, or in the oneness of God and forming an allegiance with this God. It is the belief that “one Deity is universally supreme and categorically unique from all other heavenly or ‘divine’ beings, and that the worship is properly to be given solely to this one Deity, with worship of any other beings regarded as idolatry.”<sup>11</sup> The term comes from the Greek μόνος θεός or “single God.” In a Western context, the concept of “monotheism” tends to be exclusively tied to the concept of the God of Abraham or of the Abrahamic religions. It typically defines the entire grouping, but may be used in particular reference to the God as defined by a specific religion or sect. The concept of monotheism has

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<sup>10</sup> Jon Stone, *On Language, Mythology, and Religion* (New York: Pelgrave, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Larry Hurtado, “Monotheism,” *DTIB*, 519.

largely been defined in contrast with earlier polytheistic religions (those that profess a belief in many gods), and beyond a general concept of “oneness.”

For many commentators, the book of Isaiah forms a crucial step in the development of the concept of monotheism in the OT. To understand this development properly, it is worthwhile looking at the OT itself as the end product of a complex process of literary growth where the reader is presented with a rather idealized outlook of the Israelite belief system and their worship. In general, the origins of monotheism in Israel probably began in the realm of tribal religions that were limited to small areas,<sup>12</sup> where each tribe would have worshipped their own deity. When the state was centralized under David and Solomon, several groups emerged that saw Yahweh as the supreme god, supreme over other divinities such as Baal and El and therefore worthy of the title of “God of Israel.”

## **VI. The Redaction of the Book of Isaiah**

The key question that now arises is how the role of the redactors influenced the entire text of the book of Isaiah and how the divine designations can aid in the illustration of this process. The idea that the redactor of Deutero-Isaiah, changed parts (whether the text was added to or altered in its existing state) of Proto-Isaiah to suit the outlook of Deutero-Isaiah is a negative one and seems to go against the notion of the creative aspects of redaction. A different outlook, or “dimension” is to see the redactor or redactors, most conceivably over an extended period, as bringing the texts together. This editing and

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<sup>12</sup> A thorough examination of the historical process cannot be attempted here and in any case would not do justice to Albright’s detailed history in *From the Stone Age to Christianity, Monotheism and the Historical Process*. See in particular 236-72.

changing of the existing texts to form the “unified whole” of today, while it still held the three major divisions, also demonstrated a continuity and development of thought that did not exist among the three independent texts.

At best, any theory regarding the redaction of the book of Isaiah is a tentative one. The LXX and the scrolls found at Qumran, as well as the indication that Ben Sira was familiar with chs. 36-39, and the majority of Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah (Sir 48:22) would suggest that the editorial process had all but ended by 150 B.C.E. It would appear following this study of the divine designations that the text of Deutero-Isaiah forms the more established and stable section of text, possibly even existing in a state close enough to its final form when the redaction of the whole book of Isaiah. The tendency is to confirm the idea that the so-called “Servant Songs” formed part of the text in its “original” form. Deutero-Isaiah is normally dated towards the end of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (556-539 B.C.E.). Redactional activity that would result in the final form of the book of Isaiah seems to have begun soon after as it was the text of Deutero-Isaiah was the central focus of the redactors. Their lack of editorial intervention in this text would suggest that it already existed in a form that was compatible with the outlook of the redactors. It is impossible to tell whether or not there was one single redactor or an “Isaiah school,” and indeed, the answer to this question is not crucial to this study. The consideration of the divine designations would also lead to a conclusion the intention of the editing process was not to produce a coherent collection from a source of disparate or separate texts or scrolls, almost to make an orderly arrangement, such as one would attempt with a filing system. Rather, the intention of the redactional process would seem to have been

concerned with the development of theological themes and in particular the monotheistic outlook. In this manner, redactional activity began with Deutero-Isaiah as the starting point and the text of Proto-Isaiah was then edited (in the sense of amalgamating, expanding, and reordering existing texts) to reflect this development. The fact that one of the principal concerns of Deutero-Isaiah was the reconstruction and repopulation of the city of Jerusalem may have made the traditions of Proto-Isaiah, with its concentration on the fortunes of the city, particularly attractive.

With Trito-Isaiah, the inclination is to argue for this text as an independent unity, a late addition by the final redactors of the book of Isaiah. It shows the continuation and culmination of the theological development of the monotheistic outlook. There seems to be several redactional layers of this section of text, occurring in a relatively brief time-frame as although such editorial additions can be identified, the theological outlook remains consistent, as does the use of the divine designations. The absence of the term "Yahweh Sabaoth," as well as other key designations such as "creator" indicate that there was a coherency in literary style and theological aim.

The next step in this process is therefore to trace the development of this redactional shaping of the theological viewpoint through the text of the book of Isaiah. As previously stated, when commentators focus on the "theology" of the book of Isaiah, they tend to either attempt to encompass the entire sixty-six chapters into one consistent theological viewpoint or focus almost exclusively on the text of Deutero-Isaiah. This method does not take account of the vital question of why, if the book of Isaiah is to be regarded as the definitive statement of Israel's monotheistic faith, is the text situated



between of two other blocks of text. Ignoring this situation seems tantamount to believing that the redactors of the text did not notice its uncompromising monotheistic outlook and almost sought to diminish the impact of the text by surrounding it with texts with a dissimilar outlook.

When the divine designations are used as the hermeneutical key to the text, the theology of the text is as it were is “unlocked” and the development from henotheism, to monotheism, to a monotheistic outlook that embraces the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and his people may be identified. While the divine designations are not the sole evidence for this development, an investigation of their role in the text, nevertheless brings this phenomenon more clearly to light.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The difficulty in addressing the question of whether the outlook of the texts in question is monotheistic or henotheistic arises when looking at their final form. The final form of all OT texts is monotheistic. Both Judaism and Christianity are firmly monotheistic and their sacred texts will reflect this. It is presupposed in the creation accounts of Gen 1 and reflected in a more explicit manner in texts such as Deut 6:4 **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד**, which forms the core of what is the Shema, or traditional Jewish confession of faith in one God. As previously addressed, the majority of commentators would agree that the most persistent and indeed definite declarations of monotheism in the texts of the OT are to be found in Deutero-Isaiah.

After examining the creative role of the redactors in the literary shaping of the text and their artistic influence on the literary forms of the three

sections of the text it would seem feasible to argue that this creative process would have encompassed a shaping and editing of the theological outlooks of the sections. This is further backed up by the idea that theology is an inherently linguistic discipline<sup>13</sup> and therefore the idea of the language apparent in the final (redacted) form of the text is intrinsically linked with the theological position of the text is a realistic principle.

By keeping the idea of language and theology in parallel the redactional aim, at least in the major editing and additions can be surmised as being to formulate a coherent progression toward the development of a monotheistic outlook. It is important to remember that the authors and redactors of the text were in a literary sense, extremely gifted. Their command of language, whether in a poetic or narrative sense is exceptional in its breadth as well as in its stylistic features. In this way, the text does not present the reader with a flat character of Yahweh. To be more precise, there is a rounded theology present in the text or rather in the final form of the text. The microstructure of the text, the three sections of Proto-Isaiah, Deutero-Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah show the picture of the Israelite religion at the time of writing and the plan for the future. Intertwined with this is the expression of the setting out and growth of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and the chosen people of Israel.

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<sup>13</sup> Irene Lawerence, *Linguistics and Theology. The Significance of Noam Chomsky for Theological Construction* (ATLA Monograph Series 16; Metuchen, N.J. & London: The American Theological Library Association, 1980), 98.

### **a. Proto-Isaiah**

By using the divine designations as the hermeneutical key to the text, Proto-Isaiah may be taken as being henotheistic in its outlook and as such differing from Deutero-Isaiah. This henotheism forms the first part of the developmental process from the polytheistic origins of Israel as the cultural and religious atmosphere in which Proto-Isaiah prophesied and in which these prophecies would have been first recorded would have been predominantly polytheistic. It is working against a culture that is predominantly polytheistic and must therefore be able to relate to the beliefs of its audience. The use of the title “Yahweh Sabaoth” is essential here in terms of the fact that it is used to show that Yahweh is Lord of all the hosts, of all the other deities. Its use does not preclude worship of other deities, nor does it dismiss their existence. To be more precise, the use of the term signifies that Yahweh is the supreme God, even when surrounded by many. The term is used 49 times in Proto-Isaiah, six in Deutero-Isaiah, and never in Trito-Isaiah.

In terms then of the presentation of the other gods and idols in Proto-Isaiah, it is noteworthy that when they are first referred to in the text in ch. two they are termed אֱלִילִים or “worthless and insufficient things.” The image is presented in this section of text of the land of Jacob as filled with these worthless things and the idea of the people being “brought low” by their worship of this clearly states the author’s opinion of idol worship. Not only will they have to humble themselves by bowing and scraping before the idols but they as a people will be brought low, almost in the idea of not being able

to hold their heads up high. The tone is scoffing in nature and in 2:18, these worthless things will “entirely be passed away.” This poetic term links the phrase with the previous verse where it is emphatically stated that Yahweh alone will be worshipped in the future. This is furthered by the image set forth in 2:20 where on the day of Yahweh, these idols (worthless things) will be abandoned.

In ch. 10, Assyria is depicted as the “kingdom of the idols” where idol worship is more prevalent than the worship that is rife in Jerusalem and Samaria. The language of 10:10 **פְּסִילֵי אֱלִילִים** highlights the worthlessness of the idols once more and 10:11 makes a threat to the future of the idols of Jerusalem on behalf of Yahweh. In ch. 19 it is the turn of the gods and idols of Egypt to be termed “worthless things,” and in this instance they are depicted as trembling at the very presence of Yahweh before them. The strength and might of Yahweh that has been built up by these two images (10:11 and 19:1) culminates in the ridiculing of the Egyptians when they turn to the idols when they are under threat from Yahweh. These idols will be no match for him. In 30:22 and 31:7, the term **פְּסִילִים** is used alone in the context of Yahweh’s promise to Zion. This once again forms a link with future events, it is clear that the future existence of the idols is limited, their demise is imminent in the face of Yahweh.

The existence of the other gods and idols that are used to worship them are acknowledged. They are not dismissed as non-existent and inconsequential instead when the might and presence of Yahweh is put beside them they immediately appear inconsequential. The tone used to address

those people who worship idols is not one of anger or physical threat; it is predominately mocking in nature. Yahweh is depicted as the “mighty God” and the “Mighty One of Israel,” terms not used in Deutero-Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah, as the need to establish him as the more powerful God in comparison to others seems to be only necessary in this text. Always prevalent in the text is a belief that once the people open their eyes and acknowledge that Yahweh is the Lord of all the hosts and the more powerful God, then they will realise the errors of their ways and immediately turn to worshipping Yahweh. Yahweh is their God after all, as indicated by the use of the title, God of Israel, seven times in Proto-Isaiah.

#### **b. Deutero-Isaiah**

With Deutero-Isaiah comes the development of the explicit or theoretical monotheism that simply rejects other gods as non-existent as has been argued in several important recent works on the subject.<sup>14</sup> Monotheism logically implies universalism, and although the conviction of election is maintained, the people of Israel recognise that Yahweh’s salvation will extend to other nations. As Millard Lind states, “Deutero-Isaiah elucidates the biblical teaching of monotheism, clearly stating its logical and climactic conclusion.”<sup>15</sup> This inference is that Yahweh is the only God of Israel. Mark Smith, in his detailed examination of monotheism in Deutero-Isaiah, sees that

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<sup>14</sup> Principal of these is the recent work of Mark Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>15</sup> Millard Lind, “Monotheism, Power and Justice: A Study in Isaiah 40-55,” *CBQ* 46 (1984): 432.

“Yahweh becomes more than the god above all other gods.”<sup>16</sup> In the text of Deutero-Isaiah, the existence of other gods is vehemently denied and the two images portrayed by the divine designations of the king and the creator serve to undermine any development of their cults. There can only be one king and one creator as depicted in the use of these divine designations with more frequency than in Proto-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah.

The inclusion of the results of the study of the divine designations in the book of Isaiah serves to further sharpen the concept of Deutero-Isaiah’s monotheism. Crucially the designations “everlasting God,” “God of the whole earth,” “Righteous God,” “Creator,” and “First and Last” only appear in the text of Deutero-Isaiah, never in Proto-Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah. These terms all serve the monotheistic position of Deutero-Isaiah. Everlasting God shows the power of Yahweh that transcends a temporal aspect. God of the whole earth shows the universalistic aspect that Deutero-Isaiah hopes to achieve with this monotheism. The people of Israel are not the only ones to hear the message, all nations must take heed and recognise that Yahweh is the one God. With the term “righteous God,” the saving nature of Yahweh is reiterated, linked in with the titles “redeemer” and “saviour.” The epithet of “First and Last” speaks for itself in this instance. Yahweh is atemporal but at the same time part of human history, both in the past and in the future.

It can be said that the text of Deutero-Isaiah shares the view of Proto-Isaiah with regard to the “holiness” of Yahweh, in terms of his unique standing; he is the only god of Israel. The term “holy one” has been noted as

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<sup>16</sup> Mark Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 179.

occurring three times in Deutero-Isaiah, comparable to only one occurrence in Proto-Isaiah. More telling is the almost equal number of occurrences of the term "Holy One of Israel" in the two texts, twelve in Deutero-Isaiah and eleven in Proto-Isaiah. Elaborating on the idea "righteous God" mentioned earlier is the distribution of the term "redeemer." Deutero-Isaiah clearly places more emphasis on this aspect of Yahweh's character as the term is used ten times in chs. 40-55. It is only used twice in Proto-Isaiah. As has previously been detailed, the use of the term redeemer indicates a close relationship. In this case, the relationship is between Yahweh and his people and is inherently linked with the idea of covenant. Deutero-Isaiah appears to use the term in the sense of the two-way relationship that it encourages; the Israelites must face up to their personal responsibilities with regard to their worship. The incentive is that Yahweh will act in the same manner as an earthly redeemer, but in this case, the future of the people and their descendants will be secured. One of the most telling aspects of the theology and monotheistic outlook of the prophets can be seen in the fact the Deutero-Isaiah only uses the term Yahweh Sabaoth six times compared to the 49 instances in Proto-Isaiah. This is important as it makes clear the fact that Deutero-Isaiah has made a visible move away from the henotheistic point of view that was prevailing in Proto-Isaiah and relocates his theology to a firmly position monotheistic.

### ***c. Trito-Isaiah***

The focus generally on work concerning Trito-Isaiah is usually not primarily concerned with the theology of the book but on its existence. Rendtorff and

Sweeney in particular all have construed formations of the text that includes all or part of chs. 56-66 as the final compilation of the book of Isaiah.<sup>17</sup> The majority of commentators, however, do see chs. 60-62 as the hub of the theology of Trito-Isaiah. The tone is both confident and filled with hope. Zion is declared as the place of justice and peace, where material wealth and God's glory are abundant. There are firm assurances that Yahweh's plan will be achieved. In their response, the people recognize the power and glory of Yahweh. He does not present them with material benefits as a reward for their loyalty, though the author of the text does use extensive materialistic imagery such as 60:17 "Instead of bronze I will bring gold, instead of iron I will bring silver." Prominence is placed on the role and place of Zion in society. The proclamations made in 60-62 are unconditional and Yahweh details how he will act towards Zion and the people. Foreigners will be subordinate to Israel, as the people will have re-established a powerful international position (60:10). This subordination will give honour to Yahweh and Zion will become the "city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." Yahweh will then create an everlasting covenant with the exiles (61:8), who in return will recognise his righteousness.

It is clear therefore, that the text of Trito-Isaiah does draw on the monotheistic statements of Deutero-Isaiah but the outlook of the two texts is inherently different. Trito-Isaiah develops the monotheism of Deutero-Isaiah with a move from the educating outlook of Yahweh's holiness and unique

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<sup>17</sup> One of the most thorough and clearly executed surveys of literature on the formation of Trito-Isaiah is Anna Grant-Henderson's Appendix on "Proposals for the Redactional Growth of Isaiah 56-66," in *Inclusive Voices in Post-Exilic Judah* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 153-155.



standing to an inclusion of the covenant in his teachings. There is a focus on the future and his rhetorical and linguistic style highlights the need for humanity to be part of this future. Humanity in this case is no longer the people of Israel, as all nations may now be included in Yahweh's saving plan. As Westermann states "Membership [of the covenant] ceases to be based on birth, and now depends on resolution, the resolve to take as one's god the God of Israel."<sup>18</sup> This new emphasis on human responsibility may be seen as early as in 56:1 Thus says Yahweh: keep judgment, and do what is right, for my salvation is near, and my deliverance will be revealed." These of course are not new lessons or teachings, they have been lauded throughout the OT and even echo what is stated in Deutero-Isaiah, particularly in 46:13, "I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off, and my salvation will not tarry; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory."

The common theory, even among those who see 56-66 as a coherent unity, regarding 56:1 is that it is a late addition to the text, among the section of text comprising of 56:1-8. Westermann articulates what many commentators believe, namely these verses do not form part of the original words of the prophet "they merely wear the garb of them"<sup>19</sup> and it seems likely that these verse are an example of the redactional shaping of the text with a view to highlighting a theological development. Rendtorff indicates that in Proto-Isaiah, the term צדקה depicts righteousness that has been "kept and done." In Deutero-Isaiah Yahweh's own צדקה "whose coming is

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<sup>18</sup> Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, 305.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 305.

announced and whose character will be **ישועה**, salvation.<sup>20</sup> These two aspects are joined together in 56:1, where something new and unanticipated is announced. It would appear therefore that later editing and redaction of the text was formulated to visibly identify the theological progression of the three texts. In 46:13, the reference is to Yahweh's involvement in salvation, but there is no indication of a call to the people for action. In 56:1, the tone is challenging, appropriate action has to be taken. Salvation will only come about because of Yahweh's action (59:16) but the people must prepare themselves for this promised salvation with action that will have a positive effect on their community and society in general. Trito-Isaiah realises that blind faith in an all-powerful God will only continue the ethical and moral apathy of the Israelites that all the prophets preach against. By highlighting this outlook, the redactors of the text take the theology of the text to another level. The scope is still inherently monotheistic but there is the new and added dimension of human responsibility.

The divine designations echo this, not by which designations are used in the text, but rather which ones are avoided. Yahweh Sabaoth is possibly the most the most obvious example, and the implications of its absence have previously been discussed. The working theory concerning this would be centred on the fact that the term's traditional associations were with one or more of the Israelite institutions such as the monarchy, the ark or the temple, and holy war. With the perspective of Trito-Isaiah being firmly focused on future events, any retrospective associations would not have been conducive

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<sup>20</sup> Rolf Rendtorff, *Canon and Theology. Overtures to an Old Testament Theology* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 183.

to the theological argument that the author wished to advance. Relating Yahweh to the traditional “hosts” would be unhelpful on two levels: firstly the suggestion of an affiliation with other gods and secondly with the traditional emblems such as the ark. The people realise that Yahweh does not now have to be contained within the walls of a temple or confined within a box and used to intimidate enemies. His role in their lives has now been established as being much greater, as the promise of salvation for the future has now been ascertained.

In a similar fashion, the terms “creator” and “maker” are not used in Trito-Isaiah as they are linked primarily with the past and Trito-Isaiah wishes to highlight the continuous plan for the future. The terms also have connotations with the formation of a monotheistic outlook as with their use in Deutero-Isaiah. Trito-Isaiah does not wish to be part of the educational process in this regard. The facts have been established; Trito-Isaiah takes them as given and does not need to reiterate them, as they are such an inherent part of his theology. Dwelling on well-known facts will only move the focus away from the future. In the same way, there is no reference to the idea of Yahweh as a heavenly king. This would be in line with the emerging theology that saw a clear division between earthly (human) and divine roles in the covenant. Allocating to Yahweh the duties of an earthly king takes from the idea that humans now had their own responsibilities with their own roles and duties to follow. Yahweh has his own plan for the people; he does not have to treat them like subjects to work in collaboration with them.

The term “saviour” is used once and “redeemer” three times. The use of redeemer may to some seem oddly placed in a text that does so much to

encourage people that they must be responsible. If the idea that Yahweh is the redeemer of the people it may appear that this responsibility is actually an option, something that does not have to be carried out as Yahweh will redeem his people regardless of their behaviour. More accurately, the term in Trito-Isaiah signifies the link between past and present. In 63:16, the idea of redemption links Yahweh with the ancestors or “fathers” of the audience. The two other occasions, 59:20 and 60:16 the concentration is firmly placed on the idea of redemption as being part of an ongoing future.

Overall, Trito-Isaiah tends to use the more commonly used designations such as Yahweh and *elohîm*. This is linked not only with the author’s literary style but also with the theology or the idea of God that the author wished to convey and the later redactors sought to expand. By using the divine name, and hardly any titles or epithets, apart from the well-established *elohîm*, the author allows the text to remain as a consideration of the existing prophetic work (both from Proto-Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah as well as the earlier prophetic literature).

In general therefore the use of the divine designations as the hermeneutical key to the formation of the final form of the book of Isaiah is a profitable exercise as both in their use and their absence from the traditional sections of the book allow for greater insight into the theological outlook of the work as a whole. This outlook is one of an illustration of the progression from a polytheistic culture into an acceptance and celebration of God as the unique and holy creator of all of heaven and earth, with a salvific plan for the his people, not only the people of Israel but for all the nations. The study of the divine designations also highlights the literary skill and tradition of not

only the original prophet, but of the subsequent redactors and editors of the texts as they sought to unify the texts and the theological messages contained within them.

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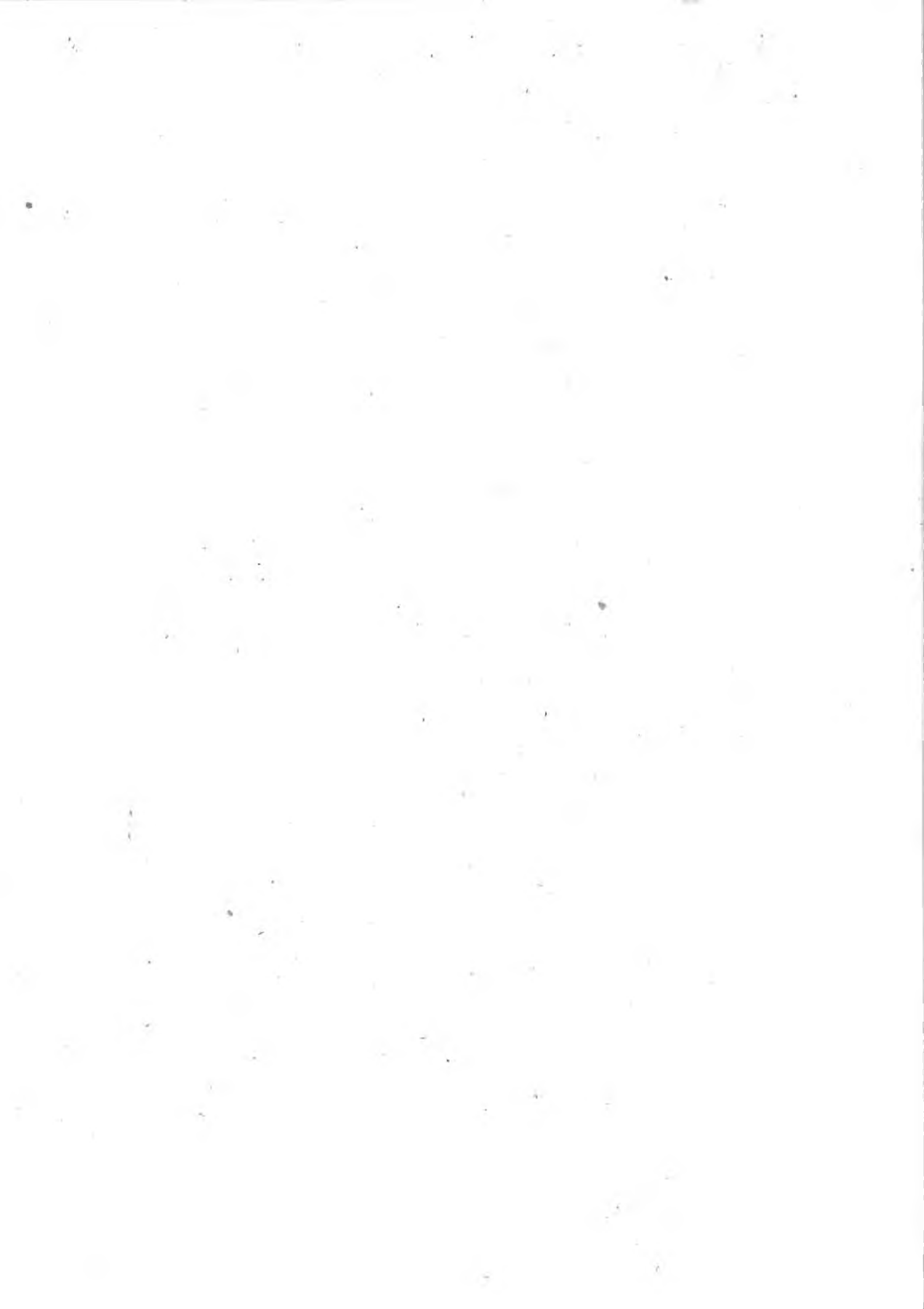
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