Word and Spirit in Ezekiel

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Two fundamental experiences of Yahweh in the Old Testament are an encounter with the `word' of Yahweh and an encounter with the `spirit' or `wind' or `breath' (rı́āḥ) of Yahweh. This thesis explores `word', rı́āḥ, and their relationship in the book of Ezekiel. It argues that the relationship between Yahweh’s rı́āḥ and Yahweh’s word is to be understood not so much in terms of the inspiration and authentication of the prophet but in terms of the transformation of the book’s addressees.

According to the dominant paradigm for explaining the emphasis on rı́āḥ and its relation to Yahweh’s word within the book of Ezekiel, the prophet Ezekiel is recovering from the pre-classical prophets, or even pioneering, an emphasis on rı́āḥ in prophecy that is conspicuously absent from the classical, writing prophets. This reading interprets the emphasis on rı́āḥ in Ezekiel in terms of the self-authentication of the ministry of the prophet. This thesis examines the relationship between rı́āḥ and prophecy in Ezekiel and in the rest of the Old Testament, and shows that the dominant paradigm requires modification.

The emphasis on Yahweh’s rı́āḥ in Ezekiel, even the `prophetic spirit’, is best understood in relation to the book’s concern for the transformation of its addressees. The prophet Ezekiel’s experience of Yahweh’s rı́āḥ and his own obedience to Yahweh’s call are clearly contrasted with the disobedience of the prophet’s addressees in order to present Ezekiel as a model for the addressees of the book. His experience illuminates for them how the dramatic vision of the future can become a reality in their experience. This provides a different perspective on the conundrum of the presence in the book of calls to repentance alongside declarations of Yahweh’s unilateral salvific actions. Further, it provides an integrated account of the different occurrences of rı́āḥ in relation to the rhetorical function of the book. Yahweh’s rı́āḥ has a fundamental role in the envisaged obedient response to Yahweh’s word, both of Ezekiel and of the book’s addressees.
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PREFACE

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Note: Throughout the thesis, where the original text is given in the footnotes, the translation in the main body is my own. I have used ‘Yahweh’ for the divine name and ‘Lord’ for ‘ādônây, except when quoting secondary literature. Quotations from the Bible in English come from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). The section entitled ‘What is the Thesis?’ in Chapter 1 and the whole of Chapter 7 use transliteration rather than Hebrew to facilitate understanding for a wider audience.
**ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>AnBib</td>
<td>Analecta Biblica</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANE</td>
<td>Ancient Near-East</td>
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<td>AOAT</td>
<td>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTI</td>
<td><em>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>ATANT</td>
<td>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</td>
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<td>ATD</td>
<td>Das Alte Testament Deutsch</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBR</td>
<td><em>Bulletin for Biblical Research</em></td>
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<td>BETL</td>
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<td>BibOr</td>
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<td>BJRL</td>
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<td>CahRB</td>
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<td>DSB</td>
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<td><em>Encyclopaedia Judaica</em>, eds. C. Roth et al., (Jerusalem, Keter Publishing House Ltd., 1971)</td>
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<td>EvT</td>
<td>Evangelische Theologie</td>
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<td>FOTL</td>
<td>The Forms of the Old Testament Literature</td>
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<td>Int</td>
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<td>JPTSsup</td>
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<td>MOT</td>
<td>Mastering the Old Testament</td>
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<td>MT</td>
<td>Masoretic Text</td>
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<td>NAC</td>
<td>The New American Commentary</td>
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<td>NCBC</td>
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<td>OBT</td>
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<td>RSPT</td>
<td>Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>Revised Standard Version</td>
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SBJT The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology
SBLDS Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBT Studies in Biblical Theology
SCM Student Christian Movement
SJOT Scottish Journal of Theology
STJ Studios Theological Journal
ThWAT Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, eds. G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1970-)
ThZ Theologische Zeitschrift
TOTC Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TynBul Tyndale Bulletin
VT Vetus Testamentum
VTSup Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WEC The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary
WBC Word Biblical Commentary
WestITJ Wesleyan Theological Journal
WTJ Westminster Theological Journal
ZAH Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZAW Zeitschrift für die Alte Testamentliche Wissenschaft
ZThK Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche
PART I: GATHERING THE DATA

The goal of divine action is to maintain and to create life; to achieve this aim Yahweh chiefly avails of himself of two means which we encounter in varying intensities in all the realms of his manifestation: the Spirit and the Word.¹

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the Old Testament, two fundamental experiences of God are these: an encounter with the ‘word’ of God, often rendered, particularly in prophetic literature, by יִשְׁמַר,² and an encounter with the ‘spirit’ or ‘wind’ or ‘breath’ of God, almost always represented by רוּחַ.³ Indeed the first paragraph of Koch’s book on the spirit of God in the Old Testament declares, ‘On the Spirit and the Word of God rests, as on two pillars, the whole edifice of Old Testament revelation.’⁴ Conceptually speaking, these two experiences could be related. There is, after all, a natural association between ‘breath’ and ‘word’ – it is a person’s breath that carries their word. Such an association is quite common in the ANE. For example, in the Egyptian The Legend of Isis and the Name of Re, ‘Isis came, bearing her effective magic, her speech being the breath of life, her utterance dispelling suffering, her words revivifying one whose throat is constricted.’⁵

This connection is sometimes exploited in the Old Testament. For example, in Isa. 11:4, the shoot from the stump of Jesse, on whom the spirit of Yahweh shall rest, shall kill the wicked ‘with the breath of his lips’ (יִשְׁמַר לִפְיו), a phrase that occurs in parallel with him striking the earth ‘with the rod of his mouth’ (רִמְנָם). Such an association is also predicated of Yahweh. This is particularly apparent in Ps. 33:6:

By the word of Yahweh (יִשְׁמַר אלהים) the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth (רוּחַ אלהים).

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² The semantic range of יִשְׁמַר is very great. The closest synonyms (in terms of function and syntagmatic relations) that speak of Yahweh’s prophetic word are נְשֵׁי (used metonymically), נְשֹׁ, and three poetic words, יִסְדֵּד, יִסְדֵּד, and יִסְמֵב. רוּחַ, כָּן, can speak of Yahweh’s prophetic word (e.g. 1 Kgs. 13:21 (cf. v.9); Num. 24:13); see further C.J. Labuschagne, יִשְׁמַר p.976-78. רִמְנָם speaks of Yahweh’s prophetic word in Hos. 6:5 (יִשְׁמַר הָאָרֶץ) (cf. Num. 24:4, 16); it also speaks of Yahweh’s word more generally (e.g. Josh. 24:27; Job 22:12 (עַל רוֹאִי); 23:12; Ps. 138:4). רוּחַ speaks of the prophetic word in Isa. 28:23 and 32:9; it, too, speaks of Yahweh’s word more generally (e.g. 19 times in Ps. 119). A third poetic word, found particularly in wisdom literature, is רוּחַ. It never occurs in a construct relationship with ‘Yahweh’ or ‘God’; it is only used for the divine prophetic word in 2 Sam. 23:2 (עַל רוֹאִי); the other occurrence where it speaks of Yahweh’s words is in Job 23:5 (עַל רוֹאִי). The final synonym that should be mentioned is רוּחִי. I shall be examining it and its occurrence in the phrase רוּחִי רוּחִי below.
³ The principal alternative is רוּחַ. In Isa. 30:33, רוּחַ רוּחַ; in Job 4:11, רוּחַ רוּחַ; in Job 32:8 and 33:4, רוּחַ רוּחַ; in Job 34:14, רוּחַ רוּחַ; in Job 37:10, רוּחַ רוּחַ; in 2 Sam. 22:16, רוּחַ רוּחַ; (cf. Ps. 18:16 [ET 18:15], רוּחַ רוּחַ).
Eichrodt, in commenting on ‘the association of the spirit of life with the creative word’, affirms ‘the inner homogeneity of the two concepts’. This homogeneity is evident from the fact that ‘the same expression’ is ‘used to designate both the spirit of God as the breath of life going forth from him and the word of God as the breath of his mouth’.6

This near-interchangeability of the two concepts is seen very clearly in the postexilic book of Judith 16:14, ‘Let all your creatures serve you, for you spoke (εἶπες) and they were made. You sent forth your spirit (τὸ πνεῦμά σου), and it formed them; there is none that can resist your voice (τὸ φωνή σου).’ It is also found in the New Testament. In the Gospel of John, in the discourse after the feeding of the 5000 (6:1-15), Jesus declares, ‘The words (τὰ ῥήματα) that I have spoken to you are spirit (πνεύμα) and life’ (John 6:63). In two of the prison letters of Paul, closely paralleled passages outlining the need for the recipients to address one another with ‘psalms, hymns and spiritual songs’ preface such a call with what seem to be almost interchangeable commands: ‘...but be filled with the Spirit’ (ἀλλὰ πληρώθη ἐν πνεύματι – Eph. 5:18) and ‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly’ (Ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτο ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως – Col. 3:16).

In view of the natural association, sometimes paralleled by a theological association, this thesis aims to pursue further the relationship between Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s breath / spirit within the book of Ezekiel.

A. WHY THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL?

I have decided to focus the study particularly on the book of Ezekiel for two main reasons.

First, its emphasis on both Yahweh’s רָצוֹן and Yahweh’s רווח makes it particularly appropriate. At the start, it is important to emphasise that this study is not restricted to the relationship between words per se, but between concepts, such that I am concerned to explore the relationship between ‘word’ and ‘spirit’ however the concept of Yahweh’s utterance (and, indeed, Yahweh’s ‘spirit’) is expressed. At the same time, however, an analysis of the surface structure of the book of Ezekiel reveals how it is dominated by the prophetic ‘word of Yahweh’. Apart from five visionary encounters with Yahweh, in which the ‘hand of Yahweh’ is significant (1:1-3:15; 3:22-5:17; 8:1-11:25; 37:1-14; 40:1-48:35), Zimmerli identifies forty-seven other units.7 Of these, forty-five are introduced by the phrase (or a variation of the phrase), ‘the word of Yahweh came to me saying...’ (וַיִּאמר יְהוָה לְךָ אֲמֹרָה).8 Rarely are there narrative

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8 Zimmerli accounts for the other two instances as follows: one exception, Ezek. 33:21-22, gives the year, the day and the month on which not Yahweh but an escapee from Jerusalem brings Ezekiel news of
comments (e.g. 20:1; 24:18); instead, the words that Ezekiel is to utter, the sign-acts he is to perform, even the reaction of his audience, are all subsumed within what Block calls ‘the prophetic event,’9 the prophet receiving a ‘word’ from Yahweh. As Zimmerli comments, ‘the message in this prophet is dominated completely by the event of the divine word to which he refers in the first person.’10

This emphasis on the ‘word of Yahweh’ is matched by the prominence of נַחַל. Within the book, there are fifty-two references to נַחַל, a number that has led Block to term Ezekiel ‘the prophet of the spirit.’11 While Block is rightly quick to qualify such a statement, since נַחַל can have meteorological (‘wind’) and anthropological (‘spirit,’ ‘mind,’ ‘breath’) meanings, as well as theological ones (‘spirit,’ ‘Spirit’), it is striking to notice the contrast between Ezekiel and the two works to which Ezekiel is most similar both in thought and language, Jeremiah and Leviticus.12 Leviticus has no reference to נַחַל of any kind, and Jeremiah never uses נַחַל theologically.13

The second main reason is perhaps best explained by noting that one of Wonsuk Ma’s motivations for studying נַחַל in the book of Isaiah and not Ezekiel, when both of these books have more than 50 references to נַחַל, is ‘the long historical span the book embraces.’14 In other words, the implicit assumption lying behind his statement, which I take to be essentially correct, is that the book of Ezekiel is not the product of a ‘long historical span.’ I shall look at this question in more detail within chapter 1. For the moment, I want simply to highlight that a relatively short compositional history has two implications which have influenced my choice of the book. First, it increases the likelihood of a coherent, unified portrayal of the relationship between Yahweh’s ‘word’ and Yahweh’s נַחַל, and thus lends support to the holistic approach that in general I have adopted. Secondly, a relatively short compositional history means that the book of Ezekiel, rather than being a video camera (to alter slightly Ma’s metaphor of a

Jerusalem’s destruction. This unique ‘narrative without a word of proclamation’ exploits the prominence of the ‘word of Yahweh’ and emphasises the announcement of the fall. The other exception is the ‘lament’ (ירה) of ch. 19. See Zimmerli, ‘Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character’, pp515-16.

10 Zimmerli, ‘Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character’, p516.

13 Of the eighteen occurrences in Jeremiah, fourteen refer directly to נחַל as ‘wind’ (Jer. 2:24; 4:12, 13; 10:13; 13:24; 14:6; 18:17; 22:22; 49:32, 36 (x2); 51:1, 16), of which the most significant is 5:13, where ‘the prophets are nothing but wind’ (נַחַלָּלי נָחַלֶם יִשְׁרָאֵל); one refers to an extension of this meaning, ‘side’ (Jer. 52:23), two to the ‘breath’ that idols do not have (Jer. 10:14 = Jer. 51:17), and one to the ‘spirit’ of the kings of the Medes (Jer. 51:11). נחַל as ‘wind’ is under Yahweh’s control (e.g. 10:13), and often a simile or metonymy for Yahweh’s judgement (e.g. 4:11; 13:24; 22:22).
'window') 'through which the modern reader can see how the concept [of ר痛み] was used to address a real historical struggle'\(^{15}\) is perhaps more akin to an ordinary camera that provides a snapshot alongside which the picture before and afterwards can be compared and evaluated.

B. WHERE DOES THIS STUDY FIT?

It will be apparent from what I have said above that this study takes place at the interface of Ezekiel studies, on the one hand, and studies about ר痛み on the other. Many of the monographs exploring particular themes within the book of Ezekiel focus in their orientation section either on the book of Ezekiel more generally, or on the particular subject on hand. However, in his examination of ר痛み in Isaiah, Ma's orientation section focuses exclusively on research about ר痛み. Since I shall be interacting with many of the works insofar as they relate to the subject of this study en route, and since few deal directly and in depth with the relationship between Yahweh's word and Yahweh's spirit, what follows is by no means an exhaustive attempt at surveying either the history and state of Ezekiel scholarship, or the study of ר痛み. Rather, it is a sketch of what I see as some of the most important works, and some of the main trends, currents and issues, particularly as they impact this study.

1. Study of the book of Ezekiel\(^{16}\)

The scholarly study of Ezekiel can be characterised as having three phases, though of course it should be recognised that any review is an attempt to impose order where there is none inherent, so some works do not 'fit' precisely within the phases, and the transitions are in reality less pronounced than a sketched review can portray.

The first phase, up until the beginning of the 20th century was marked by a broad agreement on the authorial unity and general integrity of the book. So, for example, in the introductions to the Old Testament by Driver and Gray, there appear concise statements to that effect.\(^{17}\)

\(^{15}\) Ma, Until the Spirit Comes, p16.


\(^{17}\) 'No other book of the Old Testament is distinguished by such decisive marks of unity of authorship and integrity as this...it forms a well-articulated whole.' G.B. Gray, A Critical Introduction to the Old
This peace was shattered soon afterwards, although the cracks had already appeared. Significant in this was the work of Hölscher, who drew a sharp distinction between authentic poetry, on the one hand, and secondary prose, on the other. After removing all hopeful material (chs. 33-48), because Ezekiel was a prophet of doom, and any passages redolent with the language of the (later) Deuteronomy and the Holiness Code, he was left with around 150 verses that were genuine. In the years that followed, it was, according to Torrey, 'as though a bomb had been exploded in the book of Ezekiel, scattering the fragments in all directions.' Issues revolved around three interlocking topics: when the book was composed, how (if at all) the book is a unity, and where the prophet (if there was one) had carried out his ministry. The emphasis on Jerusalem in the first 24 chapters led a number of scholars to argue that part or all of Ezekiel's ministry had taken place there. Other views, such as that of Torrey, who thought that the book of Ezekiel was pseudepigraphic, with the earliest parts written in the 3rd century BC, were more radical.

The shift to the third phase started around 1950. Howie, although arguing that the 'collection of Ezekiel's teachings' was made by others, contended for a solely Babylonian ministry for the prophet, drawing on historical, linguistic and archaeological data which corresponded with the book of Ezekiel. Fohrer recognised the problem the

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18 Zimmerli (Ezekiel 1, p4) notes how in the 1897 commentary of Bertholet, some parts of the book only arrived later in their present context, and how in 1900 Kraetzschmar thought he could find 'parallel recensions' on the basis of the shift between 1st and 3rd person found in Ezek. 1:1-4, and subsequently at different points throughout the book. Howie notes that the earliest shift from the traditional view is to be found in the late 18th century work, G.L. Oeder's Freye Untersuchung über einige Bücher des Alten Testaments. Oeder claims that chapters 40-48 are a 'spurious addition' to Ezekiel's prophecy. See C.G. Howie, The Date and Composition of Ezekiel, JBL Monograph Series 4, (Philadelphia, SBL, 1950), pp1-2.

19 Gustav Hölscher, Hesekiel, der Dichter und das Buch, BZAW 39, (Giessen, Töpelmann, 1924).

20 C.C. Torrey, 'Notes on Ezekiel', JBL 58 (1939), p78. The 'fact' that precipitated the destruction of the 'unity and harmony' was the editing of 'the original Palestinian prophecy...in such a way as to transfer it to Babylonia' (ibid.).


22 So for example Herntrich, who regarded most of chs. 1-39 as coming from Ezekiel's ministry in Jerusalem prior to 586. The rest of the book comes from a Babylonian redactor, who also reshaped the first 39 chapters so as to give an apparent Babylonian provenance for the prophet (Volkmar Herrnrich, Ezechielprobleme, BZAW 61, (Gießen, Töpelmann, 1932)). Bertholet, however, ascribed the dual focus of the book, on both Jerusalem and Babylon, to a dual ministry. Ezekiel was not deported in 597 but in 586 (Alfred Bertholet, Hesekiel mit einem Beitrag von Kurt Galling, HAT 13, (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1936)).

23 Charles C. Torrey, Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1930). For him, 'The original "Ezekiel(\ldots)"...was a pseuodigraph purporting to come from the reign of Manasseh, but in fact composed many centuries later. It was converted into a prophecy of the so-called "Babylonian Golah" by an editor as part of a literary movement starting in the middle of the third century B.C.' whose 'purpose' was 'the vindication of the religious tradition of Jerusalem.' (p102).

24 Howie, Date and Composition of Ezekiel. Examples include a) the term ἔλημος in Ezek. 4:1, which Howie regards as a 'sun-dried brick', and therefore Ezekiel's action reflects a practice common in the Neo-Babylonian empire, but unusual in Judah (p18); b) 'mud brick' walls, which were the only walls used in Mesopotamian house-building and through which it would have been possible to dig (Ezek. 12:5),
book presents by seeming to portray Ezekiel as a prophet to Jerusalem although he lives in Babylon. However, he examined rigorously the arguments used to defend a Palestinian sphere of ministry for the prophet, and a late date, and systematically refuted them. Rowley, after reviewing the recent scholarship of his day (1953-54), concluded, "The ministry of Ezekiel I would place wholly in Babylonia in the period immediately before and after the fall of Jerusalem." The transition to the third phase was given further, one might even say conclusive, impetus by the publication in 1955 of the first part of Zimmerli's major commentary on Ezekiel. His work was marked by comprehensive form-critical and traditio-historical analysis, and by a systematic attempt to trace the journey from the prophet himself, whose ministry he located exclusively in Babylon, to the final form of the text.

The first characteristic of the third phase could be described as the reinstatement of the prophet. For the last 50 years, it has been without doubt the majority opinion that the prophet Ezekiel was a real figure with a real ministry in Babylon during the early part of the exile, and that significant parts of the book of Ezekiel reflect accurately his words and his ministry.

There is a sense, though, in which the reinstatement of the prophet did not lead directly or necessarily to the reinstatement of the book of Ezekiel. This statement needs careful qualification, since it is not saying that the recognition of redactional additions or layers, as acknowledged in the four works mentioned above and in most subsequent research, necessarily militates against the reinstatement of the book. As we shall see below, many of the works focusing on the unity of the book do not deny redaction. Allen summarises my point succinctly,

"Zimmerli, while concerned with the whole book, was inclined to stand beside Ezekiel and then look beyond to the redactional sequel to which the book bears witness. This is a natural procedure, especially since the book urges us to look back at Ezekiel's prophesying. Yet its real invitation is to engage in a re-reading of the record from a later standpoint, and it is only as we endeavor to respond to that invitation that we honor the book." 28

unlike the stone walls common in pre-exilic Palestine, which would have immediately collapsed (p18). Howie also makes the important point that the prophet need not 'face his audience directly' if he is to be a prophet (p100). This then removes one of the main arguments in favour of a ministry in Jerusalem.

27 Though there have been, of course, some dissenting voices, particularly among German scholars such as Garscha (Jörg Garscha, Studien zum Ezechielbuch: eine redaktionskritische Untersuchung von 1-39, Europäische Hochschulschriften 23, (Frankfurt, Lang, 1974)) and Pohlmann (Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, Das Buch des Prophet Hesekiel (Ezechiel) Kapitel 1-19, ATD 22/1, (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); Das Buch des Prophet Hesekiel (Ezechiel) Kapitel 20-48, ATD 22/2, (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002)). For Garscha, only 17:1-10 and 23:2-25 are the authentic words of Ezekiel. For Pohlmann, the Babylonian setting that pervades the book does not derive from the oldest material. Only 134 verses in the first 19 chapters derive from the oldest layer.
Certainly some scholars have repudiated diachronic approaches to the book, without subscribing either to a pre-critical or to an ahistorical literary reading. The leading exponent has been Moshe Greenberg. He has mounted a sustained critique of some of the preconceptions and methods used to distinguish between what is authentically Ezekielian and secondary material, and in his two commentaries has demonstrated the value of a synchronic reading. However, it has not been essential to follow Greenberg unequivocally in order to focus on the book of Ezekiel from the perspective of recognising its essential unity. It is this perspective, recognising not just the essential accuracy of the book’s portrayal of the prophet’s words and Babylonian location, but also the essential (usually redactional) unity, that has marked almost all of the monographs published in English in the last thirty years. This has enabled Ezekielian studies to blossom in at least seven areas.

The first is that of the book of Ezekiel’s relationship to other parts of the Old Testament. Four examples focusing in this area are those of Carley, Hurvitz, Rooker and Levitt Kohn. Carley explores Ezekiel’s relationship to the pre-classical prophets, in particular, as well as to other major streams of Old Testament tradition. Hurvitz, Rooker and Levitt Kohn all examine the characteristics of the Hebrew of the book in order to compare it with other works, principally P, but also, in the case of Levitt Kohn, with D/Dtr. For all of these three, Ezekiel represents the transition from classical to late biblical Hebrew better than P, which they adjudge to be earlier.

The second is that of the book of Ezekiel as a literary or rhetorical work. Davis outlines in her words a new ‘mode of interpretation’ of the book, whereby the prophet, in a radical departure from what has preceded him, confronts his audience by means of text. Her purpose is to take account of parts of the book ‘which violate our preconceptions about prophetic speech’ while at the same time ‘taking seriously’ Ezekiel’s ‘own claim to stand in the line of Israel’s prophets. Renz argues that the

29 See in addition to Greenberg’s commentaries the trenchant article ‘What Are Valid Criteria For Determining Inauthentic Matter in Ezekiel?’ in EHB, pp123-35.
31 It should also be noted that the three major English commentaries published in the last 20 years similarly focus on the unity of the book: Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20; idem, Ezekiel 21-37; Allen, Ezekiel 1-19; idem, Ezekiel 20-48, WBC 29, (Dallas, Word, 1990); Block, Ezekiel 1-24; idem, The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25-48, NICOT, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1998).
32 These are not discrete, watertight areas, but they do help highlight different fields of study.
35 Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, p25.
book of Ezekiel ‘received its final shape to function in a specific way for the second generation of exiles.’

That is, the book is not so much an anthology as an argument. The work by Stevenson can also be placed here, although she deals with Ezek. 40-48 alone. Stevenson looks at these chapters through the lenses of human geography, regarding them as rhetoric concerning space, rather than an elaborate blueprint for building. The mass of details are in no sense irrelevant but are there ‘to give hope to a community in exile.’ The book generates hope ‘by creating a vision of a future restructured society, a society centered around the temple of YHWH’ with Yahweh as the only king, a vision evident from Yahweh’s territorial claim. Finally, mention should also be made of the examination of the sign-acts in the books of Ezekiel and Jeremiah by Friebel. Marshalling an extensive range of scholarly work into his discussion of each sign-act, he focuses on the ‘rhetorical strategies’ embodied in the performance of each act as recounted within both books.

The third area is that of the temple vision in Ezekiel 40-48. We have already observed the work of Stevenson here. To it should be added the work of Levenson and Tuell. Levenson explores in his monograph the different traditions underlying the temple vision, the nature of the messianic expectation, and the ‘social and political organization of the restored society’. Although he regards the vision as ‘informed by radically contradictory traditions’, at the same time, he comments that ‘to break up this vision into its components is to dissipate its power.’ Tuell describes these chapters as ‘the religious polity of the Judean Restoration’, for him, ‘ancient tradition, current practice, and the author’s own insight and innovation have been skillfully [sic] combined’ into ‘a final, purposive unity’ to give ‘a courageous confession in a “day of small things” (Zechariah 4:10) that YHWH is not far off, but near at hand.’

The fourth area focuses on Ezekiel’s use of emotive language found in the extended metaphors of chs. 16 and 23, and in particular at the portrayal of women.

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38 Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, p. 163.
44 Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration*, p. 162.
This is closely related to the second area, but the perspective with which the book of Ezekiel is read is generally hostile towards what are regarded as pornographic texts. The critique of the book of Ezekiel is aimed neither at its unity, nor its authenticity, since both Galambush and Kamionkowski treat the book holistically. Rather, it is aimed at the demeaning of women by Yahweh, as portrayed by Ezekiel.

The fifth area is that of ethics. Two representatives in this field are Matties and Mein.\(^{50}\) Matties focuses on Ezekiel 18, analysing it 'using the literary-historical tools of form criticism...and traditio-historical investigation'.\(^{51}\) He moves from this to explore three major problems that the chapter raises: '(1) the matter of responsibility in community, (2) the human moral agent and the function of law, and (3) the divine moral agent in relation to human responsibility, human community, and theodicy.'\(^{52}\) For Matties, Ezekiel 18 speaks of the 'liminal moment between Ezekiel's harsh announcements of judgment and his bold eschatological vision.'\(^{53}\) At this moment, it is 'an attempt to shape a moral community...it envisions the possibility for transformation and reconstitution. Its task is to nurture the formation of a peoplehood.'\(^{54}\) Mein argues that a study of biblical ethics needs to take account of social context. That Ezekiel's addressees are the Jerusalem élite explains the 'dual focus' on both Jerusalem and Babylon found in the book. Oracles proclaiming judgement on Jerusalem reflect the élite's concern for and past involvement in foreign policy and the cult, while oracles focusing on the disempowered exiles 'ritualize' ethics by extending the language associated with the temple and 'domesticate' sin, focusing particularly on the individual and the family. In reviewing this work, Boadt makes the striking observation that Mein's regarding the book as 'far more unified than most previous commentators would grant...allows him to identify the major topics of the oracles from a new vantage point...and frees him to show that the distinction between apparently inconsistent points of view'\(^{55}\) lies in the time and situation which Ezekiel is addressing. In other words, the reinstatement of the book has led directly to a blossoming of study and a new way of reading. These in turn have further fostered the book's reinstatement.

The sixth area is that of theology, or of theological themes. Four works that focus here particularly are those of Joyce, Duguid, Kutsko and Wong.\(^{56}\) Joyce explores the tension between divine sovereignty, expressed in God's declaration that he will give


\(^{51}\) Matties, Ezekiel 18, p2.

\(^{52}\) Matties, Ezekiel 18, pp5-6.

\(^{53}\) Matties, Ezekiel 18, p224.

\(^{54}\) Matties, Ezekiel 18, p219.


Israel a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 36:26; cf. 11:19), and human responsibility, expressed in the call for Israel get for themselves a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 18:31). His conclusion, after lucidly rebutting the notion that Ezekiel’s prime contribution is as the innovator of individual responsibility, is that the book exhibits ‘radical theocentricity’ such that ‘the responsibility of Israel has been subsumed in the overriding initiative of Yahweh.’

If Matties concludes by giving significant place to human responsibility, Joyce ends by accentuating divine sovereignty. Duguid explores the portrayal within the book of four different groups of leaders: kings and princes, priests and Levites, prophets, and lay leaders. He argues that ‘there is a coherent and connected attitude taken toward…leadership groups throughout the book: those singled out for the most reproach in Ezekiel’s critique of the past are marginalized in his plan for the future, while those who escape blame are assigned positions of honour.’

Kutsko explores the theme of divine presence and absence in the book of Ezekiel, working from the perspective of the book as an ‘integrated discourse’. In particular, he argues strongly for Ezekiel’s monotheism as an answer to the trauma of exile, a monotheism evident from a number of factors including use of rather than in stock phrases in order to avoid any suspicion of implying some kind of existence by using the common word for deity. More controversially, in view of the fact that it is nowhere explicit in the book of Ezekiel, he argues that Ezekiel shares the same belief as P that humans are created in the image of God. Kutsko explains Ezekiel’s silence by arguing that Ezekiel could not speak of this explicitly because of the danger found in the Mesopotamian context of regarding idols as images. Wong in his study on retribution in the book of Ezekiel finds three distinct principles at work concerning the relationship between an act and a consequence. The first is that the relationship between act and consequence is ‘determined by an external agent according to agreed norms.’ The second principle, ‘is that impurity requires its resolution. Basic to this principle is the idea that impurity should be confined or disposed. One way to do this is to remove the source of impurity.’ The third principle ‘is that the consequence is like the act by incorporating some features of the act.’ All three principles Wong sees as being adduced by Ezekiel ‘as a response to the question of theodicy.’

The seventh area is that of anthropology. Lapsley explores precisely the same tension that Paul Joyce does, between calls to repentance, on the one hand, and declarations that Yahweh will act unilaterally to bring about salvation (compare Ezek.

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Instead of focusing on issues of theology, she concentrates instead on what she sees as two conflicting views of human moral identity. On the one hand, there is what she terms 'virtuous moral selfhood', whereby 'people are assumed to be inherently capable of making moral decisions that accord with a vision of the good, which for Ezekiel is always coterminal with Yahweh's will (most often manifested by torah). This is evidenced by the language of repentance in several chapters (Ezek. 3; 14; 18; 33). On the other hand, there is what she terms 'neutral moral selfhood', whereby 'people are inherently incapable of acting in accord with the good'. This is apparent from the language of determinism, especially in chapters 16, 20, 23, 24. Within the book of Ezekiel, she discerns a shift in Ezekiel's conception of human moral identity, which cannot be reduced to a simple chronological shift within the book, and which has two aspects. First, there is a shift in origin of this identity, 'from being inherent in human beings to existing only as a potential gift from God.' Secondly, there is a shift in form, from a moral selfhood focused on action to a moral selfhood focused on knowledge.

In summary, the reinstatement both of Ezekiel the prophet and of Ezekiel the book has led to the blossoming of a diversity of approaches to the book, and many fruitful avenues of research. The study I am undertaking, exploring the relationship between Yahweh's word and Yahweh's spirit, falls chiefly within the sixth area above, that of theology or theological themes. At the same time, though, it will interact with works found in other areas (particularly the second area, that of rhetorical approaches, and the seventh, that of anthropological approaches), not least because one of the central tensions within the book, reflected in the call to the exiles to 'Get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!' (Ezek. 18:31) and in the promise by Yahweh, 'A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you', involves קֶרֶך at its centre. It is to this קֶרֶך that we now turn.

2. Study of קֶרֶך in the Old Testament

Within the Old Testament as a whole, there are three hundred and eighty-nine occurrences of קֶרֶך; eleven of these occur in the Aramaic sections of Daniel. The semantic range of the word is wide, as can be seen from the following four examples. It can serve as a meteorological term, speaking of the 'wind.' Thus in 1 Kgs. 18:45, the heavens are said to have grown black 'with cloud and wind (קֶרֶךְ).’ It can also serve as

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65 Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, p185.
66 Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, p185.
67 Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, p186.
an anthropological term, speaking of the 'breath of life' or the emotions or disposition in a person. Thus in Gen. 6:17, Yahweh declares that he will 'destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath (רוח) of life,' and in Jdg. 8:3, after Gideon has mollified the Ephraimites, the narrator reports that 'their anger (רעם) subsided.' רוח can also function as a theological term, referring to Yahweh's רוח. In Jdg. 3:10, 'the spirit of Yahweh (רוח יahuו) came upon Othniel and he judged Israel. Such a wide semantic domain is reflected in the variety of words used by the LXX to translate it, including πνεῦμα ('breath', 'wind', 'spirit', 277 times), ἄνεμος ('wind', 52 times), θυμός ('anger', 6 times) and πνοή ('breath', 4 times). 

a) A brief survey of scholarship

In view of the fact that רוח is essentially invisible, and generally refers to the unseen cause of a wide variety of effects, it is neither surprising that Neve comments, 'Probably nothing in the Old Testament so eludes comprehension as the spirit of God,' nor that the study of רוח in the Old Testament has given rise in the last 100 years to only a small number of monographs dedicated to the subject in English, French and German.

In English, there are the works by Neve and Hildebrandt, as well as the first part of the book by Montague which explores the development in the understanding of what became known as the 'Holy Spirit' prior to the New Testament.

Neve's approach is to isolate the 'spirit of God' texts from other texts where רוח occurs, and then to examine them within the categories of four different periods: 'Earliest', 'Elijah to the Exile', 'Exile and Early Restoration', and, finally, 'Post-Exilic'. This approach has the advantage that it acknowledges a development in the Old Testament understanding of רוח, but his self-consciously chosen approach to leave dating and provenance discussions out of a book which takes a diachronic perspective is one weakness.

Montague similarly follows a diachronic approach, though he traces development through postulated authors, sources or traditions. He starts with the Yahwist, and then acknowledges at the start of his second chapter that 'at this point it is difficult to decide


71 Neve, Spirit.


74 He comments in the preface, 'The texts have not been dated without serious consideration, however, but the debate over the chronology and provenance of each text seldom appears in the book' (Neve, Spirit of God, pv).
to which part of the Old Testament to turn next.\textsuperscript{75} He chooses the Deuteronomist, principally because he regards the references to the spirit within the `Deuteronomic History' as coming from `an early stratum'.\textsuperscript{76} His work therefore has similar strengths and weaknesses to that of Neve. Further, by treating the material so discretely, he evinces an unwillingness to allow one tradition to be interpreted by referring to another.\textsuperscript{77}

Hildebrandt is somewhat different. Although his opening chapter discusses the semantic range of מִרְECH, and explores both the origins of its use and chronological development, the bulk of the book comprises four chapters surveying the work of Yahweh's Spirit from a synchronic perspective, dealing with `The Spirit of God in Creation', `The Spirit and God's People', `The Spirit of God in Israel's Leadership', and `The Spirit of God and Prophecy'. The strength of such an approach is the willingness to explore interconnections, such as those between the pillar of cloud and fire and מִרְECH.\textsuperscript{78} This is further enhanced by his willingness not to restrict himself simply to occurrences of the word מִרְECH. However, although Hildebrandt is aware of a variety of scholarly literature, he does not interact with the French and German monographs mentioned here. Further, his work suffers from the lack of depth that a diachronic perspective would give. That is not to say that a diachronic approach is straightforward, for, as Dreytza notes, `late redaction can preserve earlier use or can have adapted to a newer usage',\textsuperscript{79} thus making it harder to date texts, but it is clear, for example, that some of the verbs predicated of מִרְECH in Judges (such as `rush' (clh) (Jdg. 14:6)) would not be predicated of מִרְECH in post-exilic works, so some account should be made of this.

In French, there is the substantial work by Lys.\textsuperscript{80} In addition, a series of articles on מִרְECH published in different journals by van Imschoot has sufficient depth and breadth to merit placement here.\textsuperscript{81} Lys analyses מִרְECH by categorising occurrences into three: `wind', `God' and `man'.\textsuperscript{82} Further categorisations are those of genre (e.g. poetry, wisdom) and of era (earliest texts, the major prophets, the historical texts deriving from around the

\textsuperscript{75} Montague, Holy Spirit, p17.
\textsuperscript{76} Montague, Holy Spirit, p17.
\textsuperscript{77} So, for example, in his discussion of Gen. 1:2 and the meaning of מִרְECH there, although mention is made of the verb רִשּׁ while it occurrence in Deut. 32:11, and of the noun תָּהוּ, and its occurrence in Deut. 32:10, there is nothing made of the significance of these occurrences, and, in particular of the fact that in the תורה, the only two places that these two words occur are in Gen. 1:2 and Deut. 32:10-11.
\textsuperscript{78} Hildebrandt, Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God, pp72-76.
\textsuperscript{79} `Späte Redaktion kann frühen Gebrauch konserviert oder an neueren Sprachgebrauch angepaßt haben', Manfred Dreytza, Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH im Alten Testament: Eine wort- und satzsemantische Studie, (Giessen, Brunnen, 1990), p76.
\textsuperscript{80} Lys, Risch.
\textsuperscript{82} `Vent'(V), `Dieu' (D), and `Homme' (H).
time of Josiah’s reforms, the exilic texts and post-exilic texts). Individual books, such as Ezekiel, may appear in more than one of these eras; thus Ezek. 1-39 is categorised as an exilic text, while Ezek. 40-48 is characterised as a post-exilic text. As perhaps might be evident from his title, Lys places strongest emphasis on the anthropological dimension.

With regard to van Imschoot, there is not space here to discuss each one of his articles. Instead, I want to note the main observations from his first article.⁸³ There he argues that before the exile the spirit of Yahweh can be represented in two different ways. The first, which he believes is older, is מַלֶּא acting intermittently in particular individuals. Such action is seen in sudden bursts of enthusiasm of different kinds, whether it be of courage or strength in war, or prophetic exaltation (e.g. Jdg. 3:10; Num. 24:2). The second use describes a permanent gift for a particular function or task that has already been determined (e.g. Isa. 11:2ff.). In both cases, the visible effects produced by the spirit of Yahweh are comparable to the effects produced by a wind, or, rather, Yahweh’s breath.

In German, there are the works by Volz,⁸⁴ Koch,⁸⁵ and Dreytza.⁸⁶ Volz discerns five stages within the development of the concept of מַלֶּא as the spirit of Yahweh. Strikingly, he sees the earliest stage as ‘Ruh als Dämon’. He notes the hitpael of נָפַל describes Saul’s behaviour induced by an evil spirit in 1 Sam. 18:10 as well as the behaviour of prophets in 1 Sam. 10:6 and Num. 11:25, and comments, ‘Moreover it turns out that the link between Ruh and Yahweh is not so close or original as it now appears in the literature of the Old Testament and as it is usually portrayed.’⁸⁷ Such a perspective he sees as reinforced both by references to the ‘spirit of’ something within the Old Testament as if it were some kind of external power, and by the comparative study of religions. It was only in later Judaism that the independence of מַלֶּא re-emerged.

Koch’s work focuses on the messianic dimension of מַלֶּא, by which he also means the eschatological or end-times (endzeitlich) dimension. In his second monograph, he observes that many of the studies of מַלֶּא in the Old Testament have missed this dimension, which he regards not just as the pinnacle of the portrayal of מַלֶּא in the Old Testament, but also the pinnacle of Old Testament theology.⁸⁸ This messianic perspective provides the focus and the order for his investigation. For him, there is a

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⁸³ van Imschoot, ‘L’action de l’esprit de Jahve’, pp553-87. Albertz / Westermann identify this article as the first clear characterisation of the spirit of God in the early period of Israel’s history (מַלֶּא, TLOT 3, p1213).
⁸⁵ Robert Koch, Geist und Messias, (Freiburg, Herder, 1950); idem, Der Geist Gottes.
⁸⁶ Dreytza, Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH.
⁸⁸ See Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p12.
development from נָרָא as wind in the natural world to נָרָא as breath of life, and finally, to נָרָא as something that can only be spoken about in religious categories. The action of the ‘spirit of Yahweh’ on people mirrors that of the wind or life-breath – ‘as the life-giving one, the dynamic one’, but remains closely linked to Yahweh. There is no real independence of the spirit of Yahweh in the Old Testament despite occasional poetic personifications (e.g. 2 Sam. 23:2; Hag. 2:5). Instead, ‘the crucial characteristic of the term “spirit of God” is the closest of connections to God’s person. The Old Testament does not know yet of any personal divine Spirit, but rather a personal power of God with many and different effects.’

Dreytza’s work is an examination of the use of the word נָרָא, and in particular its syntagmatic relations. The thoroughness of his dealing both with ancient near-eastern material and with secondary literature makes this work indispensable for these two areas. His focus is on the theological use of נָרָא, though he does devote a chapter to meteorological use. It is slightly surprising that there is no chapter on the anthropological use of נָרָא. The study’s strength is its categorisation of נָרָא and its collocations. Less space is therefore devoted to discussion of theological issues.

Alongside these monographs are general articles on נר in journals, dictionaries, Old Testament theologies, and other books. Rather than summarise them here, I shall

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89 Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p31.
90 ‘als das Belebende, das Dynamische’ (Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p31).
91 ‘Das entscheidende Merkmal des Gottesgeist-Begriffes liegt im absoluten Anschluß an die Personalität Gottes. Das Alte Testament kennt noch keinen persönlichen göttlichen Geist, wohl aber eine personhafte Gottesmacht mit vielen und verschiedenen Wirkungen.’ Koch, Der Geist Gottes, pp137-38 (his emphasis).
be interacting with many of them at different points in the study, though it is appropriate
to highlight the concise and measured article by Albertz and Westermann. 96

There are also a number of articles, chapters or monographs on רווח in the Old
Testament with a more specific focus. Some examine רווח with particular reference to a
time-period97 or a particular corpus such as the Heptateuch98 or the historiographic
writings.99 However, perhaps not unexpectedly, it is in the discussions about the
prophets that רווח has particular prominence.

Most significant in this regard is the book by Wonsuk Ma on the spirit of God in
the book of Isaiah.100 Although he recognises that there is a degree of potential
oversimplification to his approach, in that further redactional layers may be obscured,
he splits his work into four chapters reflecting his ‘four-stage reading’ of Isaiah to
preserve clarity. His first stage is the ‘Pre-exilic Isaianic Spirit Tradition’; his second is
‘Exilic Isaianic Spirit Traditions’; his third is ‘Postexilic Isaianic Spirit Tradition’;
finally, he ‘takes a more holistic approach by reading the passages [already discussed]
in the literary and theological context of the entire book.’101 He categorises spirit
of God’s Person or Sign of God’s Presence’, and, finally, ‘The Spirit Practically a
Substitute for God’, and explores how each one is portrayed within each stage. The
great strengths of the book are his painstaking examination of the individual texts, his
relating the conclusions from close exegesis to the ongoing development in the
conception of רווח, and his attempt to integrate both a diachronic and a more holistic
reading.

Discussions about the relationship between רווח and prophecy are also found in a
number of books exploring Old Testament prophecy, in particular the works by
Wilson,102 who explores the spirit’s role in mediation in the light of contemporary
sociological and anthropological research, Heschel,103 who argues that the dimension of
רווח as expressing pathos or emotion is often omitted, and the wide-ranging Lindblom.104
In addition, there are also a number of articles that explore the relationship between רוח and the prophetic word.\textsuperscript{105}

Finally, in this survey, we should note particular works on רוח in the book of Ezekiel. There has been no work comparable to Ma's, but there are three journal articles that focus on רוח in Ezekiel,\textsuperscript{106} and two books which give particular attention to the subject beyond the ones already mentioned.\textsuperscript{107} These will of course be discussion partners throughout this study.\textsuperscript{108}

\subsection*{b) Some issues}

Out of this literature there are three issues that merit further comment. These are the development of רוח language in the Old Testament, insights from lexical semantics about רוח, and the relationship between רוח and the prophetic word. The first merits further comment because it illustrates some of the difficulties in accounting for the wide semantic range of רוח; the second, because it highlights some of the issues that this study faces in exploring the use of רוח in Ezekiel, and explains why I shall often leave רוח untranslated; the third because it identifies an issue that lies right at the heart of this study.

With regard to the development of רוח language in the Old Testament, the particular issue is not so much the etymology of רוח,\textsuperscript{109} nor indeed its relation to the counterparts of רוח in north-west Semitic languages,\textsuperscript{110} but whether there is one meaning that can explain all the others found in the Old Testament, given the great diversity. There seem to be five main views on this question, though some are very closely related. The first is that of רוח as `wind'.\textsuperscript{111} The second is that of רוח as `breath'

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item For a fairly comprehensive bibliography of works until 1990, see רוח, \textit{ThWAT} 7, pp386-88.
\item For which see Lys, \textit{Rúach}, pp19ff.; Dreytza, \textit{Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH}, pp37f.; Schüngel-Straumann, \textit{Rúah}, pp9-12. Silva helpfully summarises the different kinds of etymological approaches: a) ‘identifying the component parts of a word’; b) finding ‘the earliest attested meaning’; c) looking at ‘prehistorical stages: what meaning (or form, or both) did a particular word have prior to its earliest attestation?'; d) ‘reconstruction of the form and meaning of a word in the parent language by a careful examination of the cognate languages.’ See Moises Silva, \textit{Biblical Words & Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics}, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1983), pp39-40 (his emphasis).
\item For which see Dreytza, \textit{Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH}, pp16-32.
\item So e.g. Koch, \textit{Der Geist Gottes}, p14.
\end{thebibliography}
or 'wind' without distinguishing them.\textsuperscript{112} Certainly early texts (e. g. Exod. 15:8) do speak of the wind as the breath of Yahweh's nostrils. This could either be defined as 'air in motion'\textsuperscript{113} or as 'the power encountered in the breath and the wind.'\textsuperscript{114} The latter is preferable because the former potentially assumes the conceptualising of a substance, instead of focusing on the effects.\textsuperscript{115} The third is רוח as a demon.\textsuperscript{116} The fourth is רוח as 'space' (espace) (cf. Jer. 22:14).\textsuperscript{117} The fifth is that there are diverse spirit traditions reflected in the Old Testament which defy a common origin.\textsuperscript{118} For Ma, who proposes this last view, the action of the spirit of God on leaders and prophets, on the one hand, is not easily explained in terms of developments from a life-giving wind. On the other hand, there are instances such as 1 Kgs. 22:19-23 where רוח 'maintains the Mesopotamian demonic tradition.'\textsuperscript{119} It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the arguments in depth, but tentatively I would align myself, along with majority opinion, with the second position, that of 'the power encountered in the breath and the wind', while acknowledging at the same time that some of the development may well have happened outside Israel, yet be reflected in, for example, the 'personal' spirit seen in 1 Kgs. 22.

The second issue that merits further discussion is that of רוח and insights from lexical semantics. Four insights derived from lexical semantics need to be borne in mind as we come to look at רוח in the book of Ezekiel, and face, in some cases, difficulties over the meaning or the best translation of a 'polysemantic lexeme' like רוח in a particular context.\textsuperscript{120}

First, there is the possibility of deliberate ambiguity. For rhetorical purposes, the writer of the book of Ezekiel might have kept the precise meaning or nuance of רוח vague, in order to keep the readers (or hearers) thinking, anticipating further instances which might clarify their understanding or force them to conceive fresh realities.

\textsuperscript{112} van Imschoot, \textit{Old Testament Theology}, vol. 1, pp172-73, though he cautiously favours 'breath' as 'primary'. Eichrodt (\textit{Theology of the Old Testament}, vol. 2, p46) similarly makes no distinction, 'Ruah has retained at all times...the meaning "wind", denoting the movement of air both outside Man in Nature, and inside him, his own breath.' It should be noted in passing that Eichrodt seems here to be guilty of what Cotterell terms 'the myth of point meaning', which asserts that behind every usage lies a 'central', 'fundamental', or 'basic' meaning. See Peter Cotterell, 'Linguistics, Meaning, Semantics and Discourse Analysis', \textit{NIDOTTE I}, p148.

\textsuperscript{113} 'an initial awareness of air in motion, particularly "wind"', Johnson, \textit{Vitality}, p3.

\textsuperscript{114} רוח', \textit{TLOT 3}, p1203. A careless reading of Lys might suggest he focuses erroneously on רוח as 'air': 'le sens fondamental est celui de l'air en mouvement dans l'espace' (Lys, \textit{Ruach}, p23). Lys however makes it clear that movement is everything, 'Râûh n'est rien sinon mouvement; en sorte qu'à proprement parler il n'y a pas d'être du Râûh' (p336, his emphasis).

\textsuperscript{115} Schoemaker comments, 'the conception of wind as air in motion is, of course, entirely absent from the thought of the early Hebrews' (Schoemaker, 'Use of רוח', p14). See also רוח', \textit{TLOT 3}, p1203.

\textsuperscript{116} Volz, \textit{Der Geist Gottes}, pp3-6.

\textsuperscript{117} Cazelles, 'Prélégomenes à une étude de l'esprit dans la Bible', pp75-90.

\textsuperscript{118} Ma, \textit{Until the Spirit Comes}, pp26-28.

\textsuperscript{119} Ma, \textit{Until the Spirit Comes}, pp27.

\textsuperscript{120} For a helpful discussion of the 'phenomenon of polysemy' and the 'practical problem of decoding' with reference to רוח and other polysemantic Hebrew words, see Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, 'On the Decoding of Polysemantic Lexemes in Biblical Hebrew', \textit{ZAH 7} (1994), pp17-25.
Secondly, there is the possibility of unintended ambiguity. What communication theory calls ‘noise’ can arise both from ‘interference in the process of communication’ (e.g. textual variation), and from the fact of two differing contexts.\(^{121}\) The writer is so engrossed in a particular train of thought that the potential ambiguity is overlooked. The readers (or hearers), not having access to the speaker’s thought processes, are unable to distinguish between two or more possible meanings. An amusing example of such ambiguity can be seen in the phrase apocryphally seen on a reference, ‘If you can get him to work for you, you would be very lucky.’ In practice, as in this example, it may not always be possible to distinguish between deliberate and unintended ambiguity.

Thirdly, there is the degree of choice that the writer had available when using הדר. It was Saussure who noted the interdependence of language, and that, as Thiselton puts it, ‘words or other linguistic signs have no “force,” validity, or meaning, independently of the relations of equivalence and contrast which hold between them.’\(^{122}\) Saussure, summarised in Thiselton, used the analogy of chess, noting the changing value of chess pieces depending on where they were on the board, and how they were positioned relative to the other pieces. In order to try to work out the particular nuance of a word, it is important to ask what degree of choice the writer had; to continue Saussure’s analogy, we need to ask what other chess pieces were available to the writer at that moment. In other words, if a word is to have a particular nuance, the question needs to be asked whether there were any appropriate synonyms that could have been used. If there were no synonyms available, then the word chosen was no longer a matter of style; any particular nuance of that word is to some degree neutralised.\(^{123}\) With regard to הדר, at some points in the Old Testament it is clearly synonymous with הקצל (e.g. Gen. 6:3; 7:22 (cf. 2:7); Isa. 42:5; 57:16), while at other points it is synonymous with אָצַל (e.g. Ezek. 20:32; cf. Jer. 51:50). The presence of these alternatives suggests that style may be the reason for the usage of הדר, rather than its synonym, at points where הדר has a referent similar to that of הקצל or אָצַל, but issues of semantic development over time need to be taken into account.

Fourthly, there is the distinction between acceptations (dictionary definitions) and translation equivalents. Since no two languages are isomorphic, it is most unlikely that the semantic domain of a word in one language maps perfectly onto a word in another. Silva gives the example of the English words eat and drink, and the Spanish words comen and tomar.\(^{124}\) There is not a straightforward mapping. The English speak of to eat soup (or ice cream), while the Spanish will not tolerate comen, but use tomar la sopa

\(^{121}\) For both these points, see Silva, Biblical Words, p152.
\(^{123}\) See Silva, Biblical Words, p165. ‘Neutralise’ is used as a technical term in phonology and is borrowed by Silva here.
\(^{124}\) Silva, Biblical Words, pp142-43.
(or el helado).\textsuperscript{125} He suggests that the English terms refer to the manner the food is taken to the mouth,\textsuperscript{126} while the Spanish terms refer to the consistency of the 'food' – is chewing required? Just because tomar is, in certain contexts, an appropriate translation equivalent for eat, this does not mean that eat has two distinct acceptations (dictionary definitions). In other words, because X and Y are two translation equivalents for A (in certain collocations), that does not mean that A has two acceptations, or X and Y are two different meanings of A. It is not correct to invest A with the meanings of X and Y. With regard to רוח, it \textit{may be preferable to translate} רוח as 'spirit' in some contexts, 'breath' in others, and 'wind' in others; \textit{but that does not mean, necessarily, that these were three different acceptations of רוח.} What may be properly translated 'spirit' in English may not have been in the author of Ezekiel’s mind at all. It may, for example, be difficult for us to envisage the 'breath of God' transporting Ezekiel (e.g. 8:3). We may, therefore, prefer the translation 'spirit' as the (English) idiomatic way of speaking of Yahweh’s action (in the same way as the Spanish idiom is of tomar la sopa (or el helado)) – but it is a mistake to think, necessarily, that Ezekiel had anything else in mind other than a metaphorical usage of רוח (similar to 'the hand of Yahweh').

In short, speaking of Yahweh’s 'spirit' can, unless care is taken, invite a dogmatic reading, aspects of which might be incongruous in Ezekiel. This point is strongly endorsed by one of the five conclusions that Sawyer drew, based on his study of Hebrew words for salvation, namely that 'semantic analysis must be monolingual.'\textsuperscript{127} He comments that

\begin{quote}
'one of the chief obstacles to good semantic theory in much OT scholarship has been the persistent practice of overestimating the importance of English equivalents: dabar means both 'word' and 'thing'; יָשָׁע means 'victory' as well as 'salvation'. Only at the very end of the study of the meaning of a given item is it appropriate to suggest English equivalents: only after the semantic description is complete are we ready to contemplate translation.'\textsuperscript{128}
\end{quote}

By way of conclusion to the discussion about רוח and lexical semantics, at the start of our study, I posited three domains of meaning of רוח (meteorological, anthropological and theological) which shall serve to provide a basis for categorisation.\textsuperscript{129} Such an approach is preferable, in a study examining the theological use of רוח, to the division of רוח into 'wind,' 'spirit' and 'breath,\textsuperscript{130} since 'breath,' when spoken of Yahweh, is

\textsuperscript{125} Though he notes these observations will not apply to all Spanish speakers. Silva, \textit{Biblical Words}, p143.
\textsuperscript{126} English speaks of 'drinking' soup from a mug.
\textsuperscript{128} Sawyer, \textit{Semantics}, p116.
\textsuperscript{129} So, for example, Lys (Rüech, pp25-26), who categorises the occurrences as vent, dieu and homme, derived from three domains (le créateur, la création, la créature), and Neve, \textit{Spirit of God}, pp3-4, who speaks of the 'trifurcation' meaning of רוח. Both are careful not to divide occurrences into 'wind', 'breath', and 'spirit'.
\textsuperscript{130} BDB, pp924-926.
clearly theological, if anthropomorphic, language, while ‘breath’ spoken of in a person is clearly anthropological. However it needs to be remembered that the boundaries, even between these categories mentioned above, may be much more fluid than our English translations make them, and the range of meanings within each category is very great.131

The third issue is the narrower question of the relationship between רוח and the prophetic word. This takes us closer to the heart of this study.

We have already observed above how prominent both Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s spirit are in the book of Ezekiel. Given the prominence of both Yahweh’s ‘word’ and Yahweh’s ‘spirit’ within the book, it might be expected, though it ought not be assumed a priori, that there is a relationship between them. Certainly later theology placed all the activity of the prophet wholly under the influence of the divine Spirit, whether in the Old Testament (Neh. 9:30), in the New Testament (2 Peter 1:20-21), or in church history. Aquinas writes,

‘in prophetic revelation, the mind of the prophet is moved by the Holy Spirit, just like an instrument deficient in view of its principal agent. Moreover, the mind of the prophet is not only moved towards something to be laid hold of, but also towards something to be said, or towards something to be done; and sometimes indeed to all three at the same time; sometimes, however, to two of these; sometimes, in fact, to one only.’132

The matter, however, is not straightforward. Amongst scholars, there is divergent opinion on the nature of the relationship, and the reasons for that relationship (if there is one). Kaufmann has commented, particularly with reference to word, spirit and prophecy, that ‘there is no biblical doctrine of the relationship between the word and the spirit.’133 Ma, on the other hand, asserts that ‘the prophetic inspiration of the spirit of God throughout the Old Testament is for the preaching of Yahweh’s word’134 and that, after a relative absence of such prophetic inspiration in the pre-exilic classical prophets, ‘it is only after the fall of Jerusalem that the idea receives a revived emphasis as seen in Ezekiel.’135 The relationship between word and spirit in general, and between spirit and prophetic word, in particular, need re-examination.

C. WHAT IS THE THESIS?

Having looked at the study of the book of Ezekiel, and the study of רוח, I am now in a position to articulate clearly what I shall be arguing in this thesis. It can be summarised

131 See especially the detailed differentiation in ‘רוח’, TLOT 3, pp1202-20.
132 Summa Theologiae II, q.173, a.4. ‘...in revelatione prophetica movetur mens prophetae a Spiritu Sancto, sicut instrumentum deficiens respectu principalis agentis. Movetur autem mens prophetae non solum ad aliquid apprehendendum, sed etiam ad aliquid loquendum, vel ad aliquid faciendum; et quandoque quidem ad omnia tria simul; quandoque autem ad duo horum; quandoque vero ad unum tantum.’
134 Ma, Until the Spirit Comes, p121.
135 Ma, Until the Spirit Comes, p135; so too רוח, ThVA 7, p394.
in straightforward fashion: The relationship between Yahweh's rūāh and Yahweh's word in the book of Ezekiel is to be understood not so much in terms of the inspiration and authentication of the prophet but in terms of the transformation of the book's addressees.

By speaking of the 'book of Ezekiel', I mean to make it clear, as I said above, that I am working from the standpoint of regarding the book as an intentional unity. While this is a methodological perspective, and one that has proved fruitful in recent research, it is neither an uncritically held nor an ahistorical literary one.

By speaking of 'the relationship between Yahweh's rūāh and Yahweh's word', I mean to indicate that I am approaching the thesis from both an historical and a theological perspective. The historical perspective means that I shall be interacting closely with the discussions introduced above, with regard to the place of what has sometimes been termed 'the prophetic spirit' within the variegated phenomenon of Old Testament prophecy. In particular, it will mean trying to account for the prominence of rūāh, when it is so noticeably absent from Jeremiah and Leviticus. The theological perspective means that I am concerned to make sense of the different possible dimensions of the relationship between rūāh and word. I am not simply interested in the 'prophetic spirit' but in relating Yahweh's rūāh, wherever it may be found, to Yahweh's word, wherever it may be found.

By speaking of 'its addressees', I intend to make clear that I regard the book not simply as a collection of the words of a prophet, the structure of which is dependent on loose thematic connections. Rather, it is a book written with a purpose, to a set of addressees. In addition, by speaking of 'addressees', I am indicating the book as a whole can be understood as a 'speech event'.

Naturally I will be arguing for the above three points, but none is in itself the thesis. The thesis itself contains both a negative and a positive statement. The negative statement is that 'the relationship between Yahweh's rūāh and Yahweh's word in the book of Ezekiel is to be understood not so much in terms of the inspiration and authentication of the prophet'. In other words, I shall be arguing that perhaps the dominant paradigm for explaining the emphasis on Yahweh's rūāh and its relation to Yahweh's word within the book of Ezekiel is inadequate. According to this paradigm, the prophet Ezekiel is recovering an emphasis on rūāh in prophecy from the pre-classical prophets, or even pioneering an emphasis that has been conspicuously absent from the classical, writing prophets. Such an emphasis on rūāh in Ezekiel is usually understood, on this reading, in terms of the self-authentication of the ministry of the prophet.

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136 'A speech event is an activity in which participants interact via language in some conventional way to arrive at some outcome.' George Yule, Pragmatics, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), p57.
The positive statement is that ‘the relationship between Yahweh’s rūah and Yahweh’s word in the book of Ezekiel is to be understood...in terms of the transformation of its addressees.’ In other words, the emphasis on Yahweh’s rūah, even the ‘prophetic spirit’, is best understood within the overall function of the book, which is concerned for the transformation of the addressees. In particular, I shall be arguing that the prophet Ezekiel’s experience of Yahweh’s rūah and his own obedience to Yahweh’s call are clearly contrasted with the disobedience of the prophet’s addressees in order to present Ezekiel as a model for the addressees of the book. His experience will illuminate for them not just that, but also how the dramatic vision of the future can become a reality in their experience. This will provide a different perspective on the conundrum of the presence of calls to repentance within the book being found alongside Yahweh’s apparently unilateral actions to bring about the salvation of the exiles. Yahweh’s rūah has a fundamental role in the envisaged obedient response to Yahweh’s word.

The study will therefore proceed in three main parts. In the rest of Part I, I shall look in detail at where Yahweh’s word can be found within the book of Ezekiel, and at how it should be conceived. I shall also look, more briefly given the fact that some occurrences will be treated in greater depth in Part II and Part III, at the different occurrences of rūah within the book, with a view to categorising them and identifying those instances where interpreters disagree.

In Part II, I shall examine what is probably the dominant paradigm for interpreting the relationship between word and spirit in the book of Ezekiel - that of the inspiration and authentication of the prophet. Since such a paradigm is typically associated with a particular perspective on the relationship between word and spirit through Israel’s history, the chapter will explore the relationship between word, spirit and the inspiration of the prophet, in terms of possible historical developments. I shall argue that the book of Ezekiel, in its emphasis on rūah, is less concerned with authenticating the prophet than is often supposed.

In Part III, I shall propose a different conceptual framework for the link between Yahweh’s word and spirit within the book. In particular I shall maintain that the prophet portrayed in the book has, in addition to the customary proclamatory role, a paradigmatic one to the readers of the book. Through examining the role of Yahweh’s rūah in the programmatic 36:26-27, 37:1-14 and 39:21-29, I shall argue that the prophet himself is a paradigm of the transformation necessary for the addressees of the book. The book of Ezekiel, and the emphasis on Yahweh’s rūah within the book, is more concerned with the transformation of the people in obedience to the word of Yahweh. Yahweh brings about the transformation of his people through the cooperation of word and rūah.
I shall finish by reviewing the main arguments and conclusions of the thesis, and by considering the contribution that this study makes both to the study of Ezekiel and to the study of *rūḥ* in the Old Testament.

Now, our attention must turn to Yahweh's word and Yahweh's spirit in the book of Ezekiel, as I examine them in their own right.
CHAPTER 2: EXPLORING WORD AND SPIRIT IN EZEKIEL

In the introduction to this study, I looked to do four things: to introduce the subject of the study, to survey the current scene of Ezekiel scholarship, to survey the scene of scholarship on נַדְר, and, finally, to outline my thesis.

In this chapter, there are two foci for my study. First, I shall examine the different possible communication situations in which the word of Yahweh can be discerned, exploring in the process some issues surrounding the different possible relationships to that word that different groups may have. If we are to see how Yahweh's נַדְר is related to Yahweh's word, we need to see where that word is found. Of necessity, we will look at the dating and provenance of the book of Ezekiel, since Part II explores the contribution of the book of Ezekiel within the framework of historical development. Secondly, I shall look at the different instances of נַדְר in the book of Ezekiel chiefly through the lenses of four writers, to provide a necessary orientation to the debate that will follow in the subsequent chapters, and to discuss in more detail those occurrences which will not be prominent in the rest of the thesis.

With regard to the first, I shall argue that it is possible to discern four distinct communication situations, in each of which Yahweh can be said to be the speaker. I shall argue that the final communication situation envisaged is that of the book of Ezekiel to its addressees in exile in Babylon. Further, I shall also seek to demonstrate that insights from speech act theory can help illuminate some of the different possible relationships to the (same) word of Yahweh that different groups might have.

With regard to the second, it will become obvious that, while there is substantial agreement on the meaning of נַדְר in some places in the book of Ezekiel, in others there is significant disagreement. Some of these disagreements will be seen to have substantial impact on the interpretation of the book as a whole. Further, the distinction between theological, anthropological and meteorological senses of נַדְר will be shown to be not always as easy to maintain as some studies might suggest. Works that look only at the theological use of נַדְר can miss some of the force and interplay of the other instances.

A. YAHWEH'S WORD IN EZEKIEL

Although it is possible to take Yahweh's word in the sense of the message of the book of Ezekiel, a summary of the argument or theology,¹ our task is to focus more closely on where Yahweh's word in the sense of a 'speech event' with Yahweh as the speaker is to be found, and precisely how it should be conceived. Thus I am using the 'word' of Yahweh in a narrower sense than 'message', but I am also using it in a broader sense,

for my focus is not limited to prophetic discourse, but embraces every communication situation in which a speech event with Yahweh as the speaker may be found. There are four communications, four possible ‘speech events’, which require our attention:

1. Yahweh addressing Ezekiel
2. Ezekiel addressing his audience
3. Yahweh’s ordinances and statutes
4. The book of Ezekiel itself

For each of these possible speech events, I shall look at how these different communications can be understood as speech events, and to what extent Yahweh can be understood as the speaker. After exploring each one of these four, I shall turn my attention to the question of the recipients of these speech events, in order to illuminate further our understanding of each event as a whole. It is only when we have explored the different communications, the different speech events in which Yahweh can be said to be the agent that we will be in a position to see how Yahweh’s הָנִּיטה relates to each of those events.

1. Yahweh addressing Ezekiel

As I noted above, the book is dominated by Yahweh’s dealings with the prophet, both in the giving of visions, and in the giving of his word. Central to an understanding both of what it means for Yahweh to address Ezekiel, and of the significance of that address, is the word-event formula, ‘the word of Yahweh came to me, saying...’ (and variations on this), which dominates the book’s articulation of the coming of Yahweh’s word to the prophet. After assessing this formula, I shall look at how the visions Ezekiel receives relate to Yahweh’s word, in order to develop a coherent picture of what it means for Yahweh to address Ezekiel.

a) The word-event formula

In this section, after a brief outline of the occurrences of the formula in the book, I shall focus the discussion around two questions: first, the question of what it means to speak of ‘the word of Yahweh’ (והָנִי הָנִיטא) as found in the formula, and, secondly, the question of what is the significance of the formula itself. Under this second question we shall...
look at the distribution of the formula within prophetic literature, the question of in what way this formula speaks of an 'event', the related question of whether the 'word' is to be regarded as an hypostasis, and, finally, we shall look at issues around the reception, audibility and form of the word.

The word-event formula occurs fifty times within the book, all of which occur in chapters 1-39. It almost always introduces 'a new speech section'. Apart from 1:3, where it is a redactional description of what happened to Ezekiel in the 3rd person, it always describes in the 1st person the reception of the word of Yahweh by the prophet, and it precedes direct discourse by Yahweh. In what we might call its 'purest form' (כנימי יִתְנַה לָ֣בָר לְוַיָּהֵ֣ו), the same phrase occurs thirty-nine times. There are another ten instances, with some variation. Some of these include a date (in particular those which introduce the oracles against the foreign nations); another instance includes a time (12:8, 'in the morning'); on one occasion, 24:20, the phrase is set in a narrative context, with Ezekiel explaining his behaviour to the exiles after his wife has died.

Central to the word-event formula is 'the word of Yahweh' (ברבר יִתְנַה). The phrase occurs around two hundred and twenty-five times in the Old Testament, and has been characterised as 'a technical term for the prophetic word of revelation. Internal evidence within the book of Ezekiel for understanding the phrase as a technical term can be derived from the lack of variation in wording. The robustness of the formulaic saying as a whole, and in particular the phrase 'word of Yahweh,' to variation is apparent from the fact that two other major formulae, the 'citation' formula (וָֹדָה לָ֣בָר יִתְנַה - 'Thus Yahweh declares') and the 'signatory' formula (וַיָּהֵֽו לָ֣בָר יִתְנַה - 'the declaration of Yahweh'), both have a distinctive wording in the book of Ezekiel, with 'the Lord Yahweh' usually replacing 'Yahweh.' On no occasion, however, in the book of Ezekiel (or in the Old Testament as a whole), does the word-event formula have the double designation of the divine name, 'the word of the Lord Yahweh came to me...saying...'. The same effect is also observable in Jeremiah. The phrase 'Yahweh of Hosts' (יִתְנַה דָּבְרָהּ) occurs more than seventy times, but never in connection with Yahweh's word, yielding 'the word of Yahweh of Hosts' (ברבר יִתְנַה דָּבְרָהּ). On the other hand, the phrase 'the word of Yahweh' (ברבר יִתְנַה) occurs more than sixty times in Jeremiah, but it remains untouched by the distinctive Jeremianic divine appellation.

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3 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p144.
4 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 17; other dated instances of Yahweh's word coming are 1:3; 3:16; 20:1-2; 24:1; 33:21-23.
5 O. Grether, Name und Wort Gottes im AT (1934), pp66, 76, cited by Schmidt in J. Bergman, H. Lutzmann, and W. H. Schmidt, "דָּבְרָה יִתְנַה, דָּבְרָה יִתְנַה, דָּבְרָה", TDOT 3, p111 (my emphasis); cf. Preuss's description of it as a 'terminus technicus' for the prophetic communication either from Yahweh to a prophet or from a prophet to the prophet's audience (Old Testament Theology, vol. 2, p73).
6 Cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, pp556-62 (Appendix 1). He comments that the distinction between Jeremiah and Ezekiel 'shows that the two books in their present form come from quite different tradition circles and, in spite of all the points of contact, are not to be attributed overhastily to related editing' (p558).
7 There are only three instances of the phrase 'the word of the Lord Yahweh' (ברבר יִתְנַה, דָּבְרָה יִתְנַה, דָּבְרָה), all in Ezekiel (6:3; 25:3; 36:4). They all occur in the phrase 'hear the word of the Lord Yahweh'.
Two cautions, though, need to be levelled against the characterisation above. First, in view of the limited occurrence of the word-event formula (and the phrase רַעֲבֵי יְהֹוָה) in many prophetic books (see further below), an understanding of רַעֲבֵי יְהֹוָה as a technical term should clearly be carefully circumscribed. It is a characteristic mark only of some prophets in some prophetic books. Further, the phrase ‘word of X’ is not exclusive to prophets or prophetic books, but is a commonplace of the word of a king (e.g. 2 Kgs. 18:28, “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria!”), or indeed of a person with authority in the Old Testament (e.g. 1 Sam 4:1, ‘And the word of Samuel came to all Israel’). Meier notes how ‘other cultures elsewhere in the ancient Near East also employed the same figure of speech to describe the dictates of gods and kings.’ Its usage as a technical term is illuminated by its use in more ordinary contexts, where it ‘connoted an authoritative communication’.

Secondly, attention needs to be paid so that the ‘word of Yahweh’ is not associated more with ‘revelation’ as a theological category than with divine speech. Thiselton points out that the concept of revelation ‘directs attention to propositional content, but so pervasively as to leave no room for questions about propositional force.’ In the book of Ezekiel, the focus is very much on ‘propositional force.’ The word is Yahweh’s speech addressed to the prophet, or, in the case of the call-to-attention formula, ‘hear the word of Yahweh’, it is the prophet addressing his audience. The word of Yahweh is Yahweh’s particular word to a particular situation, as is emphasised by the dates given throughout the book, a word of address which cannot be reduced to the concept of revelation. In the book of Ezekiel, it makes clear that what follows is nothing other than what Yahweh says.

If we turn our attention now to the word-event formula, and to its distribution, it is apparent that, as with many of the formulaic statements and phrases, it is not unique to the book of Ezekiel. If the significant elements are identified as the phrase רַעֲבֵי יְהֹוָה, the verb רָאָה, and the marker of direct discourse, רָאָה לָהּ, a number of significant parallels and distinctions with other Old Testament books can be observed.

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8 Meier, Speaking, p316.
9 Meier, Speaking, p319.
10 For a cogent argument on the difference between the two, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), chapter 2.
12 Though this too is subsumed within the word of Yahweh to the prophet, since the voice of Ezekiel is rarely heard in the book as an independent element, other than as the narrator.
13 See Claus Westermann, Elements of Old Testament Theology, tr. D.W. Scott, (Atlanta, John Knox Press, 1982), pp24-25. See also Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p145 and Mowinckel, ‘Postscript’, p264. All three writers stress this historical and particular nature of the divine word. Westermann goes so far as to say that the word ‘cannot be separated out of this history as something God said. The Old Testament knows nothing of an abstracted, objectified word of God, and that is why the word of God in the Old Testament cannot become a doctrine’ (p24). Were he correct, then there would be no justification for the word being retained, edited and reapplied for subsequent generations.
14 See especially Meier, Speaking, pp314-19 for what follows.
In some of the books, these three elements do not appear at all together; indeed, the verb מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָּ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ to describe the prophetic event (Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Malachi). In some of the books, the phrase מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָּ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ and the verb מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ occur together only in the 3rd person and only in the redactional headings (Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zephaniah 1:1); they are not to be found introducing individual oracles (i.e. the third element, marking direct discourse, is absent). The only prophetic books apart from Ezekiel where the three elements combine to introduce direct discourse to a prophet are Jeremiah, Haggai and Zechariah (though they do occur in Jonah 1:1 and 3:1, but Jonah is narrative; see below for Isaiah). Of these, the 1st person form that is almost universal in Ezekiel is to be found on ten occasions in the book of Jeremiah. Subsequently, the only occurrences of the 1st person form are in the book of Zechariah.

In the book of Isaiah, there are two instances where the phrase מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ and the verb מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ occur together in the context of the word of Yahweh coming to people, followed directly by Yahweh’s speech. In 28:13, strikingly, the word comes not to prophets, but to the people as a whole. Meier plausibly suggests that ‘its appearance in this isolated piece of poetry...points to the actual significance the phrase had before it became a stereotypical marker used by some prophets to identify a communication from God. Here it simply refers to an authoritative directive issued to insubordinate Israelites.’

In 38:4, the three elements are present in a situation where Yahweh’s word comes to a prophet (Isaiah), but it is likely that they occur here because the section is borrowed from Kings, where the formula is often to be found (e.g. 1 Kgs. 13:20, of the northern prophet who invited home the man of God who came from Judah; 1 Kgs. 16:1, of Jehu; 1 Kgs. 17:2 of Elijah; 2 Kgs. 20:4, of Isaiah).

Outside the prophetic literature identified above and Kings, these three elements are hardly to be found together. Within Genesis to Judges, they only occur together in Gen. 15:1 (though Gen. 15:4 should be noted, where there is the deictic מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ). In Samuel, they occur together in three places: 1 Sam. 15:10, of the word coming to Samuel; 2 Sam. 7:4, to Nathan; 2 Sam. 24:1, to Gad, David’s seer. These elements are also sparingly present in Chronicles, present from sources in 1 Chr. 17:3 (parallel to

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15 Though in only two of the five occurrences is the word said to come to Haggai, as opposed to through him (מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ) (Hag. 2:10, 20). The other three instances (1:1, 3; 2:1) stress the agency of Haggai in speaking to Haggai’s addressees, merging the prophetic and rhetorical events.
16 Jer. 1:4, 11, 13; 2:1; 13:3, 8; 16:1; 18:5; 24:4; 32:6; (cf. 25:3). There are thirty instances altogether within Jeremiah of the word of Yahweh coming to the prophet.
17 Zech. 4:8; 6:9; 7:4; 8:18; cf. 3rd person forms in 1:7; 7:8; 8:1.
18 Meier, Speaking, p319.
19 Though strikingly in 1 Kgs. 16:7, Jehu becomes the invisible mediator, as the word of Yahweh (מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ) comes (מִיְּדַ֣וְּר) to king Baasha and his house by the hand of Jehu.
20 So Meier, Speaking, p315. Other instances in Kings where the main elements occur, marking divine speech are 1 Kgs. 6:11 (to Solomon); 1 Kgs. 12:22 (to Shemaiah; with מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ); 1 Kgs. 17:8, 18:1, 19:9 (with מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ instead of מֵוָּ֣שֶׁהְּנָ֖ לַֽבּוֹרְדַּ֣פֶרָּֽהְיִֽוְזִּ֣חַ), 21:17, 28 (to Elijah); 1 Kgs. 18:31, to Jacob.
2 Sam. 7:4, though with  רָקָּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל (Rs) and 2 Chr. 11:2 (parallel to 1 Kgs. 12:22), but otherwise in only two other places (1 Chr. 22:8, of David; 2 Chr. 12:7, of Shemaiah).\(^{21}\)

This brief survey demonstrates how this way of speaking about Yahweh addressing a prophet is by no means universal, even within prophetic literature. At the same time, it is extraordinarily prominent in the particular works identified above, a fact that should not be surprising given the similar ‘temporal horizon’ of the 6th Century when the phrase ‘word of X’ was used ‘as the introductory (and not repeated) words in official communiques [sic].\(^{22}\)

With regard to the question of the status of the word coming to the prophet as an ‘event’, although the presence of dates and other modifiers to the word-event formula indicate a narrowing of the speech event to a particular point, this does not mean the event should be over-dramatised or over-interpreted. So again Meier observes that ‘the use of “word” in conjunction with the verb “to be” is actually quite underwhelming in its banality in the light of usage in Akkadian and Hebrew’;\(^{23}\) because many more colourful fientive verbs, such as ‘seize’ or ‘arrive’ or ‘reach’ are predicated of ‘word’.\(^{24}\) Indeed, in 1 Sam. 4:1, the verb-form יִדְרִיחַ occurs together to describe the event of Samuel’s word going to all Israel.

Consequently, we should not see in the word-event formula the hypostatisation of the word. Zimmerli’s claim that, ‘instead of a direct encounter by the personal address of God, the “word” is understood almost as an objective entity with its own power of entry,’\(^{25}\) reads too much into the phrase, given what we have observed above about ‘banality’ of the verb ‘to be’.\(^{26}\) In addition, in Ezekiel there is not always a consistent mediation of the word between Yahweh and the prophet. On occasions, Yahweh speaks directly with the prophet, without ‘the word’ mediating (2:2, 8; 3:10, 24; cf. 22:28).\(^{27}\)

Speaking of the word coming ‘directly’ to the prophet, or of Yahweh ‘addressing’ the prophet raises questions about the mode of reception, audibility and the form which the word took. These questions are important if we are going to consider in what way Yahweh speaks, and how Yahweh’s ידֶד might relate to it.

It seems that the word was a private word, in the sense it was not immediately publicly available. When the elders visited the prophet (14:1; 20:1), the ‘word of Yahweh’ came to Ezekiel. There is no evidence that the elders heard it before Ezekiel addressed them; indeed, Yahweh’s address is explicitly to Ezekiel in the 1st person, instructing him on what to say to the elders (14:3-4; 20:3). Such a perspective is

\(^{21}\) See Meier, Speaking, p315.
\(^{22}\) Meier, Speaking, p319.
\(^{23}\) Meier, Speaking, p317.
\(^{24}\) Meier, Speaking, p317.
\(^{25}\) Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p145. For the question of hypostasisation, see ‘יִדְרִיחַ, יִדְרִיחַ, TDOT 3, pp120-21; TLOT 1, pp331-32.
\(^{26}\) For the question of the inherent power of a word, as opposed to hypostasisation, see further pp204f. below.
\(^{27}\) See Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, pp83-84.
reinforced by the reticence inherent in the word-event formula, for, ‘although the content is specified as verbal (הָנֵא הָאֱלֹהִים),’ the phrase ‘retreats from the position that God’s voice is heard, for it obscures any precision – God’s word simply happened’. 28 While the word was inaudible to onlookers, the book characterises Ezekiel’s subjective impression of the words of Yahweh as objective speech. 29 Such characterisation is not restricted to Ezekiel ‘hearing’ Yahweh’s voice in the context of visions, though it is present there (1:28b; 2:2; 3:24; 8:5, 9). In 3:17, Ezekiel is told that he will hear a word from Yahweh’s mouth, and that he, as a watchman, is to utter it. Further, his certainty in the face of hard-heartedness (2:7), unbelief (12:21-28), scorn (21:5 [ET 20:49]) and apathy (33:30-33) points to a profound experience of something that, though probably internal, must have seemed to him to have been objective. If the prophet did not believe that the words were objective, his critique of the false prophets, that they prophesy out of their own ‘imagination’ (וַיִּקָּחֵם מִפְלָסָם (13:2)) or ‘follow their own spirit’ (וַיִּפְלָסָם (13:3)) would have been both duplicitous and erroneous. 30

At this point, it is also appropriate to express reservations about Wilson’s characterisation of the particular emphasis on the ‘word of Yahweh’ within Ephraimite prophetic tradition as evidence that they ‘regarded spirit possession as the most common means of inspiration.’ 31 Were this true, there would be a conspicuous, continuous link between Yahweh’s word and word running throughout much of the prophetic literature. It seems that he reaches this conclusion by extrapolating from the observation that within ‘contemporary intermediation, possession theories are usually characterized by the belief that the possessing spirit takes control of the intermediary and speaks directly through him, with the result that the speech of the intermediary is actually the speech of the spirit,’ 32 though ultimately he insists his understanding is based on exegesis, not contemporary sociology or anthropology. 33 Since there is a similar emphasis on ‘direct divine speech’ within the Ephraimite prophetic tradition, as evidenced by ‘the tendency to describe prophecy as the reception and delivery of the word of God’, 34 this is, for him, conclusive evidence that ‘the Ephraimites regarded possession involving God’s speaking as the normal form of intermediation.’ 35 One

28 Meier, Speaking, p232.
29 Cf. Lindblom, Prophecy, p110; Heschel, The Prophets, vol. 2, p211: ‘To the consciousness of the prophet, the prophetic act is more than an experience; it is an objective event.’ For Heschel here, ‘the prophetic act’ is ‘the act of inspiration’, that is, the act of the word coming to the prophet.
31 Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p144; cf. also Susan Niditch, ‘Ezekiel 40-48 in a Visionary Context’, CBB 48 (1986), pp208-24. For Niditch (p208), Ezekiel is like ‘a spirit medium’ because in so many of his actions he ‘looks like those whom traditional societies consider to be possessed by the divine, a mouthpiece for the deity, a bridge between heaven and earth.’
32 Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p145.
33 See Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p16.
34 Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p145.
35 Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p146.
difficulty with such a conception is the fact that the difference between Ephraimite and Judean traditions is not as clear as Wilson portrays. The most obvious exception to his viewpoint is Ezekiel, where, as we have seen, emphasis on the 'word of Yahweh' is great. It is true that he recognises and tries to account for (the Judean) Ezekiel's 'affinities with Ephraimite language and theology.' There are, though, very few references to 'the word of Yahweh' coming to a prophet, or calls to 'hear the word of Yahweh' in Hosea (Ephraimite) or Isaiah (Judean) (cf. Isa. 8:11). Further, Jeremiah is very reticent to speak about the role of הוב in prophecy, so it is rather too speculative to regard the opening formula in Jer. 1:2 as a 'typical Ephraimite superscription indicating that the prophet received his revelations when he was possessed by Yahweh's spirit.'

It summary, it is preferable to see in the book's use of the 'word of Yahweh,' and, in particular, the word-event formula, the self-conscious awareness on the part of Ezekiel, as narrator, of Yahweh speaking to him within history as an objective event which mirrored both 'the old tradition of the prophetic schools,' as seen in the narratives of the early monarchical prophets (e.g. 1 Sam. 15:10; 2 Sam. 7:4; 1 Kgs. 13:20), and the contemporary practice found in official communiqués. This 'word' is not a hypostatic entity, nor is a focus on the 'word of Yahweh' necessarily evidence of an underlying belief in spirit possession.

b) Visions

We now turn our attention to the visions that the book portrays the prophet as experiencing. These are important for an analysis of the relationship of Yahweh's הוב to the word of Yahweh coming to the prophet, since Yahweh's הוב at points in the book is explicitly linked with the visions, and Kaufmann distinguishes between spirit-inspired visions and the word that comes to the prophet within them: 'The spirit of prophecy also prepares him [the prophet] to receive the divine word - to see visions, to hear the divine voice in dreams or ecstatic slumber. But the source of prophecy proper is other than these activities. It is in the revelation of God.' In this section, I argue that they are not simply vehicles for Yahweh's word to come, but can in themselves be understood as

36 Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p145 n22. He does not attribute these to a Deuteronomic redaction of Ezekiel, since he regards the Ephraimite portrayal of Ezekiel (i.e. a prophet like Moses to whom elders come and inquire; intercession is forbidden to him) as present in every layer. Thus, for Wilson, Ezekiel had Deuteronomic influence on him before being exiled, though he retains a distinctive Zadokite element. Wilson, Prophecy and Society, pp284-85.
39 Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, p99.
‘speech events’. Before I can make the case for this, we need first to identify the visions.

We observed above that Zimmerli identified five main vision units. Three of those, the longest vision complexes, are introduced with the phrase תֵלָה יִת (1:1-3:15; 8:1-11:25; 40:1-48:35), with יושב being almost certainly a subjective genitive, ‘divine vision’ or ‘vision given by God’ given the subject matter in chapters 8-11 and 40-48.\(^{40}\)

The opening vision complex is marked off by the word-event formula in 3:16, and is made up of a report of the vision per se in 1:4-28, followed by a report of the words Yahweh spoke to commission Ezekiel (though with a brief reversion to visionary encounter in 2:8-3:3 and again in 3:12-15).

The second of these vision complexes introduced by מִבְנָא הָאֲנָשִׁים occurs in chs. 8-11. Although there are clear signs of disjunction within these chapters (e.g. formally, the word-event formula in 11:14; in terms of content, the survival of 26 prominent men who ought to be already dead (11:1, 13; cf. 9:3-11)), the chiastic order apparent in 8:1-4 and 11:22-25 clearly marks out the complex as one literary unit.\(^{41}\)

The third of these occurs in chs. 40-48. Again, there are clear signs of discontinuity, notoriously, one might say, around the pro-Zadokite material in ch. 44 and around the organisation of the text in chs. 45-46. Such discontinuities led Tuell to observe, ‘Attractive as it may be to hold for a single interpretive principle explaining all of chapters 40-48, the text itself is too vague, too disparate in nature, too haphazardly presented for such a single-theme approach to be relevant.’\(^{42}\)

Stevenson, however, observes rightly that ‘interpreters evaluate the visionary character of the text on the basis of their own assumptions about what an “authentic vision” is supposed to be, whether the vision was a real experience or a literary fiction, whether authentic visions contain legislation, and so on.’\(^{43}\) As it stands, the text has been put together as a narrative account of a vision. It is with this perspective, rather than with an emphasis on its redactional history, that chs. 40-48 need to be understood as ‘visions given by God’. Within this, there are descriptions of what the prophet saw, and what the prophet heard.

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\(^{40}\) Cf. Block, Ezekiel 1-24, pp84-85 (on 1:1). He prefers the rendering ‘divine vision’ to ‘visions of God’ for three reasons. First, in Ezekiel לֵלָה יִת is not usually a proper noun, but rather an ‘appellative, “divinity.”’ Secondly, the vision is ‘not so much of God’ as of “divine, heavenly realities.” Thirdly, the plural רָאִית is ‘not a true plural, but a “plural of generalisation.”’ For the genitive of the author as ‘subjective genitive’, see JM §129d and IBHS, 9.5.1c.

\(^{41}\) Cf. Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, pp129-37; Block, Ezekiel 1-24, pp272-76.


\(^{43}\) Stevenson, Vision of Transformation, p157 n38.
The fourth visionary encounter to be identified, the second that occurs in the book, is that classified by Zimmerli as occurring from 3:22-5:17.⁴⁴ The end of the unit is marked by the word-event formula in 6:1. Allen observes that the pattern followed here mirrors that in 1:1-3:15, with an ‘introductory divine vision (3:22-24a)...followed by a divine speech (3:24b-5:17).⁴⁵ Although a number of scholars see 4:1 as the start of a new section,⁴⁶ the formulaic markers noted above, and the presence of the ‘hand of Yahweh’ (3:22), which is characteristic of visions in Ezekiel, mark this out as a vision complex, with the vision proper limited to a brief description of Yahweh’s glory in v.23, but within which Yahweh’s word comes.⁴⁷

The fifth vision which can be identified in the book, the fourth to occur, is that in 37:1-14. While there is no explicit mention of a vision in 37:1, it is clear that the incident with the dry bones takes place within a vision, since the introduction closely mirrors that of the vision in ch. 40,⁴⁸ the events that are described could not be conceived as literal events, and ‘the frequent use of יָדָּבִּיק throughout the passage as well as יָדָּבִּיק in v.8 give additional support to such a reading.’⁴⁹

The five visions in Ezekiel are not introduced by the word-event formula, as we have seen, but by the ‘hand of Yahweh’ upon the prophet,⁵⁰ by Ezekiel seeing (1:1, 4; 8:2; cf. 3:23), and in particular by יָדָּבִּיק followed by a description of what Ezekiel saw.⁵¹ This does not mean, though, necessarily that a vision event in toto cannot be understood as Yahweh’s speech or discourse, nor that there are not close links between individual visions within a vision event and word. In 11:25, for example, the vision that Ezekiel has seen is described at the close as ‘all the יָדָּבִּיק that he had shown me.’ Yahweh’s communication is not simply restricted to words uttered – the visions within the vision event can also be understood as divine speech. This is not based woodenly on the observation that because יָדָּבִּיק occurs, it must mean ‘word’. Rather, the understanding

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⁴⁴ Zimmerli, ‘Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character’, p515. In his commentary, Zimmerli does not identify the unit specifically as a visionary encounter, and regards the unit as starting with 3:16a, while 3:16b-21 he treats separately, as a ‘redactional insertion’ (Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p154).
⁴⁵ Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p55. He regards the unit as starting in v.16, but notes the difficulties surrounding the first section of the literary unit (3:16b-21).
⁴⁷ Odell questions whether ‘oral speech forms continue to govern the development of literary forms’, and has reservations about treating 1:1-3:15 and 3:16-5:17 as ‘two separate units because they were crafted from two separate genres’ (Margaret S. Odell, ‘You Are What You Eat: Ezekiel and the Scroll’, JBL 117 (1998), p230). While it is of course true that they are linked together in a number of ways (such as the appearance of Yahweh’s glory and the agency of יד in setting the prophet on his feet (2:2; 3:24), such that within the literary work the individual units may have been woven into a larger compositional unit, nonetheless the sharp lines marking direct discourse in Ezekiel do argue for treating them as in some sense independent units.
⁴⁸ In particular, the phrase ‘the hand of Yahweh was upon me’ and the striking use of יד in the sense of יד (‘he set down’). An alternative is that MT ‘misvocalizes’ (Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p367).
⁴⁹ Renz, Rhetorical Function, p201.
⁵⁰ Ezek. 1:3; 3:22; 8:1; 37:1; 40:1.
⁵¹ Ezek. 1:4, 15; 2:9; 3:23; 8:2, 4 and frequently in ch. 8; 9:2, 11; 10:1, 9; 11:1; 37:2, 7, 8; 40:3, 5, 17, 24; 42:8; 43:2, 5; 44:4; 46:19, 21; 47:1, 2, 7.
of how it is possible to ‘say’ something needs to be expanded. Critical in this expansion of understanding is speech act theory.

According to speech act theory, developed first by Austin, and then in particular by Searle, ‘speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behavior. To put it more briskly, talking is performing acts according to rules.’ There are three aspects of speaking. First, there is the locutionary utterance, ‘which is roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to ‘meaning’ in the traditional sense.’ Secondly, there is the illocutionary utterance, which is an utterance that does not describe anything, but ‘is, or is a part of, the doing of an action.’ A typical example is that of a person declaring, ‘I hereby name this ship “Josephine.”’ No other action needs to be performed for the ship to acquire the name Josephine, though it is of course true that there need to be certain conditions in place for the naming to be ‘happy’ or ‘successful.’ The focus here is on the force of the utterance, and answers the question, ‘What are you doing in saying that?’ or ‘What kind of speech act is it?’ Finally, there is the perlocutionary utterance. This answers the question, ‘What are you doing by saying that?’ and explains what is the result, or effect, of saying these words. It can cover both intentional and unintentional effects. Cohen summarises Austin’s short formula to distinguish the three clearly: ‘a locution is an act of saying something, an illocution is an act done in saying something, a perlocution is an act done by saying something.’

Since the early work by Austin and Searle, the study of speech acts has moved on significantly. Nonetheless, still fundamental is the difference between locutionary acts,
‘acts of uttering or inscribing words’, and illocutionary acts, ‘acts performed by way of locutionary acts, acts such as asking, asserting, commanding, promising, and so forth’. With this distinction, as Wolterstorff observes,

‘though of course such actions as asking, asserting, commanding, and promising, can be performed by way of uttering or inscribing sentences, they can be performed in many other ways as well. One can say something by producing a blaze, or smoke, or a sequence of light-flashes. Even more interesting: one can tell somebody something by deputizing someone else to speak on one’s behalf. In short, contemporary speech-action theory opens up the possibility of a whole new way of thinking about God speaking.’

In this sense, it is quite legitimate to regard a vision as a ‘word’ of Yahweh, as an illocutionary act, or, better, an illocutionary event, of God ‘speaking’. Such a view is confirmed by other instances in Ezekiel, and in other parts of the Old Testament, where the close links between divine visions and the word of Yahweh are apparent.

In 12:21-8, visions seem almost interchangeable with the word of Yahweh. This is apparent in the response Yahweh gives to two current proverbs. In 12:22, the proverb of the people lampoons the ineffectiveness, even falsehood, of the divine visions relayed by Ezekiel or perhaps by Jeremiah, ‘The days are prolonged, and every vision comes to nothing.’ Yahweh declares there will be an end to such cynicism by asserting that he will speak the word that he will speak, and will fulfil it (12:25). A parallel is implicit between the divine vision (יִתְנָה) in the past that has not come to anything, and the word (נָוִי) which will come to pass in the future. Such a parallel is reinforced by the slightly awkward phrase יִתְנָה כְּרֵי רְאוּ (12:23b), rendered ‘that which every vision proclaims’ by Zimmerli, ‘the content of every revelation’ by Allen, and ‘the event of every vision’ by Greenberg. However it is to be rendered, the explicit link between word and vision is established. In 12:27, the second proverb relates more explicitly to Ezekiel. The house of Israel has been bemoaning the fact that the vision Ezekiel had received was for the distant future, ‘The vision that he sees is for many years ahead; he prophesies for

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63 Wolterstorff, Divine Discourse, p13 (his emphasis).
64 Wolterstorff, Divine Discourse, p13.
65 That the ‘yours’ in the first part of 12:22 (“Mortal, what is this proverb of yours about the land of Israel, which says...”) is not simply Ezekiel is clear from זִכְרוֹנַ. Whether this first oracle relates to words that are being said ‘in the land of Israel’ or ‘about the land of Israel’ is debated. The phrase in MT is יִתְנָה כְּרֵי רְאוּ. Arguments in favour of ‘in’ include the preposition ב in v.23, which is more probably locative (‘in Israel’), and the parallel with 33:24, where the same expression יִתְנָה כְּרֵי רְאוּ occurs locatively and Ezekiel similarly has access to the words of those left behind in Jerusalem. On this reading, the unfulfilled visions are perhaps those of Jeremiah. On the other hand, the inclusion of Ezekiel in the phrase points strongly to the saying being prominent in exile (so Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p196), and the phrase can also mean ‘concerning the land of Israel’ (Ezek. 36:6).
66 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p279.
67 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p185.
68 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p226. Some scholars emend the MT here, making יֵשֶׁר דָּתָא into a verb (cf. Syr.) to ensure a verb clause. For a concise list of attempts, see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p279.
distant times.'” Ezekiel is told to reply, “none of my words will be delayed any longer (לֹא תְרַבַּד נַפְסִי) (v.28). 69

The linking between word and vision is also found elsewhere in the book. In chapter 13, the charge against the false prophets in 13:1ff. is that they say ‘hear the word of Yahweh’ (אֶרֶנְעַת יְהֹウェָה), when they have not ‘seen’ (אֶרֶנְעַת יְהֹウェָה) anything (13:2-3). Finally, in 7:26, a prophet is clearly expected to have visions (cf. Jer. 18:18, where a prophet is marked by a ‘word’). This pattern is reflected elsewhere in the Old Testament. As Block notes, ‘several prophetic books that consist largely of oracles are formally introduced as “the visions” of the respective prophets (Isaiah, Obadiah, Nahum). Others speak of words or oracles that the individual “saw” (Amos, Micah, Habakkuk).’ 70 The ‘word of Yahweh’ could come equally through a vision or through a direct ‘word’ (cf. 1 Sam. 3:1). 71

In summary, Yahweh addresses the prophet both by vision and by word. Both should be conceived as Yahweh’s speech to the prophet which takes place at a particular historical point. The divine word in visions is not to be restricted simply to divine speech within visions, but encompasses the visions themselves. Such an address, while not audible to onlookers, is perceived to originate in Yahweh. The relationship between Yahweh’s word and the word that comes to the prophet will be explored further in the next chapter.

2. Ezekiel addressing his audience

The second place in the book where Yahweh’s word is to be found is in Ezekiel addressing his audience, or, to be more precise, in Ezekiel being instructed to address his audience. As we noted above, narrated interaction between the prophet and his audience is negligible within the book, since almost everything is subsumed within Yahweh addressing Ezekiel, the rhetorical event. 72 Nonetheless, it is possible to isolate such speech, since the book of Ezekiel makes strenuous efforts to mark the different voices. As Meier notes, ‘A number of prophetic texts are simply uninterested in the marking of divine speech and speech in general...At the other extreme stands the book of Ezekiel with the most extensively standardized marking of DD [Direct Discourse] in the entire Bible’. 73 Significant attention is necessary here because it is possible that any

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69 For the plural subject with the fem. sg. verb, see GKC 145k; see also Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p188.
70 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p111.
71 It is interesting to note in this regard that Jeremiah’s critique of the false prophets in Jer. 23:16 was not that they saw visions, but that the visions they saw came from their own minds (בְּאֵיתָם), and not from the mouth of Yahweh. It was possible not merely to see Yahweh’s word, but to hear Yahweh’s visions. For the prophet ‘seeing’ Yahweh’s word, see Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p261; Preuss, Old Testament Theology, vol. 2, p73.
72 A notable exception is 11:25, where Ezekiel comments, ‘And I told the exiles all the things that Yahweh had shown me.’ The book’s addressees have just been given, therefore, the content of what Ezekiel told the exiles.
73 Meier, Speaking, p324.
relationship between בְּרִית and the prophetic word uttered in the rhetorical event may simply be a product of the role of בְּרִית and the prophetic event.

In this section, after exploring the different ways in which the hypothetical rhetorical event is marked, I shall focus more specifically on three formulae, the citation formula, the signatory formula and the call-to-attention formula. I shall argue that the ‘messenger formula’ is not necessarily an indicator that the prophets saw themselves as messengers. I shall also argue that all three formulae indicate that what the prophet is saying in the rhetorical event is not simply a report of what Yahweh has said, but an instantiation of Yahweh speaking in the present. Finally, I shall argue that the words Ezekiel is to utter are verbatim with the words he has received.

The book of Ezekiel as a whole first marks the words that Ezekiel is to utter by the command of Yahweh to ‘say’.74 This is expressed either by the imperative רָאוֹ לָךְ,75 by the imperative רָאִי,76 or, when preceded by the imperative of another verb enjoining Ezekiel to speak, by the הָגָטֵל, הָגָטֵל.77 Preceding imperatives include רָאִי (‘speak’),78 יָנִיב (‘prophecy’),79 יָנִיב (‘make known’),80 יָנִיב (‘propound a riddle and speak an allegory’),81 יָנִיב (‘raise a lamentation’).82 There are a number of occasions where there is no explicit command for Ezekiel to speak in the MT, even though what follows is clearly Yahweh’s speech, introduced by the formulaic יָנִיב (אֱלֹהִים).83 I shall discuss the significance of these below.

Such a command by Yahweh for Ezekiel to speak does not necessarily mean, of course, that Ezekiel is to mark as Yahweh’s words the words he is to say. Indeed, in some cases it is debatable whether they should be understood as Yahweh’s words, even

74 Much of this data is replicated in Meier, Speaking, pp230ff., but Meier omits some examples (such as the lamentation in 19:1) and his primary scope is only Ezek. 11:14-39:29.
75 Ezek. 6:11; 11:5, 16, 17; 12:10, 11, 23, 28; 13:11; 14:6; 17:9, 12; 20:30; 21:14 [ET 21:9] (though this is preceded by a command to ‘prophesy and say’ (יֹדֵעָה יָנוּר) and the citation formula); 22:24; 24:21; 28:2; 31:2; 33:10, 11, 12, 25; 36:22; 39:17.
77 Note that in Ezek. 11:5, the imperative יָנִיב introducing the words Ezekiel is to say is preceded by the imperative יָנִיב. However, note also that on occasions יָנִיב is preceded not by an imperative enjoining speech, but by a participle (Ezek. 2:4 (‘I am sending you’), by another finite verb form (3:27 (‘I will open your mouth’)); 12:18-19 (‘You shall eat...and drink’), by a (projected) report of the words of Ezekiel’s addressees (21:12 [ET 21:7]), by another הָגָטֵל form of a verb of speaking, which in turn is preceded by an imperative (3:11), or by an imperative which does not enjoin speech (Ezek. 44:5-6 (‘mark well and look closely’)).
78 Ezek. 14:4; 20:3, 27; 33:2; the instance in 29:3 is also preceded by the imperative יָנִיב.
79 Ezek. 6:2; 11:4; 13:2, 17; 21:2 [ET 20:46], 7 [ET 21:2], 14 [ET 21:9], 19 [ET 21:14], 33 [ET 21:28]; 25:2; 28:21; 29:2; 30:2; 34:2; 35:2; 36:1, 3, 6; 37:4, 9; 37:12; 38:2; 39:1; 52:2. Of these, the imperative יָנִיב is preceded by ‘set your face’ in Ezek. 6:2; 13:17; 21:2 [ET 20:46], 7 [ET 21:2]; 25:2; 28:21; 29:2; 35:2; 38:2 (cf. 4:7, where there is the same motif, without direct discourse following).
80 Ezek. 16:2-3; 20:4-5 (גָּחַד אֲדוֹן; 22:2-3 (מַעֲרֹת - preceded by a direct question, ‘will you judge?’).
81 Ezek. 17:2-3; cf. 24:2-3 (גָּחַד - preceded by a command to ‘write’).
82 Ezek. 19:1; 27:2-3; 28:12; 32:2.
though Yahweh has instructed Ezekiel to speak them, because Yahweh is not marked as
the speaker when they are uttered. So for example in Ezek. 21:12bα [ET 21:7], Ezekiel
is told how to respond to the question asked by his addressees about his moaning: ‘And
when they say to you, “Why do you moan?” you shall say, “Because of the news that
has come...”’. Although Ezekiel is commanded to speak these words, and Yahweh gives
them to him, the words cannot be understood to be the words of Yahweh in the same
way as the words that Ezekiel is said to relay to his addressees specifically as Yahweh’s
words. This is because they are marked differently. 84 Presumably, the author of the
book of Ezekiel would have his readers understand these words as the (future) words of
the prophet, although within the book they are subsumed within the word coming to the
prophet.

After the command to speak there comes on ten occasions the call-to-attention
formula, which we shall look at below. On each of these occasions, and in the vast
majority of instances where Ezekiel is given the words of Yahweh to utter, such words
are introduced by the formulaic see לְבָנָה (רֵעַ לְבָנָה) דַּבֶּר. This serves to identify Yahweh’s
voice in the (hypothetical) rhetorical event in a very consistent fashion. 85 The only
places where Yahweh’s words that Ezekiel is told explicitly to utter are not prefaced by
this formula are 17:12, where Ezekiel is instructed to give an explanation for the riddle
found in 17:3-10; 21:12bβ [ET 21:7], where Yahweh’s words are explicitly identified as
such by the signatory formula at the end of the verse; 22:24, where Ezekiel is
commanded to speak against the land; 33:2, where Yahweh reintroduces the watchman
motif; and 33:11, 12, where Yahweh reaffirms his lack of pleasure in the death of the
wicked and the ineffectiveness of the righteousness of the righteous to save the people
when they transgress.

Given the high degree of consistency in the marking of divine speech throughout
the rest of the book, we must look at how the book portrays the rhetorical event by
examining in particular the citation (or messenger) formula, the signatory formula, and
the call-to-attention formula. 86

84 Other instances include 19:2, where Ezekiel is told what to say in his lament for the princes of Israel;
32:2b, where Yahweh, having instructed Ezekiel to raise up a lamentation over the king of Egypt, does
not introduce his own verdict until the citation formula at the start of v.3. Care should be taken, however,
here, since such precise demarcation of divine speech based on the citation formula is not always
followed in the Old Testament. The most striking example is found in 2 Kgs. 1:2-6, where the location of
the citation formula shifts as the narrative moves from the commissioning of Elijah to his fulfilment of
that commission. See Meier, Speaking, pp295-96.
85 Cf. Meier, Speaking, p231-34.
86 See especially the work by Meier, Speaking, pp230-242 on Ezekiel, and pp273-322 on marking divine
speech in general. Meier’s work on Ezekiel is hampered by a focus almost exclusively on 11:14-39:29,
given that divine speech is also found outside these chapters. It is not surprising that divine speech is
marked somewhat differently within divine visions (though I note that within the book 11:14-23 is
subsumed within the divine vision). Where the formal units are not divine visions, the pattern discernible
in 11:14-39:29 is also present (i.e. in chapters 6 and 7).
a) The citation formula

The citation (or messenger) formula ( Heb: נא"ר יתנוה 'Thus has (the Lord) Yahweh declared') occurs over four hundred times in the Old Testament. Without the double divine designation, it occurs almost three hundred times in the Old Testament; over half of those occurrences are in Jeremiah. Only three are in the book of Ezekiel (11:5; 21:8 [21:3 - ET]; 30:6). The expanded phrase, 'Thus has the Lord Yahweh declared' occurs more than one hundred and thirty times in the Old Testament. Of these, over ninety percent are in the book of Ezekiel. Other occurrences occur in Isaiah (eight, of which five are in 1-39), Jeremiah (7:20), Amos (3:11; 5:3) and Obadiah (1:1). Neither version appears in Hosea, Joel, Habakkuk or Zephaniah, and there is only one occurrence in each of Obadiah, Nahum and Malachi. Though the author of the book of Ezekiel does not coin the expanded version, nor is it unique to the book, yet he makes the phrase his own. Though it does point to 'the subservient role of the prophet,' it speaks also of the rebelliousness of the people against the one who is the Lord Yahweh even though they do not acknowledge him as such.

On most occasions, the formula occurs within a unit introduced by the word-event formula. It can occur, though, within a vision unit (e.g. 11:5). It can function either at the outset of the message that the prophet is to declare, or it can punctuate the message itself, often introducing a new oracle that Ezekiel is to utter within the word that has come to Ezekiel (e.g. 13:3, 8, 13). Further, on some occasions Ezekiel is told to say, 'Thus has the Lord Yahweh declared', while on other occasions, as we observed above (see footnote 83), the citation formula suddenly appears within the unit without any hint that the situation has moved from Ezekiel hearing material which explains a situation to his hearing material he is to proclaim and announce. For example, after the word-event formula in 15:1, vv.2-5 appear to convey Yahweh explaining to Ezekiel how charred wood (i.e. the destroyed Jerusalem) is useless. Only in v.6 does the citation formula come. There is no instruction for Ezekiel to speak anything, yet the presence of the citation formula, along with the 'you' plural in v.7, shows that these words are meant for an audience wider than Ezekiel. The citation formula refers to the putative rhetorical event but does not have the explicit command, 'say', presumably because this ellipsis serves to strengthen the links between the word that came to the prophet and the word that the prophet uttered. The gap between the prophetic event and the rhetorical event is systematically eliminated by such a strategy. Here is evidence of the book itself serving a rhetorical purpose. The focus is not so much on an account of Ezekiel's life and ministry, as to make the force of that word present to the readers and hearers of the book.

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87 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p34.
88 Cf. Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, pp64-65. For more on the rebelliousness of the people, see on page 154ff. below.
There are two somewhat different perspectives on the formula in current scholarship. Differences over the suggested *Sitz im Leben* of the formula lead to different conclusions about how much theological freight can be carried by it. On the one hand is the view that the formula is a messenger formula. This has been most extensively expressed by Westermann, who comments,

‘If one can begin the inquiry about the speeches of the prophets with the basic knowledge that they are messengers who bring a message and speak in the style of a message, then there is a foundation of formulas, speech forms, and speeches which have been passed down, where one can be assured of encountering the self-understanding of the prophets and of being on solid ground.’

For him, this is ‘nothing more than a methodological starting point; but this basis should now be confidently accepted.’ Such a viewpoint has been accepted amongst most OT scholars, as seen for example, in Koch, Zimmerli, dictionary articles, and in the glossary of ‘genres’ in Sweeney’s commentary on Isaiah 1-39.

Westermann has used this ‘starting point’ as one strand in his argument that the prophetic ‘announcement of judgement’ (Gerichtsankündigung) ‘is something essentially different from the threat’ because ‘a threat is transmitted very poorly by a messenger’. He has also used the same ‘starting point’, that the prophets were messengers, to argue that, since ‘it is impossible for a message to be received in a state of ecstasy...in no case may one assume that the reception of the messenger’s speech occurred in ecstasy.’

More significant for our purposes are two other possible implications of regarding the formula as a messenger formula, and the self-understanding of the prophets thereby necessarily as messengers. First, just as Westermann argues from the starting point of messengers in the ANE to draw certain conclusions about prophets and prophecy, so it could be possible to treat the relationship between the words spoken in the prophetic event and the rhetorical event in a similar fashion to the relationship between the words that a messenger received and the words which the messenger delivered. That of course would potentially raise interesting questions about the relationship between Yahweh’s רְאוּי and the word of Yahweh in the prophetic event, on the one hand, and the relationship between Yahweh’s רְאוּי and the word of Yahweh in the rhetorical event, on the other, in particular, about the verbatim nature of the words. Secondly, and related to

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93 Jerome A. Lund, ‘“רְאוּי”’, *MIDOTTE* 1, pp444-45; H.H. Schmid, ‘‘רְאוּי‘ mr to say’, *TLOT* 1, pp159-62.
this first point, within this viewpoint of the prophet as messenger, the formula is sometimes translated in the present tense, ‘Thus says PN’, despite the perfect רצח. So, for example, Schmid observes how with verbs of speaking, there is the possibility of expressing the coincidence of statement and behavior with the ‘perfectum declarativum’ (‘I state hereby’), and he suggests that, ‘the formula koh ’amar yhwh “thus says Yahweh (herewith, through me)” may also belong here.’ In other words, at the moment the messenger relays the message, the sender of the message is also speaking, through his messenger. On such an understanding, when Ezekiel speaks as Yahweh’s messenger, he is not simply reporting words that Yahweh has uttered, but Yahweh is uttering them at that moment through him. Here again there is potential significance for an understanding of a relationship between Yahweh’s נֶאֶר and Yahweh’s word.

The two most comprehensive recent disagreements with this perspective, that the Sitz im Leben of the so-called ‘messenger formula’ is the messenger in the ancient world are those works by Greene and Meier. Greene takes issue with the notion that prophets are messengers, not least because ‘messenger speech’ [the form-critical category] was neither equal to nor the equivalent of message. Meier’s basic thesis at this point is that the so-called messenger formula ‘PN רֶאֶב הָּל is not diagnostic of messenger speech and cannot be used in support of the metaphor of prophet as a messenger’ since ‘there is no speech form for the introduction of messages in the Hebrew Bible that unequivocally points to messenger activity.” Instead, it needs to be understood within a rather less theologically-rich framework as introducing the ‘quoting’ of ‘another’s words that have already been spoken.’ Therefore, ‘as a citation of another’s words which have already been spoken, we can be spared the over-theologizing of the verb tense when applied to God’s speech.’

97 Such a comment is not intended to show my understanding of the Hebrew verbal system as anchored within the confines of a narrow, tense-based approach. Nonetheless, there needs to be an explanation of why רצח is translated as ‘says’ or ‘said’. For work on the Hebrew verbal system to 1990, see the summary in IBHS, Chapter 29; see also, more recently, Yoshinobu Endo, The Verbal System of Classical Hebrew in the Joseph Story: An Approach from Discourse Analysis, Studia Semitica Neerlandica 32, (Assen, Van Gorcum, 1996); Tal Goldfajn, Word Order and Time in Biblical Hebrew Narrative, Oxford Theological Monographs, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998).

98 ‘inK’, TLOT 1, p160. Without using the technical terms associated with speech-act theory, Schmid observes how verbs of speaking can also do something. They are a particular kind of performative utterance.

99 John T. Greene, The Role of the Messenger and Message in the Ancient Near East, Brown Judaic Studies 169 (Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1989), p226. Although his observation is apposite that form-critical scholars sometimes are sloppy in applying the term ‘message’ to categories broader than is warranted on the basis of an analysis of ancient near-eastern messages (pp139-46), his work suffers from his own admission (p207) that the sources for his research were letters, rather than narratives. Meier points out that the perspective that is received from letters is very different from that received from study of messengers embedded within narrative. See Samuel A. Meier, The Messenger in the Ancient Semitic World, HSM 45 (Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1988), p60.

100 Meier, Speaking, p278.
101 Meier, Speaking, p290.
102 Meier, Speaking, p291.
Evidence usually garnered for the designation ‘messenger formula’ comes from two places. First, in the Old Testament, there are clear instances where an intermediary is commissioned with a message to take to a third-party. One of the most striking examples is in Gen. 32:3-5, where Jacob sends messengers before him to Esau. He instructs them to say upon encountering Esau, “Thus you shall say (גַּם אֲנִי אֱלֹהִים) to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob (יִשָּׁבֵב יִשָּׁבֵב)...”103 Secondly, there are examples in the ANE of a similar pattern. So for example Zimmerli, who locates the original Sitz im Leben of the ‘messenger formulas’ as well as the ‘letter formulary’ as being the dispatch of a messenger, observes that the letter is not so much A to B, but A instructing a messenger to tell B. He cites an example of this ‘memorandum’, ‘a letter from the governor Kibridagan to King Zimrilim of Mari begins: “To my lord [i.e., Zimrilim] say: Thus says Kibridagan...”’.104

Meier, while naturally acknowledging the data above, argues strongly for a different interpretation of the data.

First, he observes that the almost total lack of occurrence of the formula in many of the prophetic books points to the fact that ‘even within prophetic circles (or circles depicting prophetic activity) there was not a uniform understanding of this phrase and its significance, or...prophecy is a considerably variegated phenomenon.’105 That is, if it be granted that the formula indicates the self-understanding of those who used it, ‘these prophets who did not use the term must not have perceived of themselves as messengers from God, or, if they did, they did not underscore this perception as of great import.’106

Secondly, the use of the phrase by messengers is optional.107 He comments that while it is certainly true that at points Old Testament narrative does depict messengers using this phrase, most messengers do not use it.108 There are broadly two kinds of absence. First, there are those instances where the messengers do not explicitly identify the source of their words.109 Since ‘messengers function in a communication process where a source A (the sender) employs a channel B (the messenger) to reach a target C

103 See also Num. 20:14 (Moses sending messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom); 22:16 (officials from Balak coming to Balaam); Judg. 11:15 (Jephthah sending messengers to the king of the Ammonites); 2 Kgs. 1:11 (a captain conveying the king of Samaria’s command to Elijah); 18:19, 31 (Rabshakeh’s announcement to Hezekiah and then the people of the words of the King of Assyria); 2 Kgs. 19:3 (Eliakim, Shebna and the senior priests convey Hezekiah’s words to Isaiah).
105 Meier, Speaking, p274.
106 Meier, Speaking, p278.
107 Meier is not wholly consistent here. On p186 of Messenger, he comments, ‘In biblical literature, one may assume from commands to messengers and from actual performance that they prefaced their message with the formula “Thus says PN”’, while on p191, he comments, ‘The biblical literature, due to its variety, spontaneity and total lack of adherence to any consistent forms (even “Thus says PN” is more often than not omitted and on one occasion occurs twice), may provide the best insight into actual messenger performance.’ In other words, there is variety in ‘actual messenger performance’, not consistency.
108 See Meier, Speaking, pp278-79.
(the addressee),\(^{110}\) it would of course have been essential for some form of self-identification. Without such a self-identification, `the target C has no clue as to who the message is from.'\(^{111}\) Therefore its general absence shows that `it is an optional narrative feature that biblical story-telling found largely irrelevant for the purposes of its art.'\(^{112}\) It is not possible to make clear judgements on the basis of these absences. There is, however, a second, and more significant, kind of absence. This is where the messengers do identify themselves, but not with the `messenger formula'. In 1 Sam. 25:40, messengers (cf. v.42) sent by David identify themselves as sent by David, but there is no messenger formula. It is true that the words they utter do not contain the direct speech of David, but this example makes it clear that the `messenger formula' is not a necessary condition for a messenger.\(^{113}\)

Thirdly, the messenger formula is not the exclusive preserve either of messengers, or indeed of situations where there is an intermediary. So, one problem with calling it `the messenger formula' is that one may think the phrase was particular to messengers but Meier argues that `the phrase has a prehistory antedating its appearance in Hebrew texts where messengers use it.'\(^{114}\) A correlation between occurrences in the messenger speeches in the Old Testament and in the prophets' speeches does not imply a causal link between the two. There can be, and is, in Meier's view, an antecedent causal link. He observes that, in diverse genres in Akkadian, the cognate phrase kītam iqbi `never' describes `a message delivered by a messenger on behalf of another. It is simply a citation formula that marks a statement, often formal, made by an individual.'\(^{115}\) Further, the citation formula is used in other situations where there is no intermediary between two communicating parties, and therefore no message is being relayed. For example, in narrative, in 1 Sam. 9:9, `the narrator quotes the typical words Israelites used to say when consulting a prophetic oracle: “Formerly in Israel thus said the man (דועם:сад) on his way (בלאף) to inquire of God, ‘Come, let us go....”'\(^{116}\) This is simply a citation, not a situation involving messengers or intermediaries.

Perhaps more striking, the phrase occurs in the prophets without any link to messenger activity. Meier notes how `words of Yahweh depicted as specifically addressed to the prophet may be introduced with the phrase, “Thus said the Lord to me” (דועם:сад אלי:יאו; Isa 21:6)’.\(^{117}\) Again, this is no A→B→C situation here, with the

\(^{110}\) Meier, Speaking, p281.
\(^{111}\) Meier, Speaking, p281.
\(^{112}\) Meier, Speaking, p279.
\(^{113}\) Cf. also 2 Kgs. 5:22, and the fabricated words of Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, to Naaman, introduced by `Greetings! My master sent me, saying...(טראב:קדא:קקיא טריאטיא).' Meier, Messenger, pp186-87 notes another example, 1 Sam. 4:16-17, where the self-identification is not by means of the `messenger formula'. Here, though, the runner with news of the Israelites’ defeat is not actually sent by anyone.
\(^{114}\) Meier, Speaking, p279.
\(^{115}\) Meier, Speaking, p280.
\(^{116}\) Meier, Speaking, p282. Meier gives other examples (2 Sam. 16:7; 19:1) and other places with the yiqtol form of לְאִיר in the phrase דועם לְאִיר (Gen. 31:8; 1 Sam. 14:9, 10; 20:7, 22; 2 Sam. 15:26).
\(^{117}\) Meier, Speaking, p282. He also notes Isa. 8:11; 18:4; 21:16; 31:4 and Jer. 17:19.
messenger as B relaying the words of A to C. Isaiah is quoting what Yahweh has said to him.

Further, Meier argues that there is no need for the phrase ‘to me’ to demarcate this as different from a messenger situation. He notes a number of examples in Jeremiah where the phrase כָּל וְיֵרָאָה יְהֹreeze occurs in an address meant for the prophet alone.

‘In Jer 30:1-3, Jeremiah is told to write in a book all the words that God had given to him. This is not a message from God for Jeremiah to pass on to others, but it is a command that he alone is to hear and obey. But it is introduced with the words, “Thus said Yahweh” (דברי יהוה; 30:2).’

In these occurrences, the citation formula speaks not of the rhetorical event, but of the prophetic event. On one occasion in the book of Ezekiel, it is possible that the formula introduces words meant for Ezekiel alone as part of the prophetic event. We observed above how the formula on occasions in the book of Ezekiel occurs without an antecedent command to ‘say’. We also noted that one rhetorical function of such instances, where in addition the words are clearly ultimately to be addressed to Ezekiel’s addressees, was to narrow the gap between prophetic and rhetorical event. In Ezek. 39:17, Ezekiel is told, ‘As for you, mortal, thus says the Lord Yahweh: Speak to the birds of every kind...’. The LXX characteristically includes a second command to ‘say’ (אֶלָּקַנְת) before the citation formula. There is some evidence within the MT of a second command to ‘say’ after the citation formula (21:14 [ET 21:9]; 21:23 [ET 21:18]), but as it stands, the MT in 39:17 is an example within Ezekiel of the citation formula being used in a situation where no message is involved, its context being the prophetic, not the rhetorical event.

Meier then refutes the suggestion that these last two sets of examples are variations of or derivations from the basic formula, הבש יְהֹreeze, because ‘the unanimous evidence from the cognate phrase in Akkadian demonstrates that the phrase’s citation function is standard and demonstrably prior to any function as a “messenger formula” in the Bible.’

Fourthly, he argues that the ANE parallels have not been understood rightly, because ‘scholars have unfortunately confused a written epistolary style with the oral despatching of messengers.’ There are a number of strands to his argument, but the main point is that, even if it be granted that the parallel in Akkadian is not with the cognate ki’am iqbi, but with the particle umma, characteristic of the introduction of

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118 Meier, Speaking, p283. Other places he notes are Jer. 26:2; 33:1-3, 23-26; 34:1-2a; 35:12-13; 37:6-7. To these can be added Hag. 2:10.
119 Cf footnote 83 above.
120 Meier, Speaking, p283.
121 Meier, Speaking, p284.
Mesopotamian letters, this particle ‘typically introduces in Babylonian any quotation made by anyone, whether messenger or not.’

Finally, ‘the repetition’ of the phrase ‘within single units’, as found particularly in Ezekiel, Haggai and Zechariah, ‘has no counterpart in messenger activity.’ Rather, it ‘is attested as a literary phenomenon in royal inscriptions of the Persian period.’

In summary, Meier concludes that phrase does not by its very presence point to messenger activity. Usually it does not have a messenger function. ‘One must look to the context to determine if messengers are using this formula as a part of their commission to identify the one who sent them. The formula is simply used to make citations of other’s words.’ Meier’s powerfully argued conclusions mean that Ezekiel cannot be assumed to be Yahweh’s messenger merely by the use of this formula. He also insists that the translation of the verb must be ‘past’ because what is introduced is simply the citation of the words of another, uttered in the past.

This in turn leaves us with two main tasks or questions. The first one is whether Ezekiel is portrayed as Yahweh’s messenger, given that the ‘messenger formula’ is probably better rendered ‘citation formula’. The second is whether we are compelled by the designation ‘citation formula’ to regard the tense as past, such that the words spoken by the prophet in the rhetorical event are (merely) a report of words spoken to the prophet by Yahweh, or in fact Yahweh speaking through the prophet.

One problem with arguing that the prophets en bloc regard themselves as messengers is the lack of concern of many of them to identify the words of Yahweh, as opposed to their own. A further concern is that only in the post-exilic period are prophets clearly acknowledged as messengers. While Ezekiel explicitly speaks of himself as a prophet, a מנהיג (Ezek. 2:5; 33:33), he is nowhere explicitly designated a messenger of Yahweh. Nonetheless, there are three strands of evidence that would support the conclusion that Ezekiel is in some sense Yahweh’s messenger.

First, there is in the book of Ezekiel the same care to identify and distinguish Yahweh’s voice as that found in Haggai, a book that clearly speaks of Haggai as Yahweh’s messenger (Hag. 1:13). While it is true that the citation formula is not the exclusive preserve of messengers, its consistent use by Ezekiel certainly mirrors the usage found amongst messengers elsewhere in the Old Testament, and mirrors that of one prophet who is explicitly identified as a messenger. Secondly, there is the temporal

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122 Meier, Speaking, pp285-86. He notes the exceptions of poetic myth and epic, where ‘umma is eschewed’ (p286 n1).
123 Meier, Speaking, p297.
124 Meier, Speaking, p298.
125 Meier, Speaking, p284.
126 Meier, Speaking, p290.
127 In Haggai 1:13, Haggai is described as ‘the messenger of Yahweh’ (הנהיג יעה) who spoke ‘with Yahweh’s message’ (תנור, נבישים); in Mal. 3:1, the messenger going ahead of Yahweh is probably a prophetic figure (see David L. Petersen, Zechariah 9-14 & Malachi, OTL, (London, SCM, 1995), pp209-10); cf. Koch, Growth, p216; 2 Chr. 36:15-16.
proximity of Ezekiel to Haggai. Given the points of similarity above about identifying Yahweh's speech, such proximity makes it more likely that Ezekiel should be understood as Yahweh's messenger. Thirdly, Meier, in his study on the messenger in the ancient Semitic world, observes that 'characteristic of West Semitic literature was the phrase, “Thus says PN”, while characteristic of Akkadian was the statement, “I will send you”.' This background accords well with the picture that is found in Ezekiel. Three times within Ezekiel's commission (2:4; 3:11, 27), Ezekiel is told that he will say to the people 'Thus has the Lord Yahweh declared.' Four times, he is described as 'sent' (נִשְׂאוּ) by Yahweh (2:3, 4; 3:5, 6). It is therefore not an unreasonable working assumption that the prophet Ezekiel is indeed Yahweh's messenger, notwithstanding the fact that the usage of the citation formula does not mirror precisely usage by messengers, nor the fact that Ezekiel, unlike messengers, did not have the same liberty to rephrase or enter into dialogue.

The second question is over the precise relationship of the words to be uttered by the prophet (or messenger) to the God who has given them to him.

Broadly, we have met two contrasting views so far. The first, that the tense must be 'past', and the translation must be 'thus has Yahweh said', is that of Zimmerli and Meier. Zimmerli comments,

'It points back to the moment when he [the messenger] received the message and was used at the time of delivery in order to appeal back to this moment. From this the perfect tense of the messenger formula becomes intelligible. At the moment of delivery of his message the messenger identifies himself with the time when he was entrusted with it by the person who commissioned him.'

The clear implication is that there is some distance between Yahweh, the sender of the message, and the words actually spoken. The words the prophet utters are the reported speech of Yahweh, not Yahweh actually speaking in the present in and through the prophet's words.

The second view, that it ought to be translated as a present tense, 'thus says Yahweh', is expressed by a number of scholars. Schmid, as we saw above, links it to the 'perfectum declarativum', linking 'statement and behavior'. Koch comments that 'the sender of the message is brought as near to the recipient of it, and speaks to him in just the same tone, as if the two were face to face.' Thus for him,

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128 Meier, Messenger, p248. Meier consciously avoids relating his work to the question of whether the prophets were messengers, however: 'The perception of the prophet as a messenger sent from God (Hag. 1:13) is a subject which can also benefit from this study but is not appropriate as a primary source for this investigation. We wish to remain precise and deal with messengers per se and not with possible permutations of the social reality as employed by the prophets who may have used the notion as a metaphor for their social status and message' (p9).
130 ‘יְנָא, TLOT 1, p160.
the Hebrew perfect does not in this case refer back to a particular point in time when the originator of the message first spoke to the messenger alone. Here the perfect is intended to express the absolute validity of the pronouncement. Thus it can only be used by a man of superior or of equal rank.\footnote{Koch, Growth, p190 n9.}

Two intermediate positions between these two can be found in Westermann and Bjørndalen. Westermann observes two occasions for using the ‘messenger formula’, and so discerns two possible translations.

\begin{quote}
In the process of sending a message, then, the messenger formula has a twofold place; it occurs two times: the sender first introduces his speech with it – that means that in the presence of the messenger whom he sends he authorizes the speech that is introduced with this formula as his speech; then when the messenger has arrived, he introduces the message that has been entrusted to him with the formula, and in this way authorizes it as the speech of the person who had sent him. Because of these two places in which the messenger formula occurs, the Hebrew perfect ‘amar cannot be clearly rendered by our present or perfect tense. If we are thinking of the moment of the commissioning, then we must say, “Thus says NN”; but if we are thinking of the moment of the delivery, then it is more exact to say, “Thus said NN.”\footnote{Westermann, Basic Forms, p102.}
\end{quote}

However, he does not take adequate account of the fact that in the vast majority of cases the citation formula occurs \textit{within} direct speech that the messenger (or prophet) is to utter, and therefore, even at the point of commissioning, the timeframe envisaged by the phrase is no different from that at delivery.

Bjørndalen, on the other hand, regards the presence of the vocative as the key element in determining a translation in the present tense: ‘Where the citation formula introduces a message with the vocative of the recipient, and the sender is identical with the cited person, the citation formula must have a present timeframe.\footnote{Wo die Zitatformel eine Botschaft im Vokativ des Empfängers einleitet, und der Absender mit der zitierten Person identisch ist, muß die Zitatformel die Zeitstufe Präsens haben. A.J. Bjørndalen, ‘Zu den Zeitstufen der Zitatformel... im Botenverkehr’, ZAW (1974), p397. Bjørndalen discusses five different groups of texts involving the ‘Zitatformel.’ His chief exception is the fifth of these, where the formula also has \textit{lishol}.}\footnote{Bjørndalen discusses five different groups of texts involving the ‘Zitatformel.’ His chief exception is the fifth of these, where the formula also has \textit{lishol}. Meier, Speaking, p291.}

It should be clear from what we have seen above that the formula is best spoken of as the ‘citation formula’, rather than the ‘messenger formula’. Nonetheless, we are faced with the disputed question whether the particular usage in this situation should extend beyond mere citation to describe the coterminous act of prophet and sender speaking in the present.

Evidence from the use of the citation formula with the prophetic event points towards this as a possibility. For example, in Jer 30:1-3, the citation formula in v.2
clearly occurs within direct speech of Yahweh to Jeremiah marked by יִדְרַכֵּךְ in v.1.\textsuperscript{136} The context therefore of the citation formula is not the reporting by B of words spoken in the past by A, whether the words were for B or for C. Rather, it introduces words spoken in the present by Yahweh to Jeremiah. Although this is an extension of the citing of the words of another, it demonstrates the necessity, at points, of a translation of the citation formula in the present tense.\textsuperscript{137}

Further, Bjerndalen rightly highlights the significance of the vocative in the relaying of A’s speech by B to C. It is not as if the identity of the prophet has been lost in the delivering of the words. After all, in scenarios involving messengers in everyday life, it is obviously essential that the messenger is not identical with the sender. Rather, the implication is ‘that the speech of the messenger should be regarded as the speech of the sender, in the vocative: as his actual address to the recipient.’\textsuperscript{138}

We need to revisit again speech-act theory and performative utterances, because they can assist us at this point. It is true that Talstra has criticised a definition of ‘performative’ that embraces this formula on two grounds.\textsuperscript{139} First, he observes that usually a performative can be discerned when ‘the one who speaks is identical with the subject of the verb’, but in this case ‘the speaker (the messenger) is not the subject of the verb (the sender).’\textsuperscript{140} Secondly, the identification of a performative is confirmed by the possibility of adding ‘hereby’.\textsuperscript{141} Talstra states that ‘kh does not refer to the very moment of speaking and acting, but introduces a quotation.’\textsuperscript{142} This might seem to preclude a performative understanding for the citation formula. However, it is possible to translate as ‘Yahweh hereby says as follows...’, with Yahweh’s words, spoken through his prophet, following. The speech act represented by the formula is a declaration, and what is happening in this phrase is rather different from what is happening in a phrase like ‘I apologise’, or ‘You are fired’, or ‘I hereby name this ship Joan of Arc’.\textsuperscript{143} He is asserting that the words that follow are Yahweh’s words. The notion of ‘deputized discourse’ enables a conception of Yahweh’s spokesperson

\textsuperscript{136} For further examples, see footnotes 117 and 118 above. For the significance of יִדְרַכֵּך in introducing direct speech, see Cynthia L. Miller, \textit{The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis}, IISL 55, (Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1996), pp163-232.


\textsuperscript{138} ‘daß die Botenrede als Rede des Absenders gelten darf, bei Vokativ: als seine aktuelle Anrede an den Empfänger.’ Bjerndalen, ‘Zeitstufen’, p402 (his emphasis).


\textsuperscript{141} \textit{IBHS}, p489 n17, in speaking of this test, notes the contrast between, ‘I hereby renounce title to the estates’ and ‘I renounce title to the estates by marrying the woman I love.’ Only in the first instance are the speaking and the acting ‘identical.’


speaking words that ‘count as’ Yahweh’s words.\textsuperscript{144} I have argued above that such words are introduced by the citation formula.

To summarise and conclude, the messenger formula is better spoken of as the ‘citation formula’, but this does not preclude the notion that Ezekiel himself appropriated the metaphor of Yahweh’s messenger, at least implicitly. Such a possibility should be borne in mind when comparing, for example, the words spoken to Ezekiel in the prophetic event, and those to be spoken in the rhetorical event. Further, although on certain occasions the citation formula does simply introduce words spoken in the past, when the vocative, in particular, is present, there is a strong indication that the words of the prophet are to count as the words of Yahweh in the present. Though the citation formula, like other formulae, may have served in one way as a means of aligning the prophet with a particular tradition (and the false prophets clearly used the same formula, too; see 13:6), its primary function was to assert the authenticity the prophet and his message.\textsuperscript{145} It asserts that, at that moment, what the prophet says, Yahweh says. It serves to mark divine speech, whether, for example, announcing the grounds for judgement (e.g. 13:3-7, 18-19) or the actual judgements themselves (13:8-12, 13-16, 20-23).

b) The signatory formula

The signatory formula (נֵא נָמ הַנִּשָּׁנָה), like the citation formula, occurs in two forms.\textsuperscript{146} The first, ‘the declaration of Yahweh’, occurs only four times in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek. 13:6, 7; 16:58; 37:14), of which two are citing the claims of the false prophets (13:6, 7). It occurs more than two hundred and fifty times in the Old Testament, with more than one hundred and sixty instances in Jeremiah. The second, ‘the declaration of the Lord Yahweh’ occurs eighty-one times in Ezekiel, and a further eleven times in the rest of the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{147} Here again, as with the citation formula, there is a difference between Ezekiel and Jeremiah in usage. Ezekiel stresses the sovereignty of the Lord Yahweh in a way that is characteristic of the book as a whole.

There have been debates about the etymology, morphology, and semantic and syntactic functions of the key element of this formula: נֵא.\textsuperscript{148} With regard to etymology, most scholars link it with the Arabic نَمَ, meaning ‘whisper’,\textsuperscript{149} while Meier argues that

\textsuperscript{144} Wolterstorff, \textit{Divine Discourse}, pp42-51.
\textsuperscript{145} Block, \textit{Ezekiel 1-24}, p33.
\textsuperscript{146} The rendition of נֵא is that of Block, \textit{Ezekiel 1-24}, p33. For other translations, see Meier, \textit{Speaking}, pp298-99.
\textsuperscript{147} Isaiah 2 times (3:15 – ‘the Lord Yahweh of hosts’; 56:8), in Jeremiah, 4 times (2:19; 49:5; 50:31– ‘the Lord Yahweh of hosts’; 2:22), and in Amos, 5 times (3:13; 4:5; 8:3, 9, 11).
\textsuperscript{149} See ‘*nَمَ’, \textit{TLOT2}, p692.
a more satisfactory derivation is from the ‘convergence of two Akkadian particles’, \(150\) umma and anumma. Of course etymological links alone are not significant, but Meier observes that these are reinforced by a ‘syntactic and semantic connection as well.’ \(151\) In particular, umma in Akkadian is, as we have seen already, ‘the particle identifying quoted speech.’ \(152\) Although ‘rarely repeated’ within an utterance ‘in Old Babylonian’, ‘in Middle Babylonian, and particularly in the peripheral dialects,’ it ‘may be repeated within a lengthy quotation or discourse apparently as a reminder that the quotation has not yet terminated.’ \(153\) Such a pattern can also be seen in Old Testament texts, though the usage of ḫn is by no means either identical with the Akkadian particles, nor indeed consistent throughout the Old Testament. \(154\)

Some have tried to locate the function of the phrase within the book of Ezekiel in the marking of the structure of utterances, and in particular, with ending a section or an oracle. \(155\) However its precise location within the oracles is hard to systematise, although the introductory function that it has, for example, in Num. 24:3-4 has been wholly superseded by the citation formula. \(156\)

What is striking for our purposes is that in its usage in the Old Testament in general, and in Ezekiel in particular, it clearly reinforces the picture of the rhetorical event as Yahweh speaking, thus confirming our understanding of the citation formula above.

This is evident from the fact that there is not a necessarily retrospective glance in the use of this marker of direct discourse. It does not even automatically point to previously-uttered words that are now being related as if in the present. It can be used by a speaker, within his speech, to alert his hearers that what follows are indeed his words. In Num. 24:3-5, one of the rare occasions when the utterance that follows is not Yahweh’s, ḫn occurs within Balaam’s speech, identifying the words that follow as his own words: ‘and he uttered his oracle, saying (ץא)א): “The oracle of Balaam son of Beor (ץאא), the oracle of the man whose eye is clear (ץאא), the oracle of one who hears the words of God (ץאא), who sees the

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\(150\) Meier, Speaking, p303. His principal arguments against links with the Arabic verb are threefold. First, the ‘quality of the utterance’ is different (p300), since ‘one refers to speech while the other refers to sound.’ Secondly, ‘the evidence for this root in biblical Hebrew is overwhelmingly nominal and not verbal.’ (p300). The only occurrence of the verb is in Jer. 23:31. Thirdly, the uniform vocalisation of the word in what he argues at this point is a reliable Masoretic tradition points more to it as ‘a particle’ (p301). He continues on pp302-303 to outline how it might be possible to derive ḫn from the two Akkadian particles.

\(151\) Meier, Speaking, p303.

\(152\) Meier, Speaking, p303.

\(153\) Meier, Speaking, pp303-304.

\(154\) Meier, Speaking, p309.

\(155\) E.g. Ronald M. Hals, Ezekiel, FOIL 19, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989), p361: the formula is ‘usually…placed at the end of a unit or a major section with a unit.’

\(156\) Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p114 outlines the different occurrences. Meier (Speaking, p309 n1), however, criticises some of the categories (‘marking “a change of topic within an oracle”, “heightening effect”’ and “anticipatory, false ending” as ‘ad hoc’, since many changes of topic are not marked in this way. Further, its usage is ‘highly variable and optional’ (Meier, Speaking, p238).
vision of the Almighty, who falls down, but with eyes uncovered: How fair are your tents...". Such an observation makes probable an interpretation of those occurrences in the rest of the Old Testament and in Ezekiel where the quoted words are indeed to be understood in the present. This is strengthened by the fact that there is no counterexample where the formula must be understood as functioning with a clear time lacuna between the speaker of the formula and the words introduced by the formula. Meier also points to the contemporary nature of the discourse marked by זנה: ‘Not only does זנה introduce speech that follows, precisely like Akkadian umma, but one of the peculiar features of the particle זנה is its frequent appearance within a quotation, re-identifying the person who speaks." In other words, the words the prophet utters are the words that Yahweh utters. Meier does not, however, seem to recognise the significance of this, for it serves to reinforce the contemporary nature of Yahweh’s words introduced by the citation formula.

Although their location within Yahweh’s speeches in the book of Ezekiel is different, the rhetorical function of the citation formula and the signatory formula is equivalent, and the false prophets use both to try to authenticate their message (Ezek. 13:6-7; 22:28): ‘this formula adds solemnity to the prophetic pronouncement by pointing to its divine source.’ Further, the signatory formula seems to have displaced over time the concluding truncated citation formula, הוהי רואים. What the prophet says, Yahweh also says.

c) The call-to-attention formula

The call-to-attention formula (הוהי רואים - ‘Hear the word of (the Lord) Yahweh’) accounts for the remaining instances of הוהי רואים in the book of Ezekiel apart from those occuring in the word-event formula. The phrase occurs seven times in the book of Ezekiel without יד (‘the Lord’), and a further three times with it. The phrase also occurs throughout the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, though it is not nearly as widespread as the first three formulae examined. It closely resembles the introduction to an official proclamation made by a herald, or the call of a singer about to start. This call-to-attention can be directed to a wide variety of addressees. In 1 Kings, it is addressed to an individual (1 Kgs. 22:19). Within the book of Ezekiel, it can be addressed to groups (e.g. false prophets (13:2), shepherds / leaders (34:7, 9), the

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157 E.g. 2 Sam. 23:1-2 (David); Prov. 30:1-2 (Agur); Ps. 36:2 (transgression); of Yahweh, see e.g. 2 Kgs. 19:33; Isa. 56:8.
158 Meier, Speaking, p306 (my emphasis).
159 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p33.
160 ‘Qm’, TLOT2, pp693-94.
162 1x in 1 Kings, in 22:19 (Micaiah) (paralleled in 2 Chr. 18:18); 2x in 2 Kings, in 7:1 (Elisha) and 20:16 (Isaiah); 4x in Isaiah, in 1:10; 28:14; 39:5; 66:5; 13x in Jeremiah, in 2:4; 7:2; 17:20; 19:3; 21:11; 22:2; 29:20; 31:10; 34:4; 42:15; 44:24, 26; 1x in Hosea, in 4:1; 1x in Amos, in 7:16.
163 Cf. 2 Kgs. 18:28, ‘Hear the word of the great king (רְאוֹעָן הַמָּלָאך), the king of Assyria!’
164 Cf. Jdg. 5:3, ‘Hear, O kings (קְנֵי־הַגְּבָרִים) give ear, O princes; to Yahweh I will sing.’
people (e.g. 18:25; 37:4; cf. 25:3)), to the city of Jerusalem (16:35), to the land or the
earth (mountains (6:3; 36:1, 4), the forest (21:3 [ET 20:47] – a probable metonymy for
Jerusalem\(^{165}\)) and to dry bones (37:4). Within Ezekiel, the only instance of the formula
introducing a message of hope, rather than of judgement, is that of 37:4, where the
prophet addresses the dry bones.

On each occasion that it occurs, it is followed by the citation formula. The clear
implication again is that the word that Ezekiel is to utter is indeed the word of Yahweh,
not merely a report or citation of that word. Further, the gap between what the prophet
receives and what the prophet is to utter is further reduced by the usage of the same
phrase, ‘word of Yahweh’, to describe both the essence of the prophetic event and the
rhetorical event.

d) Verbatim speech

In the discussion of the rhetorical event, I have made three main points. First, these
three formulae all stress that what the prophet utters is what Yahweh is saying. When
put alongside the repeated assertions by Yahweh that ‘I have spoken’, there is little
doubt that what Ezekiel is to say, Yahweh also says. Secondly, there is some good
evidence supporting the notion that Ezekiel is Yahweh’s messenger. Thirdly, the gap
between prophetic event and rhetorical event is reduced in a number of ways: by
subsuming everything within the prophetic event; by the occasional ellipsis of the
command to ‘say’ before the citation formula; by the presence of the citation formula
which ‘is styled as a literal repetition of the words that were given to the messenger at
the time that the messenger was commissioned by the sender’.\(^{166}\)

There is also a fourth way in which the gap is all but eliminated, and that is by the
explicit depiction of the words that Ezekiel is to utter as verbatim with the words
received. There is no gap between the word that the prophet received, and the word that
he is to speak. We turn our attention to such a depiction in the book, in order to assist
further our aim of locating where Yahweh’s word is to be found and how it is to be
conceived.

Elsewhere in the Old Testament, the relationship between the word that comes to
the prophet and that which he delivers as Yahweh’s word is not necessarily verbatim
(e.g. the word that comes to Elijah in 1 Kgs. 21:19, and that which he delivers in 1 Kgs.

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\(^{165}\) Scholars disagree over the referent, principally because there is no evidence of trees in the Negeb, the
desert land south of Jerusalem. Craigie argues that Ezekiel was speaking using ‘allegory’, since there was
hardly going to be a forest fire in the desert; see Peter C. Craigie, *Ezekiel*, DSB, (Edinburgh, The Saint
Andrew Press, 1983), p154. Block (Ezekiel 1-24, p663) notes support for seeing Jerusalem here from the
LXX, and from the second half of the oracle that shows ‘the correctness of this approach’ by making
Jerusalem explicit.

\(^{166}\) Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, p524. Sweeney uses the language of messengers, but the substantive point
remains the formula is styled as indicating verbatim delivery. The example that follows in the text, from 1
Kgs. 21, makes it clear that the relationship is not necessarily quite so simple.
Similarly, a messenger did not always simply deliver a message verbatim, but could respond to queries and even be creative in how to frame a particular instruction. In Ezekiel, visions cannot, of course, be reported verbatim. Nonetheless, there are four pieces of evidence with Ezekiel that point to a verbatim relationship between what he is portrayed as hearing, on the one hand, and uttering, on the other.

First, there is the unusual phrase in 3:4 ("use my very words in speaking to them"). According to The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew, the verb can follow by the noun can mean 'speak concerning' (e.g. Deut. 6:7; 11:19) or speak 'in, with, by means of', with the preposition designating 'accompaniment, method, means, instrument'. The former meaning makes no sense here. The latter is less likely than a third view, 'recite', as Weinfeld argues in his commentary on Deut. 6:7. Noting parallels with (Deut. 17:19) and (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2) and from the comparison with Exod. 13:9, 'where the sign and reminder (compare v8 here) should serve the purpose, "that the teaching of YHWH shall be in your mouth"', he maintains that the phrase 'involves recitation and reading or murmuring.' Although the LXX, the Syriac and the Vulgate reduce the force of the MT here (LXX renders with ζυγος μου), suggesting an original (cf. 2:7), they are more likely to reflect a free rendering of the MT, for there is no reason why the more difficult MT reading should have arisen. Zimmerli renders the phrase 'speak (with the authority of) my words to them', deriving such an interpretation from 'the stereotyped language of prophetic schools' which is reflected in 1 Kings 13. However, such an interpretation requires to be singular. Greenberg, followed by Allen and Block, is right when he says that 'the nuance...seems to be verbatim repetition of the message.' The force of this phrase is that Ezekiel is to speak with the 'very words' which Yahweh had spoken to him. Ezekiel's personality is not to obtrude. The mixture of Yahweh's words and the prophet's words, seen in, for example, Hosea 9:11-17 (where Hosea utters, 'Give them, O Yahweh-- what will you give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry...')

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167 Though of course such a shift could be a narratorial device, highlighting Elijah's unreliability or the twin aspects of Ahab's sin, murder (v.19) and idolatry (vv. 20-21).
168 Cf. Exod. 5:6-13; 2 Sam. 11:7,20-21,25. See Meier, Messenger, pp205, 250. We shall see below how the words of the messenger can still count as the words of the one sending.
170 DCH, vol. 2, p392. Ezek 3:4 is placed under the second of these categories.
173 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, pp92-93.
175 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p128.
176 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p68; so too idem, 'On Ezekiel's Dumbness', JBL 77 (1958), p103, 'The b of biiḇārī is...unexampled...but it would seem far better to regard it as written with a special purpose, than as a mistake: The prophet may speak only what God has put into his mouth, in the very words that God has spoken. This is also the meaning of the remarkable image of eating the scroll of prophecy, which immediately precedes these words.'
breasts' (v.14)) is absent from Ezekiel. The words of Yahweh in Ezekiel are carefully marked out. He is to speak precisely and only what Yahweh speaks to him.

The second piece of evidence that Ezekiel is to utter verbatim what Yahweh says to him is the incident within the commissioning vision of Ezekiel swallowing the scroll (2:8-3:3). This links closely with the observations above about 3:4. Yahweh's word coming to Ezekiel 'as a text' serves to limit and constrain the freedom of the prophet to modify or reshape the words. The scroll having writing on both sides symbolises a complete message to which Ezekiel may not add. "This gloomy scroll is full; it contains nothing but desolation and there is no leftover space. No amendments will be made; no codicil will be added; the sentence is final." The exclusivity of the words, and the exhaustive nature of them is further reinforced by the image of 'filling' (3:2) his stomach with them. He may not, indeed he cannot, internalise any other word before uttering it. The words that Ezekiel has swallowed, he is to utter, using precisely those words that he has been given (3:4).

Such an interpretation, linking the scroll with the message that Ezekiel is to utter, though popular with most commentators, has been challenged by Odell. She argues that the event with the scroll should be understood as a test of the prophet rather than as the legitimation of his message, seen in the consuming of the contents of the message. She advances a number of arguments to support her view.

First, she argues that the parallelism in the phrases 'hear', 'do not be rebellious' and 'open your mouth and eat' (2:8) 'emphasizes Ezekiel's obedience, not the synonymity of eating and hearing.' Secondly, in 3:1, the command 'eat...eat' and 'go, speak' (3:1) 'simply outlines a series of actions Ezekiel is to perform', rather than entailing that what is eaten is what should be spoken. Thirdly, the noun רָפַיִם is absent from this section, though very prominent in 3:4-11. Fourthly, the sequence of the narrative, in which the scroll-event precedes instructions outlining to Ezekiel what he is to do when he hears Yahweh's word, suggests that he has not yet received that word. Fifthly, the internalising of the divine message is expressed in 3:10 by taking into the heart and ears, not into the belly. Finally, her interpretation resolves, she says, the

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177 Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll*, p51 (her emphasis).
179 Baruch J. Schwartz, 'Ezekiel's Dim View of Israel's Restoration', in BETAP, p44.
180 Odell, 'You Are What You Eat', pp229-48. Eichrodt criticises the notion that there is a 'theory of prophetic inspiration' enshrined in the procedure (Ezekiel, p62). What the scroll-event indicates to him is 'on the one hand, a proof of the obedience of the person who has been chosen and, on the other hand, an assurance that the message with which he is entrusted is independent of his own subjective judgments, and is divine in origin.'
apparent conflict that has long been noted between Ezekiel's message of judgment and the description of the scroll as laments.\footnote{Odell, "You Are What You Eat", p244.}

Her alternative, which forms part of her thesis that the whole call vision from 1:1-5:17 marks the transition of Ezekiel from a priest to a prophet, is that 'what Ezekiel eats...is not the message of divine judgment but the judgment itself.'\footnote{Odell, "You Are What You Eat", p244.} He does this as a priest, bearing the guilt in a way parallel to the ordination ceremony in Lev.8-9. 'By eating the scroll, Ezekiel takes into his inner being the fate of his people.'\footnote{Odell, 'You Are What You Eat', p244.} The phrase 'words of mourning and lamentation and woe' \footnote{There are a number of textual issues here – LXX (and Targum) read the singular of נקよ (םְפִּיוֹכ); the final word is a hapax, which LXX confuses and reads כָּל הָדְרֵי. See Zimmerli, Ezekiel I, pp91-92.} speaks of the consequences, not the essence, of the message, and this precludes an understanding of the scroll as Ezekiel's message.

Odell's arguments concerning the scroll are not conclusive, however. First, although it is true that the terms used to describe what is written on the scroll speak more of the anticipated consequences of the message that Ezekiel is to utter than the content itself, it is possible that 'mourning and lamentation and woe' are instances of metonymy for the events that bring about these effects (cf. Ezek. 7:27, where the king shall 'mourn' (רָמַע), or synecdoche, where the whole of Ezekiel's message is spoken of by means of a part of it.\footnote{Cf. Zimmerli (Ezekiel I, p135), who follows Koch and Fahlgren in adopting an interpretation based on the 'synthetic view of life' for the close link between cause and effect; Allen (Ezekiel 1-19, p40) comments that 'the title refers not the content of the prophetic revelation but obliquely to its effect'; Block (Ezekiel 1-24, p125) comments, 'the words...describe the effects of the judgments he will pronounce upon his people.'} Such figures of speech are not alien to the book of Ezekiel, for in 23:24, the prophet speaks of 'wheel(s)' \footnote{See further pp172ff.} as a synecdoche for 'wheeled vehicles'.

Secondly, while it is true that there is a dimension of 'obedience' that is emphasised here,\footnote{Note particularly the discussion in Gregory Y. Glazov, The Bridling of the Tongue and the Opening of the Mouth in Biblical Prophecy, JSOTSup 311, (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp226ff.} this does not preclude the scroll being the divine message.\footnote{Baruch J. Schwartz, 'The Concentric Structure of Ezekiel 2:1-3:15', in Proceedings of the tenth world congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 16-24, 1989, ed. David Assaf, (Jerusalem, The world union of Jewish students, 1990), pp107-14. Lind similarly regards the swallowing of the scroll as central, but for him it is central in the commissioning narrative, from 1:1-3:15 (Millard C. Lind, Ezekiel, Believers Church Bible Commentary, (Scottdale, Herald Press, 1996), pp25-26, 381-82). Certainly the inclusio} Within the framework of Ezekiel receiving God's word and then speaking it in 2:8-3:3, the eating of the scroll (3:1) most naturally functions as receiving God's word. This is reinforced by two observations. First, these verses are at the centre of what Schwartz terms 'the concentric structure' of the verses from 2:1-3:15, framed by words of encouragement (2:6-7; 3:4-9), the charge to speak (2:3-5; 3:10-11), and assistance given by הָדְרֵי (2:1-2; 3:12-15).\footnote{See further pp172ff.} The 'focus' lies in 2:8-3:3, thus it makes greatest sense if this
section contains 'both charge and encouragement'. 'The Scroll-eating both orders the prophet what to say and at the same time relieves him of the responsibility of figuring out how to say it, since he has been infused with God's own words.'\textsuperscript{192} The second observation is the fact that throughout the book, Ezekiel is a prophet, priest and lawgiver like Moses.\textsuperscript{193} In these verses it is Ezekiel who is a prophet 'among them' (2:5; cf. Deut. 18:18) in whose 'mouth' Yahweh has placed his 'words' (2:8-3:3; cf. Deut. 18:18).\textsuperscript{194}

The other objections outlined above, based on a comparison between 2:8-3:3 and 3:4-11 fail to account for the fact that what is figuratively expressed in the scroll-event is then literally expressed in 3:4-11. So, for example, the observations about the apparently irreconcilability between the two narratives of the organs for internalising God's word fail to account for the imagery used.

Finally, Odell's own interpretation contains a significant shift in the referent of the words on the scroll. Initially, 'the scroll contains something that is decreed, fixed by having been written'.\textsuperscript{195} This she takes to be 'the judgment itself'.\textsuperscript{196} However it is difficult to see precisely how words of 'lamentation, mourning and woe' are 'the judgment itself'. So Odell then asserts that what he eats is 'the judgment itself and its consequences',\textsuperscript{197} and in reality, her analysis speaks more of the consequences of the judgement than the judgement itself. Although her interpretation is aimed at avoiding the 'conflict' as she sees it between the message that Ezekiel is to utter and the description of the scroll, in reality her interpretation involves a similar conflict.

Before concluding that the scroll is indeed a metaphor for the message the prophet is to utter, there is, though, a third possibility that should be considered, and another objection to the notion of scroll as Ezekiel's message.

A third way of understanding the scroll is to see the words of 'lamentation, mourning and woe' as relating to Ezekiel's experience, and his alone, by virtue of his being commissioned. They describe neither the message that he is to utter (most commentators), nor Ezekiel's embodying of the judgement on Israel and its

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\textsuperscript{192} Schwartz, 'Concentric Structure', p112.
\textsuperscript{194} See Levitt Kohn, New Heart, p109. It should be noted that there is not a verbal but a conceptual link with the notion of 'among' (ענני - Deut. 18:18; ענני - Ezek. 2:5).
\textsuperscript{195} Odell, 'You Are What You Eat', p243.
\textsuperscript{196} Odell, 'You Are What You Eat', p244.
\textsuperscript{197} Odell, 'You Are What You Eat', p244 (my emphasis).
consequences (Odell), but the experience of the prophet in his ministry. With this interpretation, the fact that the scroll is covered on both sides with writing points simply to the fact that his ministry from beginning to end will be marked by difficulty, by 'lamentation, mourning and woe'. This is true whether his message is one of judgement, or of reassurance and hope. Ezekiel needs to be willing to undergo unremitting hardship in his ministry. His swallowing the scroll is a test of that willingness.

In favour of this interpretation is the fact that this narrative occurs within the commissioning of the prophet, and 2:3-7 and 3:4-11 make it very clear that Ezekiel's ministry is going to be marked by stubborn resistance and hostility. Further, later in Ezekiel's ministry he is told to take up a lament (ניר; ch.19), echoing 2:10. Again, the experience of the death of his wife and the command not to mourn or weep (כ Atatürk, נבש) in one sense encapsulates the 'lamentation, mourning and woe' which is to be his lot. The lack of public mourning in 24:15-24 does not preclude inward mourning. In addition, the experience of frustration, of hostility, of rejection seems to have been the reality, as portrayed in the book, from the beginning to the end of Ezekiel's ministry, hence both sides of the scroll are covered with the writing.

There are two difficulties with this third view. First, there are almost no verbal allusions or indicators that the scroll relates to Ezekiel's own experience. This is not insuperable, since there are almost no verbal allusions that link the contents of the scroll to his message, but the gap between the words on the scroll and Ezekiel's own experience is greater than that between the words on the scroll and the judgement announced. Secondly, as highlighted above, the structure of the unit highlights the scroll-eating not just as an act of obedience, but also as an act of equipping the prophet with the message he needs to bring.

A possible further objection to the notion that the scroll speaks of Ezekiel's message is the observation that Ezekiel's message was not exclusively one of doom and destruction. Hölscher resolves this by arguing that the real Ezekiel only announced judgement. Schwartz highlights and then resolves it in a different fashion. He believes that there is no basis within the book for the shift in Ezekiel's ministry from oracles of judgement and doom to oracles speaking of Yahweh's purposes to restore and prosper the exiles. Given that the scroll is indeed the message to proclaim, the message of the restoration of Israel is of a piece with the oracles of judgement, wholly and unchangeably melancholic:

'For Ezekiel, the future restoration of Israel is not something distinct from and subsequent to YWH's punishment of his people, but rather a direct outgrowth of
it. According to Ezekiel, YHWH’s ultimate decision to restore his people’s fortunes is not the result of any change in their feelings or behavior towards him or in his disposition toward them. And since Israel’s unregenerate evil and YHWH’s wrathful resolve to requite them for it remain unaltered, Ezekiel never really alters his message.201

It is not necessary to go with either Hölscher or Schwartz. The most common view, often linked with Ezekiel’s dumbness, is that the fall of Jerusalem, or news of the fall of Jerusalem, precipitates a shift in the thrust of the message.202 At one level, that is of course true, since the balance of the message clearly shifts. However, it naturally raises questions about the place and function of oracles of salvation in chs. 1-24. Those scholars who regard such oracles as post-587 additions do not have a problem at this point, because until the fall Ezekiel’s message was unremitting ‘lamentation, mourning and woe’,203 but they lose synchronic coherence if they continue to maintain the scroll spoke of the message. A second view, suggested by Odell, is that a transition in the book is evident in Ezek. 24:15-24.204 For her, the prohibition against mourning is not concerned with limiting expressions of grief. Rather, it has a social function, expressing dissociation from the one who has died.205 In similar fashion, the putting on of a turban has a wider social function. She notes that it occurs in contexts unrelated to mourning, and serves principally to mark a change in the status of the one who puts the turban on.206 For her, Ezek. 24:15-24 ‘signifies...that God has chosen the exilic community over Jerusalem, and that Ezekiel’s actions are a sign of this election.’207 Odell’s arguments about the social function of the prohibition against mourning and of the putting on of the turban are well made. However, her suggestive thesis needs further development. In Ezekiel, it is the exiles who are to put on turbans (24:23), yet, in Isa. 61:10, as Odell herself notes,208 it is the bridegroom who puts on a turban as a mark of the change in his status, so the parallel is not exact. It is not easy to see how the exiles are to act like a bridegroom, and yet be Yahweh’s ‘betrothed’ after his wife, Jerusalem, has died. Secondly, given that the exiles remain rebellious until the end of the book, the change in status needs to be some kind of proleptic change.

The best solution is to recognise that in view of the anticipated hard-heartedness of Ezekiel’s addressees, and the anticipated 40 years in exile (cf. 4:6), even messages of

201 Schwartz, ‘Ezekiel’s Dim View’, p55.
202 Cf. especially Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, pp56ff.
203 So e.g. Hals, Ezekiel, pp70-71; Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, ppxxviii-ix.
206 Odell, ‘Genre and Persona’, p203. Instances where it occurs include ‘in the description of the clothing worn by priests’ (Ezek. 44:8; Exod. 39:28), ‘or in accounts of election or restoration to high office’ (Zech. 3:5), ‘or in wedding imagery’ (Isa. 61:10). This wider perspective concerning change of status explains how turbans can be associated with mourning.
hope and salvation that, within the timeframe of the book, predated the fall of Jerusalem were not messages of hope and comfort for that generation.

The second piece of evidence, then, pointing to the verbatim communication of Yahweh's words is the motif of the prophet swallowing the scroll and subsequently speaking Yahweh's words.

The third piece of evidence that points towards the verbatim nature of the relationship between the words Ezekiel receives and those he utters is the only instance recorded of the prophet actually speaking to his exilic audience (24:20ff.). There, in response to the people's question in v.19 about Ezekiel's lack of mourning, Ezekiel replies to them by relaying to them his experience of the prophetic event, and the words he received in that prophetic event: 'Then I said to them, "The word of Yahweh came to me...".' Thus the 'rhetorical event' consists of Ezekiel simply repeating verbatim the prophetic event. There is no gap between them.

The fourth and final piece of evidence is the form of the book itself. The readers of the book are not presented with the rhetorical event, of the prophet delivering his words, but with the prophetic event, of the prophet receiving Yahweh's words. Such an approach leaves no gap between the two events. What the prophet received is what confronts the reader (and, presumably, the prophet's audience). The word of Yahweh does not just come to the prophet, it comes to the readers of the book.

e) Summary

In summary, though the book of Ezekiel hardly ever records the prophet actually speaking, yet it is clear, through the use of the different formulae introducing speech, that there is a distinction between the prophetic event and the rhetorical event. However, such a distinction should not obscure the point that Ezekiel was essentially to utter verbatim what he received. Further, the rhetorical event is not simply a repetition of words that Yahweh said to him, and instructed him to relay. Rather, the rhetorical event is Yahweh speaking.

3. Yahweh's ordinances and statutes

Until now, our focus on Yahweh's word in the book of Ezekiel has been exclusively on the prophetic word. It is a mistake, however, when studying the relationship between the word of God and the spirit of God from a theological perspective, to limit Yahweh's word to the 'prophetic word.' Vriezen notes, when writing about revelation by the word, that besides the 'word' to the prophet, there is 'revelation to the priest, who receives torah (instruction) from God.' Vriezen notes, when writing about revelation by the word, that besides the 'word' to the prophet, there is 'revelation to the priest, who receives torah (instruction) from God.'


Ezek. 5:6f; 11:20; 18:17; 20:11, 13, 19, 21, 24.
Thus Yahweh stands behind these words in the same way that he stands behind the prophetic word — he is the author and speaker of both. This broadening of the field of study is not invalidated either by the fact, noted above, that יָדַרְתְּ - לֹאֲךָ is a technical term for the prophetic word, or Gerleman’s contention that the seven passages where the noun יָדַרְתְּ in construct relationship with ‘Yahweh’, indicates unequivocally God’s legal word, are late. Yahweh’s words are broader than the prophetic ‘word of Yahweh.’ A theological examination of the relationship between ‘word’ and ‘spirit’ will entail looking at the different kinds of Yahweh’s words. Precisely how Yahweh’s יָדַרְתְּ relates to these words of Yahweh, we shall examine below in Part III.

4. The book of Ezekiel itself

It has already been noted that the word of Yahweh is primarily a speech event. It needs to be asked, however, to what extent the book of Ezekiel, as opposed to the words that the prophet received, was understood as the ‘word of Yahweh’ by the implied author. In other words, is the book of Ezekiel itself a speech event of Yahweh in its own right, or a record of a succession of speech events? Again, this is important if we are to be in a position to understand precisely at what point, if at all, and in what way, if at all, Yahweh’s יָדַרְתְּ relates to such a speech event, if it be such. In this section, I shall look at the two main ways in which the book as a whole might be understood as Yahweh’s word. First I shall look briefly at the proposal of Ellen Davis, that the prophet communicated in writing. I shall argue that this approach, while rightly recognising the literary nature of much of the book, is ultimately not adequate. Secondly, I shall look at the significance of 1: 3, and shall argue that it makes sense to see it as a superscription for the book of Ezekiel as a whole, and that, while it does differ from the ways of marking direct discourse within the narrative, nonetheless, it makes a claim for the book as a whole — the written words of the prophet, along with the biographical information — as Yahweh’s communication to the readers.

Although the prophets wrote some of their oracles down before the exile (Isa. 30:8; Hab. 2:2; Jer. 36), it is likely that the exile was formative and influential in the

213 Ezek. 44:24.
214 Num. 15:31; Deut. 5:5; 2 Sam. 12:9; 1 Chr. 15:15; 2 Chr. 30:12; 34:21; 35:6.
215 - תּוֹרָה, TLOT1, p331.
216 Cf. Claus Westermann, who, though acknowledging that his categories ‘only approximately and inexacty encompass the richness of God’s words’ (p23), divides Yahweh’s words into three: the word of announcement, the directive word (torah understood as instruction) and the cultic word (Westermann, Elements of Old Testament Theology, pp17-23); also Preuss, Old Testament Theology, vol. 1, pp196-97 for the same points.
217 Who is clearly distinct from the narrator in the book, the prophet Ezekiel himself (cf. 1:1-3).
collecting of material. As Eichrodt notes, 'the more during the Exile men were compelled to make reading from the sacred Scriptures the focus of divine worship, the more natural it became to look for the word as a fixed entity in a sacred book.'

In her interesting study, Swallowing the Scroll, Davis puts forward the thesis that Ezekiel set out to communicate with his audience in writing. This is not to deny oral features to his oracles, but it is to say that 'Ezekiel's achievement is in making narrative a vehicle of prophecy.' Central to her thesis is the relationship between ingestion of the scroll and Ezekiel's dumbness (2:8-3:3; 3:26): 'During the period of dumbness, Ezekiel is merely the vehicle of the divinely authored text' since, up to the fall of Jerusalem, his fellow exiles need no new word at all. For her, the move from oral to literary was not so much a response, a reaction to the past and the present but a creative movement, one that shaped the future. By prophesying through a literary work, the focus moved from the prophet to the prophecy, from the person to the text. So she sees it as crucial that we understand 'literary activity as an instrument of social change and not merely a means of reflecting its occurrence.' Here, then, Yahweh's word is intimately linked with the book.

Davis' work, though, does not always account adequately for the public dimensions and oral features of the book; some features, such as the great emphasis on marking divine speech, require further explanation. More significantly, as Block points out, it is not obvious that the editors of the book of Ezekiel linked clearly the swallowing of the scroll and Ezekiel's dumbness. Thirdly, the fact that the word came to Ezekiel 'as a text' does not mean that Ezekiel had to pass it on as text, as Davis argues. It may simply mean that the prophet is not at liberty to alter what Yahweh says, and that, as I argued above, the prophet is to utter Yahweh's words verbatim. Davis' suggestion, then, is not compelling.

If we turn our attention then to Ezek. 1:3, we are faced with two questions. The first is, 'In what sense is this verse a superscription?' The second, which depends on the answer to the first, is 'If it is indeed a superscription, in what way or to what extent does it signal that what follows is Yahweh's speech?'

Many of the prophetic books, as well as other books of different types, have superscriptions. Some have as their introduction a variation of the word-event formula in the 3rd person (e.g. Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1), a formula in superscriptions that is often attributed to the circles associated with Deuteronomy. Thus, these prophetic books

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219 Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, p126.
220 Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, p56.
221 Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, p131.
224 Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, p51 (her emphasis).
225 יִדְבָּר dābhar, יִדְבָּר dābhar', TDOT 3, p113; Lindblom, Prophecy, pp279-80; Gene M. Tucker, 'Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of a Canon', in Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament
could be understood as the 'word of Yahweh'. In Ezek. 1:3, the word-event formula occurs, from the perspective of the implied author, describing Ezekiel in the 3rd person, '...the word of Yahweh came to the priest Ezekiel son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of Yahweh was on him there.' Should the book of Ezekiel be understood in a similar way?

In his article examining prophetic superscriptions, Tucker excludes the book of Ezekiel.226 There are a number of reasons why 1:3 might be excluded. First, superscriptions tend to stand at the head of the book, outside the body of the work,227 but Ezek. 1:3 does not. Secondly, superscriptions are syntactically unrelated to what follows, but Ezek. 1:3 is incorporated into the text (cf. the 3rd person, 'the hand of Yahweh was upon him').228 Thirdly, superscriptions tend not to be clauses in their own right,229 but Ezek. 1:3 has a main verb. Fourthly, most scholars link v.2 with v.3, thus introducing a specificity to the 'word' that came to the prophet, either to the 'word' that the prophet received beginning in 2:1,230 or to the vision as a whole.231 Such a linking of v.2 and v.3 also makes this less like a superscription. Finally, v.3 separates two standard Ezekielian elements introducing a vision, the action of the 'hand of Yahweh' which precedes every vision, and the description of the vision as סְפָרֶה לִי נַחֲלָה (cf. 8:3; 40:2), thus apparently delimiting v.3 to the vision that follows.

However, there are a number of strong reasons why Ezek. 1:3 should be treated as a superscription for the book. First, it clearly stands apart from v.1 and v.4 because of the shift in person from 1st (vv.1, 4) to 3rd (v.3); a different voice is heard – that of the implied author, not the narrator. Secondly, it is likely that v.2 is linked more closely with v.1 than with v.3.232 While it is theoretically possible that the awkward incomplete date in v.2 was added later to specify further the time of the once clear, but now unclear, 30th year in v.1,233 it is more likely that v.2 went with v.1 from the beginning, given that the other dates in the book are defined with reference to Jehoiachin. This means that the form is much closer to other prophetic superscriptions. Thirdly, if v.3 were not a superscription, the word-event formula would then introduce a vision, a unique function in the book. Fourthly, where the word-event formula is used elsewhere in Ezekiel, it is

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226 Tucker, 'Prophetic Superscriptions', p59.
227 Tucker, 'Prophetic Superscriptions', p58.
228 Zimmerli (Ezekiel 1, p82), however, comments, 'One has to read סְפָרֶה לִי נַחֲלָה "upon me"'. This is based on his reconstruction of the original vision report (p108).
229 Tucker, 'Prophetic Superscriptions', p59.
230 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p41.
231 Allen comments, 'It provides a superscription, not for the book, since only one oracle (דָבָר "word") is in view, but strictly for the unit 1:1-3:15' (Ezekiel 1-19, p23); Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p89.
232 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, pp100-101; Renz, Rhetorical Function, pp133-34.
233 Possibly in a similar fashion to the often-discerned deuteronomistic redaction of the superscription in Amos 1:1 made necessary by the relatively short-lived specificity of the reference to the 'earthquake'. For this point on Amos, see Tucker 'Prophetic Superscriptions', pp69-70.
introduced differently (with הַר וֹלְדוּ not with הַר וֹלְדוּ֫י). Fifthly, Allen’s observation that the singular יִרְדַּב signifies only ‘one oracle’ does not take account of the singular in Hosea, Zephaniah, Micah and Joel. Finally, its location within the text and its different syntax are both explicable in terms of the uniqueness of the literary setting. Not only is the narrative in the 1st person, but a geographical and temporal reference has already been supplied in vv.1-2. By giving the implied author a word that vindicates the claim of the narrator, it furthers the rhetorical purpose of the book.\(^{234}\)

In conclusion, the redactional ‘heading’ of the book is restricted to v.3, which serves to introduce the book as a whole.\(^{235}\) It seems likely, then, that the author of the book of Ezekiel saw the book as a whole as Yahweh’s word. Far from presenting an account of the prophet’s ministry in any biographical sense,\(^{236}\) Yahweh’s word is re-presented with fresh significance to the readers of the book.

The second question concerns the way in which or the extent to which such a superscription indicates that what follows is Yahweh’s speech.

Meier has rightly observed that these prophetic superscriptions differ from the usual marking of direct discourse in that they summarize what follows, rather than introducing it.\(^{237}\) Further, he notes that a rubric can become a marker of direct discourse, as in Zech. 1:7, ‘where Zechariah’s autobiographical discourse is disconcertingly introduced as a divine oracle’.\(^{238}\) For these reasons, he is reluctant to see such superscriptions as indicating that the ‘entire text...is enclosed within quotation marks.’\(^{239}\) However, to say that it is not ‘direct discourse’ in the same sense as the original oracles does not mean that it does not ‘count as’ Yahweh’s word. Indeed the point in adding the superscriptions is to give authority to the written words, with all their historical specificity, that the words had when spoken. As Mays comments on Hosea, ‘The book as a whole is “the word of Yahweh”, the message of the God of Israel. The category of “word” (דָּבָר) is extended to include the total tradition deriving from a prophet, all his oracles and the narratives which tell of his activity.’\(^{240}\) The book of Ezekiel confronts the readers directly with the same word that confronted the

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\(^{236}\) The framing of the narrative of the book with reference to Yahweh’s word thus contradicts von Rad’s suggestion that ‘the Book of Ezekiel is practically a long prophetic autobiography’ (*Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2, p265).

\(^{237}\) The rubric supplies a context; the DD [Direct Discourse] marker assumes it’. Meier, *Speaking*, p23.

\(^{238}\) Meier, *Speaking*, p23.


prophet, re-presented to them. Such a perspective points to an understanding of that word speaking afresh to the readers / hearers.

5. The recipients of Yahweh’s word

The discussion above reveals how complex the relationship is between Yahweh’s word, and those to whom it comes. The book portrays the prophetic word coming to the prophet. It envisages the prophet conveying that prophetic word to his exilic audience. However, such a conveying occurs through oracles addressed, apparently, to a variety of addressees, both animate (passim) and inanimate (mountains in ch.6, the Negev in 21:3-5 [ET 20:47-49]), both present (the exiles) and absent (Jerusalemites in ch.16).²⁴¹ It depicts Yahweh’s laws and statutes, given long ago to the house of Israel’s ancestors (20:11, 19), as being now Yahweh’s speech both to the Jerusalemites (5:6-7; 11:12) and to the exiles (18:17; 36:27; 37:24). Further, Yahweh’s words to the prophet, and the narrative framework within which they are contained, are also re-presented to the readers / hearers of the book of Ezekiel.

Such complexity renders it necessary to proffer a framework for understanding the functioning of Yahweh’s word and its relationship to the different groups, as a counterpart to our discussion of the different communication actions. This is essential because we may find that Yahweh’s word relates to Yahweh’s word at particular points, or in particular communication situations.

Wolterstorff draws a number of helpful distinctions, and provides useful categorisation for different recipients of a word, based on insights derived from speech-act theory.²⁴² He notes, first, that many (not all) speech acts have an addressee; so, for example, I promise someone. In the book of Ezekiel, Yahweh’s speech acts at one level all have the prophet as the addressee. The book as a whole is narrated from the perspective of the prophet himself, yet the prophet is portrayed not so much as a communicator of the word of Yahweh, but as a receiver of it. At another level, however, we see how the mountains, Jerusalem and others, as well as the exiles, are also the addressees of the speech acts that Ezekiel is told to utter. At another level still, those to whom the book was presented are the addressees of the book.

Secondly, often persons other than the addressee will hear / read one’s text. These Wolterstorff terms the audience. Within this audience, there may be some for whom it was intended that they read or hear what was said. This group he calls the intended audience. Within this intended audience, there are (potentially) two groups: the speaker or writer may have intended that particular people be in that audience (IA.1), or it may be that anyone of a certain sort would be the audience (IA.2). Where the prophet is

²⁴¹ Pace Brownlee, Ezekiel 1-19, who argues that Ezekiel did in fact deliver the oracles in person. For a cogent defence of the majority view that Ezekiel prophesied exclusively in Babylon, see Renz, Rhetorical Function, pp27-38.

²⁴² Wolterstorff, Divine Discourse, pp54ff.
instructed to address speech acts to addressees other than the exiles, the prophet’s intended audience (IA.1) is the exiles in Babylon (3:11); indeed, the addressees are addressees in form only, since there is no indication that the prophet did indeed address his words to those whom he is apparently instructed to address. In these instances, it is not the addressees who are expected to respond to the word of Yahweh, but the intended audience, the exilic community. Where the prophet is instructed to address speech acts to the exiles, the identity of the addressees and the intended audience is the same. With regard to the book as a whole, it is likely that the intended audience (IA.1) is the same as the addressees. We shall look at their identity below. Whether the speaker or writer intended that people of a particular sort (i.e. IA.2) would hear / read the book of Ezekiel depends not least on an understanding of the nature of inspiration of the book as a whole, and lies outside the scope of our study.

Thirdly, a single illocutionary act may have more than one addressee – one may address one’s remarks to a number of people. In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet himself is, as we have seen, the primary addressee of Yahweh’s word. There are, though, other addressees of the prophet’s words envisaged.

This, Wolterstorff says, is more obvious than the fourth point, that a single locutionary act may say different things to different addressees. He gives the example of a mother at the evening family meal asserting, ‘Only two more days until Christmas.’ He observes that, to her children, the meaning is presumably something like ‘Isn’t it exciting?’ or perhaps, ‘Be patient!’, but to her husband, she might mean ‘Stop going off to the golf course and get the shopping done instead!’ Thus one locutionary act (‘Only two more days until Christmas’) may contain more than one illocutionary act. An act of imagination, of interpretation, is required on the part of the hearer or reader to discern the illocutionary force of the locutionary act. In the book of Ezekiel, the addressees of a speech act are not differentiated one from another at any point, such that the illocutionary force could be seen to be different for different addressees. Clearly this could not be the case for Yahweh’s words to the prophet, since he alone is the

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243 This is not tautological. Because the addressees were not the intended audience, it does not necessarily mean that the prophet did not speak to them. It is quite possible for a person to address another, while the addressee is not the intended audience at all. When British Prime Minister Tony Blair replies on television to a question by television presenter David Frost, formally he will be addressing David Frost, but his intended audience is the viewing public, not David Frost.

244 These include oracles that Ezekiel is to address to false prophets (13:2ff.), the leaders (‘shepherds’) of Israel (34:7, 9), the exilic community as a whole (chs. 14, 18, 20, 36), and princes (45:9). In many of these oracles, it is not surprising, then, that there are direct calls to action aimed at those whom the prophet is to address (14:6; 18:30f.; 20:30, 39; 33:11b; 36:32b; 45:9).

245 Cf. for example, the claim in 1 Peter that ‘it was revealed to them [i.e. the prophets] that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven— things into which angels long to look!’ (1 Pet. 1:12).

addressee. It could, though, be the case for Ezekiel’s words he is to utter to his addressees / intended audience.

In general, the intended audience is perceived as a unity, as ‘the house of Israel.’ In that respect, Joyce is right to point to the corporate nature both of judgement and restoration.247 There are, however, hints of a possible ‘self-differentiation’ within ‘the house of Israel’ dependent on the attitudes of those hearing Ezekiel’s words. One striking example is that found in 3:27. By way of modifying the apparently blanket statement about Ezekiel’s dumbness, Yahweh continues in v.27,

"But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh’; let those who will hear, hear; and let those who refuse to hear, refuse; for they are a rebellious house.’"

Here is a tacit acknowledgement, even anticipation, that there could be different responses to Ezekiel’s words. In 11:14-20, in response to the self-centred, self-satisfied statement of those in Jerusalem who claim that they, and not those in exile, will possess the land, Yahweh promises restoration to those in exile. In the difficult v.21, Yahweh announces, ‘but as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads.’248 The most obvious reference here is to those in Jerusalem in v.15, who are marked by ‘detestable things’ and ‘abominations’ (v.18). However, Allen and Block are right to see here a reference to those in exile who are also marked by idolatry (14:1-11; cf. 20:32), and whose heart (v.19) needs renewing.249 Thus in the same locutionary act at the same time to the same set of addressees, Ezekiel may be both condemning and promising, depending on the attitude and heart of those addressees.250

Fifthly, a given text (locutionary act) can be used on different occasions to say different things (or to re-say the same thing) to the same or different addressees. The important distinction that Wolterstorff wants to maintain here is that saying something by authoring a text is different from saying something by presenting a text to someone, whether it is a text that one has oneself authored, or one that someone else has authored.251 The illocutionary force may change by using someone else’s speech, or by a person performing the same locutionary act in a different context. Wenk gives the

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248 See Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p129 for a discussion of some of the textual issues.
249 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p166; Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p355. Other instances where there is evidence of (potential) distinctions in the addressees include 20:38 and 34:17-22. See further Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, pp79-80.
250 Cf. Möller’s observation on prophetic judgement oracles that ‘it is the addressees who “decide” what the speech act counts as’. Karl Möller, ‘Words of (In-)evitable Certitude? Reflections on the Interpretation of Prophetic Oracles of Judgement’, in Bartholomew, Green and Möller (eds.), After Pentecost, p368. There is a fine distinction between this point, and the closely related one, whereby the same illocution has different perlocutionary effects, such as hardening or contrition. This would obtain if no distinctions were recognised or envisaged within the intended audience (IA.1), but were only revealed after the locutionary act.
251 Cf. Thiselton, New Horizons, p41.
example of a joke. In the first setting, the force of the joke might be to entertain. However, the same joke could be told in a different setting, whether in oral or written form, to educate, by providing an example of good (or bad) humour. Thus though the prophet was the addressee and recipient of the word of Yahweh, its 're-presentation' within the book of Ezekiel may carry a different illocutionary force. For example, in Ezek. 2:1-7, the call to Ezekiel serves as Yahweh commissioning the prophet. That is the original illocutionary force of such a statement, as the narrative presents it to us. In saying these words to Ezekiel in the vision, Yahweh is commissioning the prophet. However, the author, in re-presenting these words to his readers, authenticates the prophet. Ezekiel is a prophet who has received Yahweh's call. He also warns the readers, as we shall see, not to be like Ezekiel's addressees but to be like the prophet.

In the same way, what was said previously by the prophet Ezekiel (or, more properly, what was instructed to be said) can now serve to speak to a different community by way of them being presented with the finished book of Ezekiel, which includes those same words. This is true, even if the audience of the book includes some who heard the words when they were first uttered. For example, oracles initially uttered by the prophet to assert the fall of Jerusalem (a speech act Austin would probably term a 'verdictive') can no longer function in that way once Jerusalem itself has fallen. By being re-presented within a larger 'speech event', these same oracles do something different. In order to think what, I must look at the related matter of the distinction between 'direct' and 'indirect' speech acts. Yule outlines this clearly.

An indirect speech act is one where there is an indirect relationship between the 'structure' of the speech act and its 'function.' An example he gives is the utterance, 'It's cold outside.' When this utterance is used to make the statement, 'I hereby tell you about the weather,' it is functioning as a 'direct' speech act. Its structure is declarative, and it functions to make a statement. However, when this utterance is used to make a command or request, 'I hereby request of you that you close the door,' it is functioning as an 'indirect' speech act. Though its structure is declarative, it functions not to make a

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253 Though care needs to be taken here, since questions concerning the historicity of particular events could be raised by distinguishing between events in Ezekiel's ministry and those recorded in the book. We have access only to the literary account.
254 Cf. Ronald E. Clements, 'The Chronology of Redaction in Ezekiel 1-24', in *EHB*, p290. He comments, 'The original prophetic message possessed a clear and firmly defined context dictated by the historical and political situation in which it was given. As a written prophecy, however, preserved through a period when that original context had receded into the past, it acquired a new context, partly provided by the new historical situation that had arisen, but also very substantially affected by the larger literary context in which it was now placed.'
255 Austin, *How To Do Things*, p150. Austin categorises 'verdictives' as 'typified by the giving of a verdict, as the name implies, by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire. But they need not be final; they may be, for example, an estimate, reckoning, or appraisal.'
statement about the weather, but as a request or command that you close the door. In the case of the oracles of judgement on Jerusalem re-presented to the book’s audience, they do not function as ‘direct’ speech acts. Though they are declarative, they do not make a statement, ‘I hereby tell you about the destiny of Jerusalem,’ since the book’s addressees already know. Rather, as an ‘indirect’ speech act, they request or command the audience to repent, to distance themselves from any allegiance to Jerusalem and from what caused such a downfall. In other words, and this is critical to my reading of the book, some oracles acquire a new life, and a new illocutionary force comprehensible by seeing them as ‘indirect’ speech acts. Through such oracles, the readers of the book are called to repentance.²⁵⁸

This analysis means that it is not necessary to posit different addressees (and an intended audience) of the book from those who had, in fact, heard the prophet himself speak. Oracles that they had (mostly) heard before could have been presented again with a new illocutionary force. This observation does not demonstrate that they were the same addressees. What it does do is show that the book of Ezekiel need not be simply a collection of the prophet’s oracles, even if it be granted that the addressees had heard some (or all) of them before.

If we turn now from categorising the addressees and seeing how Yahweh’s word can be understood as coming to them to the identity of the addressees, we immediately find ourselves potentially entering complex debates over dating, provenance and historicity. The scope of this thesis, however, will limit our involvement in these debates somewhat. Above, we identified four different communication situations in which Yahweh’s word can be seen. The first three, Yahweh addressing the prophet, the prophet speaking to his intended audiences, and Yahweh’s statutes and ordinances being re-presented to the exiles, are all wholly ‘within’ the book, so an examination of the relationship between Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s word that comes in each one of these three situations can be conducted ‘within’ the book itself. In other words, we can explore the relationship between word and the word that comes to the addressees / intended audience implied in the text without entering these complex debates. The fourth communication situation, however, which speaks of Yahweh’s word as it comes via the book itself, does require us to make judgements about the identity of the addressees. Their identity is important for two reasons. First, an understanding of how the oracles or visions that came to Ezekiel function when re-presented to the addressees of the book depends on precisely to whom these words are addressed. There is, though, the problem of circularity at this point. The identity of the addressees is determined by the content of the book. The function of the book is then determined by the identity of the addressees. Such circularity is not ultimately avoidable. The best approach is to

²⁵⁸ See further pp155ff. below.
assess the degree to which the hypothesised addressees fits with the proposed understanding of the book and its oracles within it.

Secondly, the identity of the addressees is important within this thesis not so much in its own right, since we can assess the book's understanding of the relationship between God's נָשָׁתָה and the word that comes to its implied readers without certain knowledge. Rather, I need to make judgements about the book as a whole, and the addressees of the book, because Part II will explore the book's portrayal of word, נָשָׁתָה and prophetic inspiration within the context of possible historical developments. That is only possible when the book of Ezekiel itself is located within the continuum that is Israel's history.

Although a consideration of historical developments might suggest that we do need, after all, to be concerned for the historical location of the individual oracles in the book, this is diminished by the fact that the book as a whole points to a terminus ad quem of around 538 B.C.E, and not later than 516 B.C.E,259 and to the addressees being the exiles in Babylon. Two factors point in this direction.

First, negatively, the book does not reflect a post-exilic situation. There are a number of strands of evidence that lead to this conclusion. First, nothing in the book points to the return from exile as being an historical fact. Even the Gog oracle, which speaks of the situation where the return to the land has happened, still portrays such a return as future. Secondly, the book reveals no 'hint' of the Persian empire succeeding the Babylonian.260 Thirdly, the book's assertion that the whole population of Judah was annihilated would have made little sense in view of the conflict between those who returned from exile and those who remained (and survived) in Judah.261 Fourthly, 'the book does not address any of the specific issues that arose in the post-exilic community in Jerusalem, such as dyarchical leadership, mixed marriages and the deterioration of Judah's economic conditions.'262 Fifthly, the book does not give any indication of a Diaspora setting, speaking neither of how to worship Yahweh in another land, nor how to cope with living in a foreign land with little or no expectation of a return.263

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259 This is not to say that there have not been subsequent textual glosses. It is to say that a distinction can be made between textual criticism and redaction criticism. See Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, pxxvii; Renz, Rhetorical Function, pp9-10. For the redactional shaping of the book, see also Terence Collins, The Mantle of Elijah: The Redaction Criticism of the Prophetical Books, The Biblical Seminar 20, (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1993), ch. 4; and, in particular, chs. 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15 in the collection of essays by Clements (Ronald E. Clements, Old Testament Prophecy: From Oracles to Canon, (Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 1996)). For Clements, 'virtually all the substantive material in the book belongs to sixth century B.C.' (Ronald E. Clements, 'The Ezekiel Tradition: Prophecy in a Time of Crisis', in idem, Old Testament Prophecy, p157). In his commentary, though, he dates the Gog oracle to 'at least two centuries after Ezekiel's time' (Clements, Ezekiel, p170). Rooker, from a linguistic perspective, concludes that the book typifies 'the transitional link between pre-exilic and post-exilic BH [Biblical Hebrew]' and notes that this is 'consistent with the exilic setting reflected in the book.' Rooker, Biblical Hebrew in Transition, p186; so too Hurvitz, Linguistic Study.
260 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, pxxvi.
261 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p9 n28.
262 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p232.
263 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p232.
The second factor in arriving at an exilic date and a Babylonian provenance is the converse of the first factor. The book itself makes sense in precisely that situation because it tackles the question of whether “Israel” has a future or would disappear from history.\(^{264}\) When read from the perspective of an exilic audience located between, on the one hand, Yahweh’s judgement seen in the destruction of Jerusalem and an audience unresponsive to the prophet Ezekiel’s message, and, on the other hand, the return from exile, the book makes best sense. As we saw earlier in our review of English monographs on Ezekiel, the reinstatement of the book of Ezekiel has given rise to a number of studies which in turn serve to reinforce the picture given of a book essentially complete by the end of the exile. The major exception is Tuell, who, although regarding Ezek. 40-48 as having a clear shape and purpose, dates the second of the two sources he discerns in these chapters to the reign of King Darius I in the Persian era (521-486BC).\(^{265}\) However, it is not easy to see how Tuell’s view relates to the first factor above.\(^{266}\) Further, the transmission of holiness envisaged in Ezek. 44:19, a text dated by Tuell to the Persian era, does not sit easily with the historical understanding embodied in Hag. 2:12, where it seems that holiness is not transmissible through contact with clothes.

In short, Kuenen’s comment, originally refuting suggestions that the book of Ezekiel is pseudepigraphic, is clearly applicable to all attempts to remove the book from an exilic date and provenance:

“The book of Ezekiel...if removed from Babylonia and the exilic era to Judaea and a later century, becomes a purposeless and unintelligible piece of writing. Whoever in the future again denies its authenticity should be mindful of the duty to give at least some account of the purpose the alleged author had in mind, of the knowledge he displays, and of the expectations and ordinances he postulates.”\(^{267}\)

6. Summary

The relationship between Yahweh’s word, on the one hand, and the different addressees (actual or envisaged) and the different audiences, on the other, is a complex one in the book. Although it is at once apparent that everything is subsumed within Yahweh’s word coming to the prophet, it is also apparent that Yahweh’s word can be seen both in the words Ezekiel is commanded to utter, in the statutes and ordinances that the exiles are supposed to obey, and in the contents of the book itself. Speech-act theory and Wolterstorff’s analysis of issues surrounding the recipients of a speech act provide a helpful framework within which to think about Yahweh’s word and its relation to the different people groups to whom that word comes. In particular, the possibilities that

\(^{264}\) Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, p232.
\(^{265}\) Tuell, *Law of the Temple*.
\(^{266}\) See further Mein, *Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile*, p252.
one speech event can have a different illocutionary force for different addressees, and that the same words can have a different illocutionary force by virtue of being represented in a different context, perhaps as an indirect, rather than a direct speech act, provide help to explain how the book of Ezekiel functions as Yahweh’s word. Such a delineation will be valuable later in the thesis in illuminating how Yahweh’s word relates to Yahweh’s וְיִרְאוֹ. Finally, the addressees of the book are to be seen, probably, as the second generation of exiles in Babylon.

**B. YAHWEH’S וְיִרְאוֹ IN EZEKIEL**

Within the book of Ezekiel, וְיִרְאוֹ carries a similar breadth of meanings to that found in the rest of the Old Testament. Even within one passage (37:1-14), its meaning oscillates between the transporting ‘spirit of Yahweh’ (v.1), the animating ‘breath of life’ (vv.5-10), the ‘wind / points of the compass’ (v.9), and Yahweh’s ‘life-giving spirit’ (v.14).

Since many instances will recur throughout the thesis, the purpose of this section is not to provide a thorough analysis, but to point to areas of scholarly agreement and disagreement, and to highlight the critical instances to which we must return in subsequent chapters. Four works will serve as the basis for our analysis: those of Albertz / Westermann,268 Block,269 Woodhouse270 and Zimmerli.271 The first is a sensitive, comprehensive dictionary article on וְיִרְאוֹ in the Old Testament. The other three are articles specifically on וְיִרְאוֹ in Ezekiel providing a good spectrum of opinion. None is simply concerned with theological uses. This is important because it must be remembered that in some cases, anthropological or meteorological uses might have theological importance in view of the fluidity of the categories.

**1. Accepted meanings of וְיִרְאוֹ in Ezekiel**

**a) Meteorological**

There are six occasions in the book where it is generally agreed that וְיִרְאוֹ is used in the meteorological sense of ‘wind.’272 In each case וְיִרְאוֹ is the superordinate, further defined by a hyponym or qualifying noun to which it is bound. These can be categorised slightly differently, depending, for example, on the significance given to the kind of east wind mentioned (so Block speaks of the east wind in 27:26 as a ‘violent gale,’ while the east wind in 17:10 and 19:12 is ‘the scorching sirocco’273). There is general agreement that וְיִרְאוֹ in 1:4 is a theophanic storm wind, as is apparent from the cloud and fire. This wind is concomitant with the divine theophany, but not in any sense to be confused with

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268 וְיִרְאוֹ, TLOT3, pp1202-20.
Yahweh. Unlike in the other instances of רוח as ‘wind’, it is neither a punishing nor a destructive wind, though there are suggestive links to the next two occurrences to be examined: those of רוח in 13:11 and 13:13. Here there is general agreement that this ‘wind’ is a storm wind, linked with Yahweh’s judgement that will come on the false prophets who whitewash fragile walls. The final three instances, לוחות כפולה in 17:10, 19:12 and 27:26, all speak of an east wind, closely linked with Yahweh’s judgement because of its harsh effects. Particularly striking about these is the clearly masculine gender of רוח in 19:12 and 27:26. The precise significance of the gender is debated, though the meteorological use of רוח often is masculine. If a distinction is to be drawn between the winds here and the quasi-theological wind of Exod. 14:21 (cf. Exod. 15:8, 10), it lies in the fact that, although the winds in Ezekiel are carrying out Yahweh’s (destructive) purposes, they are only agents of Yahweh in so far as the enemies of which these winds metaphorically speak are Yahweh’s agents.

Secondly, there are six instances in the book where רוח has the sense ‘direction.’ This meaning is derived from ‘wind,’ as can be seen clearly in 5:2, where Ezekiel is to scatter one third of his hair ‘to the wind’ (רוח; this is interpreted and expanded later (5:10-12) as Yahweh scattering the people ‘to every wind’ (רוח). This meaning can also be seen in 12:14 and 17:21, where again people are scattered ‘to every wind,’ and in 37:9, where Ezekiel is to summon רוח to come from the four ‘winds’ (רוח).

Thirdly, there are five instances of רוח in 42:16-20, where the sense is that of ‘side.’ Ezekiel witnesses the man, whose appearance shone like bronze (40:3), measuring the temple area all round. The first four instances, all in the construct state, are qualified by points of the compass in the absolute. The final one describes how the man measured the four ‘sides’ (רוח). This meaning is the ultimate extension of רוח as ‘direction.’

b) Anthropological
There are five anthropological uses where there is broad agreement.

In the first example, which is the second occurrence of רוח in 3:14, Ezekiel describes his internal state as he ‘went’ after receiving his commissioning. In contrast with the רוח which lifted him up, his own רוח was somewhat depressed (רוח כבש רוח).
here speaks of an emotional state or mood, or ‘impulsive...psychic force’ of
‘anger’\(^{278}\) describing Ezekiel’s reaction to his commissioning. This is one meaning
within a ‘rich semantic field’ (i.e. anthropological uses of \(\text{רעהי} \)) which describes ‘an
entire range of human frames of mind, from the strongest emotions to the failure of all
vitality.’\(^{279}\)

In 13:3, \(\text{רעהי} \) describes the source of the false prophets’ prophesying, speaking of
‘their mind’ (דעתו) in a way parallel to בֵּין (13:2).

A similar sense of \(\text{רעהי} \) is found in 11:5. The prophet, within a vision, is instructed
to say to the twenty-five men whom he has ‘seen’ at the east gate of the temple, who are
full of pride over Jerusalem, ‘I know the things that come into your mind (דעתך).’
Again, there is the contrast between two instances of \(\text{רעהי} \) in the same verse. Here,
Yahweh’s \(\text{רעהי} \) falls on the prophet, in an ‘external’ fashion so that Ezekiel can know and
speak of what is going on ‘internally’, what is ‘going up’ into the \(\text{רעהי} \) of the addressees,
which clearly is in contradiction with Yahweh’s mind.\(^{280}\)

In 20:32, \(\text{רעהי} \) again speaks of the ‘intellect’\(^{281}\) or ‘mind,’ in this case the mind of the
exiles. Woodhouse translates \(\text{רעהי} \) in 20:32 as ‘breath’, given the parallelism with the
second half of the verse (“‘What is on your breath shall never happen – that which you
are saying...’”\(^{282}\)), but the sense is essentially the same, since what is being spoken of is
the generation of thoughts. It is impossible here not to think of the corrupt \(\text{רעהי} \) that the
exiles have, a \(\text{רעהי} \) that needs renewing or replacing.\(^{283}\)

Finally, in 21:12 [ET 21:7], Ezekiel is told what to say when the exiles ask him
why he is moaning. In his reply, he is to say that, when the news of Jerusalem’s fall
comes, ‘every \(\text{רעהי} \) will faint.’ Here \(\text{רעהי} \) is the ‘seat of the emotions’\(^{284}\) or the ‘psychic
glor\(^{285}\) that is to be destroyed. Rather than appearing synonymous with בֵּין, as in the
previous two instances discussed, \(\text{רעהי} \) here is in parallel.

2. Disagreements over the meaning of \(\text{רעהי} \) in Ezekiel

We have observed above general agreements among the four commentators on the
meaning of \(\text{רעהי} \) in a number of places. In this next section, I shall look at those instances
where commentators disagree. There are broadly two kinds of disagreement. The first is
where there comes disagreement about how \(\text{רעהי} \) should be understood or rendered

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\(^{278}\) \(\text{רעהי} \), \text{TLOT 3}, p1210.

\(^{279}\) \(\text{רעהי} \), \text{TLOT 3}, p1210.

\(^{280}\) Cf. Lys, \text{Rā‘ach}, p138; Schüngel-Straumann, \text{Rā‘ah}, p49.

\(^{281}\) \(\text{רעהי} \), \text{TLOT 3}, p1212.


\(^{283}\) It is striking in this regard to note that only Israel ever has a \(\text{רעהי} \) in Ezekiel. When the same
conception, of thoughts ‘going up’ occurs in 38:10, the word used is בֵּין. The owner of the heart is Gog. See Schüngel-Straumann, \text{Rā‘ah}, p49 n134.

\(^{284}\) Block, ‘Prophet of the Spirit’, p46.

\(^{285}\) \(\text{רעהי} \), \text{TLOT 3}, p1210.
within a particular domain. The second kind is where there is disagreement over the
domain in which a particular occurrence should be placed.

a) Anthropological

and 36:26, Yahweh promises to give the exiles ‘one / a new heart and a new spirit
(בְּיָדְךָ נָשָׁרָה).’ In 18:31, the exiles are told to get for themselves what Yahweh elsewhere
has promised, ‘a new heart and a new spirit.’ While there is agreement that the
occurrences are anthropological, speaking of the human ‘spirit,’ there is disagreement
about the precise significance. Here, again, נָשָׁרָה occurs alongside בֵּל. Some see נָשָׁרָה as
essentially synonymous with בֵּל as ‘will.’ Such a view is apparent in the expanded
rendering, ‘new center of volition necessary for repentance and new obedience to the
commandments’ and the accompanying comment about the ‘equation’ of נָשָׁרָה and בֵּל.286
Block, however, while seeing נָשָׁרָה as ‘the seat of one’s mental activity’287 in 11:19 and
18:31 (thus closely paralleling בֵּל), suggests a distinction between the two in 36:26 on
the grounds of the different way בֵּל and נָשָׁרָה are developed.288 Certainly the new נָשָׁרָה is
not a temporary gift to equip or fortify the people for a particular task. In addition, the
presence of a corrupt נָשָׁרָה in 11:5 (albeit in those in Jerusalem) points to the need for an
internal transformation and suggests essential synonymity with בֵּל. At the same time, it
is difficult to avoid the thought that נָשָׁרָה is not essentially human in the same way as בֵּל
is, and that נָשָׁרָה is somehow ‘complementary’.289

b) Theological / Anthropological

There are four instances in 37:1-10 where נָשָׁרָה clearly speaks of the ‘breath of life’290 or
the ‘agency of animation’.291 These occur in vv.5, 6, 8 and 10. The dry bones lack נָשָׁרָה,
and Ezekiel is told to prophesy to the bones, and declare to them that Yahweh will put
נָשָׁרָה in them. In v.10, נָשָׁרָה enters them. All see the sense ‘breath of life,’ too, in the call to
‘the breath’ in v.9 (three instances of נָשָׁרָה), but Zimmerli also notes the sense ‘wind’ too,
and even the link with the ‘world of the divine.’292 His comment is a significant one:
‘Here we can ascertain...the remarkable lack of clarity in some statements in the book of
Ezekiel which prevents the clear differentiation of areas of meaning.’293 In somewhat
similar fashion, Block, in analysing the occurrences of נָשָׁרָה in Ezekiel, sees a bifurcation
(meteorological, non-meteorological), rather than a trifurcation, from the meaning

286 נָשָׁרָה, TLOT 3, p1212; cf. Zimmerli (Ezekiel 2, p567), who observes the parallelism between the two,
and notes that the only ‘inconsistency’ is in the qualification of the ‘old heart’ as ‘stone’.
289 Cf. Knierim, Task, p282; also Wolff, Anthropology, p38; Cooke, Ezekiel, p125. See further pp213ff.
below.
290 נָשָׁרָה, TLOT 3, p1209.
292 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p567; נָשָׁרָה, ThWAT 7, p394.
293 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p567.
‘wind’ (p29), such that it is not always clear whether the non-meteorological uses of רוח are essentially anthropological or theological. When he speaks of the ‘agency of animation’, it does seem that he treats it as something essentially ‘theological’, particularly since he speaks of ‘animating effect of the presence of the spirit’. 294

c) Theological / Meteorological

There are seven occasions in the book where רוח is used in connection with the transportation of the prophet (3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1; 43:5). 295 In six of these (not 37:1), רוח is absolute, anarthrous, and marked as feminine by the finite verb(s) of which it is the subject. In each of these six, רוח ‘carried / picked up’ (שנ) Ezekiel. In 3:14, after ‘picking up’ Ezekiel, רוח ‘took’ (לקח) him; in 8:3, 11:1, 24a and 43:5, after ‘picking up’ Ezekiel, רוח ‘brought’ (ביא - hif.) him; in the seventh (37:1), רוח is no longer the subject, but preceded by the preposition ב. In addition, it is in the construct state, with Yahweh as the absolute (רוחו, רוח). The phrase serves to identify the agent of Yahweh’s action of bringing the prophet out (_AXשא - hif.) and ‘setting him’ (והז - hif.) in the desert.

These are not actual transportations, but occur in visions that Ezekiel is having. In 3:12 and 3:14, Ezekiel returns at the end of his commissioning vision to the exiles amongst whom he has been all the time (cf. 1:1-3). In 8:3 and 11:24, visions are explicitly mentioned, while in 11:1 and 43:5, such transportation occurs in the middle of a vision. While there is no mention of vision in 37:1, it is clear that the incident with the dry bones takes place within a vision, as we saw above. 296 Nonetheless, they are literal transportations in the sense that within the vision there is real movement, as is evident from the parallel in 8:3 between the action of what looked like a hand of the human-like figure, in taking Ezekiel by the lock of his head, and that of רוח, in lifting him up between earth and heaven. Block notes the degree of ambiguity raised by the fact that רוח is anarthrous in the six occurrences, and argues that what transports Ezekiel is Yahweh’s ‘spirit.’ His chief reason is that the masculine verb forms in 8:7, 14, 16 (‘he brought me to...’) suggest ‘that the one conveying him [Ezekiel] about is the same as the person who speaks to him’ 297 (the nearest masculine antecedent is ‘the Lord Yahweh’ in v.1). Woodhouse, on the other hand, cites Greenberg in rendering 3:12 as ‘wind’: ‘as opposed to “the wind from YHWH” that was believed to transport Elijah (I Kings 18:12; II Kings 2:16 - ru°h YHWH is construed with masc. verbs), the “wind” that transported Ezekiel (construed with fem. verbs) is, to be sure, supernatural in origin, but

295 Block (‘Prophet of the Spirit’, p34) and Albertz and Westermann (‘רוח’, TLOT 3, pp1213, 1207) regard רוח in 11:24b as speaking also of the ‘agency of conveyance’, the others link it with the receiving of the divine vision.
296 See p34 above.
unattributed – another sign of reserve. Zimmerli comments that the anarthrous usage makes דִּרְקָו appear ‘to be an almost independently effective power’ though ‘in its activity we are dealing with effects brought about by Yahweh.’ Albertz and Westermann speak of the ‘intermediate position’ of דִּרְקָו ‘between the basic meaning “wind” and the fig. meaning “spirit”’. Although the occurrence in 37:1 provides conclusive evidence, in Block’s view, that what is meant is Yahweh’s spirit, it is possible for רִנְקָו to speak of ‘the wind / breath of Yahweh’ (Isa. 40:7).

**d) Theological / Anthropological / Meteorological**

In two other instances which Zimmerli sees as closely related to those mentioned above in so far as they all speak of ‘the דִּרְקָו of the specific, prophetic experience of a call’, רִנְקָו enters the prophet, prostrate before Yahweh’s glory, and sets him on his feet (דָּבָר תֹּבֶל דִּרְקָו יְבָא - 2:2; 3:24). If the transporting דִּרְקָו acts ‘externally’ on the prophet, lifting him up almost as an object, רִנְקָו here acts internally, entering him. In 2:2, the entry of דִּרְקָו is linked with Yahweh speaking to the prophet, such that Block sees hints of prophetic inspiration here, as does Zimmerli, who regards דִּרְקָו as making the prophet ‘capable of speech’ after being in a ‘state of collapse’. Both, however, consider the predominant notion here as that of דִּרְקָו as the ‘agency of animation.’ In this respect they are similar to Woodhouse, who regards דִּרְקָו as ‘breath,’ and Albertz and Westermann, who regard these instances as examples of the ‘vitality’ of the individual, albeit ‘altered theologically’. There is some agreement that the instances here are specifically theological. Block asks, ‘Is it a sudden gust of wind...? Or is it the spirit of Yahweh?’ and concludes it is the latter. The scene is a royal court scene; ‘only the divine spirit could give him the authority or the energy to stand erect before God.’ There is, though, some disagreement about what is meant. Thus Woodhouse agrees with Block in seeing it as a ‘divine דִּרְקָו,’ but prefers to see it not as ‘spirit’ but as Yahweh’s ‘invigorating breath accompanying the speech of God’. It might seem, then, that these two occurrences ought to be categorised as ‘theological’ disagreement. However, as we shall see below, other commentators regard דִּרְקָו here either as ‘wind’ or as ‘breath’.

The second main area of disagreement within this category centres around the six occurrences of דִּרְקָו linked with the movement of the living creatures and the throne in chs. 1 and 10. These will involve our close attention partly because they are the first instances in the book where there is some disagreement, and partly because I shall not

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299 דִּרְקָו, *TLOT* 3, p1207.
300 Block, ‘Prophet of the Spirit’, p34.
305 דִּרְקָו, *TLOT* 3, p1208.
be discussing them later. The first two, in 1:12 and 1:20a, explain the movement of the living creatures (v.12) and the movement of the wheels with them (v.20); ‘wherever the living creatures would go, the living creatures would go too’ (1:12). Zimmerli and Albertz / Westermann propose that רוח speaks of the ‘organ of the decision of the will’ or ‘one’s center of action...the unique inner compulsion’ that directs the way to be taken, and ensures that all move together. Woodhouse, however, says that this understanding has ‘no basis in the immediate context and seems to overlook the dominance in the whole scene of the storm wind of v.4.’ He prefers the meaning ‘wind.’ The sense, then, is that the living creatures are carried by the storm wind. Block, however, says that the sense ‘wind’ is ‘impossible at this point.’ He argues that רוח here is ‘the vitalizing principle of life that comes from God himself.’

Before examining the evidence and arguments surrounding these two instances, we need to look at the other occurrences of רוח in the visions concerning movement of the living creatures and throne, in 1:20b, in 1:21 and in 10:17, because Block, Zimmerli and Albertz / Westermann treat all five occurrences together, and Block, in particular, regards these three as determinative of the interpretation of the first two. Woodhouse alone detects a shift in meaning between the occurrences, from רוח as ‘wind’ to רוח as ‘breath’ in v.20b and v.21 (and in 10:17), so that it is the breath of the living creatures that moves the wheels.

In each one of these latter three occurrences, רוח occurs in a construct relationship with the absolute, הניבס. While some commentators take רוחות as a collective noun, ‘living creatures’ or a distributive, and Greenberg takes the singular here as stressing ‘the unity of the ensemble’, there are five reasons, which, taken together, point towards rendering the whole phrase ‘the breath / spirit of life’, with רוח understood as ‘life’. This is not simply something anthropological, but the divinely-given, animating, vivifying breath.

First, the living creatures are until this point in the opening vision always referred to with the plural, רוח (1:5, 13, 15, 19). Although this point might seem to be negated somewhat by 1:22, where הניבס clearly is a collective noun (also 10:15 and 20), such a shift to the singular is explicable. Lys explains the occurrence of the singular in 1:22 as

308 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p566.
309 רוחי, TLOT 3, p1212.
313 The second of the three occurrences of רוח in 1:20 is almost certainly due to dittography. See GKC 123d n2; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p87.
315 E.g. Cooke, Ezekiel, pp18, 27; cf. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p87. So too among modern English versions of the Bible: RSV, NR SV, NIV, ESV, NASV, NJB.
316 Suggested by Cooke, Ezekiel, p27.
317 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p48; cf. also Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p87.
an ‘error’ occurring because of the three occurrences in the singular in 1:20-21, and would emend to a plural.\textsuperscript{319} Such an emendation is not necessary for רוח to be rendered ‘life’ in 1:20 and 21, and ‘living creatures’ in 1:22. The ‘attraction’ to the singular in 1:22 does not mean that the referent need be the same. Nonetheless, evidence from the LXX and Vulgate supports Lys,\textsuperscript{320} as does the next occurrence of the word where it refers to the living creatures, 3:13; there it is plural again.

The second piece of evidence supporting the rendering ‘breath / spirit of life’ comes from the LXX and the Vulgate. They both are careful to distinguish ‘living creature(s)’ from ‘life’. In 1:20-21, they render רוח נוח with ספיהווצף and \textit{spiritus vitae} (‘spirit of life’), while they render ν.22 רוח נוח with אברק עולם אברק ותא מוף and \textit{super caput animalium} (‘over the head of the living creatures’). Thus they distinguish clearly between two senses of the root רוח.\textsuperscript{321} Further, in chapter 10, where undisputed references to ‘living creature(s)’ are always rendered in the MT by the singular, רוח (10:15, 20), LXX and the Vulgate distinguish between רוח as ‘living creature’ (רוח, \textit{animal}) in ν.15, 20 and רוח as ‘life’ in the phrase ‘breath / spirit of life’ (ספיהווצף, \textit{spiritus…} \textit{vitae}) in ν.17. Given the distinction between singular and plural found in ch. 10, this provides evidence for Lys’ argument concerning the plural in 1:22. It also indicates, in the case of LXX, a clear understanding of the רוח ν.20c, 21 and 10:17 as ‘the breath / spirit of life’ and not directly related to the ‘living creatures’.

Thirdly, although the phrase here, רוח נוח, would be a unique way of designating the ‘spirit / breath of life’ in the Old Testament,\textsuperscript{322} and although רוח elsewhere in the book does speak of ‘wild animals’ (e.g. 5:17; 14:15, 21) or, in 10:15, 20, explicitly of the living creatures, yet רוח can refer in Ezekiel to ‘life’ (7:13).\textsuperscript{323} Further, there are suggestive parallels in Gen. 1, where רוח designates ‘living creatures’ in 1:24 (cf. LXX: \textit{ψυχής ζωής}), but ‘breath of life’ (cf. LXX: \textit{ψυχής ζωής}) in 1:30.

Fourthly, although the living creatures in chapter 1 are clearly ‘alive’, given their movement (e.g. 1:24), there does seem to be a degree of reticence about their life, seen in the prefacing with נונ (1:5, 10, 13).\textsuperscript{324} Further, given Ezekiel’s clear reluctance throughout the book to countenance any rival to Yahweh, and to give no credence to idols or images,\textsuperscript{325} it would be strange for Ezekiel to focus on the ‘breath’ (רוח) of these


\textsuperscript{320} See below.

\textsuperscript{321} BDB, p312 regards the meaning ‘life’ to be a subdivision within רוח, ‘a living thing, animal’; however \textit{HALOT}, p310 sees these two meanings as deriving from two homonyms. Neither treat the instances here as ‘life’.

\textsuperscript{322} Elsewhere rendered by רוח (Gen. 1:30), ישן תורת (Gen. 2:7), ישן ור (Gen. 6:17; 7:15), ישן ערכין (Gen. 7:22). Other instances use the lexemes גל or חנ.

\textsuperscript{323} It seems a late poetic form, closely related to ישן. See \textit{HALOT}, p310.

\textsuperscript{324} Although Lys is right to point out that the living creatures turn out to be inanimate temple objects, cherubim (Lys, \textit{Ruach}, p128), such an understanding is not there for Ezekiel, or for the readers, at this point in the book.

\textsuperscript{325} See especially Kutsko, \textit{Between Heaven and Earth}. 
living creatures given their subservient role with regard to the throne, their similarity to ANE skybearers and divine beings, and the anti-idol polemic of the prophets that the idols ‘have no breath in them’ (e.g. Jer. 10:14 - בִּמְלַא צְרִי; cf. also Hab. 2:19; Ps. 135:17).

The final reason comes from the sense. In each of these three instances, the phrase occurs as part of an explanation for the movement of the wheels, ‘and when they (i.e. the living creatures) rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them; for the spirit was in the wheels.’ It does not make sense to say that ‘the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels’ if this is to do with ‘the organ of decision of the will’ of these living creatures. The issue here is not the decision-making ability of the wheels, but their animation. This is not solved by arguing that ‘the spirit of the living creatures’ speaks of the ‘vivifying breath of the living creatures’ for as we have seen the independent life of the creatures is somewhat muted; further, nowhere in the Old Testament is anyone other than Yahweh the source of this vivifying ‘breath / spirit of life.’ It makes better sense to say that the ‘breath of life’ (or ‘the spirit of life’) was in the wheels, thus emphasising the fact that everything, even the normally inanimate wheels, is animated by Yahweh’s life-giving רוח. It is for this reason that they move when the whole throne-unit moves.

If it be agreed that רוח in 1:20b, 21 and 10:17 speaks of ‘breath / spirit of life,’ we are still left with the occurrences of רוח in v.12 and v.20a. As noted above, some regard the referent here as determined by that of רוח in 1:20b and 1:21. However, this is not necessary, since רוח can shift its meaning within the same verse or even sentence (e.g. 11:5; 37:9), and indeed might seem unlikely, particularly since the first occurrence, in v.12, would then lack an interpretative clue until v.20.

In fact, to a reader or hearer, the context of v.12 and v.20a seems to favour the idea of רוח as ‘wind.’ Where the article is attached to רוח as here, it is either cataphoric, defined further by what follows, anaphoric, referring to a רוח that has already been introduced, or speaks of what is the most obvious referent within the context (e.g. ‘wind’ (Eccl. 1:6; 8:8; Ezek. 37:9); ‘breath’ (Eccl. 11:5; Ezek. 37:10); ‘spirit’ (Hos. 9:7)).

In view of the fact that ‘wind’ has already been spoken of in v.4, it is most likely from the context that the article is anaphoric, referring back to v.4. In addition, the only other occurrence of רוח being the subject of רוח is in Eccl. 1:6; there, רוח clearly is ‘wind.’ Although Lys argues that רוח in v.12 does not refer to the storm wind in 1:4, none of his arguments is conclusive. That רוח in 1:4 did not ‘propel God’s chariot’ but was an ‘announcer’ (annonciateur) of God’s presence is not gainsaid by the references in vv.12 and 20, since all we are told there is that the chariot goes where רוח ‘would

326 Cf. IBHS, 13.5.
327 Lys, Rûach, p125.
go'. Further, the presence of the definite article does not serve to distinguish the two, since the indefinite 'wind' of v.4 would now be definite, and marked as such by the article. Even the shift in the gender of הני, from feminine in v.4 (the participle נקך is feminine) to masculine in v.12 (the verb נקך indicates a masculine subject), is not determinative since the 'living creatures' in the opening verses are sometimes regarded as feminine (e.g. the pronominal suffixes in vv.5, 12 and the pronouns in vv.5, 6) and sometimes as masculine (e.g. the pronominal suffixes in v.9 and the verb forms in vv.9, 12). It is certainly plausible that a distinction is being marked between הני in v.4 and in v.12 by the shift in gender, so it is right to look for a better understanding, but Block's view that 'wind' is 'impossible' here (see above) is overstated. 328

If for the moment we grant that the use of the masculine מִי, unique in Ezekiel, serves to distinguish the מִי in v.12 from that in v.4, there is the question of referent. The use of the article can hardly be cataphoric, since the explanation is delayed until v.20. If not anaphoric, the article must be 'designating either a particular person or thing necessarily understood to be present or vividly portraying someone or something whose identity is not otherwise indicated.'329 It is theoretically possible that it could speak of the 'organ of the decision of the will' (Zimmerli) of the 'living creatures'. Certainly in Jdg. 8:3, the singular, מִי, can be used distributively to refer to the מִי of a group, but there the connotation is one of emotion. In Ezek. 13:3, similarly, מִי is used distributively. However, it is hardly likely that מִי referring to the 'center of action' of the living creatures would be introduced in such a fashion, without a pronominal suffix to indicate it. It is much more likely, especially in view of the prominence of the theological use of מִי later in the book, that what is in view here is Yahweh's מִי. This in turn is an unusual picture, that of Yahweh's מִי 'going' from place to place. More investigation needs to be done than the simple equating of this מִי with the vivifying spirit of Yahweh which energises the creatures and the wheels.

This almost independent conception of מִי does have some parallels. In the book of Ezekiel itself, the prophet is to address מִי, and summon it from the four winds (37:9). It is this mysterious reality that vivifies the re-formed but lifeless corpses. Certainly there is a parallel between the מִי here that enlivens and directs the chariot and the מִי that will enliven and direct the once-dead bones. At the same time, there are tantalising hints of further developments. In Ps. 139:7, the psalmist seems to regard מִי as Yahweh manifest in omnipresence, parallel to Yahweh's נְפֶשׁ, 'Where can I go from your spirit

328 Zimmerli explains the masculine gender by suggesting a somewhat convoluted process, whereby the gender comes from the word to which מִי is bound (ני), which is clearly identified in 10:15 as the masculine בְרָאשִׁים (Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p566). The determination of gender from the absolute is appropriate, but the link to ch. 10 is not established here. Further, it also depends on the identity of referent of מִי in 1:20b with that in 1:12 and 1:20a. In discussing change in gender in Ezekiel, mention should be made of the bones in Ezek. 37:1-14. Here it probably is a rhetorical device linking the bones with the 'whole house of Israel'. The next time מִי occurs, in 2:2, it is clearly feminine.

329 IBHS, 13.5.1.e. The quotation is directed towards this chapter.
Or where can I flee from your presence (מִקְנֵי)? This correspondence between מִקְנֵי and רֶוֶן can also be seen in Ps. 51:13 [ET v.15] and, in particular, in Isa. 63:10-14.330 There, רֶוֶן corresponds not with ‘angel’, but with מִקְנֵי.331 רֶוֶן seems to designate Yahweh’s presence in the midst of the people of Israel, going with them in the wilderness. What Isa. 63:14 ascribes to the action of רֶוֶן, ‘the spirit of Yahweh gave them rest (שָׁם נִקְנָה הָרוֹעָן רֶוֶן)’, Exod. 33:14 ascribes to the action of מִקְנֵי, ‘“My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest (נִקְנָה בְּעָלָי מִקְנֵי).”’332 In view of the fact that in the exodus, Yahweh guided the people by means of a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, there are potentially close links between רֶוֶן and this pillar. Evidence for such a link comes from the hovering (רֶוֶן) of Yahweh (presumably in the pillar) over the wilderness waste (רֶוֶן) (Deut. 32:10-11) being paralleled to רֶוֶן hovering (רֶוֶן) over the waters, with the earth being a wilderness waste (רֶוֶן) (Gen. 1:2). These are the only places in the Torah that the words occur.

Given, then, the links between רֶוֶן and the theophanic pillar accompanying those in Exodus from Egypt symbolising the presence of Yahweh, and the striking theophany with which Ezek. 1 opens, including fire and cloud (v.4), I think that, although it is possible in v.12 to see רֶוֶן as the same wind as the storm wind in v.4, it is more likely that it designates Yahweh’s presence, albeit in a circumscribed and mediated way. That is not to say that there are not close links to the notion of רֶוֶן as ‘breath of life’ given by Yahweh, and coming from the four winds,333 as we have seen, but there are hints towards something more – to Yahweh’s presence, a presence associated with Yahweh’s leading in the exodus. This means there is a subtle shift in meaning, though both are theological, between רֶוֶן in 1:12 and 20a, on the one hand, and רֶוֶן in 1:20b, 21 and 10:17, on the other. 1:20 should be understood as follows: Wherever the spirit, that is, Yahweh’s presence, would go, the living creatures would also go. The wheels were not left behind by this. Instead, because they were animated by Yahweh’s vivifying breath, they could rise up and follow.

In view of the importance of רֶוֶן throughout the rest of the book, the significance of the references in the opening chapter should not be underestimated. Block comments:

‘The precise connection among this רֶוֶן, the stormy רֶוֶן that had borne the apparition to the prophet (v.4), the רֶוֶן that would later enter and energize him (2:2; 3:24), and the רֶוֶן that would later lift him up and carry him away (3:12,
14) is not clear. However, the reference serves as a harbinger of the role that the ruah will play in Ezekiel's ministry...\(^\text{334}\)

What is striking here is that the distinctions that we are forced to make by virtue of translation are not reflected in the acceptations of ruah as evident in the book of Ezekiel. Further, the boundaries are very fluid between the different semantic domains of ruah, and ambiguity, whether deliberate or unintended is clearly apparent.\(^\text{335}\)

e) Theological

The remaining five instances of ruah in the book are all explicitly theological. In 11:5, within his temple vision, Ezekiel is told to prophesy to the twenty-five men who give wicked counsel in the city. Before Yahweh tells the prophet what he is to say to them, Ezekiel relates how 'the spirit of Yahweh fell upon me (ruah mi 1ýv) and he said to me...'. All are agreed that this reference is theological, and most see here a reference to Yahweh's 'spirit,' particularly the 'prophetic spirit.'\(^\text{336}\) Woodhouse, however, notes the close connection with the word coming to Ezekiel, and suggests that the phrase 'makes explicit what was already implicit in 2:2 and 3:24' - ruah as Yahweh's 'breath.'\(^\text{337}\)

In 11:24, there is the only occurrence of the phrase סְפֶּר רָאוּ ה רָאוּ ה in the book of Ezekiel. ruah has lifted the prophet up, and has brought him 'in a vision רֵדַת אֶלְהֵם' to Chaldea, to the exiles, mirroring his transportation to Judah at the start of the vision in 8:1-3. Block sees the reference here to ruah as the 'agency of conveyance.' He notes that, by analogy with the 'divine visions' of 1:1, 8:3 and 40:2, it is possible that the phrase here may not mean any more than 'divine wind,'\(^\text{338}\) but prefers to see the reference being to Yahweh's 'spirit' because of the determinative (for him) 37:1. Zimmerli sees רֵדַת אֶלְהֵם as speaking of the 'spirit' of God in the sense of 'enveloping sphere' in which the process of transportation takes place, and links it with the pre-Israelite linguistic usage characteristic of the pre-classical prophets.\(^\text{339}\) For Woodhouse, it is 'the breath of God', which seems to be linked with the prophet's transportation, not inspiration.\(^\text{340}\)

The other three of these five instances of the theological use of ruah are those in which Yahweh speaks of 'my spirit / breath' (רְאוּ ה). In 36:26, Yahweh has promised the house of Israel 'a new heart and a new spirit.' In the next verse, Yahweh promises that 'I will give my spirit within them' (רְאוּ אֵלֶּחֶם). In 37:14, at the end of the vision of the dry bones, in words very similar to those of 36:27, Yahweh promises that

\(^{334}\) Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p101.


\(^{336}\) Block, 'Prophet of the Spirit', p41; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p567.

\(^{337}\) Woodhouse, "'Spirit' in the Book of Ezekiel", p15.

\(^{338}\) Block, 'Prophet of the Spirit', p34; he seems to relate it more closely to the reception of the vision in his commentary (Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p359).

\(^{339}\) Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p567.

"I will put my spirit in you" (וך ירוחא רוח). Block regards both of these references as examples of רוח as 'spirit' with 'animating' effect that brings about a 'radical spiritual revitalization of the nation.' While the link between 36:27 and 37:14 is clear, Woodhouse prefers to see in both a reference not so much to Yahweh's 'spirit' as to Yahweh's 'breath.' On 36:27, he notes the links with Jer. 31:31-34 and comments, 'there is little obvious difference between God writing his law on the heart, and placing his (speaking) breath within. Any difference seems to fade when the consequence of the latter act is seen to be obedience to the law (Ezek. 36:27b)!' On 37:14, Block suggests that רוח here undergoes 'an extremely significant shift in meaning. The רוח that will revitalize Israel is not the ordinary, natural life-breath common to all living things; it is the spirit of God himself.' Woodhouse, however, does not see why such a shift is demanded. While it may seem that Block and Woodhouse are very close to each other in their conceptions, since Block is conceiving of רוח at these points as the 'agency of animation' while Woodhouse conceives of them as Yahweh's 'breath,' the substantial difference is apparent when it is seen that for Woodhouse the 'breath' that is spoken of is tied closely to Yahweh's word.

In 39:29, the reference to רוח is again clearly theological. Yahweh is announcing that he will never again hide his face from the house of Israel again. In this context, he speaks of pouring out 'my spirit' (ךנפ קרו רוח). Although the precise relationship between such a promise and the outpouring of Yahweh's רוח will be examined in Part III, it is worth observing again the differing perspectives on רוח here. Block, noting the significance of 'pouring,' regards רוח here as the 'sign of divine ownership,' yielding a substantially different force from רוח in 36:27 and 37:14. Zimmerli regards the phrase here as a 'late redactional formulation' by which the earlier statements are 'transformed'. Albertz and Westermann, however, see no such shift, preferring to see 'spirit' as the 'bestowal of the spirit on the entire people of God.' Woodhouse again prefers to see the notion of Yahweh's 'breath,' though he does note that 'this breath represents nothing less than the saving presence of God himself.'

3. Conclusions

It will be apparent from our discussion of the fifty-two occurrences of רוח within the book of Ezekiel that, even within the perspective of four works looking at רוח, there are

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341 Block, 'Prophet of the Spirit', p39. However, in the table on p31, both instances of רוח in ch. 36 are categorised under רוח as 'mind'.
343 Block, 'Prophet of the Spirit', p38.
346 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p567.
substantial points of difference on how רוח is to be understood and translated. Some of
the disagreements are over the particular domain in which the occurrences should be
placed, whether meteorological, anthropological or theological (e.g. on the
‘transporting’ רוח). Others are over the nuance of רוח within a particular domain (e.g.
Yahweh speaking of ‘my רוח’. Some of the ambiguity may be resolved by sharper
exegesis. Some of the ambiguity may be explicable in terms of a deliberate ploy on the
part of the author of the book. Some may be regarded as unintended. Some may be seen
as a product of our conceiving of רוח in too sharply defined categories. As Albertz and
Westermann point out, it is possible to translate רוח as ‘spirit’ when the ‘concrete
meanings “wind” and “breath” advance to a no longer empirically perceptible realm,
without, however, becoming less real’ provided that ‘one must be clear that the
transitions are fluid because the force mysteriously effective in the wind and the breath
points toward God from the outset.’349 They maintain that ‘the specifically theological
usage of רוח as Yahweh’s spirit or the spirit of God is markedly distinct neither
terminologically nor materially from the profane usage.’350 Judgements, however, must
be made, since if Woodhouse’s conclusion is correct, that language ‘usually understood
to refer to the “Spirit” of God is better understood when it is seen to be a transparent
anthropomorphism to be rendered by an English expression such as “the breath of
God,”’351 then the connection between Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s רוח will be more
in evidence. In the following chapters, we will explore these issues more fully.

C. WORD NOT RELATED TO רוח?

Having looked at how the word of Yahweh and the רוח of Yahweh can be conceived
within the book, we need to pause briefly to revisit the suggestion made by Kaufmann
that ‘there is no biblical doctrine of the relationship between the word and the spirit’.352
It could have been possible that, despite the prominence of both Yahweh’s word and
(Yahweh’s) רוח within the book, there is in fact no particular notion of a relationship
between the two. Two things can be said in response.

First, Kaufmann was speaking in an exaggerated fashion of one particular kind of
relationship – that between the prophetic ‘word of Yahweh’ and the spirit. His purpose
was to stress the uniqueness of the Israelite religion in general, and of Israelite prophecy
in particular.353 The intelligibility of Israelite prophecy, seen in Yahweh’s ‘word,’ is set
in marked contrast to pagan notions of ‘a specific source of mantic power’ (e.g.

349 רוח, TLOT 3, p1212.
350 רוח, TLOT 3, p1212.
352 Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, p101.
353 Cf. his comment that ‘Israelite prophecy is in every aspect a new phenomenon.’ Kaufmann, Religion
of Israel, p101.
'spirits') that characterises 'pagan prophecy.'\textsuperscript{354} Such rhetoric, and that is really what it is, conceals other statements that reveal a more nuanced position. In his discussion, for example, he comments that 'the spirit is the by-product of the word,'\textsuperscript{355} a statement that clearly implies some kind of relationship.

Secondly, even a preliminary analysis of the occurrences of Yahweh’s word and רוח in the book of Ezekiel reveals possible links between the two. In 2:2, there is רוח that enters the prophet when Yahweh speaks to him (cf. 3:24). On a number of occasions in the book, the prophet, who is to be Yahweh’s mouthpiece, is transported by the רוח. In 11:5, the ‘spirit of Yahweh’ fell on the prophet and Yahweh spoke to him. In 36:27, Yahweh’s רוח is linked with the house of Israel’s obedience to Yahweh’s word. In short, it is simply not correct to say that there is ‘no...relationship.’ What needs to be explored is precisely what kind of relationship the book envisages. It is to one possible domain that we now turn, to that of the inspiration of the prophet.

\textsuperscript{354} Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, p95.
\textsuperscript{355} Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, p100.
PART II: WORD, SPIRIT AND INSPIRATION

‘Among all the wonders of the spirit the proclamation of the word of Yahweh came more and more to take the central place. That the “men of the spirit” were at the same time the mediators of the word, and that not simply in cases where a divine oracle was explicitly ascribed to the spirit, explains the profound influence both on individuals and on the nation at large which enabled them to determine decisively the pattern of religious thought.’

CHAPTER 3: INSPIRATION AND EZEKIEL

In Part I, we observed how the book of Ezekiel is marked to a great degree by the presence of נְרוּ. We noted, too, that many of the occurrences are either explicitly theological, or may have theological significance even when apparently not theological. Further, we saw that this emphasis sets the book of Ezekiel apart from both Jeremiah and Leviticus. There is another dimension, though, to this distinctive emphasis. This dimension is connected to the fact that many of these theological, or theologically significant, references to נְרוּ relate directly to the life and ministry of the prophet Ezekiel himself. נְרוּ set Ezekiel on his feet when confronted by a vision of the glory of Yahweh (2:2; 3:24). נְרוּ transported him from place to place, lifting him up (3:12), carrying him away to the exiles in Babylon (3:14; 11:24), to the temple in Jerusalem (8:3; 11:1), to the inner court within the ‘new’ temple (43:5), and to a valley filled with dry bones (37:1). While it is true that all these occur within the context of visions, ‘that does not affect the underlying conception of the function of the spirit.’

Further, the temple vision (8:1-11:25) came about נְרוּ; (11:24), and, in 11:5, נְרוּ fell on Ezekiel as Yahweh was instructing him to speak and telling him what to say. The new dimension can be seen by comparing the prophet Ezekiel’s experience of נְרוּ, ‘where almost every word and action of the prophet is attributed to the spirit,’ with that of the pre-classical and that of the classical prophets. Such a picture has attracted a good deal of scholarly attention. I shall briefly sketch the main currents before I outline my aims and direction for Part II since these currents provide essential context.

First, as Zimmerli and Carley, in particular, have pointed out, the emphasis on נְרוּ within Ezekiel’s ministry, as with many other features of that ministry, serves to align the prophet closely with the pre-classical prophets. Just as Yahweh’s נְרוּ is seen (by popular opinion of their day) as the ‘transporting’ spirit, which can snatch Elijah up and deposit him somewhere else (1 Kgs. 18:12; 2 Kgs. 2:16), so too נְרוּ transports Ezekiel.

3 Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p261.
4 Zimmerli, ‘Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character’, pp515-27; idem, Ezekiel 1, pp42ff.; Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets.
In this way, and in other ‘dramatic animation[s]’ such as swallowing the scroll, Zimmerli sees a recall of ‘the נָרָד-theology of the older prophets.’

Secondly, the book of Ezekiel’s portrayal of the influence of נָרָד on Ezekiel appears very different from all the pre-exilic classical, writing prophets. In the classical prophets, there is an almost complete absence of theological uses of נָרָד, especially with regard to their own inspiration. This is true of Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Jeremiah. There are a few disputed instances in Hosea, Micah and Isaiah. Eichrodt summarises the distinction when he comments of Ezekiel that, ‘in his case the spirit plays a part unknown in the records of the other prophets.’ Substantial scholarly debate about this absence in the pre-exilic classical prophets can be summarised by focusing on two questions.

First, there is the question of what the Old Testament actually says. Mowinckel argues that

‘pre-exilic reforming prophets never in reality express a consciousness that their prophetic endowment and powers are due to possession by or any action of the spirit of Yahweh, רַעֲל יָהוֵה. There is, on the contrary, another fundamental religious conception upon which the whole of their consciousness and prophetic message rest, namely the word of Yahweh.’

Many others have broadly followed him. So, for example, Albertz and Westermann assert that the relationship between Yahweh’s נָרָד and his word is ‘completely absent in the writing prophets from Amos to Jeremiah. Only the post-exilic period understood prophecy as the obvious work of the divine spirit.’ In effect, they maintain that the classical prophets do not speak explicitly of any role for נָרָד in their inspiration. Such an understanding depends on eliminating any possible reference to the divine נָרָד and inspiration in the prophets’ self-understanding. Important passages in this regard are Hos. 9:7, Mic. 3:8 (cf. 2:6-11), Jer. 5:13 and Isa. 30:1-2. A second view sees references to the divine נָרָד within the classical prophet’s self-understanding as present, but not at all prominent.

The second question relates to how this relative (or complete) absence of נָרָד from the classical prophets should be interpreted: Why do the classical prophets talk so little (or not at all) about the divine נָרָד when speaking of their inspiration, especially when

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5 Zimmerli, ‘Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character’, p520.
6 Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, vol. 2, p50 n1. However, according to Eichrodt, it is not נָרָד that ‘endues him [Ezekiel] with the gift of prophecy.’
7 Mowinckel, “‘The Spirit’ and the ‘Word’”, p199 (his emphasis).
The role of הָנּוֹר is prominent in the ministry of the pre-classical prophets? 

Broadly four lines of interpretation have been proposed.

The first interpretation, which we might term the *antithetical* view, has been stated most famously by Mowinckel. This view is that the classical prophets not only saw no place for הָנּוֹר in their own inspiration, but they also essentially repudiated הָנּוֹר. Central to it is the perceived radical discontinuity between the classical prophets and the ‘spirit-inspired’ חֶבֶל. The classical prophets not only rejected inspiration in the form of הָנּוֹר of Yahweh, since they did not like the ecstatic phenomena, but they also spoke out against the חֶבֶל who were inspired by חֶנֶס, since they were false prophets. Couturier argues that this does not mean that הָנּוֹר within prophecy always had negative connotations. He maintains that there are three quite distinct prophetic types, the ecstatic prophets, associated with Samuel (הָנּוֹר וְעָזָי) and Elijah / Elisha (נְרִי), the professional prophets and the ‘individual, or called prophets.’ The involvement of הָנּוֹר in the first type, who were around until the end of the 9th century, is not criticised. It is the role of הָנּוֹר in the numerous professional prophets (הָנּוֹר), who were often in groups, who plagued the individual prophets from the end of 9th century until the exile, and who, above all, peddled lies, that was instrumental in the repudiation of הָנּוֹר by the individual prophets.

The second view, the *historical* view, also finds a complete absence of הָנּוֹר in the classical prophets. However, the issue here is not so much one of a repudiation of הָנּוֹר found in the false prophets. Rather, it is simply a matter of history: ‘when this objective reality, the spirit, whose presence had to be attested by a prophet’s associates, ceased to operate, then the prophet of the word had to rely much more on himself and on the fact that he had received a call.’ In other words, the lack of mention of הָנּוֹר points to a fundamental historical reality.

The third and fourth views, like the first, acknowledge the significant role of הָנּוֹר within false prophecy, but regard the classical prophets as downplaying the role of הָנּוֹר within their own inspiration, albeit for slightly different reasons. The third view argues

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10 It should be noted, though, that the inspiration of the pre-classical prophets is sometimes carefully circumscribed, such that it does not relate to communication of words (so e.g. ‘חֶנֶס’, *TLOT*, p1215). See further below.

11 Mowinckel, ‘“The Spirit” and the “Word”’, pp199-227.

12 A similar ‘repudiation’ was suggested earlier by Volz (Der Geist Gottes, pp62-69), though in his case it was because of the demonic associations of חֶנֶס: ‘It can therefore be said, the prophets did not need רַחֲל, because they had Yahweh, and they rejected it, because it was foreign to them and their Yahweh’ (‘Man kann daher sagen, die Propheten brauchten die Ruh nicht, weil sie Jahwe hatten, und sie lehnten sie ab, weil sie ihnen und ihrem Jahwe fremd war.’ Volz, *Der Geist Gottes*, p68). Although Mowinckel slightly tempered his criticism of ecstasy after experience of the prophecy of the Oxford Group (see Mowinckel, ‘Postscript’, pp261-65), the article by Couturier (‘L’Esprit de Yahweh et la Fonction Prophétique’) argues in support of Mowinckel’s 1934 article. Further, the reprinting of Mowinckel’s 1934 article in *The Spirit and the Word*, pp83-99 suggests ‘repudiation’ will continue to be one way of interpreting the data.


that the absence of רוח was due to a loss of confidence in prophetism arising from false prophecy.\textsuperscript{15} Certainly 1 Kgs. 22 makes it clear that what are portrayed as ‘false prophets’ laid claim to רוח (1 Kgs. 22:24). In consequence, רוח is downplayed for what might be termed practical, or rhetorical, reasons. Although רוח could ‘reveal’ what was ‘true and right’,\textsuperscript{16} inspiration by רוח was no longer seen as determinant of true prophecy. Indeed the classical prophets were so reticent in speaking about the action of רוח in their own inspiration because the inspiration of רוח had ‘come into disrepute through the old ecstatic and false prophets, who attributed their “salvation prophecy” to the spirit of the Lord.’\textsuperscript{17}

The fourth view, which might be termed the theological view, summarised well in Zimmerli’s tentative suggestion of ‘another part of the explanation’ for this silence, is that the prophets are ‘so directly constrained by the message of Yahweh that they simply do not reflect on the notion of a mediating spirit.’\textsuperscript{18} A modified version of this can be found in Jacob:

‘It is clear that for all the prophets it is not the spirit but the word which qualifies them for their ministry, because only the word creates between the prophet and God a relationship of person with person. But the word presupposes the spirit, the creative breath of life, and for the prophets there was such evidence of this that they thought it unnecessary to state it explicitly.’\textsuperscript{19}

It is, then, ‘that the thought of these prophets was essentially theocentric’ that explains the absence of רוח.\textsuperscript{20}

For these last two views, there is not necessarily an inherent discontinuity between רוח and the prophetic word of the classical prophets. It should be acknowledged, though, that there is not always clarity amongst scholars here. For some scholars, there is in the classical prophets an implicit belief in רוח-inspiration which is hardly (or not at all) articulated.\textsuperscript{21} For others, particularly those who speak in terms of the rhetorical avoidance of רוח, it is often unstated or unclear whether they think belief in רוח-inspiration was present within the self-understanding of the classical prophets.\textsuperscript{22}

This background to the book of Ezekiel, both of the pre-classical prophets, on the one hand, and the classical prophets, on the other, has led many scholars to conclude that the book of Ezekiel recovers the notion of רוח linked with prophetic inspiration.

\textsuperscript{17} ‘weil sie durch die alten Ekstatiker und die Pseudopropheten, die ihre “Heilsprophezei” auf den Geist des Herrn zurückführten ..., in Verruf gekommen war.’ Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p59; cf. Neve, Spirit of God, pp34-38.
\textsuperscript{18} Zimmerli, Old Testament Theology, p102.
\textsuperscript{20} Lindblom, Prophecy, p178.
\textsuperscript{21} Cf. van Imschoot, ‘L’action de l’esprit de Yahvé’, pp570ff.; Lys, Ṭūḥa, p68 n1; Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p55.
\textsuperscript{22} E.g. Briggs, ‘The Use of רוח’, p140; Schoemaker, ‘Use of רוח’, p20; Zimmerli, ‘Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character’, p517.
after a long absence. Montague asserts that ‘especially does the spirit return as the instigator and the animator of prophecy.’ The reason for this renewed emphasis is not often articulated. Many scholars are content simply to observe the links. For Carley, however, such a picture is intimately linked with the need for the prophet to authenticate his ministry: ‘We have seen that he [Ezekiel] was concerned to authenticate his prophetic activities in the face of contemporary rivals. Recourse to older concepts and modes of expression would have helped establish him in the succession of earlier, and perhaps well-respected, prophets of crisis.

It is with the above in mind that I shall examine in Part II the place of Ezekiel within prophetic בְּרֵאשָׁת inspiration. There are three main questions that I shall endeavour to answer. The first relates to the subject with which this study opened. It is the question of whether בְּרֵאשָׁת in Ezekiel is or can be understood as Yahweh’s breath on which his word is carried. Naturally this will be restricted to the prophetic and the rhetorical events. The second is whether Ezekiel recovers בְּרֵאשָׁת as foundational in prophetic inspiration. Within this is the question of whether the classical prophets did indeed repudiate בְּרֵאשָׁת in their own inspiration. The third is whether the emphasis on בְּרֵאשָׁת within the prophet Ezekiel’s ministry is best explained in terms of the authentication of the prophet. To try and answer these questions, I shall proceed as follows.

In this chapter, I shall endeavour to bring sharper definition to discussions by examining the concept of inspiration, and then shall examine the role of בְּרֵאשָׁת within the ministry of Ezekiel himself, as the book portrays it. In chapter 4, I shall turn to the picture of inspiration present both before the book of Ezekiel, within the pre-classical and the classical prophets, and after it.

Taking both chapters together, I shall argue in Part II that the link between Yahweh’s בְּרֵאשָׁת as ‘breath’ and Yahweh’s word is neither made nor exploited theologically in the book of Ezekiel, although there are close links between בְּרֵאשָׁת and Yahweh’s word; that the inspiration of Ezekiel is not qualitatively different either from that of the pre-classical prophets, or from that of the classical prophets; that the emphasis on בְּרֵאשָׁת within pre-classical prophecy has been overemphasised; that the classical prophets were willing to attribute their inspiration to, or to have their inspiration attributed to, the divine בְּרֵאשָׁת, despite a reluctance to speak of בְּרֵאשָׁת; that the picture of inspiration after the book of Ezekiel is also not qualitatively different from that found in Ezekiel; that the prominence of בְּרֵאשָׁת within the prophetic ministry of

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25 Of those that do, Volz is notable for relating it to Ezekiel’s lack of sharp vision of the being of Yahweh, his closer affinity to popular belief, his greater disposition towards extraordinary trance-like experiences. See Volz, Der Geist Gottes, p69. Neve relates Ezekiel’s greater freedom to his being ‘transplanted into a new environment’. See Neve, Spirit of God, p38.
26 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p73.
Ezekiel is not explained well by the notion that the prophet recovers an emphasis that had been lost in order to authenticate his ministry.

A. EXPLORING INSPIRATION

First, however, if we are to evaluate the picture of word, spirit and inspiration in the book of Ezekiel and compare the relationship there with that which obtains elsewhere within Old Testament prophecy, it is essential to explore what precisely is meant by inspiration, since scholars use the word in two different senses without distinguishing between them.27

The first, which we might term ‘word-communicating’ inspiration, is that whereby the divine ‘breath’ / ‘spirit’, effectively ‘breathes’ or ‘utters’ the word to the prophet, or through the prophet to the people. In other words, נְרוֹעַ is involved in inspiring the words (of Yahweh), whether such inspiration relates to the words that came to the prophet, or to the words that the prophet delivers.28 So, for example, Neh. 9:30 is sometimes cited as a case that ‘sees the preaching of the prophets as the activity of the spirit’;29 it was וְיָדֵעַ בְּרֵאשִׁית (‘by your spirit through your prophets’) that Yahweh had warned the people of Israel.

The second sense, which we might term ‘potentiating inspiration,’ is that whereby ‘the spirit was the supernatural power that evoked the revelatory state of mind’30 in the prophet, and enabled the prophet to speak. Negatively, ‘potentiating’ avoids giving to נְרוֹעַ an anachronistic personal dimension. Positively, it encompasses both the sense of creating the potential for the prophet to receive a word, or creating the situation where the prophet is ready to receive that word, and ‘empowering’ the prophet for the task of delivering that word. In this sense, the spirit’s work here is one aspect of that same spirit’s wider work of empowering and enabling that can be seen, for example, in the book of Judges, where the spirit ‘comes upon’ (רוֹעַ נְשֵׁי) Othniel (3:10) and Jephthah (11:29), ‘clothes itself with’ (נְשֵׁי) Gideon (Jdg. 6:34), ‘impels’ (נְשֵׁי) (13:25) and ‘rushes upon’ (נְשֵׁי) Samson (14:6, 19; 15:4). Thus ‘inspiration’ can be used as the general term to describe the ‘power proceeding from God’ in the life of people.31 Such a view of inspiration has been articulated clearly by Kaufmann:

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27 The article on נְרוֹעַ in NIDOTTE uses inspiration in both the senses I outline without distinguishing between them (נְרוֹעַ; NIDOTTE 3, p1076).
28 Ma uses inspiration in this sense: ‘The prophetic inspiration of the spirit of God throughout the Old Testament is for the preaching of Yahweh’s word (e.g. Num. 24.2; Mic. 3.8; Ezek. 11.5; Zech. 7.12; Joel 3.1-2; 2 Sam. 23.2; Neh. 9.30; 2 Chron. 15.1; 20.14)’ (Until the Spirit Comes, p121). That he is talking about נְרוֹעַ as the source is clear from what he says later, commenting on נְרוֹעַ in post-exilic times (p152): ‘the claim of the spirit of Yahweh reappears as the source of revelation’ (my emphasis). Cf. Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p145.
30 Lindblom, Prophecy, p177 n112.
31 Vriezen, Outline of Old Testament Theology, p250.
We must thus distinguish the action of the spirit of YHWH from prophecy proper. The spirit is the source of activity and creativity; it animates the ecstatic, the judge, the mighty man; it rests on the poet. It rouses the prophet to act, to speak, and endows him with the ability to harangue and poetize. The spirit of prophecy also prepares him to receive the divine word – to see visions, to hear the divine voice in dreams or ecstatic slumber. But the source of prophecy proper is other than these activities. It is in the revelation of God. In this revelation the prophet ideally is entirely passive; he but listens to what is said to him. The frenzy, the physical aberrations, even the visions are not the essence. Of visions and riddles, too, the important part is the explanation that the prophet receives passively. What makes the prophet is not any faculty of clairvoyance, or the spirit that rests on or in him; it is the word that he has heard from God or his agents.32

In other words, by ‘potentiating’ inspiration I mean that ṣārā is involved in inspiring the prophet, whether to receive or deliver Yahweh’s words.

Whether ultimately it is possible to distinguish ‘word-communicating’ inspiration from ‘potentiating’ inspiration remains to be seen, however. If the work of ṣārā within ‘potentiating’ inspiration is to enable the prophet to fulfil the task to which Yahweh has called him or her, as is the case with the judges, it still raises the question of the relationship between word and spirit, since the essence of prophecy (which ṣārā is said to enable) is to have a word from Yahweh (cf. Jer. 18:18). Thus ‘potentiating’ inspiration may not necessarily preclude ‘word-communicating inspiration.’

There is a second question about inspiration that needs to be addressed, too, and that is the point within the ‘life’ of the ‘word’ to which the term ‘inspiration’ refers. We have already seen how Yahweh’s word can be understood both as the word from Yahweh to the prophet (the prophetic event), and as the word which the prophet utters (the rhetorical event). Any discussion about the role of ṣārā and inspiration needs to explore at which point the influence of ṣārā can be seen. Such a distinction between the two stages of prophecy is not always preserved or highlighted in the Old Testament, whether in what has been termed ‘ecstatic prophecy’ (e.g. 1 Sam. 10), or in later accounts of prophecy (e.g. Neh. 9:30). This should not be surprising, since, if there was a discernible ‘gap’ between the prophetic event and the rhetorical event, false prophecy would not have been an issue. Nonetheless, there are occasions, particularly in narrative, where a distinction is explicitly made between the two events (e.g. 1 Kgs. 21:19-24). Further, there are other occasions where ṣārā is linked particularly with either the prophetic event (e.g. Ezekiel (Ezek. 11:5)) or the rhetorical event (e.g. Balaam (Num. 24:2)). Maintaining a distinction, then, between the two stages, is important.

Our discussion of inspiration is summarised in Table 1 and in Figures 1 and 2 below.

32 Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, p99.
Table 1. The inspiration of a prophet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophetic Event</th>
<th>General equipping of the prophet to receive Yahweh's word</th>
<th>General equipping of the prophet without any direct reference to Yahweh's word</th>
<th>The linking of יร with the 'telescoped' reception and delivery of Yahweh's word</th>
<th>יר breathes / speaks / uters the words to the prophet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Event</td>
<td>General equipping to deliver Yahweh's word</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit 'double agency discourse' – יר speaks the words the prophet speaks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table illustrates the distinction between ‘potentiating’ and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration and the distinction between the prophetic and rhetorical events. As we have already noted, such distinctions may not always be evident. More specifically, the prophetic and rhetorical events are not always distinguished when the work of the divine יר is mentioned, but are sometimes ‘telescoped’ together (the third and fourth columns in rows two and three). Further, יר may be linked with a prophet’s ministry, but not directly with either the prophetic or the rhetorical event (column three). Moreover, ‘word-communicating’ inspiration may prove to be ‘concurrent’ with ‘potentiating’ inspiration (Figure 1), or it may be a ‘subset’ (Figure 2).  

![Figure 1. Potentiating (P) and word-communicating inspiration (W) concurrent.](image1)

![Figure 2. Word-communicating inspiration (W) a subset of potentiating inspiration (P).](image2)

Failure to make careful distinctions is a contributory factor in scholars reaching different conclusions. Hildebrandt seems to focus on ‘potentiating’ inspiration when he observes the role of יר in ‘commissioning, inspiring, motivating and guiding’ the prophets (especially Ezekiel), and concludes that ‘the relationship between the word and the Spirit in the prophet’s [sic] estimation was very intimate.’ Kaufmann appears to focus on ‘word-communicating’ inspiration when he concludes, on the basis of the same

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33 By ‘concurrent’, I mean that every instance of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration is also an instance of ‘potentiating’ inspiration and vice-versa. By ‘subset’, I mean that some, but not all, instances of ‘potentiating’ inspiration are also instances of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration. I owe the correct mathematical expressions to Dr. Paul Dale.

data, that there is no relationship between Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s רוח.\(^{35}\) It is with these distinctions in mind that we turn to the book of Ezekiel.

B. THE INSPIRATION OF EZEKIEL

Our analysis of prophetic inspiration within the book of Ezekiel will focus on four areas. The first two relate to Yahweh addressing the prophet, in visions and in ‘word.’ The third relates to other instances of links between רוח and prophecy. The fourth relates to Ezekiel communicating Yahweh’s word. Given every commentator’s acknowledgement that רוח is strikingly prominent in the book, a degree of unanimity might be expected here, but there is in fact significant disagreement with regard to the prophet’s inspiration and רוח. Koch confidently declares of Ezekiel, ‘At every turn, he emphasizes standing, talking and acting under the effect of רוחו יהוה.’\(^{36}\) Scharbert, on the other hand, while noting the action of רוח on the prophet in a number of respects, adds, ‘but nowhere is the prophetic preaching to his own fellow-believers itself characterised as a gift or even as a task of the “spirit of God”.’\(^{37}\) I shall be arguing that neither of these is accurate. There is some evidence of both ‘potentiating’ and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration, and such inspiration relates both to the prophetic and to the rhetorical events. However, such inspiration is rather less prominent than Koch states.

1. Ezekiel’s visions and רוח

We saw above, with Zimmerli, there are five vision ‘units’ within the book of Ezekiel.\(^{38}\) Within these, both the hand of Yahweh and the spirit of Yahweh have a significant role in their reception, as can be seen from Table 2.

\(^{37}\) ‘...aber nirgends wird die prophetische Verkündigung an die eigenen Glaubensgenossen selbst als eine Gabe oder auch als Auftrag des „Geist Gottes” charakterisiert.’ Scharbert, ‘Der “Geist” und die Schriftpropheten’, p92.
\(^{38}\) Zimmerli, ‘Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character’, p516.
### Table 2. The genesis of Ezekiel’s visions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The vision</th>
<th>The vision and הים</th>
<th>The vision and יד</th>
<th>The editorial comment in 1:3a affirms that the book as a whole is Yahweh’s word. 39 The comment in 1:3b (‘the hand of Yahweh was on him there (בְּנֵֽעָלָיָ֣ה יְהֹוָ֖ה)’ asserts that the vision, introduced by Ezekiel in v.1, is authentic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1-3:15 – of chariots; Ezekiel’s commission. One of three major visions described as ‘בְּנֵֽעָלָיָ֣ה יְהֹוָ֖ה’ נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן.</td>
<td>הים is the ‘storm wind’ of 1:4. Within the vision, יד enters Ezekiel and energises him (2:2); it also transports him (3:12, 14).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3:22-5:17 – the instructions to portray the different sign-acts. The vision element, in the sense of what Ezekiel sees, as opposed to what Yahweh says to him, is restricted to seeing Yahweh’s glory in 3:23.</td>
<td>יד energises Ezekiel (3:24) so as to hear Yahweh’s word. The phrase is parallel to 2:2. Here, too, יד is not involved directly in the reception of the vision.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:1-11:25 – abominations in the temple; slaughter of idolaters; Yahweh’s glory leaving the temple and the city. The second of the three נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן.</td>
<td>יד involved here as the transporting יד (8:3); such a transportation is נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן</td>
<td>As Ezekiel relates how Yahweh told him to rise and go into the valley, he also relates, using the same phrase as 1:3, how, again, Yahweh’s hand was upon him (3:22). This directly precedes his seeing Yahweh’s glory (v.23).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:1-14 – dry bones back to life</td>
<td>יד is involved in transporting the prophet (37:1), within the experience of Yahweh’s hand coming upon him.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40:1-48:35 – vision of a new temple. The third of the three נַעֲרֵ֣י הַשָּׁמ֖וֹן.</td>
<td>יד is not mentioned directly here in connection with the reception of the vision; instead, there is the lesser ‘he brought me in visions of God…and set me down…’; within the vision itself, יד transports Ezekiel to the inner court within the ‘new’ temple (43:5).</td>
<td>The opening phrase, ‘the hand of Yahweh came upon me (יְהוָ֖ה יַעֲשֶׂ֥ם יִזָּאֵֽב)’ serves to identify the beginning of the vision, before Yahweh sets the prophet down in a valley ‘by the spirit of Yahweh.’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the analysis in Table 2, it is clear that the ‘hand of Yahweh’ has a greater congruence with the reception of visions. In the reception of all of these visions, it is the ‘hand’ of Yahweh and not הים, which is the distinguishing feature. 40 A closer look at one example, 8:3, will help demonstrate this.

39 See further above on pp61ff.
40 The phrase הים יְהֹוָ֖ה (or the variant with הים in 8:1) is always linked in Ezekiel with the prophet’s ministry. Apart from the introduction to visions, it only appears at two other points in the book. In 3:14, it occurs at the close of the first vision. In 33:22, it occurs within the only narrative unit in the book, ‘presaging this time not an oracle…but a release from the years-long constraint on normal intercourse with his society’ (Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p681). Yahweh also speaks within the book of ‘my hand’ (e.g. 6:14; cf. 20:33-35). Zimmerli links the origin of the use of ‘hand of Yahweh’ with the Exodus tradition (Ezekiel 1, pp117-18). Roberts, however, criticises Zimmerli for ignoring non-biblical parallels, and associates it with illness and pathological behaviour (J.J.M. Roberts, ‘The Hand of Yahweh’, VT 21 (1971), pp244-51). Carley notes the two strands of meaning, ‘power’, or ‘alienation’ of an individual’s mind. He says that references speaking of Yahweh’s influence on the prophet fit more easily into the second sense. For Carley, הים (anarthrous, and without the absolute, ‘Yahweh’) speaks of conveying the
In 8:2-3, the prophet narrates, ‘A figure that looked like a human being…stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head; and the spirit lifted me up (תֵּאן) between earth and heaven, and brought me in divine visions (מַעְרָא הָאֱלֹהִים) to Jerusalem’ (vv.2-3). Within the context of the book, the vision that these verses introduce extends to 11:25, where Ezekiel told the exiles all that Yahweh had shown him. With the elders sitting before the prophet (8:1), the hand of Yahweh fell upon him, and he saw the ‘figure’ strikingly similar to the one he had seen in 1:26-27. Then the ‘figure’ and מַעְרָא together lift him up, and this מַעְרָא transports Ezekiel in divine visions. While visions occurred within earlier prophecy (e.g. 1 Kgs. 22:17, 19-22; Amos 7:1-9), and Elijah was regarded as having experienced transportation by מַעְרָא (1 Kgs. 18:12; 2 Kgs. 2:16), Ezekiel is unique in experiencing ‘visionary transportation’ – that is, within the vision Ezekiel sees himself as transported by מַעְרָא.

Our concern here is not so much with the precise nature of what Ezekiel experienced, but to ascertain the role of מַעְרָא with respect to the reception of the vision. At one level, the distinction between מַעְרָא and מַעְרָא is clear. Here, the role of מַעְרָא is to do with the movement of the prophet within the vision, rather than with the reception of the vision itself. It is when the hand of Yahweh comes upon him that he receives the vision in 8:1. Thus מַעְרָא here is more properly seen as the ‘transporting’ מַעְרָא, and not the prophetic or inspiring מַעְרָא. It is the ‘hand of Yahweh’ that introduces each of the five vision reports in the book of Ezekiel. Further, it was a ‘hand’ stretched out to Ezekiel that gave him the scroll containing the words of his message (2:8).

However, there are three reasons why our attention should not move too quickly away from מַעְרָא and the reception of the prophet’s visions. First, there is a close association in the Old Testament between Yahweh’s מַעְרָא and Yahweh’s מַעְרָא. Secondly, there is one instance in the book where Yahweh’s מַעְרָא does seem to be linked explicitly with the prophet’s reception of a vision (11:24). Thirdly, in one of the visions (37:1-14), the transporting מַעְרָא, usually anarthrous, is in construct relationship with, and made definite by, the absolute מַעְרָא (37:1). The identity and function of this מַעְרָא points to a closer link between Yahweh’s transporting מַעְרָא and inspiration than is sometimes recognised. We turn first to the similarity of Yahweh’s מַעְרָא and Yahweh’s מַעְרָא.

prophet, while ‘hand’ has to do with ‘awareness of an extraordinary state of mind’ (Ezekiel Among the Prophets, p29).

41 Reading מַעְרָא, with LXX. See Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p216.
42 For a discussion of this, see Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, pp31-37.
44 Lindblom, Prophecy, p58; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, pp11-18; Dreytza, Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH, pp153ff; idem, מַעְרָא, NIDOITE 2, pp403-404; Koch, Der Geist Gottes, pp133, 67; Schüngel-Straumann, RUAH, p54. This is not to say that they are identical. Lys (RUAH, p133) tentatively suggests that the difference is to be found in the nature of the action, ‘la main son action sur l’homme, l’esprit son action en l’homme’; Schüngel-Straumann (RUAH, pp54-55) suggests the difference lies in the fact that Yahweh’s hand designates Yahweh’s power (‘Macht’), while מַעְרָא is used in a more multifarious way, and is less strongly identified with Yahweh.
The close association of Yahweh’s נְרָע and Yahweh’s רְאוּא can be found outside the
book of Ezekiel. Prophetic inspiration is linked with music and the action of Yahweh’s נְרָע in 1 Sam. 10:6ff., but with Yahweh’s רְאוּא in 2 Kgs. 3:15. Divinely-assisted movement
is associated with Yahweh’s נְרָע in 1 Kgs. 18:12 and 2 Kgs. 2:16, but with Yahweh’s רְאוּא in 1 Kgs. 18:46. Similarity is also found within the book, both in the transportation of
the prophet and in the reception of visions. It is the form of a hand (רוּאָא) stretched out
from the figure on the throne that ‘takes’ (נְרָע) Ezekiel by a lock of his hand, then נְרָע picks him up (洿) (8:3). This is very similar to 3:14, where נְרָע picks him up (洿) and
takes (נְרָע) him. In 8:1, Yahweh’s רְאוּא falls (רְאוּא) on the prophet at the start of his vision, signalling the reception of the vision. In 11:5, Yahweh’s נְרָע falls (רְאוּא) on Ezekiel, the
only time such a collocation occurs in the Old Testament. Further, in 11:24, the divine
vision attributed at the start of chapter 8 to Yahweh’s רְאוּא, is attributed to נְרָע. Finally, the words used to describe the action of Yahweh’s hand coming on the prophet (רוּאָא יִרְדוּ) is elsewhere in the Old Testament used of the coming of Yahweh’s נְרָע.46

The second point linking Yahweh’s נְרָע with divine visions is, as we have just seen,
in 11:24. At the end of the vision that began in 8:1, the prophet recounts, ‘The spirit
lifted me up and brought me in a vision by the spirit of God into Chaldea, to the exiles
(רוּאָא וְנְרָע). Then the vision that I had seen left me’ (11:24). Here within the same verse are two occurrences of נְרָע which are
slightly awkward together. The significant phrase for us is נְרָע וְנְרָע, but how
we render it depends in part on how we are to interpret the ‘transporting נְרָע which
picks the prophet up. Those who favour a theological understanding of the ‘transporting
נְרָע’, such as the ‘divine energy’ that transported the prophet, 47 or as Yahweh’s spirit, 48
face a difficulty over the second occurrence of נְרָע in the verse. Neve sees the phrase
רוּאָא וְנְרָע as referring to the prophet being ‘brought,’ rather than to the notion that the
‘spirit’ brought about the vision, claiming that the spirit is not ‘the source of the visions
that Ezekiel saw.’49 Support for this might be seen to come from 37:1, where the subject
of the sentence qualifies an agent in a way similar to Neve’s construal of 11:24: ‘he (i.e.
Yahweh) brought me out by the spirit of Yahweh (רוּאָא נְרָע).’ However, the similarity
of the two instances should not be overplayed. In 37:1, the agent of translocation is
juxtaposed with the verb expressing the translocation, while in 11:24, if Neve’s
interpretation is accepted, the agent is distant from the verb. Further, this reading of
11:24 introduces substantial redundancy in the description of the agent of Ezekiel’s

45 Ezek. 1:3; 3:22; 8:1; 37:1; 40:1; cf. also 3:14; 33:22.
46 Num. 24:2; Jdg. 3:10; 11:29; 1 Sam. 19:20, 23; cf. 1 Sam. 16:16, 23. Eichrodt suggests that the
downplaying of נְרָע within classical prophecy is evident here, in so far as the ‘overwhelming effect’ of
Yahweh has come to be described by the ‘hand of Yahweh’, rather than by נְרָע (Theology of the Old
47 Cooke, Ezekiel, p127.
48 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p230; Lys, רוּאָא, pp129-30; Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p129; Block, Ezekiel 1-24,
49 Neve, Spirit of God, pp97-98.
visionary movement, a redundancy that makes אֱלֹהִים seem like a gloss. However, it is hard to discern what the function of such a gloss might have been, and there is no textual evidence for a corruption, so we should endeavour to make sense of the MT. Allen captures the force of אֱלֹהִים when he says that the phrase “by means of the spirit of God” can hardly qualify the verb of which רוּחַ “spirit” is subj. It seems rather to qualify the “vision,” which virtually has a verbal force, “that which was seen (by means of).”

Here, then, is evidence of at least a ‘potentiating’ view of inspiration. In 11:24, the ‘spirit of God’ is seen as responsible for giving the vision that is seen in 8:1 as due to the ‘hand of Yahweh.’ We can, however, go further. As we saw in the last chapter, Kaufmann’s distinction between ‘seeing’ a vision and ‘hearing’ the word of Yahweh is overstated. A prophetic vision is not always merely the vehicle within which the ‘word’ comes, as Kaufmann effectively suggests, but can also be seen itself as Yahweh’s ‘word’, a divine ‘speech event’. Thus if the ‘spirit’ is seen here as responsible for giving the vision, and the vision is understood not merely as a vehicle for Yahweh’s word, but as Yahweh’s ‘word’ or ‘speech event’, then it is better to see ‘word-communicating’ inspiration articulated here.

At the same time, it should be noted that such a reading does not diminish the awkwardness of the double mention of רוּחַ, if the first רוּחַ is interpreted theologically. Renz, therefore, follows Greenberg in rendering the transporting רוּחַ here as ‘wind.’ He regards this verse as confirming that the רוּחַ ‘operative on Ezekiel in the visions is a “wind” rather than “the Spirit”’ because of the ‘differentiation made in 11:24 between this רוּחַ and the רוּחַ through which the vision was communicated.’ This certainly accounts for the shift in gender and the lack of the divine name between the transporting רוּחַ in 1 Kgs. 18:12 and 2 Kgs. 2:16, on the one hand, and the feminine, anarthrous, unspecified רוּחַ in Ezekiel.

The third reason why Yahweh’s רוּחַ can and should be related to Ezekiel’s visions is derived from the account of the vision of dry bones in 37:1-14. In 37:1, as we noted above, the reference to the transporting רוּחַ is articulated in unique fashion. The transporting רוּחַ is said explicitly to be Yahweh’s. There must be significance in such a reference, since it was obviously possible to speak of the transporting רוּחַ in vaguer fashion. Such a reference certainly serves to orient the reader to the other nine.

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52 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p186.
54 For a different perspective, grounded in Ezekiel’s monotheism, see Lys, רוח, p130. How such a view can be reconciled with the pointers towards it being Yahweh’s רוּחַ we shall look at below.
occurrences of רוע in the thirteen verses that follow, and in particular to highlight Yahweh’s sovereign action behind these events. Two questions, though, remain. One relates to the identity of רוע here. Is it a wind sent by Yahweh or Yahweh’s spirit that transports the prophet in visions? The second relates to the significance of this occurrence for other instances of רוע within Ezekiel’s visions. Is this instance determinative or significant for the interpretation of the other instances?

With regard to the first question, to say that רוע is Yahweh’s רוע does not necessarily remove it from the principally meteorological realm, although the only other instance of רוע רוע in Ezekiel, in 11:5, is theological. The same phrase can designate the wind at Yahweh’s beck and call (Isaiah 40:7), and Yahweh’s control over רוע qua meteorological phenomenon is apparent in texts such as Exod. 15:8 and Num. 11:31. A more fruitful approach is to explore more fully the characteristics and function of רוע in v.1 in the light of the rest of the vision. In his article ‘Geist und Leben nach Ezechiel 37,1-14’, Wagner does just that. He notes that רוע in v.1 bears many of the characteristics of a storm wind, but argues that it cannot be simply a storm wind because it is not random in its action, since it takes Ezekiel to “the plain” (with the definite article). This is not a necessary conclusion, since we have seen Yahweh’s control over רוע, and Elijah is transported to heaven in a ‘whirlwind’ (סְפֹּר). However, it is in his analysis of the function of רוע that he makes a significant contribution. He argues that ‘רוּחַ seems here to be the principle of revelation of prophetic experience.’ Since Block distinguishes clearly between the transporting רוע and the רוע of prophetic revelation, we need to follow Wagner’s argument closely here.

Although there is obviously a shift between vv.1-10 and vv.12-14, in terms of the ‘picture’ (‘Bildmaterie’), Wagner asks why we should assume unity of ‘Bildmaterie’ as one of the presuppositional criteria of authenticity. Both sections have slightly different emphases, which can explain the shift. At the same time, both sections speak of ‘the same reality of death’. In view of the fact that the exiles have experienced death (37:11) in the form of ‘history that has died, belief that has died, hope that has died, ...

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56 Ma (Until the Spirit Comes, p19) notes the particular difficulty in the categorisation of רוע ‘where the function strongly implies the “wind” reference, but also has a strong indication that the רוע is specifically used by Yahweh.’
60 Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p373.
61 What follows is taken from Sections II-III of his article, i.e. Wagner, ‘Geist und Leben’, pp151-56.
promises of salvation that have perished',63 the picture of the field of bones in vv.1-2 is utterly appropriate. Having demonstrated the coherence and congruence of the different ‘pictures’ he then makes the crucial point that it is by Yahweh’s רוח that Ezekiel is brutally confronted with the reality of death.

The significance of the storm wind motif for him, which he insists should not be done away with, is that it symbolises Ezekiel being seized by Yahweh and torn away from his environment and his existing conditions.64 But רוח goes beyond that, for ‘the רוח tears away all illusions and unlocks reality, making reality experienceable, comprehensible, visible. It is precisely the act which can be understood as ecstasy, as mystical experience, that leads Ezekiel into the illusion-free actual, historical situation.65 In other words, רוח brings Ezekiel to the point of greatest reality, when Ezekiel sees the situation for the exiles as it really is. For Wagner, the transporting רוח merges into the prophetic spirit of revelation.66

Using the categories of inspiration devised above, we can refine Wagner’s conclusions. Although it is true that רוח brings Ezekiel to the place where he sees the reality of the situation for the exiles, and although what Ezekiel sees can be understood as Yahweh’s speech event, רוח is not the source of what he sees. In that sense, the transporting, even the prophetic, רוח should be understood in terms of ‘potentiating’ rather than ‘word-communicating’ inspiration.

This perspective sheds further light on our second question, on whether 37:1 is determinative or significant for the interpretation of the transporting רוח in other visions, too.

We have already seen that the transporting רוח plays a significant part within the visions; indeed, the only places we encounter this רוח are in the visions. We should notice that רוח, within the visions, takes Ezekiel to (8:3; 11:1; 43:5) or from (3:12, 14; 11:24) a place where Yahweh reveals something to the prophet or speaks to him. In that sense, there is little difference in terms of function between the רוח in 37:1 and the anarthrous transporting רוח elsewhere. Given that in 11:24 the first occurrence of רוח most naturally seems to be that of a ‘wind’ moving the prophet, yet functionally it acts in a way similar to the transporting-cum-potentiating spirit of 37:1, here is clear evidence of deliberate ambiguity surrounding the use of רוח. In the earlier passages

66 So too Lys, רוח, pp130-31. Although Hosch does not specify what kind of ‘spirit’ is in view within the semantic domain ‘supernatural beings’, he argues for the presence of a second semantic domain, ‘motion’ (earlier defined as ‘movement of air’). Hosch, ‘רוח in the Book of Ezekiel’, p114.
where the prophet is transported, there is notable reticence to define further what is meant by this נָרָם. Though a meteorological sense seems most natural, we should not regard the awkwardness in 11:24 as a definitive statement that the transporting נָרָם is exclusively meteorological. Deliberate play on the different meanings of נָרָם is clearly part of the author’s agenda, as is most obvious in 37:1-14, and references to ‘wind’ do not, of course, connote a ‘natural cause’ of Ezekiel’s movement.67 Retrospectively, we should see Yahweh’s direct involvement by his ‘spirit’, something more than hinted at earlier in the book given the close links between Yahweh’s נָרָם and Yahweh’s ר, and the near-interchangeability of מָשָא, נָרָם, and רָדַע as agents at the start of ch. 8.68

In summary, I have argued that the exploration of נָרָם-inspiration and Ezekiel’s visions yields two main conclusions. First, the role of נָרָם within the visions, the transporting נָרָם, points towards the ‘potentiating’ inspiration of the prophet, with particular reference to the prophetic event. Secondly, נָרָם in 11:24 demonstrates the involvement of Yahweh’s נָרָם in the reception of the visions themselves, that is, in the prophetic event. Insofar as these visions are Yahweh’s ‘speech event’, the inspiration envisaged here is ‘word-communicating’.

2. Ezekiel being addressed in ‘word’ and נָרָם

There are three instances within the book where נָרָם is closely linked contextually to Yahweh addressing Ezekiel. Whether such a contextual link is reflected in a theological link will need to be examined. I shall argue that Ezekiel the prophet is clearly impacted by נָרָם. However, in each one of these three instances, there is evidence not of ‘word-communicating’, but of ‘potentiating’ inspiration.

a) Ezekiel 2:2

Within the opening vision (1:1-3:15), Ezekiel had fallen prostrate before the vision of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh (1:28). Then Yahweh spoke to him, and told him to stand on his feet. The prophet continued, ‘And when he spoke to me (קָנָה נָרָם נָרָמַה), a spirit entered into me (נָרָם וַעֲקָבָא יָרָךְ נָרָם) and set me on my feet (נָרָם וַעֲקָבָא יָרָךְ נָרָם), and I heard him speaking to me.’

There are two questions that need to be addressed if the relationship to Yahweh’s word is to be discerned. The first is the identity of נָרָם. The second concerns the relationship between Yahweh’s speaking and נָרָם entering. We turn first to the identity of נָרָם.

In the preliminary discussion on pages 75f., we noted some degree of consensus on the theological nature of this נָרָם, even if some disagreement on the precise nature of it. Looking at commentators more broadly, there is some debate as to whether this נָרָם is

68 Schüngel-Straumann, Rūah, p40. Note in particular רֵיחַ אָפִי (v.3) and רֵיחַ אָפִי (v.7).
69 LXX omits this phrase, but adds כִּי אָזַל אֱלֹהִים וַיָּאָרָץ כִּי אָזַל אֱלֹהִים וַיָּאָרָץ, most of which appears in Ezek. 3:14.
theological. There are really three main views adopted: רוח as a ‘wind’ that set the
prophet on his feet, רוח as ‘breath of life, vigour, courage’ given by Yahweh and רוח as
‘spirit of Yahweh.’

Carley observes Ezekiel’s ‘curious reluctance’ to use the phrase ‘spirit of Yahweh’,
and thinks that people ‘too readily’ equate ‘spirit’ here with ‘the spirit of Yahweh.’ He
prefers the meaning ‘wind,’ linking it with the translating ‘wind’ mentioned elsewhere
in Ezekiel. He insists, however, that this does not attribute Ezekiel’s movement to a
‘natural cause,’ since Yahweh is responsible for the wind, too. The reluctance to speak
of Yahweh’s own רוח until chapter 36 serves to emphasise the ‘spirit of Yahweh’ as
instrumental within Israel’s revival. For him, the ‘word-play’ on רוח reveals ‘the
prophet’s intention of associating some forces with common physical phenomena.’

Greenberg regards רוח as ‘vigor or even courage...infused into the prophet by the
address of God.’ This might seem to suggest, as it does to Allen, a ‘subjective’
understanding of רוח, but language of Yahweh infusing Ezekiel makes it clear that what
is in view is a vigour or courage from Yahweh. In a similar vein, Woodhouse notes the
links between 2:2 and 37:10, and the contiguity with Yahweh speaking, and prefers to
see רוח as Yahweh’s breath that enters the prophet. While it should not be assumed
that this ‘breath’ that enters the prophet is necessarily related to the word that is spoken,
there is support for the rendering ‘life-breath’ from other occurrences of רוח as the
subject of הב (qal) followed by the preposition ב. Apart from this reference, there are
four others, all in Ezekiel (3:24; 37:5, 9, 10). All the instances point to רוח as
life-breath. Knierim, in his discussion of Old Testament spirituality, makes the
important point, based on Ps. 104:29-30, that ontology is not always in view when the
Old Testament speaks about רוח, whether it is described as Yahweh’s רוח or the human
רוח. In Ps. 104, whose רוח it depends on the location of that רוח at a particular
moment. The critical point, according to Knierim, is that ‘the spirit essential for human
life is given and taken by God, and is not under the control of humans’ (cf. הַנַּחַפְנַח in Gen.
2:7). Here, then, it might be that this רוח-breath that has come from Yahweh revitalises

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70 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p30.
71 Carley regards the clearly theological instances in 11:5 and 11:24 as ‘out of character’ (Ezekiel among the Prophets, p30) and hence secondary (Ezekiel among the Prophets, p25, p88 n72).
72 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p30. His comment raises the question of deriving an author’s intentions from a text. Here is not the place to pursue it.
73 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p62; cf. Fohrer’s ‘göttliche Lebenskraft’ (Ezechiel, p15).
74 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p38.
76 Other instances where רוח is the subject of הב involve the ‘wind’ or ‘air’ that comes (Job 1:19; 41:8; Ezek. 1:4; Jer. 4:12; Hos. 13:15) or that Yahweh brings (Jer. 49:36) or that brought (hif.) Ezekiel (Ezek. 8:3; 11:1, 24; 43:5). Note that some language of רוח being ‘in’ (א) a person points to רוח as ‘life-breath’ (e.g. Gen. 6:3, 17; 7:15, 22); at other points רוח clearly is God’s רוח (e.g. Gen. 41:38).
77 See Knierim, Task, p273.
the stunned prophet. Infused with renewed vitality and vigour, he can stand on his feet. 78

The third view, that of יד as Yahweh’s ‘spirit,’ is derived chiefly from the fact that יד retains its identity in setting the prophet on his feet. Thus Ohnesorge comments that יד here ‘means not only “vitality”, but more. It has here a dynamic character, so should be understood not only anthropologically, but also theologically – in the sense of a particular working of Yahweh.’ 79 He goes on to observe that there are close links with 37:10, but the difference lies in the fact that יד in 2,2a (3,24a) is the subject of הנש hif.’ while ‘in 37,10b the revitalised are themselves the subject of the phrase...’ 80 Allen argues in similar vein that יד is Yahweh’s ‘spirit’, and explains the lack of an article here (and in the references to יד transporting Ezekiel) as marks of ‘the stereotyped style of spirit-control.’ 81 Block, too, sees יד here as Yahweh’s יד, the ‘spirit of Yahweh’: ‘The text notes that the raising of the prophet occurs simultaneously with the sound of the voice, which suggests that this רוח may be the source of the word’s dynamic and energizing power. This can be none other than the Spirit of God...’ 82 Before attempting to decide between these three possible meanings, it is necessary to look at the second question relating to this passage.

The second question relates to the timing of the two events of Yahweh speaking and יד coming. In particular, it relates to the force of יד. On about two hundred occasions in the Old Testament יד is followed by one of three verbs of speaking, מקרר, יד (piel) or יד (piel); eighty of these involve יד. The vast majority of these two hundred yield the meaning ‘just as,’ since the subordinate clause introduced by יד serves to confirm that a particular action has been performed ‘just as’ has been said; new elements are not introduced. There are sixteen instances of יד other than Ezek. 2:2. In each of them, יד has this comparative sense. If יד is to have a comparative sense here, it is necessary that implicit in Yahweh’s command to the prophet to stand on his feet is the assumption that יד will be essential for this to happen. However, prior to 2:2, there has been no mention within Yahweh’s command of יד entering the prophet. יד should therefore be understood in a temporal sense

78 So Schüngel-Straumann, Ḥuah, p44. Given that elsewhere Ezekiel can respond to God’s commands without reference to יד, she sees יד here not as replacing Ezekiel’s own ability to hear and act, but as giving him וים where his own was lacking. The appropriate translation is then not ‘Spirit’ but ‘(God’s) vitality’ (‘(Gottes) Lebenskraft’).
80 יד in 2,2a (3,24a) Subject von הָיָה hi... ist’ while ‘in 37,10b sind die Wiederbelebten selbst Subjekt des Ausdrucks...’. Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet sein Volk neu, p303.
81 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p38.
82 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p115. Others seeing the referent here as Yahweh’s יד include Lys, Ḥuah, pp130-31; Hosch, ‘ḤUÁH in the Book of Ezekiel’, pp105-106.
here. Such a rendering, though, has been disputed. The rarity of this temporal usage, along with textual evidence, has led Zimmerli to regard the phrase as a later 'clarification.' Allen also rejects the phrase for similar reasons, commenting in addition that 'it adds little to the narrative and indeed cuts across the future aspect of vv 1b.' However, the temporal use is found in Ezekiel, despite the fact that Zimmerli, Tov, Allen and Lust all follow Cornill in denying a temporal usage of יִשְׂרָאֵל in Ezekiel. In 16:50, יִשְׂרָאֵל introduces an event that preceded in time the main clause, ('therefore I removed them when I saw it'). In 35:11, יִשְׂרָאֵל introduces an event that was to happen simultaneously with that in the main clause, though both would be in the future: יִשְׂרָאֵל ('and I will make myself known among them, when I judge you'). More significantly, in view of the dominance of יִשְׂרָאֵל in the sense of 'just as' with verbs of saying, is its occurrence with יִשְׂרָאֵל in a clearly temporal sense: יִשְׂרָאֵל ('And when your people say to you...'). Further, the issue of textual evidence does not yield certain conclusions. Though it is clear that the MT includes יִשְׂרָאֵל here while it is not present in the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX translators, and though it is clear that there is a strong Hebrew text tradition other than that of the MT, since the absence of the phrase from the Hexapla suggests that Origen was working from a different Hebrew text, the significance of such a plus with regard to accessing the more original text is disputed. That one commentator regards the phrase as a 'clarification' and another says that it effectively complicates the phrase demonstrates that there is no substantive reason for emending the MT.

With regard to the temporal relationship between the two clauses, Waltke and O'Connor note that when two situations are contemporary, the conjunction used (if an infinitive with a preposition is not used) is usually יחנה. However יחנה is also often used to describe situations when the event in the subordinate clause (introduced by יחנה) precedes that described in the main clause. On syntactical grounds, it is not

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83 Cf. Tov's comment: 'God did not tell the prophet in so many words that Spirit would enter him, so that these words not only disturb the context, but they are also imprecise.' E. Tov, 'Recensional Differences between the MT and LXX of Ezekiel', ETL 62 (1986), p93.
84 Ezekiel 1, p89. He follows Cornill in regarding the temporal usage as 'unusual.'
85 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p10; so too Tov, 'Recensional Differences', p93.
87 Some see here, as in 16:13, the presence of an archaic 2fs ending, and there is some ancient evidence for rendering with 2fs, 'as you saw' (see BHS). Zimmerli, however, comments, 'The meaning “when I saw it” cannot certainly be excluded.' (Ezekiel 1, p332).
88 In other words, 'in Israel'; so Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p168, as difficilior lectio. Zimmerli (Ezekiel 2, p226) deletes יחנה as an inadvertent repetition. LXX has את.
89 The LXX translators were 'relatively literal and consistent'. See Tov, 'Recensional Differences', pp91-92 (quotation from p92).
91 IBHS, 38.7a.
92 See BDB, p455.
possible to decide whether Yahweh’s speaking precedes רוחו entering the prophet, such that רוחו is seen as an effect of the word, or whether they are simultaneous (as Block assumes).

Drawing the threads of the discussion together, while Woodhouse is right to draw attention to the links with 37:10, Carley has also made an important point in drawing attention to the literary device of ‘word-play’ at this point with regard to the meaning of רוחו. I would go further, and suggest there is deliberate ambiguity. Such ambiguity will be a significant feature in the book of Ezekiel, especially in Ezekiel 37. The determining factor in understanding what is meant here needs to be the context. However, the context points in different directions. The fact that, of the occurrences of רוחו encountered so far in the book, only רוחו in 1:4 has been feminine, points to a link between רוחו in 2:2 and 1:4, yielding a meaning ‘wind.’ However, in the light of the wider literary context given by chapter 37, the meaning ‘life-breath’ seems (retrospectively) preferable. This, though, should not obscure a third direction which רוחו takes, that of the divine רוחו as ‘spirit.’ This is suggested by the increasing role for רוחו within the book, and by the fact that רוחו functions as an agent acting upon the prophet. Such ambiguity as is found in 2:2 serves to keep רוחו at the forefront of the readers’ and hearers’ minds. It is also an important reminder that categories we separate readily are in fact rather fluid.

However, though there is deliberate ambiguity here, and though the MT juxtaposes רוחו and ומברא, it is not possible to conceive of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration here. Such an interpretation would demand that רוחו in some sense preceded Yahweh speaking, an interpretation which the syntax of the MT does not allow. Although רוחו is here intimately associated with hearing Yahweh speak, the focus is not on ‘word-communicating inspiration,’ but rather on the prophet’s ‘revival,’ on his being enabled to stand up, to hear and to respond to Yahweh’s word.

b) Ezekiel 3:24

This verse, closely paralleling 2:2, occurs as Ezekiel is again confronted with the divine glory, and falls on his face (3:22-23). Ezekiel recounts how ‘The spirit entered into me,

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93 Cf. Kaufmann’s comment that ‘The word of God is not brought on by the spirit, the spirit is the by-product of the word.’ Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, p100; this is a general comment that he makes, not one specifically related to Ezek. 2:2.
94 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p115.
95 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p30. Zimmerli (Ezekiel 1, p132) notes the ‘obscurity’ as to whether it is the prophet’s own ‘vital power’ or the ‘divine רוח acting under the divine command.’
97 That רוחו is the subject and agent of both ‘entering’ and ‘causing Ezekiel to stand’ does not prove conclusively that it is Yahweh’s ‘spirit’ that is in view. In Job 32:18, the רוח within Elihu that acts as an independent agent to constrain him is none other than ‘the breath of Shaddai’ (귽ון רוח) that gives a mortal understanding in 32:8.
99 Pace Kapelrud, who says that ‘the spirit...spoke to him’ (‘The Spirit and the Word’, p42).
and set me on my feet (רֹפֵא); and he spoke with me (וְעָשִׂית נִזְהָר וְתָכְבֹּד), and said to me: Go, shut yourself inside your house.' Similarities with 2:2 are immediately apparent. Again, וְעָשִׂית enters the prostrate prophet and sets him on his feet. Here, too, this experience is followed by Yahweh speaking with him, though this is subsequent to the experience of וְעָשִׂית. Allen regards וְעָשִׂית here as the divine רְפוּא. Block agrees, commenting that

'as in 2:2a, the absence of the article leaves the identity of the רְפוּא open. However, its activity resolves the issue. As before, the רְפוּא represents the divine power that enables and authorizes the mortal to stand in the presence of the קָבֹד, the visible sign of the One Who Is Present.'

While Block and Allen are right to recognize the objective side to וְעָשִׂית here, it is still preferable to see the same deliberate ambiguity present as in 2:2. Thus, the comments above on 'inspiration' in 2:2 obtain here. Although the association between וְעָשִׂית and Yahweh speaking with the prophet is close, there is no hint that וְעָשִׂית is the source of inspiration of that word. The most that can be said here is that this וְעָשִׂית points to 'potentiating' inspiration, insofar as the prophet is affected and influenced by its presence and action.

c) Ezekiel 11:5

Within the 'divine vision' from 8:1-11:25, Ezekiel was lifted up and brought to the east gate of the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem. There he saw twenty-five men devising iniquity. In 11:4, he was told to 'prophesy against them.' Ezekiel, as narrator, continues, 'Then the spirit of Yahweh fell upon me (רְפוּא), and he said to me (וְעָשִׂית יִרְאֶה), “Say, Thus says Yahweh...”' and Yahweh continues, telling him what to say.

The use of רְリフォーム with וְעָשִׂית is unique in the Old Testament. It is used once with Yahweh's רְリフォーム in Ezek. 8:1. In meaning, the phrase overlaps with the semantic domain covered by (רְリフォーム יִרְאֶה), used of the onrush of Yahweh's spirit, and that of (רְリフォーム יִרְאֶה), which is used of Yahweh's spirit 'coming upon' a person. Both phrases can be used with וְעָשִׂית for prophecy or for more general empowerment. Neither is used of Yahweh's וְעָשִׂית in Ezekiel. Instead, רְリフォーム יִרְאֶה is linked with Yahweh's hand.

Carley has seen here 'word-communicating' inspiration, in that וְעָשִׂית 'communicates a divine revelation.' While he is correct to see here the prophetic וְעָשִׂית, as well as the

100 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, pp60-61.
101 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, pp153-54.
102 רְリフォーム יִרְאֶה - 1 Sam. 10:6, 10; 18:10; רְリフォーム יִרְאֶה - Num. 24:2; 1 Sam. 19:20, 23 (cf. 1 Sam. 16:16, 23, of the 'evil spirit' upon Saul).
104 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p70; cf. his Ezekiel, p67. So too Hildebrandt, Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God, p190; Hosch, 'RŪAH in the Book of Ezekiel', p117. This, along with this phrase's unique conception of the spirit 'falling', Ezekiel's awareness of a different mode of operation of וְעָשִׂית in 11:1, and the lack of references elsewhere to וְעָשִׂית falling in connection with calls to prophesy, has led Carley to see it as from a later period. Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, pp25, 70. So also Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p258; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet sein Volk neu, pp51, 284. LXX (Codex Vaticanus) reads רְリフォーム.
deliberate linking with pre-classical prophecy, his observation on the relationship between the words Yahweh utters and הנד is mistaken. הנד neither explicitly inspires the words that Yahweh utters, nor the words that Ezekiel is commanded to utter. While הנד ‘fell’ (feminine) on Ezekiel, it is Yahweh who ‘said’ (masculine) to Ezekiel what he should say. While הנד can take both feminine (passim) and masculine (1:12, 20; 19:12; 27:26) verb forms, it is unlikely that there is a shift here, since הנד characteristically in the book retains its gender when it is the subject of two verbs. This verse, though, does provide a clear instance of the inspiration of the prophet Ezekiel as a person; הנד prepares him to receive Yahweh’s word. It is in this sense that ‘the coming of the spirit leads to the prophetic word.’ It further reveals the vital role that the divine הנד plays in the life and the ministry of the prophet.

In summary, the three instances where הנד is most closely linked with Yahweh speaking to Ezekiel do not yield a ‘word-communicating’ view of inspiration within the book of Ezekiel. There is, however, a picture presented of a prophet who is powerfully affected by the work of the divine הנד. At the start of his commissioning, Yahweh’s address to him is accompanied by the action of the divine הנד in setting Ezekiel on his feet. In the instances of Yahweh speaking that we have examined, Yahweh’s הנד is associated deliberately and directly with Ezekiel’s ministry, yielding a prominent, if ‘potentiating,’ view of the inspiration of the prophet by הנד.

3. Other instances of links between הנד and prophecy

There is one place where הנד is linked with the inspiration of prophets other than Ezekiel. In this instance, it is the inspiration of the prophets against whom Ezekiel is to inveigh that is in view. In 13:3, Ezekiel recounts what he is to say to the false prophets: ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh, Alas for the senseless prophets who follow their own spirit (ארֹמ אִיש הַקְטַלֶב), and have seen nothing!’

This verse serves as the first part of a woe oracle against prophets, who, like Ezekiel, claimed to speak for Yahweh. If the MT is retained, then the prophets...
against whom Ezekiel speaks prophesy 'out of their own imagination' (בכלעתי) (v.2), and 'follow their own spirit' (הלאים אחר רוחם) (v.3).

Though Ezekiel judges them on the basis of the rhetorical event (their 'prophesying'), his assault on them relates to the prophetic event. He attacks the source of inspiration of these prophets. At one level, רוח can be understood effectively almost as a synonym for בלב here: the messages that these prophets utter come from their own will. However, by exploiting possible ambiguity in בלב here, Ezekiel could be making a direct assault on their claim to authority. They claim to be inspired by the divine רוח, but in reality their inspiration comes from themselves and their own delusions, and not from Yahweh at all. This certainly fits well with the rest of the condemnation of these false prophets, and the condemnation found elsewhere: they have seen nothing (v.3), they are 'fools', (כחבלי; cf. Hos. 9:7), they have seen lies and falsehood (v.6; cf. Mic. 2:11), they have claimed inspiration without Yahweh speaking to them (v.7) and they have promised prosperity.

Whether this assault on the false prophets' inspiration is matched by Ezekiel claiming the inspiration of רוח for himself cannot be ascertained directly from chapter 13. In view of what we have already seen of the role of רוח within the ministry of Ezekiel, it is likely that Ezekiel is here contrasting the false prophets' inspiration with his own in a direct fashion. Ezekiel's pungent irony, then, serves as a claim that he has the divine רוח inspiring him, unlike the false prophets (cf. 1 Kgs. 22:19-25; Mic. 3:8). This is a significant observation, because here is clear evidence that a prophet who is found attacking רוח-inspiration in other prophets also acknowledged the role of רוח within his own inspiration. The two are not mutually exclusive.

With regard to the nature of inspiration in view here, it is possible that 'word-communicating' inspiration should be understood. If the divine רוח is being contrasted with 'their minds' by direct correspondence, then, since 'their minds' are clearly the authority/source of the messages that the false prophets utter, it is apparent that the divine רוח would also be the authority/source of the messages that Ezekiel utters. Such a conclusion must remain tentative, given the difficulties over the text, over whether Ezekiel is being deliberately ambiguous and ironical in his use of בלב, and over how exact is the conception of רוח as 'source' between the two different senses of רוח.

pp138, 142; Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p160; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p285). Allen comments that the shorter reading is preferable.
111 Cf. the parallels in Jeremiah 23:16, 26. Greenberg sees Num. 16:28 as the antecedent of the phrase in Ezekiel (Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p235).
112 Cf. Block, 'Prophet of the Spirit', p43.
113 Couturier, 'L'Esprit de Yahweh et la Fonction Prophétique', pp159-60.
The first three ways we have examined in which נָצָר is linked with inspiration in the book of Ezekiel have focused more specifically on the prophetic event. Since, as we have already noted, inspiration often extends beyond the prophetic event to the rhetorical event, our final examination of the inspiration of the prophet in the book looks at the communication of the word of Yahweh and the prophet's inspiration. The question that needs to be addressed is: to what extent does נָצָר equip Ezekiel (or, indeed, other prophets within the book) to speak, and to what extent does the divine נָצָר actually 'speak' those words?

The work of נָצָר in the communication of the word can be seen in two places, the prophet's words themselves and the prophet's life.

As far as the relationship between נָצָר and the words that the prophet utters is concerned, there are no explicit references. It is straightforward to affirm 'potentiating' inspiration, since the impact of נָצָר on the prophet in general is clearly apparent. It is possible to move towards 'word-communicating' inspiration for the rhetorical event when two facts are put side by side. First, there is some evidence of 'word-communicating' inspiration in the prophetic event. Secondly, the prophet is to utter verbatim what he has received. These words are not simply the past words of Yahweh (or Yahweh's נָצָר), but the present words. However, it needs to be acknowledged that there is no explicit suggestion of double agency discourse.

The second place where the work of נָצָר in the communication of the word can be deduced is from the relationship between Yahweh's word, the prophet's life, and נָצָר, as seen in the combination of two facts evident in the book. First, the prophet is not required simply to speak the word, but to embody it. This can be seen from the fact that the prophet actually swallows the scroll (2:8-3:3). The word does not remain external to him, but is internalised within him so that, as Fretheim comments, 'as a person the prophet becomes the Word of God.' Since God cannot be separated from the word he gives, thus he goes with that word such that in some sense he is 'absorbed into the very life of the prophet.' It can also be seen from the sign-acts that Ezekiel is instructed to perform. The combination of these two, the swallowing of the scroll, and the performing of sign-acts, both point in the same direction: 'it is not only what the prophet speaks but who he is that now constitute the word of God.'

The second fact pointing towards the role of נָצָר in the communication of Yahweh's word is that the prophet's movements and actions are constrained and directed by the divinely-controlled נָצָר, whether as the 'agency of conveyance' (3:12,}

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115 Fretheim, *Suffering of God*, p153 (his emphasis).
116 Fretheim, 'Word of God', *ABD* 6, p966.
117 Block, 'Prophet of the Spirit', p33.
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14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1; 43:5), as the רוח that sets him on his feet (2:2; 3:24), or as the רוח that falls upon him (11:5a). Such instances, along with the emphasis on the 'hand of Yahweh' and the occasions where Yahweh 'brought' (עָבֹד, 'led') (רֹאשׁ) and 'brought back' (רָבָש) Ezekiel point to the fact that 'Ezekiel is a man seized by God.'

When these two facts are juxtaposed, it can be deduced that the degree to which Yahweh's רוח is involved in the movement and ministry of the prophet is also the degree to which that רוח is involved in the communication of the 'incarnate', visible word. Though neither explicit nor exploited, in the book of Ezekiel there is an implicit understanding of the inspiration of רוח in the 'word-communicating' sense. The prophet Ezekiel is that 'word' which רוח directs, guides and leads.

5. Summary and Conclusions

Within the book of Ezekiel, רוח has a very significant role to play in the experience of the prophet. There is some evidence of a 'word-communicating' view of inspiration in the prophetic event, both in the fact that the spirit inspired the vision of chs. 8-11 (11:24), a vision that can be understood as Yahweh's 'speech event', and in the fact that Ezekiel was to inveigh against the false prophets for their auto-inspiration (13:3), whereas the source of Ezekiel's inspiration and message was not his own spirit, but Yahweh's. Further, when the focus is shifted from the prophetic to the rhetorical event, 'word-communicating' inspiration can also be seen to the extent that Ezekiel is portrayed as one who is constrained by the spirit and yet embodies the word, and to the extent that רוח inspires the words to Ezekiel that he, in turn, is to utter verbatim. However, the three instances where רוח is contextually linked most closely to Yahweh speaking are precisely those which do not yield 'word-communicating' but 'potentiating' inspiration. In addition, the רוח which transports the prophet within visions is closely linked with Yahweh revealing a situation to the prophet, or to Yahweh speaking, but there is no suggestion of 'word-communicating' inspiration. Within the book of Ezekiel, then, רוח is linked both with the prophetic event and the rhetorical event. The evidence for 'potentiating' inspiration is strong in the book, but there is also evidence of 'word-communicating' inspiration. How such a picture fits within the inspiration of prophets in the rest of the Old Testament is the subject of the next chapter.

Before turning to it, though, we need to revisit one explanation for the relative absence of רוח within the classical prophets, which I termed the theological view. According to this view, the silence arises from the 'theocentric' thought of the prophets. However, Ezekiel is one of the most theocentric of prophets, attributing the

118 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p36.
119 See p90 above.
restoration of Israel to Yahweh acting ‘for the sake of his name’.\textsuperscript{120} At the same time, Ezekiel speaks often of יהוה within his own ministry. This \textit{theological} explanation does not account for the evidence.

We now turn our attention to the inspiration of prophets in the rest of the Old Testament.

\textsuperscript{120} Ezek. 36:22; cf. 20:9, 14, 22; 36:32. See especially Joyce, \textit{Divine Initiative}.
CHAPTER 4: DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVES ON PROPHETIC INSPIRATION

In the last chapter, after surveying different scholarly perspectives on the place of רוח within prophecy, I identified three questions that Part II would address. The first was whether רוח in Ezekiel is or can be understood as Yahweh’s breath on which his word is carried. The second was whether Ezekiel recovers רוח as foundational in prophetic inspiration. Within this was the question of whether the classical prophets did indeed repudiate רוח in their own inspiration. The third was whether the emphasis on רוח within the prophet Ezekiel’s ministry is best explained in terms of his attempts at self-authentication. I began to address these questions in the last chapter by doing two things. First, I examined the concept of inspiration, and suggested two theoretical distinctions should be acknowledged: that between ‘potentiating’ inspiration, where רוח inspires the prophet, and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration, where רוח inspires words, and that between the prophetic event, of Yahweh’s word coming to the prophet, and the rhetorical event, of the prophet speaking Yahweh’s word. Secondly, I examined רוח-inspiration within the book of Ezekiel, and argued that there is evidence of both ‘potentiating’ and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration, although more evidence of the former, and that each can be found in both the prophetic and the rhetorical events. Whether such a picture as I have described above is a ‘recovery’ of that which obtained among the pre-classical prophets and which was subsequently missing from the classical prophets depends on an analysis of both.

In this chapter, as I explore the relationship between רוח and prophetic inspiration diachronically, I will argue that Ezekiel does not ‘recover’ the inspiration of pre-classical prophets because, on the one hand, pre-classical prophets are not depicted as being as inspired as is sometimes said (section A), and, on the other, because classical prophets are more inspired than is sometimes allowed (section B). I will argue that essentially the same picture is in evidence after the exile (section C). In the fourth section (D), I shall summarise the findings of Part II, concluding that רוח as the ‘breath’ of Yahweh’s mouth is not linked in Ezekiel with Yahweh’s word. This will enable me in the final section to revisit the question of רוח and Ezekiel’s self-authentication; there, I shall argue that that the relative prominence of רוח within the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel is not explained well by the notion that the prophet recovers an emphasis that had been lost in order to authenticate his ministry. I shall also argue that within the context of the Book of Ezekiel, רוח-language may well have a secondary function of authenticating the prophet but that the focus lies elsewhere. First, we turn our attention to the pre-classical prophets.
A. INSPIRATION AND THE PRE-CLASSICAL PROPHETS

There are three points that can be made about the role of נְדוּי and its relation to Yahweh's word in the pre-classical prophets. First, there is strong evidence of 'potentiating inspiration.' Secondly, there is strong evidence of 'word-communicating' inspiration. Thirdly, נְדוּי is not especially prominent in the accounts of pre-classical prophets.

1. 'Potentiating' inspiration and the pre-classical prophets

There are a number of passages which point towards 'potentiating inspiration.' We shall look at three in particular: that of Balaam's prophecy in Num. 24, since there is an explicit link between נְדוּי-inspiration and the delivering of oracles; that of Saul prophesying in 1 Samuel 10, since it is representative of a number of instances within the Deuteronomistic History in which נְדוּי is linked with the hitpael of נִשָּׂא, and ecstatic prophesying seems to be in view; finally, that involving Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kgs. 2, because of these prophets' links with Ezekiel.

a) Numbers 24:2

'Now Balaam saw that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel, so he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness. Balaam looked up and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. Then the spirit of God came upon him (נְדוּי פְּרֵי נַהֲרֵי, נְדוּי אֲשלֵי), and he uttered his oracle, saying...’ (Num. 24:1-3).

These verses form the introduction to the third of seven oracles that the prophet Balaam utters. The first one, delivered and addressed to Balak after Yahweh has put a word in Balaam's mouth (23:5), explains how he (Balaam) cannot curse what God has not cursed (23:7-10). The second, again addressed to Balak, explains further Balaam's refusal to curse the people of Israel, for God does not change his mind. What God has blessed, Balaam cannot revoke (23:18-24). Before the third oracle, Balak, in desperation, takes Balaam to another vantage point so that Balaam might curse Israel. Num. 24:1-3 introduces this oracle, which is addressed to Israel camping below Peor. Instead of cursing Israel, Balaam articulates the blessing that will flow to them (24:3-9). In anger, Balak dismisses Balaam. Balaam denies that he can 'go beyond the word of Yahweh (נְדוּי יְהֹウェָה, נְדוּי אֲשלֵי)’ (24:13), and declares his fourth oracle, announcing what Israel will do to Balak's people in days to come (24:15-19). The fifth, sixth and seventh (Num. 24:20-24) oracles have a purview wider than the incident between Balaam and Balak.

Although the antiquity of the oracles is not disputed,¹ the question of composition of the Balaam narrative is a complex one.² Evidence for an early date of 24:1-2 includes

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¹ Most commentators refer to W.F. Albright, 'The Oracles of Balaam', JBL 63 (1944), pp207-33. The exception is 24:21-24 (see p227).

² See Philip J. Budd, Numbers, WBC 5, (Waco, Word, 1984), pp256-65 for a detailed discussion; also Wilson, Prophecy and Society, pp147-50. Whybray notes the difficulty scholars such as Noth had in
the verbal phrase used to describe the arrival of רח (רץ; cf. Jdg. 3:10) and the archaic notion of Balaam setting his face toward the wilderness to preserve visual contact. With regard to the role of the divine רח here, though, there is some disagreement among scholars. Montague comments, 'here for the first time in our sources, prophecy is attributed to the spirit of God.' It is not clear whether Montague regards the contents of the prophecy as being given by the divine רח (the 'word-communicating' view) or whether it is the charismatic 'gift' of prophecy. In similar vein, Baumgärtel sees the spirit here as responsible for 'prophetic or ecstatic speech,' while Noth comments that 'Balaam is represented as an ecstatic prophet who utters his words under the direct influence of inspiration.' Such comments do not distinguish between 'word-communicating' and 'potentiating' inspiration. Other scholars seem to go further, intimating 'word-communicating' inspiration. Thus Davies contrasts previous divine communications, 'effected by Yahweh's putting his words in Balaam's mouth (23:5; 16)' with 24:2, where he says 'but now the Spirit of God came upon him.' He seems to imply that the revelation which earlier came by Yahweh's word now came by Yahweh's רח. Milgrom, too, points in this direction. He comments that 'the assumption here is that instead of seeking God in a dream (22:9,20) or having God's words "put into his mouth" (23:5,16), Balaam is now invested with the divine spirit and falls into an ecstatic state (vv.3-4), the mark of a prophet (11:25-29). The result is that in vv.3-9, 'Balaam introduces himself - now that he is invested with the divine spirit - as one who is privy to God's direct revelation.' Dreytza is most explicit when he speaks of אשת here 'as personal, speaking agent'.

However others are more cautious about discerning 'word-communicating' inspiration here. Kaufmann, commenting on this verse, says that 'the spirit prepares a man for prophecy' and 'enables him to frame parables and songs' but, he notes, they 'are not properly mantic activities, nor are they peculiar to prophets.' Thus he denies here that the spirit is the 'source' of prophecy. Rather, in view of his later comment handling passages such as Num. 22-24 that 'did not seem to yield to documentary analysis'. R.N. Whybray, The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study, JSOTSup 53, (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1987), p118; see also Dion, 'La ruh dans l'Heptateuche', p169.

about the spirit’s role, he countenances ‘potentiating’ inspiration. Neve admits that, at first glance, v.2 might suggest that ‘it is the message which has been inspired by the spirit of Yahweh.' However, since Yahweh is the source of the message in Num. 23:5, 12, 16, 17, 26, without any indication of the spirit’s work, Neve sees the spirit’s activity as bringing about the ecstatic condition described in vv.3-4. Further evidence, he says, comes from the fact that Balaam didn’t consult the omens, but ‘set his face towards the wilderness,’ something that he suggests is ‘a position preparatory to the ecstatic condition.’ He concludes:

‘thus in this chapter the spirit of God is thought of as having occasioned the condition of ecstatic sight under the influence of which Balaam sees visions of God and hears his word. In this sense, the spirit of God spoken of in v.2 does not inspire the word...it rather causes the “enthusiasm” which typifies this early period.’

Thus Neve’s position is similar to that of Kaufmann, that this is an instance of ‘potentiating’ inspiration.

It is clear from 24:10, 13 that the word of Yahweh had come three times to Balaam, yet on only two occasions is that process described explicitly (23:5, 16). The phrase ‘the spirit of God came upon him’ (24:2) entails the reception of a word by the prophet and the impetus for its delivery. Precisely how the ‘spirit of God’ relates to the word that came is not certain. Three points may be made.

First, since the ‘prophetic’ and ‘rhetorical’ event are merged here, the role of the spirit cannot be reduced to the prophetic event.

Secondly, while there is the possibility of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration here, such a view is not explicitly articulated. What is certain, though, is that the prophet Balaam himself experiences the action of God’s רוח, and that this action issued in prophetic words; ‘potentiating’ inspiration, at the least, is evident in pre-classical prophecy. It is not possible to go further with certainty.

Thirdly, Balaam within the narrative is a figure who does not fit easily within categories. At points the heathen seer seems to be just that: the multiple altars are unique (23:1); he looks for omens (24:1). However, he also seems to be the true prophet: he is the one who speaks of Yahweh in ch. 22, while the narrator speaks of Elohim; he speaks Yahweh’s words, and Yahweh’s alone (23:8; 24:13). At points, Balaam seems rather like the stereotypical picture of the pre-classical prophets, in his ecstasy (24:3-4), in his maintaining visual contact (24:2; cf. 2 Kgs. 8:11), and in the role of רוח within his inspiration (24:2). However, in his emphasis on Yahweh’s word, in

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14 Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, p99. For the quotation, see p93 above.
15 Neve, Spirit of God, p15.
16 Neve, Spirit of God, p15.
17 This is also the view of van Imschoot, ‘L’action de l’esprit de Jahvé’, p583; Budd, Numbers, p268; Roland K. Harrison, Numbers, WEC, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1990), p317.
18 So Couturier suggests that the oracles were inserted within the narrative because of the influence of the Elijah and Elisha cycles. Couturier ‘L’Esprit de Yahweh et La Fonction Prophétique’, pp160-61.
the fact that he is an ‘individual’ prophet, in his refusal to prophesy for a fee (cf. 22:7, 18) he stands closer to the classical prophets. While it may be true that ‘the Balaam tradition cannot be used to define the precise nature of vocation prophecy in Israel and in Judah’, it is also true that the boundaries are not as sharply defined as Couturier has painted. The נְדִיר of God can be linked to the coming of Yahweh’s word, even in one who strongly emphasises that word.

b) 1 Samuel 10:6, 10-11

‘Then the spirit of Yahweh will possess you (נָּסִיר), and you will act like a prophet (נָּסִיר) along with them and be turned into a different person (נָּסִירַנ)’ (10:6). When they were going from there to Gibeah, a band of prophets met him; and the spirit of God possessed him (נָּסִיר), and he (Saul) acted like a prophet (נָּסִיר) along with them. When all who knew him before saw how he prophesied (כָּלִי), the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” (10:10-11).

These references to נְדִיר and prophecy occur within the account of the choosing and anointing of Saul as king over Israel. The first verse, 10:6, is part of Samuel’s declaration of what will happen to Saul as signs to Saul to indicate that Yahweh has indeed anointed him as king (v.7; cf. v.1 (LXX)); vv.10-11 are part of the narrative recounting what actually happens. In that sense, they are counterparts, although Eslinger observes the omission of the fulfilment of the first two signs, on the one hand, and the curious recounting of the third sign in v.10 when v.9 has already announced that the signs have been fulfilled. He, like Fokkelman, sees the focus as shifting onto the nature of the reception of the ‘new’ Saul by the people. The ‘rushing’ of the divine נְדִיר upon Saul will be, according to Samuel, the third of three signs that Yahweh has anointed Saul as ‘ruler’ (10:1). The final one is to serve as confirmation to Saul that he has been indeed equipped, not just anointed, to rule. This is why he is ‘a different person’ (v.6), and why Samuel instructs him in v.7 to ‘do whatever you see fit to do.’ As Klein comments, ‘the instruction for Saul to respond to the fulfilling of the signs by doing whatever his hand finds implies that he is to act according to the strength he has’. Klein sees the fulfilment of this, in the context of 1 Samuel, in the attack on the Ammonites after the spirit has again ‘rushed’ on Saul (1 Sam. 11:6). Thus, as in Num. 11, the coming of the spirit is to equip, but the manifestation, in Saul’s case for his own assurance, is seen in prophesying.

20 ‘nous ne pouvons pas utiliser avec certitude la tradition de Balaam pour définir la nature précise du prophétisme de vocation en Israël et en Juda.’ Couturier, ‘L’Esprit de Yahweh et la Fonction Prophétique’, p161. For his sharp distinctions, see p89 above.
Questions of composition and dating are complex, but there is no reason to deny a pre-exilic date. Some evidence for this is precisely the same evidence on which we must draw in order to ascertain what kind of inspiration is in view: what is meant here by the different stems of נָשָׁה? The literature on the subject is substantial. Some try to associate the hitpael of נָשָׁה with ecstatic prophetic behaviour, while the nifal is said to relate more closely with verbal utterances, particularly those of the classical prophets. By the time of the exile, they can be used synonymously. A more satisfactory analysis is given by Wilson, who rejects such a characterisation. For him, the stems do not indicate per se particular behavioural characteristics. The nifal is chiefly concerned with communication of oracles, while the hitpael is concerned with manifesting stereotypical prophetic behaviour, whether ecstatic or not.

Wilson's analysis needs nuancing when four factors are borne in mind. Evidence from these factors means that generalisations are somewhat difficult, for the evidence points to some differences, yet a degree of overlap between the stems throughout, and not simply towards the exile.

First, there is the question of whether words are communicated or not. Usually the nifal designates the communication of words, but sometimes behaviour seems in view (e.g. 1 Sam. 10:11; 19:20; Zech. 13:4). Usually the hitpael seems to designate prophetic behaviour, rather than words, but sometimes words are clearly in view (1 Kgs. 22:8, 18; Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 13:17; 37:10). Secondly, and related to this, is the syntax associated with these verbs. The nifal used absolutely, like the hitpael, speaks more of prophetic behaviour (e.g. 1 Sam. 10:11). The hitpael used with prepositions designating the source

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24 With regard to composition, Klein regards the incident in vv.10-13 as 'a proverb...explained by an etiological narrative' (Klein, I Samuel, p85). Fokkelman, however, regards the aetiological note as an 'extra' since it comes 'after completion of the plot or narrative chain' and 'the story is still quite independent without it' (J.P. Fokkelman, Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses, vol. II, (Assen, Van Gorcum, 1986), p287. With regard to dating, Birch notes that most scholars see the pericope from 9:1 to 10:16 is from the 'early source' (Bruce C. Birch, 'The Development of the Tradition on the Anointing of Saul in 1 Sam. 9:1-10:16', JBL 90 (1971), p55). This is not surprising given the folk-tale characteristics of the pericope, and the contrasting picture of prophecy present between the prophets in the pericope, on the one hand, and the prophet Samuel himself. See P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., I Samuel, AB 8, (New York, Doubleday, 1980), pp26-27, 182.

25 See the bibliographies in Gary V. Smith, 'Prophet; Prophecy', ISBE 3, pp986-1004; Pieter A. Verhoef, 'Prophecy', NIDOTTE 4, pp1067-78. See נָשָׁה', TLOT 2, pp697-98 for the number and distribution of occurrences.

26 E.g. Koch, 'Out of the ecstasy (nb', hitpael) there finally emerges the prophecy (nb', niphal), which is directed to the people, bringing them a וֹדֵד, a saying of Yahweh.' Klaus Koch, The Prophets, tr. M. Kohl, vol. 2, (London, SCM Press, 1983), p26. Cf. Couturier, L'Esprit de Yahweh et la Fonction Prophétique, pp157-58 n84, who links the hitpael first of all with ecstatic group prophets and then with the 'machinations' (agissements) of the false prophets.


28 If followed by a direct object indicating contents, a preposition indicating the subject of the prophecy, a preposition indicating addressees, or a verb introducing what is said. See נָשָׁה', TLOT 2, p703.

29 See further below.
(e.g. Ezek. 13: 17) or the subject (e.g. 1 Kgs. 22: 8, 18) of the prophecy, like the nifal, speaks more of the communication of words. Thirdly, there is the question of whether ecstatic behaviour is in view or not. Those instances where the nifal is used of prophetic behaviour seem to fit here. Similarly, there are a number of cases where the hitpael clearly speaks of ecstatic behaviour (e.g. 1 Sam. 18: 10, 29; 19: 23-24). This is by no means always the case, though, particularly in those instances where the communication of words is in view. Stereotypical prophetic behaviour may change. Fourthly, there is the question of whether there is approval of those prophesying. The nifal can be used of both true prophets (particularly Jeremiah and Ezekiel) and false (e.g. Jer. 5: 31 etc.; Zech. 13: 3). The hitpael can be used sympathetically (e.g. Num. 11: 25-27; Jer. 26: 20), neutrally (e.g. 1 Sam. 10) or negatively (1 Kgs. 18: 29; 22: 8, 18; Ezek. 13: 17). These four factors do not mean that distinctions are impossible. For example, in Jer. 26: 20, the distinction between stereotypical behaviour and prophetic speaking seems clear: Uriah ‘acted as a prophet’ (נָשָּׁא בּוֹן) and ‘prophesied (הָשָּׁא הָנָּבָא) against the city... in words exactly like those of Jeremiah’. It does mean that hasty conclusions need to be avoided.

In 1 Samuel 10 the hitpael (vv. 6, 10) and the nifal (v. 11) of נָשָּׁא are effectively synonymous. Further, the absence of prepositions or words suggesting comprehensible speech suggests that prophetic behaviour is in view, rather than verbal communication. We need to look more closely to see whether this is in fact the case.

Since the band of prophets were prophesying as they travelled down from the shrine (v. 5), it does not seem likely that the communication of words in the form of intelligible utterances for the benefit of hearers is meant. Elsewhere in 1 Samuel, the hitpael speaks clearly of prophetic behaviour that arose from the agency of an evil רָע (18: 10-11), that to some degree incapacitated those ‘prophesying’ such that they could not arrest David (1 Sam. 19: 20-21) and that described Saul’s lying before Samuel with clothes stripped off (1 Sam. 19: 24). Further, our analysis of the root נָשָּׁא above suggests that prophetic behaviour is in view. Block concurs, suggesting that נָשָּׁא here is ‘not associated with prophetic utterance, but with prophetic action.’ For Block, this does not mean, though, that there is no communication involved. Rather, these are ‘extraordinary physical expressions of Spirit possession, divinely induced non-verbal declarations. God is speaking through Saul. The witnesses and the readers of these texts are called upon to receive the communication and interpret it.’ Although this may be possible here, in view of the fact that the function of such prophesying is to show to Saul, and not to the people at large, that he has been anointed ruler, it seems more
accurate to say that through his prophesying God is speaking to Saul, not ‘through’ him. It is the prophetic behaviour that counts as Yahweh’s confirmation to Saul.

These verses clearly link the divine נב to prophecy – it is this נב that precipitates prophesying. If such prophesying included intelligible words, then it needs to be remembered that ‘no comprehensible saying from them is attested’.35 This case can only be understood to support ‘word-communicating’ inspiration if the action of Saul is understood as a prophetic word to him. If, as seems more likely, such utterances as were uttered were ecstatic and subordinate to prophetic behaviour, then ‘potentiating’ inspiration is portrayed here.36

c) Elijah and Elisha

As we have already noted, some scholars have drawn attention to the parallels between Elijah and Elisha, on the one hand, and Ezekiel on the other, and, in particular, to their experience of the spirit.37 In 1 Kgs. 18:12 and 2 Kgs. 2:16, the spirit of Yahweh is seen (by popular opinion) as the ‘transporting’ spirit, which can snatch Elijah up, and deposit him somewhere else. Such instances are not related to inspiration, in the sense of any link with the prophetic word. In so far as this נב is involved in the experience of Elijah, we can speak here of ‘potentiating inspiration.’ However, given that when Elijah is in fact transported into heaven (2 Kgs. 2:11), נב plays no role, caution is needed when considering the transporting נב with Elijah.38 In 2 Kgs. 2:9-15, however, Elisha makes a request of Elijah, ‘Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit (וְלָךְ כְּפַר מַטַּר נֶפֶשׁ יָדְךָ)’ (v.9). We need to explore what kind of נב it is, and what kind of inspiration, if any, is in view.39

Broadly, there are three views held. Some hold that this נב is the ‘human ruach’ of Elijah.40 Others say it is Yahweh’s.41 The third view, argued for by Weisman, is that this נב, like that in Num. 11:16-15, 24-25, is neither Yahweh’s spirit nor the ‘human spirit’ stirred up. Instead, it is a ‘personal’ spirit that acts by ‘imparting authority’, a spirit

36 Similar instances of apparent ecstatic behaviour being closely linked with (Yahweh’s) נב are those in 1 Sam. 18:10 and 19:23-24. Again, there is no attested word spoken as part of Saul’s prophesying. Indeed, there is even less sign there of anything intelligible being said as part of his ‘prophesying.’ There is nothing to link this נב to a ‘word-communicating’ view of inspiration. Rather, Saul’s behaviour resembled the apparent loss of self-control that marked the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs. 18:29).
37 Zimmerli, ‘Special Form- and Traditio-Historical Character’, p517; Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, pp23-37.
38 Cf. Lys, Räuch, p36; Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p44.
39 For a discussion of the dating, and a terminus ad quern of 721, see Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, pp8ff.
40 Neve, Spirit of God, p136; Lys, Räuch, pp27, 35-37. For Lys, the action here is still God’s, and in rather than on the individual. It is to avoid confusion between the human and Yahweh’s ‘spirit’ that 1 Kgs. 22:24 speaks about ‘the spirit of Yahweh’ moving from one person to another, while here the focus is on the spirit of Elijah (p36).
invoked by later writers because of the almost mythical status of Moses and Elijah. Others comment, without making their view clear. There are certainly features that require an explanation and that for Weisman set this apart. Unlike the human , its impact is not due to stirring up by Yahweh, but to the possession of it. Unlike Yahweh’s , it is not designated as Yahweh’s, but ‘is defined in relation to the individual’. There is something both public and permanent about the transfer (cf. ). In the case of the transfer from Elijah to Elisha, Yahweh does not seem directly involved: Elisha’s request is directed to Elijah; Elijah does not make it clear that such a transfer depends on Yahweh; the sons of the prophets observe, after Elisha parts the water, that ‘the spirit of rests on Elisha.’ Finally, the action of Yahweh’s in the narrative is regarded as that of an external force; similarly, the action of Yahweh’s ‘hand’ (1 Kgs. 18:46; 2 Kgs. 3:15), often an equivalent expression to Yahweh’s , is rather different from that of . For Weisman, these constitute a conclusive case that the in 2 Kgs. 2:9, 15 is not Yahweh’s . Given that the only other references to Yahweh’s in the Elijah / Elisha narratives are popular perceptions, not the judgements of the narrator, it would then mean that neither Elijah nor Elisha would have any clear relationship to Yahweh’s .

It is preferable, however, to regard the ‘spirit of Elijah’ here as ‘a metonymic figure of speech for “the Spirit of Yahweh which resides upon Elijah,”’ notwithstanding the fact that the depiction of is somewhat different from as ‘an “Extension” of Yahweh’s Personality’. Block adduces as evidence Elisha’s use of the mantle in parting the waters, the response of the people in v.15, and the actions that Elisha subsequently performed (vv.16-25). Further evidence comes from the fact that here Elisha is presented as the new Joshua completing what Moses had done. The spirit that equipped Moses (Elijah) is now on Joshua (Elisha) (cf. Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9). The strongest evidence that it is Yahweh’s comes from the clear belief elsewhere that Yahweh’s can go from one person to another (1 Kgs. 22:24); from the fact that

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43 Gwilym H. Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, vol. II, NCBC, (London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984), p385; Gray thinks the that inspired Elijah was something external, since it ‘equipped’ him (John Gray, I & II Kings, 3rd edn., OTL, (London, SCM, 1977), p475); Couturier seems to regard it as Yahweh’s, given that he sees it as bringing about ecstasy (‘L’Esprit de Yahweh et la Fonction Prophétique’, p153).
50 Johnson, The One and the Many, p15.
52 Though the parallel is not exact, since in Num. 27:18, Joshua already has before Moses lays his hands on him.
Yahweh's רוח can 'rest' (רֵאָשׁ) upon a kingly figure (Isa. 11:2); and, finally, from the fact that the notion of Yahweh's רוח as constant, empowering and authorising has already been present in the narrative of Saul's and David's kingship (Saul - 1 Sam. 16:14; David - 1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 23:2).

Further, this רוח is intimately related to Elisha becoming a prophet. In 1 Kgs. 19:16, Yahweh has instructed Elijah to anoint Elisha as a prophet in his stead (יהוה אַלּוּפָל הֶבֶרֶךְ לְעָשַׁר לְאֵלֶישָׁה). Elijah proceeds in v.19 to find Elisha, throw the mantle onto him and walk off. The narrative does not read, as we might expect, that Elisha became a prophet instead of Elijah. Instead, after Elisha catches up with Elijah, we are told that Elisha 'followed Elijah and served him' (רַּבּ֗הֶנֶּשׁ אֶלְיוֹן יָשָׁבֵהָ֛) (v.21). Although the location of the mantle is tantalisingly left in the air, it does seem that Elisha's actions reinstate Elijah as prophet. The mantle, symbolising prophethood, does not pass to Elisha until 2 Kgs. 2, at the same time as רוח is transferred. In the meantime, Elisha is 'assistant and successor-designate'.

This רוח, while closely resembling the leadership רוח found on Moses, Saul and David, is also the designating and empowering רוח that enables Elisha to function as a prophet. What the mantle symbolises externally is a reality through the agency of Yahweh's רוח. However, though the spirit that inspired Elijah and Elisha is indeed Yahweh's רוח, and is intimately related to the prophetic task, the question of inspiration can get no further than this. The focus of this early narrative is more on mighty deeds than on prophetic words. At no point can a view of the inspiration of the prophet's words go any further than 'potentiating inspiration.'

2. 'Word-communicating' inspiration and the pre-classical prophets

a) 2 Samuel 23:2

'The spirit of Yahweh speaks through me (רַֽבּוֹת יָשָׁבֵה),
his word is upon my tongue (לְפִפי לַשׁון נֵא).'

This verse starts what v.1 terms 'the last words of David,' a poem celebrating the covenant made with him, and which finishes in v.7. In turn, the poem occurs within what is often termed the 'Appendix' to the book of Samuel, chs. 21-24.

Uniquely in the Old Testament, רוח is followed directly by a verb of speaking. Here, explicitly, is 'word-communicating' inspiration. Given this striking fact, there are three questions that particularly concern us. The first is over the date of v.2, and, for our

53 There is no explicit mention of 'anointing'. It is apparent that Elijah walked off because Elisha had to leave his oxen and run after Elijah (v.20). See Paul J. Kissling, Reliable Characters in the Primary History: Profiles of Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, JSOTSup 224, (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p151.
55 Kissling, Reliable Characters, p154.
56 Kissling, Reliable Characters, p155.
57 Dreytza, Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH, p180.
purposes, whether it is pre-exilic. The second is over the nature of inspiration, whether prophetic or not. The third is over the precise point of inspiration, whether רוחות means ‘through’ or ‘to / with / in’ David.

Although the oracle as a whole shows signs of antiquity, the traditional dating of v.2 to the second half of the 10th century is disputed. McCarter thinks it is late because ‘the notion that David was a prophet has no parallel in the early literature. It arose at a later time when psalms attributed to David were being given prophetic interpretation.’ Further possible evidence for lateness includes the apparent masculine gender of רוחות, the presence of the word הַלְלָה, which appears elsewhere only in ‘late’ poetry, and the role of רוחות, ‘connected exclusively to the revelation of verbal announcements, and to the act of interpretation of the divine utterance.’

However, Gordon comments, ‘there is... no reason to deny it to David himself.’ Dating on the basis of the genesis of the prophetic interpretation of psalms attributed to David is circular. They may just as well have been given prophetic interpretation because David was considered a prophet. Certainly, the linking of monarch, prophet and spirit is not alien to the book of Samuel. This is true of Saul (1 Sam. 10), and there are pointers to it with David, in his reception of the spirit (1 Sam. 16:13), and in his music-playing which mirrored that of the prophets. The masculine gender of רוחות has been explained in different ways. Anderson suggests that the ‘lapse in gender’ with רוחות ‘is due to the intervening word (“Yahweh”).’ This is, however, unlikely, since there are six other instances in the Old Testament where a verb directly follows רוחות, and there is only one instance where the verb agrees with רוחות, not רוחות (1 Kgs. 18:12). There are, though, a number of places where רוחות רוחות is the subject of a masculine verb, so it is not wholly anomalous. Olmo Lete proposes that the masculine form of רוחות can

58 So, for example, as McCarter points out, there are no traces of Deuteronomistic language, the divine epithets are consistent with an early date, and there are close verbal links between v.1 and the archaic Num. 24:3, 15 (P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., II Samuel, AB 9, (New York, Doubleday, 1984), p486). Simon, however, tentatively believes the poem to be post-exilic, because he sees the confluence of many diverse streams of thought. See László T. Simon, Identity and Identification: An Exegetical and Theological Study of 2Sam 21-24, Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologia 64, (Rome, Gregorian University Press, 2000), pp292-308. A survey of scholarly opinions on the date is found on p293.
59 McCarter, II Samuel, p480.
60 So, for example, Neve says there are only 2 pre-593 passages with masculine רוחות - Isa. 34:16 and Ezek. 1:12 (Neve, Spirit of God, p128). Somewhat curiously, then, he dates this verse as a ‘transition text’ from before the time of Elijah, without discussing the verb form רוחות (pp28-29).
61 McCarter, II Samuel, p480; Lys, Rüach, p169.
62 Simon, Identity and Identification, p296.
67 Jdg. 6:34; 1 Sam. 16:14; 1 Kgs. 18:12; Isa. 40:7; 59:19; 63:14
68 1 Kgs. 18:12; 22:24; 2 Kgs. 2:16; Mic. 2:7.
be explained by the falling away of the mater lectionis from the revocalised feminine form, דיברה. Richardson explains the present form within his framework of examining the psalm from the perspective of 11th century orthography. Further, on literary grounds, both Olmo Lete and Richardson argue strongly that the psalm is a unit, thus making it harder to reach McCarter's conclusion of a late date. Richardson comments, 'there is nothing in the passage that denies such a date, while...there are some things that tend to corroborate it.' Particularly striking in this regard is the chiastic nature of vv.2-3aβ (Richardson's lines 5-8), where line 5 (= v.2a) has the 'double subject first, followed by a verb and a prepositional phrase' (דיבר יד יתברך), while line 8 (= v.3αβ) 'has the prepositional phrase first, followed by the verb with the double subject last' (לבר דיבר). In between, there are 'two non-verbal cola in a limited stair-like parallelism' (v.6 (v.2b)) and (v.7 (v.3aa)). Such structuring incorporates the Aramaic loan-word common in Job, פָּרַק. Finally, the mention of רַמְנֵע here is hardly problematic. The unique collocation makes it hard to date on such a basis. The conception of רַמְנֵע speaking, however, is by no means necessarily late, as we shall see shortly.

With regard to the second question, Neve, although noting that it is an 'oracle', regards David's inspiration not as prophetic but as poetic. He has two main reasons for this: first, because the oracle is described as an 'oracle of David' not an 'oracle of God' (he notes the parallel with Num. 24:3); secondly, because the nature of the poem is a 'discourse on kingship.' His conclusion is that 'this text serves as the transition from the spirit as it is evidenced in this period [i.e. the early, charismatic, period] to the spirit of the prophets...actual "enthusiasm" as related to the spirit is disappearing but prophetic inspiration is not yet present.' Neve's suggestion should be rejected, because the parallel that he draws between 'oracle of David' here and that of 'oracle of Balaam' (Num. 24:3) points precisely to prophetic inspiration, since Balaam was clearly an 'inspired' prophet there. The elaborate introduction and the framing of the book by the only instances of צָרָה (1 Sam. 2:30; 2 Sam. 23:1) point to David as prophet. As Anderson comments, 'The "spirit" in this context is not the source of ecstatic behaviour or experience...but of prophetic inspiration.'

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71 Richardson, ‘Last Words of David’, p.257.
72 Richardson, ‘Last Words of David’, p.262.
73 Richardson, ‘Last Words of David’, p.262. He revocalises the MT רִמְנֵע with רִמְנֵע. Note that the Hebrew used here follows Richardson's reconstruction.
74 Neve, Spirit of God, p.29.
75 So Simon, Identity and Identification, pp.275, 289, for the first point; so Klement, II Samuel 21-24, p.215, for the second.
76 Anderson, 2 Samuel, p.268; so also Gordon, 1 & 2 Samuel, p.310; McCarter, II Samuel, p.480.
If the questions of date and nature of inspiration are significant, so too is the question of the stage of inspiration. In order to ascertain whether what is envisaged here is Yahweh speaking through rather than with David, the phrase הבּ and its context needs closer examination. The phrase itself is rare. It can mean ‘speak with’ indicating ‘special intimacy’ (e.g. Num. 12:2, 6, 8; Hab. 2:1); indeed, this is the most common meaning. There are few instances where it might mean ‘speak through.’ Although the NRSV translates הב through in Hos. 1:2, it is more likely to mean ‘with,’ since what follows are Yahweh’s words to Hosea. In 1 Kgs. 22:28, however, the meaning ‘through’ is possible. Usually, however, when Yahweh speaks through a prophet, the phrase used is יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָa; it can also be יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא Yהוּ. Examination of the phrase alone might suggest ‘speaks with’ is a better translation. Here, then, would be a celebration of Yahweh’s involvement directly in the prophetic event, ‘speaking’ to the prophet.

However, the context of the phrase, in parallel with ‘his word is upon my tongue’ points not so much to the spirit speaking ‘with’ or ‘to’ David, as to it speaking ‘through’ him. It is preferable, then, to see the spirit as speaking ‘through’ David. If this is correct, then this is an instance of double agency discourse: what David says, the הר נ is Yahweh also says. However, since the claim that Yahweh has spoken to or with someone is often difficult to distinguish from the claim that this person speaks for Yahweh, there is ambiguity here, as we have seen. Whether the phrase refers to the prophetic event or the rhetorical event, discussion should not mask the very significant fact that here, explicitly, it is the divine הר נ that ‘speaks.’

If an early date is granted, as I have argued, then ‘word-communicating’ inspiration is clearly evident in pre-classical prophecy.

**b) 1 Kings 22 (= 2 Chron. 18)**

A second instance of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration can be found in the confrontation between Micaiah and Zedekiah. Israel and Aram had been without war for three years. Ahab’s servants then told him that Ramoth-gilead really belonged to him, so Ahab, king of Israel, asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to accompany him to war. Jehoshaphat urged Ahab first to ‘inquire’ (אֵין שָׂר) for the ‘word of Yahweh’ (וּבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽבְרָא יִֽb)
Ahab then gathered four hundred prophets, who said with some ambiguity that Yahweh ‘has given into the hand of the king’ (v.6). Jehoshaphat asked if there was any other ‘prophet of Yahweh’ (v.7). In reply, Ahab mentioned Micaiah, and how he hated him because he never prophesied anything favourable about him (v.8).

As Micaiah was brought in, all the other prophets were ‘prophesying’ before the two kings (v.10). Their spokesman, Zedekiah, with a dramatic flourish of the horns of iron that he had made, announced success, and all the other prophets prophesied the same (v.12). The messenger urged Micaiah to give the same message, since the other prophets were unanimous, but Micaiah insisted that ‘whatever Yahweh says to me, that I will speak’ (v.14). Micaiah, too, then declared success, in almost the same words as the other prophets (v.15; cf. v.12). However, after being urged to swear that he will tell nothing but the truth, Micaiah changed his message, and prophesied doom for Israel. King Ahab then said ‘I told you so’ to Jehoshaphat, that Micaiah would only prophesy disaster (v.18).

In response to this, in vv.19-23, Micaiah urged them all to ‘hear the word of Yahweh’ and, in his reply, revealed the working of Yahweh’s council. Yahweh’s purpose had been that Ahab would be enticed to his destruction (v.20). A spirit had eventually volunteered to be a ‘lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets’ (v.21). Micaiah concluded his reply by saying that Yahweh had thus put a ‘lying spirit’ in the mouth of all these prophets (v.22). It was Yahweh that had decreed disaster for Ahab.

In vv.24-29, we see the reaction to Micaiah’s words. Zedekiah hit Micaiah on the cheek, and said, ‘Which way did the spirit of Yahweh pass from me to speak to you?’ (v.24). Micaiah replied, ‘You will find out on that day when you go in to hide in an inner chamber.’ Ahab then instructed Micaiah to be imprisoned until his return, whereupon Micaiah replied confidently, ‘If you return in peace, Yahweh has not spoken by me’ (v.28).

There are many complexities surrounding the composition of the chapter, and how it relates to historical events. De Vries discerns two independent narratives about Micaiah which have been conflated. He dates the ‘word-controversy narrative’ in the reign of Hezekiah. McKenzie, however, discerns a greater degree of agreement with De Vries’s dating.
reworking, and suggests that the historical situation which suits 1 Kgs. 22:1-38 best is the later Jehu dynasty, rather than the reign of Ahab.\footnote{McKenzie, \textit{Trouble with Kings}, p90.} While precise dating is ‘probably impossible’ (McKenzie), it should be noted here that there are no strong reasons for dating this later than Hezekiah’s reign: the nature of the role of רָעָה, where רע is clearly in some sense an objective agent of Yahweh inspiring the 400 prophets is somewhat different from the critique of Jeremiah and Ezekiel against their opponents, who prophesy out of their own imagination;\footnote{Jer. 14:14; 23:16, 26; Ezek. 13:2, 3, 17. Only in Ezek. 13:3 is רע used, though see below for Jer. 5:13. Cf. Mordechai Cogan, \textit{I Kings}, AB 10, (New York, Doubleday, 2001), p498.} further, there is no explicit mention of their prophesying for personal gain here;\footnote{Cogan, \textit{I Kings}, p498 n3.} finally, the issue in 1 Kings, that of true and false prophecy, is rather different from the concerns of the post-exilic Chronicler, who barely modifies this chapter, yet shifts the focus towards foreign alliances with the word ‘entice’ (רָנָה) in 2 Chr. 18:2, 31.\footnote{See William M. Schniedewind, \textit{The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period}, JSOTSup 197, (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp94-97.}

Within the narrative, a number of observations can be made about the relationship between word, spirit and prophecy. First, it is clear that the hitpael of נָב here, accompanied by a preposition and some indication of the content, involves communication of a word (vv.8, 18); although it is used pejoratively, insofar as Ahab does not like the outcome, it cannot be reduced to mere raving. It can hardly be coincidental that the other prophets also are spoken of as ‘prophesying’ (נָב יִבְשָׂא (v.10)), without there being in their case a clear word produced until v.11. Such a usage points to the similarity, and yet difference, between Micaiah and the 400 prophets.\footnote{See the eighth observation below.}

Secondly, the nifal is predicated of the false prophets, and relates to the communication of a word (v.12); there is clear semantic overlap with the hitpael of נָב in vv.8 and 18. At the same time, there seems a distinction in between the hitpael used absolutely (v.10) and the nifal, used with an indication of content. The stems do not indicate in and of themselves either the truth value of what is being said, nor the precise characteristics of those prophesying. Rather, the instances here fit clearly within the picture I outlined above.

Thirdly, Zedekiah makes it very clear that, from the perspective of these (false) prophets, it was the רָנָה that spoke with them (v.24).\footnote{Cf. Dreytza, \textit{Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAI 1}, p218.}

Fourthly, Zedekiah also makes it clear, from his perspective, that it was רָנָה that Micaiah was effectively claiming for himself (v.24b). Zedekiah clearly understands
the work of Yahweh's רוח as actually speaking Yahweh's words — ‘word-communicating’ inspiration. 95

Fifthly, Micaiah, in narrating the vision that he had of the heavenly court, does not deny the role of רוח in the inspiration of prophets. He merely says that the רוח in the mouth of these prophets is not the divine רוח, but a lying one. 96

Sixthly, Micaiah does not refute the validity of Zedekiah's question about the time of the transfer of רוחו from Zedekiah to himself, but merely says that Zedekiah will know the reality, that is, of Yahweh's רוח inspiring him, when his (Micaiah's) words come true and Zedekiah is in hiding. 97 That Micaiah has prophesied the truth will become evident when what he says comes to pass. Implicitly, then, Micaiah claims the inspiration of רוחו. Thus as Neve comments, 'the belief that the word is inspired by a spirit, even in the case of the "weal" prophets, is left standing.' 98 Albertz and Westermann, however, disagree. 99 They see the use of רוח as 'solely polemical' here, regarding Micaiah's reference to it as assaulting the 'theological legitimization' of his opponents. Micaiah appeals to Yahweh's speech (vv.14, 28) for his own legitimation.

There are two difficulties with this view. The first is that it assumes Micaiah's vision is simply a rhetorical device which bears no relation to reality, when for its force it needs to be true. The second is that it overemphasises in too neat a fashion the distinction with regard to inspiration between the true, classical, prophets, on the one hand, who received Yahweh's word, and the false prophets who are inspired by the spirit, on the other. 100 False prophecy was a problem because the distinction was not so neat. Rather, in the understanding of Zedekiah and Micaiah, 'it was the spirit that took

95 LXX paraphrases with 'What sort of spirit of / from / before the presence of Yahweh is it that spoke with you (και έπειν πάντων πνεύμα κατά το λαλήσεις πάντων)'. Here, still, 'word-communicating' inspiration is apparent, even if the meaning of Zedekiah's words is rather different from the MT.
96 Neve, Spirit of God, p40. Whether רוח is Yahweh's רוח or not is disputed. Debate largely centres around the significance of the article (see Robert B. Chisholm, From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1998), pp74-75). Jones takes the article as 'generic', and translates "a spirit" (see Jones, I and 2 Kings, p368). Even if the article indicates that this רוח is well-known, this does not, in my judgement, mean that it must be Yahweh's 'prophetic spirit' of inspiration that is the lying spirit (pace Gray, I & II Kings, p452; De Vries, I Kings, p268; Walsh, I Kings, p351; Cogan, I Kings, p497). First, the idea of the divine רוח being an entity independent from Yahweh would be anachronistic (Smith, Distinctive Ideas, p158). Secondly, the picture is closer to that of the angelic being in Job 1-2; thirdly, the emphasis on Yahweh's trustworthiness and truthfulness in the rest of 1 Kgs. points to some distance between Yahweh and this spirit; even Zedekiah believed that a lying spirit could not be God's spirit (P.J. Williams, 'Lying Spirits Sent by God? The Case of Micaiah's Prophecy', in The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture, eds. P. Helm and C.R. Trueman, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2002), pp58-66, esp. p66). The point is that the false prophets believe they are inspired by Yahweh's spirit, when in fact it is a false, lying spirit. Micaiah, on the other hand, is inspired by Yahweh's spirit. There are two separate 'spirits', rather than two manifestations of the same רוח: Yahweh's רוח, an extension of Yahweh's personality, and the 'evil, lying spirit' inspiring false prophecy. See Evangelia G. Dafni, י"בוך רוח und falsche Prophetie in 1 Reg 22", ZAW 112 (2000), pp365-83.
97 The mention of the 'inner-room' as a place of refuge is an echo of Ben-Hadad's hiding place in 20:30.
98 Neve, Spirit of God, p40.
100 See further below.
hold of the prophets, and when they spoke it was the words which were given them by
the spirit. The process cannot be stated more directly than is done in this narrative. The
connection between the spirit and the spoken word is as close as possible. ‘Word-
communicating’ inspiration is explicit here.

The seventh observation that can be drawn from this narrative is that claiming
inspiration, even the inspiration of רוח, was no guarantee that what was said would
happen. Not every claim to the ‘spirit of Yahweh’ makes it a word from Yahweh,
although strikingly here the lying spirit is commissioned by Yahweh. Further, majority
agreement amongst the prophets does not materially alter the situation. This observation
paves the way for the relative lack of recourse to רוח within the classical prophets.

The eighth observation concerns the points of similarity and difference between
Micaiah and the other prophets. These points illuminate the picture that obtains in the
following century and beyond, with Amos and the other classical prophets in their
conflicts with the false prophets. The false prophets attribute their inspiration to רוח;
they exhibit dramatic behaviour, including sign-acts (22:10-11); they have a reputation
of being willing to modify their message (v.13); they announce triumph and victory;
they belong to Ahab’s court (‘his’ v.22); they may even be willing to prophesy for
any deity, since Yahweh is not mentioned in v.6, but only after they have been present
when Jehoshaphat has asked for a prophet of Yahweh (v.7), and the name of Zedekiah
and his father (אברהם) hint at the blurring of distinctions so characteristic of Ahab’s
reign. Micaiah, on the other hand, is distinct from the other prophets (v.8), his
characteristic prophecy is one of doom (v.8), he only speaks Yahweh’s word (v.14), he
has access to the heavenly court (vv.19-23), he appeals to the Deuteronomic test of
whether a prophecy comes true as the mark of his own authentication (vv.25, 28); all
these characteristics might suggest a radical disjunction between Micaiah and the 400
prophets. However, Micaiah accepts the notion of Yahweh’s רוח speaking to him (v.25),
while making direct appeal to Yahweh’s רוח for his own authentication; in addition, he
acts as a prophet in a similar fashion to the others (קָשָׁה). Against
such a background, it is hardly surprising that the classical prophets are not too keen to
speak of themselves as רוח or as נב--inspired, for neither provides conclusive proof
that such a person has spoken the truth.

3. The relative insignificance of רוח within pre-classical prophecy

An examination of רוח within pre-classical prophecy with regard to ‘potentiating’
inspiration and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration has demonstrated that both

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102 J.A. Montgomery and H.S. Gehman, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings,
103 Walsh, 1 Kings, p348; Cogan, 1 Kings, p497.
104 Cogan, 1 Kings, p497.
105 So Walsh, 1 Kings, p347 n5; cf. Jer. 2:8; 23:13.
understandings are clearly present. By focusing our attention here, though, there is a danger of obscuring two facts. First, as Kaufmann notes, the work of the spirit is not always related to the communication of a word from Yahweh. When the ‘spirit’ ‘clothes itself’ (לובב) with Gideon (Jdg. 6:34) and animates Samson (ועם) (Jdg. 13:25; cf. 14:6; 14:19; 15:14), the effect is that they have strength — but no word of Yahweh is involved. The agency of Yahweh’s נָדוֹנָה is in no way restricted to the prophetic נָדוֹנָה. Secondly, and conversely, words could come from Yahweh without any mention of נָדוֹנָה. This is true for Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, and Samuel. Even within the books of Samuel and Kings, there are no claims for נָדוֹנָה-possession for many of the prophets, such as Nathan, Ahijah (1 Kgs. 11; 14), for the prophets of Judah or Bethel (1 Kgs. 13) or for Jehu (1 Kgs. 16). In other words, the place and significance of נָדוֹנָה within pre-classical prophecy should not be overstated or overemphasised.

B. INSPIRATION AND THE CLASSICAL PROPHETS

At the start of this chapter, we observed how the classical prophets are relatively (or totally) silent on the role of נָדוֹנָה within their ministries, and we saw the four main views of how scholars have interpreted this silence (antithetical, historical, rhetorical, theological). In particular, many scholars have seen in the book of Ezekiel a recovery of the role of נָדוֹנָה within Ezekiel’s ministry after an absence within the classical prophets. If we are going to evaluate the significance of the book of Ezekiel, we must examine the significant points within the classical prophets where נָדוֹנָה-inspiration has been observed or denied. I shall argue that, while it is certainly true that נָדוֹנָה-inspiration is not prominent, both ‘potentiating’ inspiration and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration as concepts may be found.

1. ‘Potentiating’ inspiration and the classical prophets

a) Hosea 9:7

‘The days of punishment have come, 
the days of recompense have come; 
Israel cries107 “The prophet is a fool (אֲנִי נָבוֹן), 
the man of the spirit is mad (נָדוֹנָה אֵלָה יִשְׂרָאֵל).”’ 
Because of your great iniquity, 
Your hostility is great.’

106 Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, pp97-98. 107 On the basis of context, most commentators amend the MT (בר信息安全) to (‘cry’ / ‘shout’ (hif. imp. of רוע)), cf. the LXX καὶ κακοπαθεῖτο Ἰσραήλ (= ורטי (hif. imp. of רוע)). See Hans W. Wolff, A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea, Hermeneia, (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1974), p150. Although Mackintosh (Hosea, pp351-52) thinks the suggestion ‘dubious’ because נָדוֹנָה usually speaks of raising a shout, in joy or in battle, Couturier (L’Esprit de Yahweh et la Fonction Prophétique’, p134) points out that the parallel between Ephraim as a hunter spying on game (v.9) and Israel’s activity in v.7 makes a ‘declaration of war against Hosea’ (une déclaration de guerre contre Osée) more likely than knowledge about Hosea.
This verse occurs as part of a tightly structured unit from vv.7-9. This is in turn part of the section from vv.1-9 which outlines the conflict between Hosea and his addressees about the value of their festivals and their consequent disapproval of his ministry. There are two main questions that concern us. First, who is uttering these words about ‘the prophet’? Secondly, if it is not Hosea himself, how much of this pejorative caricature can confidently be said to be part of Hosea’s self-understanding, especially given the fact that the phrase נר תיל only occurs here?

With regard to the first question, Mowinckel argues that the prophet here is inveighing against ‘the nebhi’im,’ on the grounds that the prophet would hardly accept such a description of himself, given the strong expressions contained in the words ‘fool’ and ‘mad.’ However, Mowinckel does not pay sufficient attention to the context, which is of Israel insulting the prophet, thereby showing how guilty she truly is.

With regard to the second question, Wolff points out that these words are on the lips of the people, and that, therefore, ‘Hosea does not speak of himself as a person filled with the “spirit.’” Many commentators argue from this fact that Hosea cannot and should not be understood as claiming the inspiration of נר for himself. In particular, Couturier looks closely at the adjectives predicated of ‘the prophet’ and ‘the man of the spirit’, and, in addition to noticing the obvious pejorative nature of them, also observes, correctly, that the word ‘mad’ (נזר) only occurs in carefully circumscribed contexts (1 Sam. 21:11-16; 2 Kgs. 9:11; Jer. 29:26ff.). Within the prophetic context, it is associated with the hitpael of הר, and, for Couturier, is essentially related to ecstasy within prophecy. From the rarity of the term, and its precise usage, Couturier argues that the people’s accusation is not simply that Hosea is ‘mad’, but that he is part of a band of prophets who go around under the influence of נר. The people’s charge, then, ‘goes beyond the simple accusation of craziness; it refers to a precise tradition in the history of prophecy, whose characteristic is ecstasy accompanied by trances.’

108 Couturier notes the close structure of vv.7-9 here, which I have summarised in the following table (pp133f.)

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<td>7a</td>
<td>declaration of judgement; נר, נזר</td>
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<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>attack of people against Hosea; verbal threat; Israel; hostility vs. God (닐ך)</td>
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<td>7c</td>
<td>recollection of guilt - reason</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>attack of people against Hosea; physical threat; Ephraim; hostility vs. prophet (닐ך)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>declaration of judgement; נר, נזר</td>
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111 Wolff, Hosea, p157.


individual prophet, would have identified in any sense with the charge that he was one of the ecstatic group.

However, such a sharp distinction is neither the only nor the best interpretation. While it is, of course, true that he does not explicitly claim to be ‘a man of the spirit’, the point also needs to be made that Hosea does not distance himself from these titles. More significantly, elsewhere he identifies himself as a prophet, one of the titles with which, on this analysis, he was being lampooned (9:8; cf. 6:5; 12:11 [ET 10]; 12:14, where he has a positive view of the נבי). Though it is possible that Hosea accepts the first title (‘prophet’) but denies the second (‘man of the spirit’), such that it is the entire mischaracterisation (‘the man of the spirit is mad’) that serves to demonstrate Israel’s guilt, it is preferable to see that he is willing to identify himself as a ‘man of the spirit’. This is partly because of the synonymy, as Couturier himself notes, between ‘prophet’ and ‘man of the spirit’ and partly because there is not the contrast between the ‘individual’ Hosea, on the one hand, and the ‘plural’ נביאים (6:5; 12:11) in Hosea that Couturier regards as determinative elsewhere.

The insult of the people comes not in the title given to Hosea (נביא, נביא, נביא), but in the way such titles are predicated. It is presumptuous to argue that Hosea’s silence on ascribing נביא to himself is tantamount to rejection or repudiation. The verse needs to be understood like this: though Hosea is a נביא and a ‘man of the spirit,’ like Elijah (1 Kgs. 18:12), Micaiah ben Imlah (1 Kgs. 22), and Elisha (2 Kgs. 2:9), he cannot be dismissed as a ‘raving ecstatic’ like others who claim to be also נביאים and ‘men of the spirit.’ The difference between the true and the false is precisely that: one is a true prophet, the other is false. The distinction should not be found in ‘ecstasy / strange behaviour’ or in the presence of נביא.

The picture that emerges here is of a people who recognise the work of the divine נביא in a prophet and are scornful, and of a prophet who, while not using the term of his own ministry, does not repudiate such a reference. Nonetheless, the work of the spirit evident here is not necessarily that of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration. Here, again, it is the prophet who is inspired by the divine נביא; how that נביא-inspiration relates to the words the prophet utters is not articulated here. Eichrodt puts it well when he says

114 Cf. Jacob, Theology, p125.
115 ‘Prophecy’, NIDOTTE 4, p1074. It is of course true that Hosea, like the other prophets, fulminates against false prophets (4:4-5).
116 An example of a person accepting the first title, denying the second, and rejecting both characteristics, might be the scornful, ‘A Catholic doesn’t think for herself, a Papist just follows authority.’
117 Montague sees this as an ‘exception’ to cases where classical prophets wanted to distance themselves from the spirit (Holy Spirit, p34). Wolff (Hosea, p157), van Imsevoot (‘L’action de l’esprit de Jalivé’, p571), Carley (Ezekiel among the Prophets, p27) and Mackintosh (Hosea, p333) see Hosea as accepting this title, ‘man of the spirit’.
119 Cf. חָרָס, TLOT 2, p702.
121 Cf. Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p56.
that the work of the divine נֹבֶר in the prophet was principally that of equipping men for
the ‘office of messenger and spokesman of Yahweh’; thus ‘the man of the spirit was
marked out not so much by his translation into the divine realm as by his particular
function’.

b) Micah 3:8

‘But as for me, I am filled with power,
with the spirit of Yahweh (נֹבֶר, נֹבֶר דָּרֶךְ),
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression
and to Israel his sin.’

This verse concludes Micah’s oracle, begun in v.5, against ‘the prophets who lead
astray’ God’s people by declaring ‘peace’ when their stomachs have been fed by those
who have come to them, but who ‘declare war’ on those who have not fed them. Having
spelled out his charge against them (v.5), and the judgement that shall come to them
(vv.6-7), Micah now states his own authority (v.8). There are two significant issues
here. The first is the authenticity of the phrase ‘with the spirit of Yahweh.’ The second
is, if it is authentic, the implications of such a claim in the ministry of Micah.

With regard to authenticity, many commentators regard it is a gloss. They do so on
five main grounds: first, metre, that ‘it interrupts the three-stress colon and
‘overloads’ it, making the first colon much too long in what is otherwise a well-
structured chapter; secondly, grammar, that there is a ‘superfluous נֹבֶר (without a
copula!)’; thirdly, sense, that it confuses the source of the endowment of charismatic
gifts (the spirit) with the gifts themselves, and spoils the ‘matching triad’; fourthly,
chronology, that the linking of נֹבֶר with ‘filling’ is only found in (the later) P, or that
it is an explanatory gloss for ‘power’ (רְצָה) at a time when prophets were held as inspired
by Yahweh, fifthly, sense, for, according to Mowinckel, נֹבֶר is linked with ‘lying’
(רְשָׁע) and ‘deceit’ (שֵׁן) in 2:11, and so Micah is contrasting his own authority (‘power’,
‘might’ and ‘judgement’ (3:8)) with the נֹבֶר of the מִלְתַּי. A claim to נֹבֶר ‘in the
mouth of Micah’ is ‘suspicious’, ‘since it is associated too clearly with the claims of the

130 ‘passenden Dreiklang’. Volz, Der Geist Gottes, p65 n1.
131 Volz, Der Geist Gottes, p65; נֹבֶר, TLOT 3, p1216.
false prophets whom he excoriates and the terminology they used'. The conclusion, then, is that 'the words are surely an addendum, from the time when it was usual to associate ruach and prophecy'.

However, the authenticity of the phrase has been defended by Hillers and others. Hillers maintains that the verse is metrically adequate, that none of the terms supposed to be 'glossed' are obscure (though there may be reasons for a gloss other than obscurity); that the prophet as man of the spirit can be seen elsewhere (2:11), and that the expression is not anachronistic (he cites 2 Sam. 23:2). Further to his arguments, נַרְעָ as a liquid metaphor, as in the phrase 'I am filled with...the spirit of Yahweh,' is quite common, and need not be late (e.g. Isa. 30:28); the other instances of an individual being 'filled with the spirit' (Exod. 31:3; 35:31; Deut. 34:9) do not use נַרְעָ, so the unique syntax here guards against a too ready equation of the phrase in Mic. 3:8 with occurrences assigned to P; also, נַרְעָ is not necessarily awkward, for it could indicate that Micah is filled with power through the assistance of Yahweh's נַרְעָ (cf. נַרְעָ in Gen. 4:1); finally, excising it as a theological interpretation from a later date is a convenient way of dealing with an otherwise potentially problematic piece of evidence; it assumes what is being debated and forecloses debate. Carley comments that 'there are no generally accepted grounds for such an emendation.' In view of this, he says that 'to retain the phrase is to treat the text more fairly.' Mowinckel's question regarding the sense of the passage and its relation to 2:11 is best answered by looking at how the phrase functions within the verse, and at the significance of the verse.
With regard to the function of this verse, nowhere else in the book of Micah is there a call report, which functions to authenticate the prophet and his unpopular message; here, v.8 serves to communicate Micah's credentials. Were Mowinckel correct in his analysis of the pre-exilic reforming prophets, we would expect here a reference to the word of Yahweh as well as the supposed repudiation of מַרְזֶד that he says is found in 2:11. However, it is likely here that Micah is purposefully using irony, when set alongside 2:11. Men 'walking after the wind' and uttering falsehoods do not do so with the divine מַרְזֶד but with emptiness (רָעָם) and lies (יִשְׁפָּל), in contrast to Micah, who has the divine מַרְזֶד. In other words, Micah here is conducting an assault on the very heart of their inspiration by appealing to his own. It is too simplistic an analysis to speak of 'true prophets appeal to the word of Yahweh,' while 'false prophets appeal to the מַרְזֶד,' since in 1 Kgs. 22, we see a true prophet appeal to the divine מַרְזֶד, and in Ezekiel we see the false prophets appeal to the 'word of Yahweh.' As we have seen, false prophecy was such a problem precisely because there was no foolproof method of distinguishing between true and false.

In summary, this verse cannot be discounted as evidence in the case that the classical prophets spoke of מַרְזֶד for their own inspiration. The phrase makes sense in its context, and other arguments against its authenticity are inconclusive. The picture that this verse gives, then, is of Yahweh's מַרְזֶד being intimately involved with prophecy, and, in particular, with the rhetorical event. Micah is 'full of the spirit of Yahweh...to declare...'. This inspiration, while explicitly stated here, cannot, however, be said necessarily to be 'word-communicating.' Micah's credentials, which include 'power,' 'justice,' and 'might,' given by the divine מַרְזֶד, all imply the empowering of him as a prophet, rather than his words.

c) Jeremiah 5:13

The prophets are nothing but wind (חֲלֵבָא יִשְּׂעֶה לְרִית), for the word is not in them (מַה יִבְיֹר אָנֵה). Thus shall it be done to them!’

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144 E.g. Amos 7:14ff.; Isa. 6; Jer. 1:4-10; Ezek. 1-3.
146 Keil, *Twelve Minor Prophets*, vol. 1, p446.
147 Hehn observes that 'in a neo-Babylonian letter, it says, “I know that all you say about me is a lie and wind”' ('In einem neubabylonischen Briefe heißt es: “Ich weiß, daß alles, was du über mich sagst, Lüge und Wind ist’). Hehn, ‘Zum Problem des Geistes’, pp222-23.
150 I do not see how the ‘dependent clause’ (‘in order to proclaim...’) ‘only distantly refers to prophecy’ as Albertz and Westermann claim (‘מַרְזֶד’, TLOT 3, p1216).
151 I translate with most commentators, who follow the LXX here (καὶ λόγος κυρίου) and emend to רְבָּרָן. Holladay prefers the MT as the lectio difficilior, with the ‘postbiblical Hebrew’ meaning ‘revelation’. William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, Hermeneia, (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1986), pp183, 187. However, if מַרְזֶד is ‘postbiblical’, this explains the MT, but suggests an original רְבָּרָן.
I have already noted how theological uses of רוח are remarkably absent from the book of Jeremiah.152 There is only one place where there is a possibility of a theological nuance to רוח in the book, and it occurs within ‘a collection of poetic fragments’153 which are somewhat awkward because of the change in speaker and addressee. The literary context is of an impending invasion from the north, declared by Jeremiah (4:5-6:30), and of the complete absence of any righteous person in Jerusalem, whose presence would avert Yahweh’s judgement (5:1-9). The next two verses, 5:10-11, seem to be addressed to the impending invaders, urging them to begin their destructive work, though not to make a ‘full end’.154 In 5:12, there is a shift in speaker. Jeremiah gives his verdict on those who have spoken falsely of Yahweh.155 In the verses following v.13, 5:14-17, Yahweh declares judgement on those who have spoken falsely; such false speaking is revealed as a prime cause of the consumption of the people by the invading nation.156 There are two critical questions concerning v.13: first, ‘Of whom are these words predicated?’ and, secondly, ‘What is the force of רוח here?’

Those who see this verse as revealing Jeremiah’s view of רוח, and רוח-inspiration, as totally negative see v.13 as being a quotation of Jeremiah himself, expressing Yahweh’s verdict on the false salvation prophets who appeal to רוח.157 רוח is what inspires (probably by their own admission) the false prophets of hope, who say that Yahweh will do nothing, and that no harm will come (v.12). Jeremiah here, with a pungent word-play on רוח, says the prophets are ‘nothing but spirit / wind,’ because, in contrast to Jeremiah, they do not have the ‘word’ in them (cf. Jer. 18:18). Couturier comments, ‘One cannot avoid, therefore, seeing here not only a strong opposition between two types of prophets, but again between the “Spirit” (wind) and the “word”’.158 However, such a conclusion is by no means unavoidable.

One way in which such a conclusion has been avoided is to answer the first question, ‘Of whom are these words predicated?’ with ‘Jeremiah and other prophets of doom’. This is the approach of many modern English versions, which treat v.13, until יִרְמֵיהוּ, as a continuation of the culpably false words of those cited by Jeremiah in v.12.159

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152 See n13 on p3.
154 5:10; cf. 4:27, 5:18.
155 Holladay, Jeremiah 1, p186; McKane, Jeremiah, vol. 1, p121.
158 ‘On ne peut donc pas éviter de voir ici une forte opposition non seulement entre deux types de prophètes, mais encore entre l’esprit (vent) et le paroles.’ Couturier, ‘L’Esprit de Yahweh et la Fonction Prophétique’, p149.
159 So NRSV, NIV, ESV, NASB; also Vg., and, according to McKane (Jeremiah, vol. 1, p121), the commentaries of Duhm, Rudolph and Weiser.
With this approach, Jeremiah and the other prophets declaring doom are denounced by the false prophets, in v. 13, as uttering empty words.\(^{160}\) Given that Jeremiah himself can speak of 'the prophets' in either positive or negative terms,\(^{161}\) it is possible that his opponents can do the same. The false prophets, then, declare that נָבִיאֵים (i.e. Jeremiah and other doom prophets), are nothing but wind, and the word is not in them (v. 13). This interpretation has rightly been criticised, though not always effectively.

Holladay argues that יָדַע preceding the verb signals a 'contrast' with what has come before. However, this is not an adequate refutation.\(^{162}\) The fronting of מַעַד does not necessarily serve to mark a change in speaker; it could simply mark a change in the topic of the false prophets' speech, from their denial of the gloomy words, to the fate of the gloomy prophets. A stronger reason for linking v. 13 with the words of Jeremiah is that the indictment of נָבִיאֵים here sounds rather similar to his indictment of them elsewhere. The mention of נָבִיאֵים in 5: 13 and of the prophets prophesying יָדַע in 5: 31 (cf. 14: 14; 23: 14) is strongly reminiscent of Mic. 2: 11; further, the assertion that Yahweh's word is 'not in them' is similar to Jeremiah's accusations elsewhere (e.g. 14: 14; 23: 18-22). On this reading, given the lexicalisation of 'prophets' in v. 13, the subject of יָדַע and מַעַד in v. 12 needs to be a different group, presumably the people of Judah who regurgitate the words of the false prophets.

If it is granted, as I think more probable, that these words are the words of Jeremiah against the false prophets, there is still the question of the force of יָדַע here. The relevant phrase is נָבִיאֵים יָדַע נַעֲקַד. The preposition יָדַע indicates what the prophets will become, i.e. 'nothing' (cf. Jer. 2: 14),\(^{163}\) or perhaps what they belong to,\(^{164}\) rather than what they possess (given the lack of יָדַע with נָבִיאֵים). Certainly, the primary sense of יָדַע is of 'wind' or 'nothingness'. However, as I noted above, many see here a word-play on יָדַע, linking this primary sense with יָדַע as the source of the (false) prophets' inspiration. What is important to note, though, is that even if this were true, and it seems plausible, this does not necessarily mean that Jeremiah is hostile to יָדַע-inspiration. Jeremiah could just as easily be denying the legitimacy of their claim to the divine יָדַע here, and confronting them directly in their claim to the spirit's inspiration (cf. Ezek. 13: 3). Just as he inveighs against prophets, while he himself is one (1: 5),\(^{165}\) so too he can inveigh against claims to the divine יָדַע while regarding himself as having that same divine יָדַע (cf. Micaiah). His silence on the question of his own

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160 That false prophets (or the people citing the words of the false prophets) are in view in v. 12 is apparent from the similarity between their words here and those of the false prophets elsewhere (e.g. Jer. 14: 13; 23: 17).

161 That Jeremiah can speak positively of the plural נָבִיאֵים is apparent from 2: 30, where Judah's guilt is apparent from its treatment of its prophets (cf. McKane, Jeremiah, vol. 1, p51); that he can also speak of them negatively is apparent from 5: 31, where they are said to prophesy falsely (cf. 14: 13ff.; 23: 14ff.).

162 Holladay, Jeremiah 1, p187.

163 The prophets 'will be shown to be the windbags that they are.' Bright, Jeremiah, p40.


165 יָדַע, TLOT2, p702.
'inspiration' and the divine נָטַר should not necessarily be interpreted as antipathy towards נָטַר.166

Such a conclusion is further supported by the fact that Jeremiah does not confront the other prophets on the grounds of the style of their prophecy, repudiating the more ecstatic manifestations, but on the grounds of whether Yahweh is the source of their message. Indeed, he himself has visions (1:9ff.); he experiences the powerful 'hand of Yahweh' on him which overwhelms him, probably with external manifestations (15:17; cf. 1:9);167 he was 'enticed' and 'overpowered' by Yahweh (20:7); he experienced crushing emotions (4:17); he performed elaborate sign-acts (27:1ff.) and, finally, both true and false prophecy in the book of Jeremiah are marked by the nifal of נָטַר (e.g. true: 19:14; 25:13; 26:11,12; false: 2:8; 5:31; 11:21) and by the hitpael (true: 26:20; false: 14:14; 23:13).168 It is therefore no surprise that Jeremiah, like Hosea, was regarded as 'mad' (יָטַר) (Jer. 29:26-27));169 there was some evidence pointing in that direction within his ministry.

This picture makes it unlikely that Jeremiah actually repudiated נָטַר in his own inspiration. It is, however, impossible to argue that he explicitly endorsed it. If a word-play is intended in 5:13, what is clear is that certain prophets in Jeremiah’s day did lay claim to the divine נָטַר (even if Jeremiah didn’t explicitly).170 As Koch comments, ‘So an indirect witness for the ūnach Yahweh as source of prophetic inspiration may lie in this word of mockery.’171 Precisely what kind of ‘prophetic inspiration’ is in view cannot be determined. It is not possible to decide whether such a view of inspiration, as evinced in the late pre-exilic period, was ‘potentiating’ or ‘word-communicating.’

2. ‘Word-communicating’ inspiration and the classical prophets

a) Isaiah 30:1-2

‘Oh, rebellious children, says Yahweh, who carry out a plan, but not mine (נָטַר הָלָה);

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169 In these verses, Jeremiah has a word of rebuke for Shemaiah. Shemaiah had written a letter which told Jehoiada that Yahweh had made him priest ‘so that there may be officers in the house of Yahweh to control any madman (נָטַר) who plays the prophet (תֹּכָּה)... So now why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who plays the prophet for you (נָטַר)??’ (v:26-27). The word for madman (נָטַר) occurs in four other places in the Old Testament. In 2 Kgs. 9:11, the officers ask Jehu about that ‘madman’, the young prophet sent by Elisha; Jehu’s reply is instructive – ‘You know the man and his babble.’ Twice, David acts as a madman to avoid problems with King Achish of Gath, making marks on the door, and letting spittle run down his beard (1 Sam. 21:15-16 [ET 14-15]). In Deut. 28:34, as part of the cursings, the people shall be ‘driven mad’ by the sight their eyes shall see.
171 ‘So dürfte in diesem Spottwort ein indirektes Zeugnis für die ūnach Yahweh als Quelle der prophetischen Inspiration vorliegen.’ Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p60.
who make an alliance, but against my will, adding sin to sin; who set out to go down to Egypt without asking for my counsel.

The only possible linking of מִי to ‘word-communicating’ inspiration in texts generally accepted as pre-exilic within the classical prophets occurs in Isaiah 30:1-2. These verses come within the larger unit of vv.1-11, which form an ‘oracular report concerning YHWH’s dissatisfaction with the people’s embassy to Egypt.’ Within this, there are three sub-units. The first, vv.1-5, is ‘the oracular report of YHWH’s woe oracle.’ Verse 1a reports the woe statement, and vv.1b-2 spell out the offence. Isaiah’s addressees carry out a plan (נָשָׁבָל) that does not come from Yahweh, in sending to Egypt for protection. Essential to any conclusion on spirit, prophecy, and inspiration is an analysis of how, in v.1, מִי relates to מִי, to which it clearly corresponds. מִי has been understood in four main ways.

First, it has been understood as ‘the inner nature of God.’ Such a view is based upon the parallel between ‘from me’ and ‘by my spirit.’ However, as Albertz and Westermann point out, this ‘involves an abstract concept foreign to the OT.’

Secondly, it has been understood as the power of Yahweh, or as the ‘effect of Yahweh’s might.’ However, although the notion of Yahweh’s power is elsewhere contrasted with Egypt’s weakness, it is not found in the immediate context here.

Thirdly, it has been understood as the ‘mind of Yahweh.’ Isaiah’s point is not so much that their plan to send an embassy to Egypt is not empowered by Yahweh, but that this plan is not Yahweh’s will. This view has the strength of taking seriously the parallel between ‘by me’ and ‘by my spirit.’ Neve concedes, though, that this meaning, ‘the center of volition in Yahweh himself’ is only found at one other point in the Old Testament, and never elsewhere in First Isaiah.

\[172\] The phrase is נָשָׁבָל, which can be rendered literally ‘pour out a libation’ or ‘cast an idol’ (cf. 30:22).

\[173\] With regard to dating, Ma notes that ‘the authenticity of the passage has not been seriously questioned’ (Until the Spirit Comes, p46). Most commentators favour the Assyrian crisis at the end of the 8th century. For a discussion of possible dates, see Otto Kaiser, Isaiah 13-39, tr. R.A. Wilson, OTL, (London, SCM, 1974), pp282-84.

\[174\] Sweeney, Isaiah 1-39, p389.

\[175\] Sweeney, Isaiah 1-39, p389.

\[176\] ‘Spirit in the Old Testament’, TDNT 6, p364.

\[177\] מִי, TLOT 3, p1216; Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p58. In Isa. 31:3, ontology is not in view; rather, there is a contrast between Yahweh’s power and animal / human frailty.

\[178\] מִי, TLOT 3, p1216.

\[179\] Neve, Spirit of God, p54.

\[180\] Neve, Spirit of God, p54. So also Mowinckel, “‘The Spirit’ and the ‘Word’”, p201; יְרוּם, ThWAT 7, pp397-98; cf. Kaiser, Isaiah 13-39, p285: ‘In a few intense words Isaiah states that the plan has not come from Yahweh, and the treaty is neither in accordance with his will nor derives from him.’

\[181\] Neve, Spirit of God, p54.

\[182\] Isa. 40:13; see Neve, Spirit of God, p98.
The fourth way of understanding נב is to see it as the 'prophetic spirit.'\(^{183}\) This view interprets v.2a as expanding further on v.1b. Thus not asking for Yahweh's counsel, 'an ancient technical term for seeking an oracle from Yahweh' now in the form of 'an utterance by a prophet,'\(^{184}\) explains 'not by my spirit.' Implicit is the assumption that the spirit inspires the prophet's message. Not to ask for Yahweh's counsel from his prophet is not to go with what the spirit says (v.1b). While this would be a unique usage in First Isaiah, its chief virtue, as Ma points out, is that it makes good sense in the context, for the passage speaks of the 'conflict between the prophet and the court politicians.'\(^{185}\) The wider context of 30:9-10 and 31:1 also supports this conclusion, where the issue is acting without reference to a prophet or consulting Yahweh. The criticism of Volz that it is unlike Isaiah to put himself in the middle as a kind of mediator, because elsewhere all the people need to do is look to the Holy One of Israel (e.g. 31:1; 5:12) is invalid.\(^{186}\) Indeed, the 'consulting' (׀ר) of Yahweh that is found in 31:1 is elsewhere seen to be through the agency of a prophet (e.g. 1 Kgs. 22; 2 Kgs. 1:3; Ezek. 14:10). If Isaiah is referring to the 'prophetic spirit' here, then what is pictured is a 'word-communicating' inspiration. The spirit is not merely the one who equips Isaiah to speak, but is responsible for the message that Isaiah gives.

From the discussion above, it can be seen that both the third and the fourth views have much to commend them. It is difficult to be certain, but it would be unwise to dismiss the possibility that Isaiah is here speaking about the 'prophetic spirit,' either on dogmatic grounds (not least because both usages are unique), or because it is 'impossible exegesis,'\(^{187}\) which it is not.

3. Summary and Conclusions

In view of our analysis above, a number of comments can be made. First, though Jer. 18:18 makes it clear that the people expected a prophet to bring a 'word' from Yahweh, it is also clear that people in general linked prophecy to the divine נב (Hos. 9:7). This common perception was not restricted to a particular group. Such a linkage involved a belief that the prophets behaved in strange ways, which bore at least some resemblance to madness (נַפְשׁ (Hos. 9:7; Jer. 29:26-27)). Although this was a popular opinion, and in its context both references are derogatory words in the mouth of opponents, there is evidence that the classical prophets were not as 'rational' as Mowinckel maintains. Neither Jeremiah nor Hosea distanced themselves from such comments.\(^{188}\) Indeed, I

\(^{183}\) van Imschoot, 'L'action de l'esprit de Jahvé', p568, 571-72; Jacob, Theology, p126; Ma, Until the Spirit Comes, p49; John N. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39, NICOT, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1986), p545.


\(^{185}\) Ma, Until the Spirit Comes, p49.

\(^{186}\) Volz, Der Geist Gottes, p66.


\(^{188}\) It is not likely that they were called 'mad' simply because of their advice, since that overplays the distinction between mental states and external behaviour. 'Madness' was clearly visible in 1 Sam.
have shown above how such abuse cannot be dismissed as pure hyperbole, since Hosea willingly, if implicitly, identified himself as a prophet, and ascribed a significant function to such prophets (9:8). Further evidence of the ‘usual’ behaviour of the classical prophets comes from the involvement of the ‘hand of Yahweh’ in their experience (e.g. Isa. 8:11; Jer. 15:17 (cf. 20:7)). These instances of the prophets being caricatured as ‘mad’ and the influence of the ‘hand of Yahweh’ put the classical prophets nearer to the pre-classical ones than is often recognised.

Secondly, Volz, Mowinckel and Couturier are not correct to say that the pre-exilic writing prophets repudiated the inspiration of מַרְחָק. There is not a single text supporting such a view. While they were antithetical to false prophets, they were not antithetical to the מַרְחָק that the false prophets claimed for themselves. Hosea (Hos. 9:7), implicitly, and both Micah (Mic. 3:8) and Isaiah (Isa. 30:1), explicitly, make clear that they regard the divine מַרְחָק as having a place within their inspiration as prophets. This ought not be surprising, in view of some of the similarities we have observed between the classical prophets and prophets in general. This also means that the historical view on the absence of מַרְחָק in prophecy is, like the antithetical view, mistaken. It was not the case that ‘the spirit...ceased to operate.’

Thirdly, it is true to say that מַרְחָק is relatively absent from the pre-exilic writing prophets. In view of what we have just said, the relative absence of the prophets attributing their ministry to the divine מַרְחָק cannot be explained by recourse to a radical disjunction between the ‘rational’ classical prophets and the ‘ecstatic nebhi’im.’ Further, it is not likely that such reticence was due to the influence of מַרְחָק within ‘false prophecy,’ if what is meant by this is that the ‘true prophets’ did not want to be associated with the מַרְחָק found in false prophets. Micah assaults directly the prophetic inspiration claimed by those with whom he does not agree, but in so doing he does not renounce the divine מַרְחָק for himself. Two points come to the fore. First, mention of מַרְחָק may well have entailed connotations more usually associated with false prophets, connotations that the classical prophets tried to avoid. Secondly, appeals to the influence of מַרְחָק did not foreclose any dispute about the truth of the prophecy, nor did they a priori authenticate a prophet’s ministry. While earlier it may have been true that physical manifestations were regarded as proof of divine endorsement, clearly such a perspective did not last, not least because it was not a reliable indicator of the truth (cf. 1 Kgs. 22). Asserting the fact of inspiration by means of particular external behaviours gave way to speaking the inspired message. Since such appeals would not have
furthered any claims to authenticity, the relative silence with regard to נֵרָה in the
prophet’s ministry is due to the prophet’s desire to emphasise another side of his task,
‘that it was the decision of Yahweh he was preaching. So the word had to come into the
foreground.’ 192 In other words, the relative silence is a rhetorical strategy.

Fourthly, the view of inspiration that obtains in the prophets cannot be
characterised by evolutionary development. There is some evidence that early within
classical prophecy, נֵרָה is linked to the communication of the words of the prophet (Isa.
30:1) and therefore, to what we have termed ‘word-communicating’ inspiration. There
is also, as we have seen, pre-exilic evidence of ‘potentiating inspiration,’ whereby the
spirit is seen as the one which ‘roused the prophet to act, to speak, and endows him with
the ability to harangue and poetize...’ and ‘prepares’ the prophet ‘to receive the divine
word – to see visions, to hear the divine voice in dreams or ecstatic slumber’ 193 (Hos.
9:7; Mic. 3:8). It is erroneous to say that ‘only the post-exilic period understood
prophecy as the obvious work of the divine spirit.’ 194

Fifthly, the influence of נֵרָה on the classical prophets is not restricted to either the
‘prophetic’ or the ‘rhetorical’ event. The reference in Hos. 9:7 does not make it clear
precisely at which point the inspiration of נֵרָה is to be seen. Mic. 3:8 links the operation
of נֵרָה more closely to the proclamation of his message than to its reception. Isa. 30:1,
on the other hand, traces the source of Isaiah’s message to Yahweh’s נֵרָה. There is not a
particular point in the life of Yahweh’s word where Yahweh’s נֵרָה is more evident.

C. INSPIRATION AFTER THE EXILE

The final place we shall look for the Old Testament’s understanding of prophetic
inspiration and the role of נֵרָה within that is the post-exilic literature. This will be
illustrative rather than exhaustive, since my aim is to assess the book of Ezekiel’s place
within the general trend, rather than to give an account of every instance. 195 Here, too,
in the post-exilic literature, both ‘potentiating’ and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration
are evident.

1. ‘Potentiating’ inspiration after the exile

a) Chronicles

In this post-exilic, post-Ezekielian work, there are a number of instances of the spirit
being linked to the utterance of people which recall earlier terms. Thus, in 1 Chr. 12:19
[ET 18], the spirit ‘put on’ (נֵרָה) the soldier Amasai before he uttered a

193 Kaufmann, Religion of Israel, p99.
194 נֵרָה, TLOT 3, p1215.
195 Other instances of נֵרָה (possibly) linked with prophecy which most scholars associate with the exilic
and post-exilic period, and which I shall not be discussing, are Num. 11:26-29; Isa. 42:1-4; 48:16; 59:21;
61:1-3 (see Ma, Until the Spirit Comes); Joel 3 [ET 2:28ff]; Zech. 13:2-6.
pronouncement of loyalty to David. The same verb is used in 2 Chr. 24:20, alerting readers to the significance of the priest Zechariah’s words as he upbraids the people for their disobedience and explains Yahweh’s absence on these grounds. In 2 Chr. 15:1 and 20:14, the spirit ‘came upon’ (אֲמַעְרָא) Azariah and the Levite Jahaziel, who then go on to speak. In these latter two references, such speaking is explicitly linked to prophecy. In 15:8, the words of Azariah, addressed to Asa, all Judah and Benjamin are described as ‘prophecy’ (הָעִנָּה). In these words, Azariah reminds them of how Yahweh is with those who are with him, and abandons those who abandon him. This, in turn gives rise to a call for them, fresh from victory over the Ethiopians, to take courage (v.7). In chapter, 20, Jahaziel addresses Jehoshaphat, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and urges them not to be afraid of the Ammonites and Moabites, for the battle is Yahweh’s, not theirs (v.15). Jehoshaphat responds the next day by urging the people on, telling them to believe in Yahweh their God and to ‘believe his prophets’ (הָעִנָּה כְּבֵית רַשִׁי) (v.20). Four points in particular are important.

First, the theological use of רְנוּר in Chronicles is limited to revelation (1 Chr. 28:12, where King David learns of the dimensions of the new temple by means of רְנוּר) or authorisation of someone’s words. At the same time, רְנוּר plays a part not found in Samuel or Kings. The incident reported in 1 Chr. 12:19 in which רְנוּר clothes Amasai, chief of the thirty, before he utters words declaring his allegiance to David is not present in 1 Sam. 30. The same picture is found with the incidents in 2 Chr. 15:1, 2 Chr. 20:14, and 2 Chr. 24:20, absent from 1 Kgs. 15, 1 Kgs. 22, and 2 Kgs. 12 respectively.

Secondly, רְנוּר-inspiration is not linked with those spoken of by the Chronicler as prophets, using one of the prophetic role labels. This is reinforced by the fact that the

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196 Cf. Jdg. 6:34, and Gideon.
198 So Num. 24:2; Jdg. 3:10; 11:29; 1 Sam. 19:20, 23.
200 1 Chr. 28:12: רְנוּר יָבִא נְזֵקָה שְׁמַע וְאֶל הָעִנָּה מַעְרָא; 201 See Schniedewind, Word of God in Transition, pp202-203 for רְנוּר as ‘spirit’ rather than ‘mind’.
202 1 Chr. 12:19 [ET 18]; 2 Chr. 15:1; 20:14; 24:20. The four references in 2 Chr. 18:20-23 are taken over from 1 Kgs. 22; they also speak of revelation.
203 See Sklba, “Until the Spirit from on High Is Poured out on Us”, p16.
204 Schniedewind, Word of God in Transition, p70. Schniedewind, ‘Prophets and Prophecy’, pp217-18 sees in these ‘possession formulas’ (i.e. those that speak of the action of רְנוּר) a conscious and clear distinction being maintained between the classical prophets, for whom רְנוּר plays no part, and ‘inspired messengers’. The inspired messengers utter ‘a different type of prophecy’ directed not to the king, but to the people as a whole; the function too is different: ‘they do not explain how God acts [this is what the prophets do] but exhort the people, telling them how they should act’ (p221). In other words, there is for him ‘both a distinction between prophecy in pre-exilic and post-exilic periods and a continuity in the prophetic voice.’ (pp207-208). The apparent exception to this, where the Levite Jahaziel seems to be spoken of by Jehoshaphat as one of the ‘prophets’ (2 Chr. 20:20), Schniedewind explains differently. He argues persuasively that Jehoshaphat’s appeal in v.20 to ‘believe in his prophets’ (הָעִנָּה כְּבֵית רַשִׁי) is in fact an appeal to believe in what God had said in the past through the prophets. There are two main pieces of
verbs used to describe the action of הָרָעַע are found in the equipping not of the pre-exilic prophets, but of the judges. The prophetic voice continues to be heard through different channels as a word of encouragement or exhortation chiefly to the people.

Thirdly, הָרָעַע can relate both to the prophetic event (1 Chr. 28:12) and to the rhetorical event (e.g. 1 Chr. 12:19).

Fourthly, references to the work of הָרָעַע in inspiration serve to draw attention to what follows, and appear to give divine accreditation to what follows, but at no point in the linking of הָרָעַע with the rhetorical event is it said explicitly that the הָרָעַע has inspired the words, as opposed to the person who has uttered the words. The picture that is gained from these references to הָרָעַע cannot conclusively said to be ‘word-communicating’ inspiration. Certainly, though, ‘potentiating’ inspiration is in view. The closest to ‘word-communicating’ inspiration that Chronicles gets is in 1 Chr. 28:12, where הָרָעַע does seem to be the medium by which David has received the temple plans. It is to clear instances of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration we now turn.

2. ‘Word-communicating’ inspiration after the exile

a) Nehemiah 9:30

‘Many years you were patient with them, and warned them by your spirit through your prophets (ברוחך רעים י盔י)...’

As Ezra looks back at entry into the land, and life in the land (vv.22-31), he catalogues again Yahweh’s mercy and patience. One manifestation of Yahweh’s patience was his sending prophets to warn them. Many commentators do not mention the spirit’s work in inspiration here, so evident is it. Nonetheless, the precise nature of this inspiration needs to be examined.

It is possible that הָרָעַע does not refer to the origin of the warning, but refers to the ‘potentiating’ inspiration of the prophet. It was ‘through’ in the sense of ‘with the help of’ Yahweh’s הָרָעַע that the prophets warned their ancestors. The alternative is that...
the warning that came to the people was brought by double agency: it was both the spirit and the prophets who spoke. The latter seems preferable in view of the close parallel with Zech. 7:12, where the spirit's links with the words of Yahweh are made clear. Further, the fact that the prophets, who are clearly an agent, are separated from the verb נפש (hif.) by 'by your spirit,' suggests another agent is in view (cf. 2 Kgs. 17:13); accordingly, the second prepositional phrase functions epexegetically: 'He warned them through his Spirit; the prophets have conveyed the words of the רוח. Here, explicitly, is the 'word-communicating' view of inspiration whereby it is the divine רוח who is seen as 'speaking.'

b) Zechariah 7:12

'They made their hearts adamant in order not to hear the law (תורת) and the words that Yahweh of hosts had sent by his spirit through the former prophets רוח הקדוש אל יהוה ציון. Therefore great wrath came from Yahweh of hosts.'

In its literary context, this verse forms part of Zechariah’s answer to the question from the people of Bethel, brought by Sharezer and Regem-melech (7:2), though the answer is to ‘all the people of the land’ (7:5). The material included here about their fathers’ unwillingness to listen to what Yahweh has said (v.12), and Yahweh’s subsequent punishment (v.14), serves to justify Yahweh’s anger which has lasted for seventy years (1:12; 7:5). In v.7, Zechariah refers to words proclaimed ‘by the hand of the former prophets’ כפ増 יבר אנגלת נחמה. In v.12, the picture is expanded to include the law, קֵרֵם נַחַל חֲבָרָה נַחַל (הַמַּשָּׁל), as part of what they had rejected, and to include אל within the process of Yahweh’s sending the words. The picture of inspiration here is very close to that of Neh. 9:30. Here, most probably, is ‘word-communicating’ inspiration. The prophets were ‘agents inspired by Yahweh’s words to the people,’ or, as Carol and Eric

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210 So Dreytza, Der theologische Gebrauch von RUACH, p219; Block, ‘Empowered by the Spirit of God’, p46.
211 The parallel with Zech. 7:12 is closer than that with Neh. 9:20. In Neh. 9:20, דなくて is linked with the teaching of the law and the giving of the commandments. This is clear from the close parallels between vv.12-15 and vv.19-25. Within the section from v.12 to v.21, there are the themes of God’s gracious provision (vv.12-15), the people’s ungrateful rebellion (vv.16-18) and God’s continuing mercy (vv.19-21). Within this schema, v.20a is parallel to vv.13-14, just as v.19 parallels v.12, and v.20b-21 parallels v.15; vv.22-25 parallel v.15b (note the repetition of מנה). Thus ‘you gave your good spirit to instruct them’ parallels Yahweh speaking to Moses and giving them ‘right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments.’ See Williamson, Ezra, Nehemiah, pp313-14.
212 ‘Er warnte sie durch seinen Geist; die Propheten haben die Worte der מנה übermittelt.’ Dreytza, Der theologische Gebrauch von RUACH, p219. So too Lys, Rüach, p197. Lys wonders whether 'by the hand of the prophets' is in fact a gloss, serving to illuminate further the mode of the action of מנה. Consistent with his emphasis on the interior operation of מנה, he observes how the parallel to מנה is not now Yahweh’s hand, but the prophets’ hand.
213 Cf. van Immschoot’s comment that ‘the spirit appears as a permanent medium who by way of the prophets conveys Yahweh’s orders to His people’ (van Immschoot, Theology of the Old Testament, vol. 1, p175).
Meyers put it, 'the prophetic word is said to have been sent by Yahweh's spirit.'

217 This perspective, though post-exilic in date, is on the experience of Israel in the past, not in the present. The inspiration of the prophets by the divine רוח is not conceived of as something present in this verse. Zechariah, though identified as a prophet in the book (1:1, 7), nowhere has his ministry linked to Yahweh's spirit.

D. PRELIMINARY SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the start of Part II, I raised three questions that I suggested needed answering. The first was whether רוח is or can be understood as Yahweh's breath on which his word is carried. The second was whether Ezekiel recovers רוח as foundational in prophetic inspiration. Within this was the question of whether the classical prophets did indeed repudiate רוח in their own inspiration. The third was whether the emphasis on רוח within the prophet Ezekiel's ministry is best explained in terms of his attempts at self-authentication.

So far in Part II, I have endeavoured to address the first two of these questions. To do this, I proposed a way of defining more sharply how the rather general term 'inspiration' can be understood. This involved distinguishing between the general equipping of the prophet ('potentiating' inspiration) and רוח being the author of the words ('word-communicating' inspiration). It also involved distinguishing between the role of רוח in the prophetic and in the rhetorical event. In the rest of chapter 3, I then examined the relationship between prophet, prophetic word and רוח in Ezekiel. In this chapter, I continued the examination of this relationship, though now doing so diachronically with examples from the rest of the Old Testament. The discussion can be summarised with the aid of four tables, each of which positions, within the framework of the grid found in Table 1 on page 94 and repeated here, the different instances of inspiration we have studied from the four historical situations.

Copy of Table 3. The inspiration of a prophet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophetic Event</th>
<th>Rhetorical Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General equipping of the prophet to receive Yahweh’s word</td>
<td>General equipping to deliver Yahweh’s word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The linking of the prophet with the ‘telescoped’ reception and delivery of Yahweh’s word</td>
<td>Explicit ‘double agency discourse’ — Yahweh speaks the words the prophet speaks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. The inspiration of pre-classical prophets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophetic Event</th>
<th>Rhetorical Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elijah and Elisha; Num. 24:2</td>
<td>1 Kgs. 22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. The inspiration of pre-exilic classical prophets (not Ezekiel).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophetic Event</th>
<th>Rhetorical Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hos. 9:7; Mic. 3:8</td>
<td>Isa. 30:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. The inspiration of Ezekiel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophetic Event</th>
<th>Rhetorical Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ezek. 2:2; 3:24; 11:5</td>
<td>Ezekiel himself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Inspiration after the exile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prophetic Event</th>
<th>Rhetorical Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Chr. 28:12</td>
<td>1 Chr. 12:18; 2 Chr. 15:1; 20:12; 24:20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn.

First, while there is a conceptual link between Yahweh’s נָר as ‘breath’ and Yahweh’s word, that link is neither made nor exploited theologically in the book of Ezekiel. נָר as the ‘breath’ of Yahweh’s mouth is not linked with Yahweh’s word. This, however, does not mean that there are not close links between Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s נָר, when speaking of the inspiration of Ezekiel (or other prophets). Such links relate to the prophetic event, in so far as Yahweh’s נָר transports the prophet to the place where Yahweh speaks to him (‘potentiating’ inspiration), and gives him the
vision that can be understood as Yahweh’s ‘speech event’ (11:24) ('word-communicating' inspiration). These links are not simply related to the prophetic event, but are also linked to the rhetorical event, in so far as the רֹעֶה-constrained Ezekiel embodies the word that Yahweh has given him (cf. also Mic. 3:8). Further, such links, while more usually conceived in terms close to that of Kaufmann’s analysis of inspiration, also extends to a more direct form of inspiration, which we have termed ‘word-communicating’ inspiration.

Secondly, although both ‘word-communicating’ inspiration and ‘potentiating’ inspiration as distinguishable categories are clearly evident in the Old Testament, there is not clear evidence of an interest in distinguishing between the two. Thus there are some indisputable instances of רֹעֶה speaking Yahweh’s words (most notably 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Kgs. 22; Neh. 9:30; Zech. 7:12), both through and to the prophet. There are other instances where Yahweh’s רֹעֶה inspires the prophet, while the narrative makes it clear that such an inspiration is preparatory to, but does not entail the receiving of, Yahweh’s word (e.g. Ezek. 2:2; 3:24; 11:5). This does not mean that Yahweh’s רֹעֶה cannot be conceived as responsible for ‘speaking’ or ‘breathing’ that word, but it does mean that at these points the authors did not articulate or demonstrate that conception. Further, there are a number of points at which the inspiration of Yahweh’s רֹעֶה serves as a shorthand way of describing the entire process from the prophetic to the rhetorical event, and embraces both ‘potentiating’ inspiration and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration (e.g. Num. 24:2). Here, too, while ‘word-communicating’ inspiration is not explicitly articulated, it is also not expressly precluded. On the basis of the evidence of the Old Testament, of which the book of Ezekiel is a microcosm, the picture that can be affirmed with certainty is that seen in figure 2 on page 94, and reproduced here.

Thirdly, it is clear from our discussion in this chapter, as summarised in the tables above, that the book of Ezekiel gives a greater prominence to the role of the divine רֹעֶה within the inspiration of the prophet than any of the other Old Testament books, both before and after the exile. However, it is an exaggeration to say, as Montague does, that
with Ezekiel, there is ‘an entirely new “wind”...blowing.’ The perspective that the book gives on inspiration, while having a different degree of emphasis on the work of רוח within prophecy, does not, however, provide anything different in kind from what precedes the book of Ezekiel. While there is evidence of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration - that of the spirit inspiring the prophet’s words (11:24 (Ezekiel’s visions), 13:3, and Ezekiel’s sign-acts), such a perspective was present before the exile (2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Kgs. 22; Isa. 30:1). In the same way, while ‘potentiating’ inspiration by רוח is clearly apparent in Ezekiel (רוח falling on him (11:5a), entering him (2:2; 3:24), and transporting him (3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1; 43:5)), such inspiration can be seen not just in the pre-classical prophets, but also, though in a muted fashion, within the classical prophets (Hos. 9:7; Mic. 3:8; possibly in Jer. 5:13). The view that Ezekiel revives רוח-inspiration fails to recognise the relative infrequency of references to the divine רוח in inspiration throughout the Old Testament, including the pre-classical times. Even in pre-classical times, prophetic activity could take place with no mention of the divine רוח. It also fails to account for the presence of some (albeit a few) references within classical prophecy to the inspiration of the prophet by רוח. Finally, it does not acknowledge that Ezekiel himself says nothing new or different with regard to inspiration.

Fourthly, the relative silence of the classical prophets concerning their own inspiration by רוח should be understood rhetorically. We have seen that there is no text where they repudiated רוח, so the antithetical view is clearly wrong. We have also seen that there are some instances where they do claim רוח-inspiration, so the historical view, where רוח stopped operating, is also wrong. Finally, we have also seen that a theological interpretation that appeals to the prophets’ theocentricity for the silence fails to account for the prominence of רוח in the radically theocentric Ezekiel. This rhetorically-motivated silence came from the claims to רוח among false prophets. Appeals to רוח would not have foreclosed questions of authenticity and would have potentially risked association with the false prophets and their claims.

This then brings to the fore the third question that I raised at the start of Part II, concerning the prominence of רוח and the view that it is best explained in terms of the authentication of Ezekiel. It is to this that we now turn.

E. THE AUTHENTICATION OF EZEKIEL?

We have seen that the book of Ezekiel does not portray something fundamentally new or different about inspiration, so it is not possible to explain the book’s emphasis by saying that the book’s author was doing something new in this area. The theological perspective before the book of Ezekiel does not give in essence a very different picture,

\[^{218}\text{Montague, } Holy Spirit, \text{ p45.}\]
\[^{219}\text{See pp89ff. for the four different possible kinds of interpretation of the absence of רוח.}\]
nor, indeed, does what follows. In the post-exilic writings there can still be found both ‘word-communicating’ and ‘potentiating’ inspiration. Such a view is not merely retrospective. If Zechariah and Nehemiah seem to look on spirit-inspiration as something that is past, Chronicles looks on it as something that is present, by prefacing exhortations to the people with ancient נ///<sup>ד</sup>-possession formulae, reapplied to the (non-prophetic) speakers of these exhortations.

The explanation most commonly suggested for the prominence of נ///<sup>ד</sup>-language concerning Ezekiel’s inspiration is that it serves to authenticate the prophet, aligning him with the pre-classical prophets. We need to distinguish between two versions of this explanation. The first version is not simply that the book authenticates the prophet by means of נ///<sup>ד</sup>-language, but that the prophet himself did so.

There are a number of arguments that can be, or have been, put forward in its favour.

First, there are many links with pre-classical prophecy within the book of Ezekiel, such as Ezekiel setting his face towards the subject of his prophecy, translocation by נ///<sup>ד</sup>, the action of the hand of Yahweh, and a prophet being consulted by the elders. These are ‘all found in the autobiographical narrative.’

Secondly, the fact that there is some adaptation in Ezekiel’s usage points against their merely being ‘literary conventions or devices’. An example of adaptation is that in the book of Kings, the hand of Yahweh transports Elijah (1 Kgs. 18:46); in Ezekiel, it is נ///<sup>ד</sup> that transports him. The hand of Yahweh is associated particularly with the reception of Ezekiel’s visions.

Thirdly, it is sociologically plausible. Porter proposes that one way a society recognises a ‘divinely possessed person’ is to look at the characteristics of a person recognised as such in the past, and to compare those with the person in the present. It would be expected that a person claiming to be in a particular tradition will adopt something of the stereotypical behaviour expected.

Fourthly, the fact that, as I have argued, the classical prophets were not antithetical towards נ///<sup>ד</sup>-inspiration makes it more plausible.

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220 See especially Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, pp69-73; also Sklba, “‘Until the Spirit from on High Is Poured out on Us’”, p14.
221 Cf. Balaam in Num. 22-24 and Elisha (2 Kgs. 8:11).
222 Cf. 2 Kgs. 2:16.
223 Cf. 1 Kgs. 18:46; 2 Kgs. 3:15.
224 Cf. 2 Kgs. 6:32, paralleled by the scenes in Ezek. 8:1ff.; 14:1ff. and 20:1ff. Other examples include the word-event formula (see p29 above) and the prophetic proof-saying, ‘you shall know that I am Yahweh’ (cf. 1 Kgs. 20:13, 28) (see Walther Zimmerli, I am Yahweh, tr. D.W. Stott, ed. W. Brueggemann (Atlanta, John Knox Press, 1982), esp. pp99-110).
225 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p70.
226 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p70.
Finally, the action of מַרְאָה can serve to authenticate people (cf. 1 Sam. 10; Num. 11). It is also true, more significantly, that מַרְאָה within the authentication of prophetic ministry is found in Isa. 42:1-4 and 61:1-3.228

However, although in a sense I have made it harder to argue against such a view by supporting a continuum in מַרְאָה-inspiration from the pre-classical prophets through to Ezekiel, there is a critical difficulty with such an explanation. In view of the relative silence on prophetic inspiration and its links with מַרְאָה in the classical prophets, it is hard to see why appeals to the divine מַרְאָה, in particular, should be seen to authenticate Ezekiel’s ministry, when such appeals had not been used for at least one hundred years before Ezekiel prophesied by the prophets to whom Ezekiel was in other respects closest, precisely for rhetorical reasons: because they did not serve to distinguish the true prophet from the false one, and did not authenticate a prophet. This is not to say that Ezekiel did not speak of מַרְאָה in his own ministry, but it is to question whether he did so merely or chiefly to authenticate his own ministry.

The second version of the ‘authentication’ explanation of Ezekiel’s מַרְאָה-inspiration relates it more explicitly to the book of Ezekiel. Collins remarks that ‘the image of Ezekiel...has a certain contrived artificiality about it...Ezekiel is robed in the mantle of Elijah and Elisha, and this seems to be done expressly in order to make the point that “a prophet has been among them” (Ezek. 33.33).’229

This version is supported by many of the arguments noted above, and, in addition, is further supported by the fact that, once Jerusalem had in fact fallen, there was prima facie evidence that Ezekiel was indeed, after all, a prophet.230 Appeals to מַרְאָה for authentication found elsewhere (e.g. Isa. 42:1-5; 61:1-3) make sense only because Ezekiel has served to reinstate talk of מַרְאָה within inspiration having already been demonstrated to be a true prophet by the fall of Jerusalem. In that sense, it is surely right to see, in the מַרְאָה-inspiration of Ezekiel in the book, a dimension of authentication of the prophet.

This, however, should not be thought to be an exhaustive explanation. First, the book argues that the people will recognise Ezekiel as a prophet not so much through external credentials, but through the chief criterion of discerning a true prophet (Deut. 18:21-22): the unfolding of history according to Ezekiel’s words (2:5; 12:21-28). While there is some sarcasm or ‘pretended religion’ on the part of the exiles in urging one

228 For a detailed discussion of these passages and the place of מַרְאָה, see Ma, Until the Spirit Comes, pp88-96 and 120-25. He notes the prophetic dimension to the figure at the centre of both passages, while also rightly acknowledging that the figure does not only fit there.
229 Collins, Mantle of Elijah, pp100-101; in similar vein, Wilson suggests that Ezekiel was a peripheral figure in the exilic community, and that, in addition to a number of other ways of trying to establish his authority, ‘the role of the spirit in the book may also reflect attempts to enhance Ezekiel’s authority.’ Wilson, Prophecy and Society, p285.
another to ‘come and hear what the word is that comes from Yahweh’ (33:30), it is hard to avoid the picture that the evidence already lay before them that Ezekiel was, in fact, a prophet. After news of the fall of Jerusalem had come, what the exiles (and the addressees of the book) needed was not further authentication (though that, in turn, would happen ‘when it comes’ ((תִּכְבָּר) 33:33), but rather for themselves to act upon what Yahweh was saying through his servant, and treat a prophet as a prophet, rather than as an entertainer (cf. 33:30-33). The book of Ezekiel presents to its addressees the exiles’ failure to do that.

Secondly, any claim to Yahweh’s involvement within a prophet’s call, or within the prophetic or rhetorical events can be seen at one level as a means of giving authority to the prophet when there is no objective proof that they are indeed Yahweh’s agent. However these claims of involvement are hardly merely means of authentication within a prophetic book. For example, the word-event formula could simply be a claim to authenticity: ‘Yahweh has spoken to me.’ However, within the book it also functions to structure the book, to portray the prophet not simply as a speaker but as a hearer of Yahweh’s words, and to confront the readers/hearers of the book with the same words that confronted the prophet’s addressees.

Thirdly, the use of מִצְצָר within the prophet’s own ministry should not be isolated from other occurrences of מִצְצָר. Some of the occurrences, such as those in 2:2 and 3:24 where מִצְצָר enters the prophet, have no parallel with the pre-classical prophets, but function within the book as whole. Even occurrences speaking of the transportation of the prophet acquire a significance when placed in the book of Ezekiel.

In other words, although the language of מִצְצָר-inspiration of Ezekiel does have an authenticating function within the book of Ezekiel, there is more to it than that. As these three points intimate, and as Part III shall seek to demonstrate, the book of Ezekiel is less concerned with authenticating the prophet than with the transformation of its readers. It is with this in mind that we must turn now to an examination of a second area in which Yahweh’s מִצְצָר is related to Yahweh’s word—transformation.

231 For the prophet, such words were reassuring. For his addressees, and for the addressees of the book, there is an implicit threat, allied to a promise if they treat his words as they ought to be treated. Cf. Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p154; Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p692; Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p267.
PART III: WORD, SPIRIT AND TRANSFORMATION

‘the prophets...were totally dedicated to the words of the covenant because they were “men of the spirit”.’

CHAPTER 5: RESPONDING TO YAHWEH’S WORD – DISOBEDIENCE AND OBEDIENCE

The book of Ezekiel is one that has been carefully crafted and structured. A preliminary study reveals a macrostructure consisting of oracles of judgement in chs. 1-32 (oracles against Judah in chs. 1-24, oracles against the nations in chs. 25-32), and promises of a new future in chs. 34-48, with the news of Jerusalem’s fall in ch. 33 as ‘the turning-point.’ Within this schema, the notion of ‘reversal’ – that the judgements announced or experienced in the first part of the book are reversed in the third part – has been observed by scholars. Three examples illustrate this. First, in connection with leadership, Duguid has argued cogently that ‘there is a coherent and connected attitude taken toward...leadership groups throughout the book: those singled out for the most reproach in Ezekiel’s critique of the past are marginalized in his plan for the future, while those who escape blame are assigned positions of honour.’

Secondly, moving from theme to motif, there is the motif of Yahweh’s glory. In judgement, Yahweh’s glory leaves the temple, the journey of its departure portrayed in Ezekiel’s vision of the abominations in the temple (9:3; 10:4, 18, 19; 11:22-23; cf chs. 1-3). In the vision of restoration, Yahweh’s glory returns to the new temple via the east gate by which it had left (43:2-4). Thirdly, moving from motif to word, there is Yahweh’s attitude to being consulted. When elders come to Ezekiel in exile, before news of the fall has come, Yahweh instructs the prophet to declare that he will not be consulted (וַיַּעֲשֵׂהוּ) by them (20:3, 31; cf. 14:3). However, in the future, Yahweh will ‘let the house of Israel ask’ (וַיַּעֲשֵׂהוּ) him ‘to do this for them: to increase their population like a flock’ (36:37).

1 Montague, Holy Spirit, p60.
4 Duguid, Ezekiel and the Leaders, p1.
puts it succinctly when he says that 'the major technique employed to formulate messages of hope in Ezekiel is to express them as the undoing of past evil situations.'

The notion of 'reversal' is not restricted, however, to the nature of Yahweh’s judgement and restoration. It is also evident in the house of Israel’s response to Yahweh’s word: disobedience and rejection will give way to obedience and trust. The house of Israel will be transformed. Part III shall consider this transformation, and the role of הַרְוָא within it. As with the previous two Parts, there are two chapters.

This chapter will explore the disobedience to Yahweh’s word exhibited by the house of Israel in situations ‘2’ and ‘3’ in Table 8 below, and how the book portrays the move from disobedience to obedience in both these situations. I shall argue that these two encounters with Yahweh’s word are re-presented to the addressees of the book of Ezekiel to illustrate the move that they need to make / be part of, if they are to participate in the envisaged restoration. In particular, I shall argue that the book of Ezekiel presents the prophet as a paradigm, or model, of the obedience they should exhibit.

### Table 8. The word of Yahweh in the book of Ezekiel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Yahweh</th>
<th>Ezekiel</th>
<th>Prophetic Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>Prophetic Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>His intended audience (the house of Israel in exile)</td>
<td>Rhetorical Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>The house of Israel</td>
<td>Yahweh’s ordinances and statutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The book of Ezekiel</td>
<td>Exilic addressees</td>
<td>2 and 3 re-presented, within the literary framework of 1.</td>
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</table>

In chapter 6, I shall explore the role of הַרְוָא in the obedience of Ezekiel and of the exiles. I shall argue that, within Ezekiel’s paradigmatic role, Yahweh’s הַרְוָא is essential for his and for the exiles’ obedience. Yahweh’s הַרְוָא is intimately related, then, to his word, in so far as that הַרְוָא is essential for the right response to Yahweh’s word. Yahweh’s הַרְוָא is intimately linked with transformation.

### A. THE EXILES’ DISOBEEDIENCE

#### 1. The exiles’ disobedience to Yahweh’s word through Ezekiel

As we look first at the disobedience of Ezekiel’s intended audience to Yahweh’s word uttered through him, it is at once apparent that analysis is made more complex by the variety of rhetorical situations in the book. There are three different ‘levels,’ which can be illustrated best by reordering Table 8, so that we move ‘into’ the book from the book as a whole.

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6 The table summarises the discussion in chapter 2, which identified and examined four kinds of ‘word’ of Yahweh that can be found in the book.
7 Note that I am not saying here that they initiate, or are responsible for, such a move. Questions of initiative and responsibility shall be explored below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>The house of Israel</td>
<td>Yahweh’s ordinances and statutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the ‘top’ level, level 1 in Table 9, there is the author of the book and his own addressees. At no point in the book does the author step outside recounting his narrative to confront his own addressees directly. His addressees need to infer what they are to do from within the narrative itself.

At the second level is the prophet and his intended audience. Almost never in the book of Ezekiel is the prophet recorded as confronting directly the exilic addressees, his intended audience (the only instance is 24:20ff.).

At the third level is Yahweh instructing and commanding the prophet. In analysing the response that Yahweh called for, the response that the beginning of the book anticipates, and the response that the rest of the book portrays, it is almost exclusively the word of Yahweh addressed to the prophet (i.e. this ‘third’ level of interaction) that must be examined, since everything is subsumed within this prophetic event. In other words, the book comprises many indirect speech acts, whose illocutionary force needs to be discerned.8

a) Discerning the response called for

If the disobedience of the exiles is to be demonstrated, what must be identified first is the book’s portrayal of the response that the prophet demanded. There are three different ways in which the book illustrates this. Central here to my interpretation is the distinction between the locutionary act (what the prophet or author said) and the illocutionary act (what the prophet or author was doing in saying that). To put it more succinctly, the form of words is not necessarily a guide to the force of those words.9

(i) Oblique calls

First, there are what can be termed oblique calls. These require the exiles to see how Yahweh has acted (or will act) towards a third party, to understand the reasons why Yahweh has acted (or will act) this way, and to see themselves as potentially (or really) in the same situation.

For example, in chapter 16, the prophet is instructed to make known to the city of Jerusalem her abominations (v.2). The prophet is then to recount the history of

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8 See especially pp65ff. above.
9 For recent treatments that focus on different dimensions of repentance, see Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, pp67-77, and Mein, *Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile*, pp202-13. Lapsley examines the subject with a view to discerning the underlying anthropological assumptions implicit in such language. For her, such language “indicates that the predominant view of the virtuous moral self informs this prophet’s view of human nature as well” (p68). Mein discusses the function of calls to repentance and the value of repentance in the light of apparently unconditional promises of salvation. See further below.
Jerusalem, with the depths to which she had plunged apparent in v.48, where her behaviour is portrayed as worse even than Sodom. Though the addressee (formally) is Jerusalem, these oracles have the exiles as their intended audience. Nonetheless, the exiles are not in view on the surface of the oracle. They need to see themselves in the history of Jerusalem (indeed, they were, of course, part of that history; they too were 'the house of Israel', a phrase that 'intentionally expresses the nation's family solidarity'\(^\text{10}\)), and distance themselves from what Jerusalem had done. The oracle was not only 'a vehement ploy to communicate the necessity of the fall of Jerusalem, dragging Judah down with it'\(^\text{11}\); it also served to illustrate the kind of behaviour that Yahweh found unacceptable. By implication, continued acceptance of such behaviour admitted the meriting of the same judgement that Jerusalem was facing.

The oracle against Tyre in chapter 27 is another example of this. Tyre 'symbolized supreme self-confidence and permanence,'\(^\text{12}\) saying 'I am perfect in beauty' (27:4); she was in the heart of the seas, laden with wares (27:4; 25). But in her pride, Tyre would end up in the 'heart (depths) of the seas' (27:26, 27). As Miller comments, 'the means of her pride becomes the means of her destruction.'\(^\text{13}\) The destruction of Tyre mirrored that of another city, Jerusalem, whom Yahweh had set in the 'centre of the nations' (5:5) and who saw herself as 'perfect in beauty' (Lam. 2:15). The oracle against Tyre shows that Yahweh is against self-sufficiency, expressed in self-righteousness, wherever it may be found. The exiles had no grounds for pride, but they too needed to take heed of this call (cf. 18:2). A continued attitude of pride risked the same judgement that struck both Tyre and Jerusalem.

That such declarations by Yahweh of his judgement against a third party can function didactically, as a call for a particular kind of behaviour, is clear from ch. 14. In vv.7-8a, Yahweh's announcement of judgement towards a third party — those who are marked by idolatry and iniquity and yet come to inquire of a prophet — occurs alongside the declaration that this party will be a 'sign and a byword' (οὐσίαν ὁ ποιμήν). Further, it also occurs alongside an explicit call to repentance (v.6).

(ii) Indirect calls

Secondly, within oracles addressed to others, there are occasions when the desired response is spelled out specifically, but in the third person. The prophet is not told to confront the exiles directly with these; nonetheless, the response demanded by the prophet is clear. We might term these indirect calls. So in 6:8-10, in the context of an oracle that Ezekiel is to utter to the mountains of Israel, Yahweh instructs the prophet to tell the mountains that he will spare some, who will 'remember me among the nations where they are carried captive...then they will be loathsome in their own sight for the

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\(^{10}\) Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, p32.


evils that they have committed, for all their abominations.’ The oracle serves to make the exiles aware that the response they should have in exile is one of self-loathing. 14

A call that is more explicit still, though not to be addressed by the prophet to the exiles, can be found in 43:9-10 (cf. also 44:6). As Ezekiel is being shown the new temple, he hears someone speaking to him from the temple (43:6). The voice is Yahweh’s, since it speaks of ‘my throne’ (v.7). The call is clear: though there is a promised future (vv.7-8), there is something for the exiles to do in the present, ‘Now let them put away their idolatry and the corpses of their kings far from me’ (v.9). In v.10, there is a second communication, where the prophet is told to describe the temple to the house of Israel. In the same breath as Ezekiel is to say to them, ‘let them measure the pattern’, he is also to utter, ‘let them be ashamed of their iniquities.’ Allen comments appropriately, ‘If such wrong practices had resulted in exile..., a prerequisite for return from exile was a change of heart that took seriously their shamefulness. Proclamation of Yahweh’s new work of salvation was to stimulate a realization of how far the people stood from God and from his will.’ 15

(iii) Explicit calls

The third way in which the call to the exiles can be seen is the presence of direct commands to the exiles which Ezekiel is instructed to utter. There are six such instances of what we might term explicit calls.

In chapter 14, in response to the elders coming to consult Ezekiel, he is to reply by addressing the exiles directly with a call to repentance: ‘Repent and turn away from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations’ (v.6).

In chapter 18, Ezekiel receives a word from Yahweh explaining how the destruction that is falling on Jerusalem is their own fault. The question of individual responsibility is not in view here; rather, the question is ‘Why is this inevitably communal, national crisis happening?’ 16 At the end of the chapter, picking up promises made to the exiles in 11:14-21, there is an explicit call to repentance,

‘Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord Yahweh. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have

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14 The phrase יִרְצוּ לִשְׁמָךְ נַפְשָׁם in v.9 is awkward. Lapsley (Can These Bones Live?, p140; cf. p129 n48) emends to יִרְצוּ לִשְׁמָךְ רֹאשָׁם (presumably רֹאשָׁם, since she refers to BHS) and treats the phrase temporally: ‘they will remember me…when I have broken their whoring heart.’ So also, tentatively, Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p180; he notes LXX ‘does not presuppose רֹאשָׁם’. Textual evidence in favour of רֹאשָׁם includes Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Tg. and Vg.; this then makes the exiles’ self-loathing consequent on Yahweh’s action. However, Greenberg (Ezekiel 1-20, p134), Block (Ezekiel 1-24, p230 n62) and Allen (Ezekiel 1-19, pp82-83) prefer the MT, and translate similarly, with variations on ‘how stricken I was by…’. LXX (ὃμοιομαι) suggests a Vorlage with a word beginning with ε (ὃμοιομαι). The main objection against Lapsley’s reading, as Allen points out, is the notion of Yahweh breaking not just ‘their heart’ but also ‘their eyes’. I prefer to see here an expectation of what those carried off ought to do, without specifying whether it has required Yahweh’s prior action.


16 Joyce, Divine Initiative, p46.
committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezek. 18:30-31).  

The third instance can be found in ch. 20:30, 39. After recounting in revisionist fashion the history of Israel in such a way as to focus at great length on the exodus, a situation parallel to those in exile, Ezekiel is to confront them. In v.30, he is to ask them whether they will go the same way as their ancestors after ‘detestable things’, and then in v.39, he is to assail them with bitter irony, ‘Go serve your idols...if you will not listen to me.’  

The fourth instance occurs in 33:11. Ezekiel, as the watchman (33:1-9), is to respond to the exiles’ despairing cry (‘Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?’ (33:10)) with an assurance of Yahweh’s desire that none should perish, and a call to those in exile, ‘Turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?’  

Fifthly, in 36:32, after spelling out Yahweh’s plan to restore and cleanse them and the land for the sake of his name (vv.24-31a), Ezekiel is to call on them, ‘Be ashamed and dismayed for your ways, O house of Israel.’  

The sixth and final instance of an explicit call within the book is in 45:9, where, in an ‘abrupt change from statistical legislation to accusation and appeal’, Yahweh confronts the princes of Israel, and says to them, ‘Put away violence and oppression, and do what is just and right. Cease your evictions of my people.’ Although the call is directed towards princes (יַעֲקֹב, יַעֲבֹד) in the restored community, it has a contemporary edge, given past failures (cf. 22:6).  

(iv) Summary  

The picture generated from these three kinds of call is a clear one. The exilic community, according to the book’s portrayal of Ezekiel’s preaching, is to be marked by self-loathing for the past, and repentance in the present from all that was causing / had caused Yahweh’s judgement to fall on Jerusalem. They were to see themselves as no different. Only then could there be a hope for the future. In short, they were to accept Ezekiel’s verdict, and look to his words for any hope.  

Our concern, then, is with the book’s portrayal of Ezekiel’s message, in particular as it is re-presented to its exilic addressees. Thus it differs from the approach taken by

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17 Mein examines the calls to repentance in chs. 14 and 18 carefully, and argues persuasively that the narrowing of the focus of ethical demands to a more domestic and individual sphere reflects an exilic context. The strongest evidence comes from a comparison of the sin lists in ch. 18 and 22:6-13. See Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, pp198ff. His approach is different from mine in two respects. First, he focuses on Ezekiel’s message through historical rather than literary lenses. Secondly, and related to this, he identifies calls to respond on the basis of form alone.

18 Lapsley (Can These Bones Live?, p143) regards this call as wholly future, after the restoration, because ‘the pre-deliverance people are apparently unable to feel shame’. However the call for the exiles to do something that Yahweh will do for them is also found in 18:31 (cf. 36:26). Greenberg, like Lapsley, points out that ‘restoration precedes contrition’, but regards the call as a reflection of the fact that ‘the prophet cannot stifle his vocation to censure’. Moshe Greenberg, ‘Salvation of the Impenitent ad Majorem Dei Gloriam: Ezek 36:16-32’, in Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions, eds. Jan Assmann and Guy G. Stroumsa, Studies in the History of Religions 83, (Leiden, Brill, 1999), p267.

19 Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p655.
Raitt, who focuses on Ezekiel’s message itself. Concentrating on the judgement and salvation oracles from a form-critical perspective, Raitt discerns, as ‘one of the most basic hypotheses’ in his book, a development in the preaching of Ezekiel (and of Jeremiah) from the preaching of repentance to inevitable annihilation to unconditional salvation. He argues that, because the salvation oracles lack qualifications and preconditions, the exiles’ salvation did not depend on people’s repentance, nor did it assume their moral capacity had improved. For him, their salvation was ‘unconditional’. Though it is possible to critique Raitt’s developmental hypothesis on its own terms, our concern with the book as a whole, rather than with the prophet’s message, brings a different perspective. Renz rightly comments that ‘the call to repentance is addressed to the exiles and never revoked in the book.’ Certainly the book does not hint that the call to repentance is something in the past.

b) The response anticipated, as set out at the beginning of the book

If that was the response that Ezekiel called for, it is important to look at what response to the word of Yahweh the opening of the book anticipates, since this will set the trajectory of expectation for the book’s addressees.

The commissioning scene makes it very clear that there was an expectation from the outset of the prophet’s ministry that the people to whom he was going to preach would not listen. There are a number of ways in which this is emphasised.

First, there is the repetition of the phrase, ‘whether they hear or refuse to hear’ (2:5, 7; 3:11, 27). Although the stress here is on the task of Ezekiel delivering his message, whatever the response, there is a sense of foreboding that the latter, rather than the former, will be the case.

Secondly, there is the repeated emphasis on the prophet’s addressees as a ‘rebellious house’ (2:5, 6, 7, 8; 3:9, 26, 27). Here again, the recurring phrase anticipates an unwillingness to listen to the prophet, an unwillingness that has marked Israel’s history from the beginning, and still does so.

21 For example, oracles of judgement do not necessarily preclude the possibility of repentance. See Walter Houston, ‘What Did the Prophets Think They Were Doing? Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament’, Biblical Interpretation 1 (1993), pp167-88; Möller, ‘Words of (In-)evitable Certitude?’, pp352-86; idem, A Prophet in Debate: The Rhetoric of Persuasion in the Book of Amos, JSOTSup 372, (London, Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), pp141ff. Scholarly debate on the intention of such oracles, particularly in the pre-exilic prophets, tends to polarise between those who regard them as chiefly concerned with bringing about repentance, and those who regard them as an attempt to persuade hearers to accept the inevitable acts of divine judgement. For a bibliography of exponents of both views, see Möller, Prophet in Debate, pp141-42.
22 Renz, Rhetorical Function, pp112-13; cf. Matties, Ezekiel 18, p224: ‘The call for decision in chap. 18 is not nullified by other assertions of divine enablement.’
23 So Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, pp132-33.
Thirdly, there are other references to the addressees which illustrate the anticipated rejection of the prophet and his message. They are described as ‘nations of rebels’ (v.3), as those ‘who have rebelled against me’ (v.3), as those who are like their ancestors in ‘transgressing against me to this very day’ (v.3), as ‘impudent and stubborn’ (v.4), as ones who will oppose Ezekiel, possibly causing him to be afraid (2:6; cf. 3:25), as less willing to listen even than those of ‘obscure speech and difficult language’ (3:6). In 3:7, the anticipated unresponsiveness to the word of the prophet is articulated most explicitly: ‘But the house of Israel will not listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me; because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart.’ This pessimistic tone is not negated by the assertion in 2:5 that ‘they shall know there has been a prophet among them’ (cf. 33:33). This is not something positive for them, since the hardness of their hearts is complete. The tone is ominous, rather than encouraging in both contexts. Finally, the absence of the wicked repenting in the watchman paragraph in 3:16-21 points towards a negative response to Ezekiel’s preaching.

The overall picture, then, is clear. The book portrays Ezekiel’s exilic audience as unwilling to listen to him, even at the outset of his ministry.

c) The actual response, as worked out through the book

We have seen how the response that is anticipated in the context of Ezekiel’s commissioning is one of rebelliousness and hard-heartedness. That anticipated response proves to be the actual one throughout the book’s account of the prophet’s ministry.25

Before news of the fall had reached the exiles, their rebelliousness is evident. In 12:2, Yahweh articulates to the prophet that he ‘is living in the midst of a rebellious house’ (cf. v.3); the exiles ‘have eyes to see but do not see’ and ‘have ears to hear, but do not hear.’ Ezekiel has spoken, he has uttered the words Yahweh has instructed him to, but they are rebellious (12:25). They are sceptical of whether the prophet’s words will be fulfilled (12:22); they are cynical over the delay between the prophet’s words and their fulfilment (12:27). In 17:12, they are still spoken of as a ‘rebellious house’; in 18:2 and 18:25, they are blaming Yahweh, claiming that his actions are unfair, despite the portrait of Jerusalem as being utterly worthy of judgement. In 21:5 [ET 20:49], the same scepticism is evident again, when Ezekiel, in a rare address to Yahweh, confides with Yahweh how the exiles are responding. Instead of taking him seriously, the exiles speak of him as ‘a maker of allegories’ (םייחפ יغضפ). As Allen comments, ‘his protest is born of painful experience (“alas”) of contemptuous dismissal of his oracles among

24 MT. Without the co-ordinating ַ, the phrase clearly is in apposition to, and thus refers to, ‘the sons of Israel.’ For a discussion of the authenticity of םייחפ and whether םע or ימע should be read, see Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p115; Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p10.
his contemporaries. In 24:3, just before the fall of Jerusalem, they are still rebellious. With great irony, Yahweh instructs Ezekiel to do just the thing for which they have ridiculed him, and ‘utter an allegory’ (אין...לאמר). It is Yahweh himself, and not simply Ezekiel, who is the ‘maker of allegories’. Their quarrel is thus not so much with Ezekiel, but with Yahweh. For the addressees of the book, the scorn of 21:5 [ET 20:49] is exposed for the folly that it is.

As the first half of the book draws to a close, for the only time in the book a statement that the exiles make is recorded as part of the narrative (24:19). This statement is unusual in another respect, too, for is not criticised. Perhaps at last, with the fall of Jerusalem about to happen, the exiles will get the message, and respond appropriately to the word of Yahweh? After the tension-building oracles against the nations in chs. 25-32, there is a further hint that Ezekiel’s words were in fact getting through. In 33:10, the exiles have clearly come to the prophet with an awareness of their failings, ‘Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?’ Perhaps the groaning and pining for their sins (24:23) that was to mark their behaviour on hearing the news of the fall could already be discerned?

However, when news of the fall of Jerusalem reaches the prophet in 33:21-22, the reality is very different. The exiles’ response to this new phase in the prophet’s ministry is illustrated in 33:30-33. Since the prophet has not uttered an oracle subsequent to news of the fall, these verses are not put here because of chronological sequence, but serve to illustrate the continued response of the exilic addressees of the prophet after news of the fall arrived, and to orient the addressees of the book to that response. Since Block disagrees and regards this unit as functioning retrospectively, creating an ‘effective inclusio with his call and commission (2:1-3:15)’, we need to look more closely at these verses.

Though it is true that the notion of Ezekiel as a singer of ‘lust songs’ (נְפִירים) (33:32)) is reminiscent of ch. 23, rather than any of the oracles that follow, there are three reasons why it is not likely that 33:30-33 speaks retrospectively of pre-fall oracles such as ch. 23, but prospectively, of chs. 34-48. First, though the book portrays the elders coming to consult Ezekiel before news of the fall of Jerusalem has come (8:1; 14:1; 20:1), the book also makes it clear that Ezekiel’s pre-fall oracles were not popular (3:9, 25; 21:5 [ET 20:49]); while earlier in the book, it was not the people as a whole who came, here the situation is ‘much more open’. Secondly, the eagerness of the

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27 For more on criticism of the people’s speaking, see Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, p188.
28 Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p265.
29 The noun is used in 23:11; the cognate verb in 23:5, 7, 9, 12, 16, 20. Neither occurs elsewhere in Ezekiel (other than 33:30-33).
30 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p201.
people to listen points to the 'soothing' as well as 'demanding' nature of the message.\textsuperscript{31} Thirdly, the literary position links this report with what follows, coming as it does after news of the fall has reached those in exile (vv.21-22), and after the oracle in vv.23-29 which presupposes the destruction of Jerusalem and indeed some regrouping in Judah after the 'initial shock'.\textsuperscript{32} If this oracle were speaking of a situation pre-587, it is hard to say why it is here, or what has changed. It is more likely that people flocked to Ezekiel because of his vindicated reputation, now that Jerusalem had fallen, and because of their own preoccupation (*רָאוֹנִי יְהֹוָה* (33:31)).

Further, that these verses serve to illustrate the continued response of the prophet's exilic addressees is apparent from the fact that this lack of obedience (33:31) can be observed in the rest of the book. Such disobedience can be seen both in the presence of the continued call to 'be ashamed' (36:32) and in the unresponsiveness to Yahweh's word that remains a trait of Ezekiel's exilic audience. Even to the end of the book itself, the addressees are still 'the rebellious house' (44:6).

Thus, in the programmatic 33:30-33, the exiles have all the appearance of being interested in hearing what the prophet has to say. Not only do they apparently recognise it as 'the word that comes from Yahweh' (v.30), so ostensibly discerning that there has been a prophet among them (cf. 2:5), but their call to 'Come and hear' echoes Ezekiel's own (cf. 6:3; 13:2; 16:35 etc.). They have all the appearance of Yahweh's covenant people ('my people' (v.31)).\textsuperscript{33} Appearances, though, can be deceptive. Yahweh tells Ezekiel that his popularity is superficial; for all the exiles' enthusiastic words and actions in coming to hear Ezekiel's words, they do not obey them; 'the organs of obedience, their mouths and hearts, are otherwise occupied.'\textsuperscript{34} The prophet is an entertainer to them, not one whose words, being the words of Yahweh, should be obeyed (v.32).

The picture, then, of the exiles' response to the word of Yahweh throughout the book matches exactly the expectation and the anticipated response that was seen in Ezekiel's commissioning. They remain a rebellious house, rejecting the ministry of the prophet as prophet who needs to be obeyed, even after the news of the fall of Jerusalem has reached them and Ezekiel's earlier oracles have been proved right. The exilic audience of Ezekiel are portrayed as rebellious from first to last.

\textsuperscript{31} Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, p691. It should be noted that Greenberg sees that the element of demand envisaged in ch. 33 points to it being 'the last gasp of Ezekiel's pre-fall theology' (p692). As we have seen, the book of Ezekiel retains that element of demand right to the end.


\textsuperscript{33} So Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, p686, who regards it as 'ironical: acting as though they were devoted to me.' Block (*Ezekiel 25-48*, p264 n125) sees its omission from LXX and Syr. as due to the awkwardness of its position as the delayed subject. Allen (*Ezekiel 20-48*, p150) emends the MT, thinking it is a 'marginal gloss on וַיֶּהְפָּקְדוּ רֹפֵא בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל'; so too Cooke, *Ezekiel*, p369.

\textsuperscript{34} Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, p690.
d) The destiny of those not responding
The book of Ezekiel not only portrays the anticipated response of Ezekiel’s addressees and their response in reality, it also portrays the destiny of those who reject his message. Judgement is not simply something inevitable (for Jerusalem), re-presented to the book’s addressees as a past event; it is also a future event.

In 3:16-21, those who reject the watchman’s message will die, for they are wicked (cf. 33:1-20). In 13:22, Yahweh gives the reason for his announcement of judgement on ‘the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own imagination’ (13:17). Their guilt lies in part in that fact that they ‘have encouraged the wicked not to turn from their wicked way and save their lives.’ In 18:23, the same fate is envisaged for those who do not ‘turn from their ways and live’. In that context, the judgement according to their ways, as envisaged in 18:30 (and in 33:20), holds out little hope for those who have not obeyed the word of Yahweh. In 20:33-38, Yahweh’s response to the exiles, insofar as they continue in rebellion and idolatry, is spelled out. Yahweh will bring the exiles out in a new exodus, and will ‘enter into judgement’ (vv.35, 37) with them. There will be a sifting process, whereby some will not enter the land (v.38), for they will have failed to meet the covenant obligations. ‘This announcement of a partial judgment was meant as a powerful warning to the exiles not to exclude themselves from restoration to the land’. In 34:17-22, Yahweh will ‘judge between sheep and sheep’ as part of his purpose to save his flock (v.22). The destiny of those in exile who fail to respond to Yahweh’s message is little different from the death that is envisaged for Jerusalem (e.g. 5:2-4). The choice is between life and death for the exiles, depending on the response they make to the words of the prophet. To continue in disobedience and rejection is to experience the ‘death’ that is already their state (18:23; 37:1-10).

e) Summary
We have seen, then, how the book portrays Ezekiel’s calls, whether oblique, indirect or explicit, as calls to repentance. Only then could there be a future. We have also seen how the book portrays his audience’s response as one of disobedience, a response anticipated at the outset of the book, and proved to be just that in the rest of the book. Finally, we have seen how the book declares ‘death’ to be both their present state, and the end for those who do not repent in the face of Ezekiel’s calls. Such a grim portrayal is not restricted to the exiles’ response to Yahweh’s word spoken through the prophet. It is also apparent in their disobedient response to Yahweh’s ordinances and statutes.

37 See below for other interpretations of the calls to repentance, and for how such calls relate to apparently unconditional promises of salvation.
2. The exiles' disobedience to Yahweh's ordinances and statutes

The juxtaposition of three facts points clearly to the exiles' disobedience to Yahweh's word as expressed in Yahweh's ordinances and statutes, and their destiny of death if such disobedience persists. First, there is the portrayal of such disobedience to Yahweh's ordinances and statutes as the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem. Secondly, there is the solidarity, or common guilt, between those in Jerusalem and those in exile. Thirdly, the prophetic calls to repentance point explicitly to the exiles' own disobedience.

a) The disobedience that precipitated Yahweh's judgement

As Klein notes, there are many words occurring in Ezekiel that spell out the problems that precipitated Yahweh's judgement: 'abominations' (הָרְאֵנָה) (41x), 'detestable things' (נּוֹנֶפֶת) (8x), 'idols' (בְּשֵׁמָה) (36x), and 'harlotries' (כְּרֶשֶׁת) (19x).38 These words described cultic and moral sins, though such a distinction should not be pressed too far, nor should Ezekiel be thought apolitical. All of life was lived before Yahweh; the clearly political agenda of Ezekiel (e.g. chs. 16, 17, 19, 23) is framed in moral or cultic terms.39

Cultic sins included altars, incense, and idolatry on the mountains (6:1-9), summarised in the poignant phrase in 6:9, where Yahweh says that he was 'shattered' (בָּאָשֹׁר) because of their 'prostituting heart' (חַפַּר יָדָה). Further, ch. 8 catalogues four abominations: having an altar outside the temple itself, thus violating Deuteronomy's law of centralisation; holding a secret rite in a dark room (8:7-13), which may be linked with cult of the dead or Osiris; women weeping for the Sumerian vegetation deity Tammuz or Dumuzi (8:14-15); and 25 men worshipping the sun at the temple door. Chs. 16 and 23 portray the history of Israel as one loose woman (two in ch. 23), consorting, even cavorting with other nations and their gods. Other cultic sins included despising Yahweh's holy things and profaning his sabbaths (22:8) and child sacrifice (23:37, 39). Priests aided and abetted in this (22:26). Although the leaders are conspicuously excluded from involvement in cultic abuses, apart from 43:7-9, where the kings' condemnation is 'parenthetical',41 Zedekiah is condemned for breaking his oath with Nebuchadnezzar (17:12-21).42 Because 'this oath was sworn before Yahweh', he had not only broken his agreement with the Babylonians, 'he had broken Yahweh's oath and covenant.'43

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39 For more on Ezekiel's political agenda, see Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, chs. 3-4.
40 For a discussion of the MT reading, see n14 on p157 above.
41 So Duguid, Ezekiel and the Leaders, p42.
42 Cf. also 21:30-32 [ET 25-27], where a curse oracle against Zedekiah spells out his fate, more than his sins, but there is a hint of his sins in the address 'vile, wicked prince of Israel' (רְשָׁע מֵשְׁבִּית עם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל).
Moral sins included failure to help the poor and needy in a way far worse even than Sodom (16:47-50; cf. 18:7-9; 22:7, 29), sexual immorality (18:6), bloodshed (7:23; 9:9; 16:38; 18:10; 22:2-3), greed and extortion (22:12). Instead of speaking out against this, the prophets have ‘smear[ed] whitewash’ (22:28). Not one group is innocent. The kings are guilty of devouring the people (19:6-7; cf. 34:1-9; 45:8-9) and of bloodshed (22:6, 25). The are guilty, too, of extortion, robbery, oppression and bloodshed (22:12, 29), and none would ‘stand in the breach’ to oppose it (22:29-30). Ezekiel was not simply concerned with private morals, but with social justice.

In short, they had not ‘walked’ (דאַהוּ) in Yahweh’s ‘statutes’ (תְּנֵה יָהְנָא) and had not ‘done’ (תְּנֵה יָהְנָא) or ‘kept’ (תְּנֵה יָהְנָא) his ‘just ordinances’ (תְּנֵה יָהְנָא). Indeed, they had ‘rebelled’ (חָרְב) against them, and thus had broken the covenant. By observing these, they would have lived (18:17, 19, 21; 20:11). The ultimate indictment against Jerusalem is expressed in chapter 5. In rebelling against Yahweh’s ‘statutes and ordinances,’ Jerusalem had become ‘more wicked than the nations and countries all around her’ (5:5-6). The outcome of such a rejection of Yahweh’s statutes and ordinances, indeed the direct result, was Yahweh’s judgement, as seen in the destruction of Jerusalem.

b) The solidarity of the exiles with those in Jerusalem

This judgement on those in Jerusalem could have led the exiles to a sense of moral superiority. However, throughout the book, there is no hint that the exiles are somehow a righteous remnant, preserved by Yahweh. Instead, their guilty solidarity with those in Jerusalem is portrayed starkly.

First, they too share in the guilt of their ancestors. We saw above how the phrase ‘the house of Israel’ expresses that solidarity. Such solidarity between those in exile and previous generations is particularly evident in ch. 20. The chapter charts the failures not of Israel as one woman (ch. 16) or two (ch. 23), but of Israel, generation by generation,

46 That this passage refers to kings, rather than to leaders in general, is likely both from the fact that other leaders are condemned in 34:17-21, and that the remedy for these wicked shepherds is one shepherd, Yahweh. See Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, pp39-40, 121-22.
47 Reading חָרְבֹּן רֶשֶׁת with LXX, rather than MT’s חָרְבֹּן רֶשֶׁת (‘the band of the prophets’), for the prophets are indicted in v.28. See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, p465.
48 Though Ezekiel can use חָרְבֹּן of leaders in general (7:27; 32:29), it is likely that kings (Zedekiah and his predecessors) are in view here because of parallels with 19:1, 6-7. See Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders*, p38.
49 Cf. Lev. 26:3, where these same words occur (though חָרְבֹּן, not חָרְבֹּן) as the prelude to covenant blessings, and Lev. 26:14-15, where they occur as the prelude to covenant curses.
50 The organic link between behaviour and judgement can be seen in 5:7-8, 11; 15:8; 16:43; 20:16, 24; 22:19; 23:30, 35; 34:21. This judgement is not simply mechanical, though, as Koch suggested. See Wong, *Idea of Retribution*. 
from the earliest days in Egypt (20:7) right up to the present generation in exile in Babylon (20:30-31). Throughout, Israel's history has been one of constant failure in every generation. Those in the wilderness rejected Yahweh's 'ordinances and statutes' (20:13, 16). Their children were instructed to 'walk' in the 'statutes' and 'keep' and 'do' the ordinances (20:19), but they too rebelled against them (20:21). Such a failure has dogged them not merely to the events of 597BC, but beyond — the exiles, too, are guilty.\[51]\n
Secondly, there is the clear denial of righteousness to those who escaped from the destruction of Jerusalem. Though they themselves were not the intended audience of Ezekiel's oracles delivered before that destruction, the book allows them no scope for maintaining their innocence. Their survival and arrival in exile would serve not as a contradiction of the prophet's assertions that all would be destroyed,\[52\] but as a proof to those already in exile that Yahweh had been just in obliterating Jerusalem (14:22-23; cf. 11:16).\[53\]

Thirdly, in oracles of restoration, the restored house of Israel are to be marked by shame and self-loathing, clear pointers to their own guilt (16:59-63; 20:42-43; 36:31).\[54\]

In other words, everyone in exile, whether those who arrived in the deportation of 597BC, or after the fall of Jerusalem in 587BC, is as guilty as those who perished in Jerusalem.

c) Explicit disobedience of the exiles

We saw above (pp155ff.) how the exiles are portrayed as rebellious with regard to Yahweh's words spoken through Ezekiel. The very existence of calls to repentance by the prophet reveals clearly the book's portrayal of the disobedience of the exiles to Yahweh's statutes and ordinances. Such disobedience entailed injustice, self-sufficiency expressed in self-righteousness, transgressions and, in particular, idolatry. Thus in 14:6, the exiles are to turn away from their idols, and to turn their faces away from all their abominations, and in ch. 20, the idolatry mentioned is explicitly not that of their ancestors, but the exiles' own, for it is emphasised by the dramatic 'to this day' (ינק ותתאש) (v.31).\[55\]
3. Summary / conclusions

The book’s portrait of the exiles’ ‘current’ response to Yahweh’s word is universally negative, whether it is Yahweh’s word as expressed in Ezekiel’s word to them, or Yahweh’s word as found in his statutes and ordinances. It is also clear that these two responses tend to merge into one another, since to listen and respond to Ezekiel’s word is to turn away from idolatry and disobedience to Yahweh’s ordinances and statutes. In the same way, the destinies for disobedience merge. We have seen how the destiny for not obeying Ezekiel’s calls to repentance is death. The same is also true of those who persistently indulge in idolatry, as is evident both from the fate of Jerusalem and from Ezek. 20:38, where Yahweh will purge out all the rebels as part of his initiative in restoration.

Such a negative perspective, however, is not the only response to Yahweh’s word to be found in the book. The book envisages a time when the exilic community (‘the house of Israel’) will be marked by obedience, not by disobedience. Unsurprisingly, the response to both kinds of Yahweh’s words merges into a unitary notion of obedience.

B. THE PORTRAYAL OF THE FUTURE OBEDIENCE OF THE EXILES

1. Renewed cultic obedience

We can see renewed cultic obedience illustrated in the following three examples. First, in 11:17-21, restoration to the land (v.17) will be accompanied by an internal renewal which will lead to obedience, including the removal of the land’s q sipul and ninvirt (vv.18-20).

Secondly, in 20:40-44, the prophet is to assert how all the house of Israel will serve Yahweh in the land, on his holy mountain. When Yahweh has gathered them into the land, ‘there you shall remember your ways and all the deeds by which you have polluted yourselves; and you shall loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed’ (v.43). The self-loathing which was to have marked them will one day be a

added ‘clumsily’ by a ‘still later hand.’ Others see it as a reference to child sacrifice going on in Jerusalem (e.g. Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, p118; George C. Heider, ‘A Further Turn on Ezekiel’s Baroque Twist in Ezek 20:25-26’, JBL 107 (1988), p722 n7). Although there is no knowledge of child sacrifices amongst the exilic community beyond this reference, such practices cannot be ruled out. However, in view of the connections with 20:23-26, it may be a misunderstanding of prophetic metaphor and rhetoric to take such actions necessarily as a reflection of exilic practices. The prophet here is expressing the guilt of the generation in exile, that they are no better than their ancestors. Ezekiel announces that their practices, whether literally involving child sacrifice or not, are no different in Yahweh’s eyes. Cf. Greenberg’s comment on 14:1-11 that ‘The “idols” in the people’s thoughts and “before their faces” must be a rubric for an unregenerate state of mind’ (Ezekiel 1-20, p253). For similar reflections about the ‘pedagogical and hortatory function’ of the lists of sins in chs. 18 and 22, as opposed to their providing ‘specific evidence of the times’, see Michael Fishbane, ‘Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel’, int 38 (1984), pp146-47. On the question of authenticity, Heider comments, ‘Even if the clause is not original (as its absence from the Greek suggests may be the case), it is an accurate expansion, as v.26 has already determined the content of mattənōt (“gifts”) in this chapter as cultic child sacrifice.’ Heider, ‘A Further Turn’, p722 n9.
mark of them. They will renounce their idolatry (cf. 20:43) and be characterised instead by offerings that are acceptable to Yahweh (20:40).

Thirdly, this obedience is illustrated further in chs. 40-48. This vision, which functions as ‘a proleptic corroboration’ of the promises found in 37:24b-28, emphasises the reversal of cultic failures of the past. Thus, for example, the priests who did not make the distinction between holy and common (22:26) will now teach of the differences (44:23); the idolatry of the temple seen in chs. 8-11 (see esp. 8:10) will be a thing of the past (43:9; 44:10, 12); the presence of uncircumcised aliens within the temple area will not happen again (44:6-8). Yahweh's presence is confirmed as permanent (43:7, 9; cf. 48:35), a permanence possible only through renewed obedience ensuring a renewed purity. Further, in view of the fact that the people were vomited out of the land because they had defiled the land through their disobedience (36:17; cf. Lev. 18:24-30), other references that do not explicitly mention the obedience of the people to the word of Yahweh, but do speak of the people back in the land (such as chs. 38-39), presuppose the obedience of the people.

2. Renewed moral obedience

Moral sins, too, will be reversed. At the level of leadership, the wicked shepherds of 34:1-9 will be replaced by a new shepherd, Yahweh's servant (34:23-24), who will not oppress the people (45:8, 9; 46:18), but will reflect Yahweh as shepherd (cf. 34:11-16). Instead of devouring the people (19:6; 22:25), he shall feed them (34:23); instead of letting them be scattered, becoming food for the animals (34:4-6), he shall be their shepherd. The resident alien, instead of being treated with contempt (22:7, 29), shall have an inheritance (47:22-23). Instead of injustice for the people (8:17; 9:9), there shall be honest scales (45:10-12) and equitable land distribution (46:18; 48). Instead of the weak being ‘butted’ (34:21), they shall no longer be ravaged (34:22). The picture of security, contentment and justice is reflected in the portrayal of the restored community before the onslaught of Gog and his hordes. Where the people of Judah had once been complacent in their ‘quietness’ (טִפּוֹ) (16:49), now they will be ‘quiet’ (טִפּוֹ) with no need for ‘walls,’ ‘bars’ or ‘gates’ (38:11). Since all have sufficient, there is no jealousy, violence, theft or external threat.

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56 Cf. Lapsley, ‘Shame and Self-Knowledge’, pp143-73; idem, Can These Bones Live?, pp141-42.
58 Levenson comments that ‘in each case, the restoration of the relationship with Israel is presented as God’s compensating for the defects of Israel’s rulers, almost point-by-point. He does what they failed to do. The coming divine regime is a mirror image of the past human regime in which each standing failure is corrected.’ Levenson, Theology of the Program of Restoration, pp86-87. Duguid (Ezekiel and the Leaders, p49) comments, ‘once again the promise of restoration represents a conscious repairing of the flaws of the past.’
3. Summary

Both cultic and moral obedience will be renewed in the future, an obedience that is encapsulated in the contrast between the summary statement of the house of Israel’s failure, and the summary statement of their future obedience. Corresponding to Israel’s rebellion, seen in their failure to ‘walk’ (ḇōl) in his ‘statutes’ (Ḥâḵēḵ / Ṣalṭt) and to ‘keep’ (ḇĕšâ) and ‘do’ (ḥâšâ) his ordinances (ḇīḇīḇâḥ), the restoration promised by Yahweh involves them doing precisely what Yahweh has called them to do: ‘I will cause you to follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances’ (36:27; cf. 11:20; 37:24). As Raitt puts it, ‘the same law by which the people were judged becomes the law to which they are saved.’59 Within the flow of the narrative, these instances occur with great prominence, overarching by, and evident in all that follows. The reference in 11:20 occurs within the first oracle to speak of hope for the future within the book; the trajectory of hope for the future for the readers of the book is defined by this initial occurrence. The reference in 36:27 receives its prominence from its proximity to the distinctively Ezekielian theme of Yahweh’s ṭărâ.60 The reference to renewed obedience in 37:24b serves as part of a ‘climactic summary of future blessing.’61 Its climactic nature is apparent from the shift in perspective at the start of chapter 38 to a projected scene where the future restoration is now a reality. Together, they embody the future obedience that will one day mark the house of Israel.

C. THE PURPOSE OF THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN DISOBEIDENCE AND OBEDIENCE

The response to the word of Yahweh is, as we have seen, a mixed one in the book. The exilic addressees / intended audience of the prophet are clearly envisaged as being, and remaining, disobedient and hard-hearted. Such disobedience relates both to Yahweh’s word through the prophet, and to Yahweh’s word through his ordinances and statutes. However, there is an expectation that one day Yahweh will intervene to gather, restore, and renew the people, such that they will obey him and remain for ever in the renewed and restored land. Unlike their ancestors and unlike Ezekiel’s exilic addressees, those who are part of Yahweh’s future shall ‘walk’ in the ‘statutes’ and ‘keep’ and ‘do’ the ordinances (36:27). The function of this dichotomy, as portrayed in the book, and re-presented to the book’s exilic addressees, is twofold.

First, it serves to demonstrate that neither Yahweh’s word nor Yahweh’s prophet were failures. It was not something unexpected or surprising that Ezekiel’s exilic addressees did not respond. Even at the outset of his ministry, rebelliousness was anticipated. The subsequent portrayal of unresponsiveness, a portrayal that the

59 Raitt, Theology of Exile, p182 (his emphasis).
60 See further below.
61 Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p760.
addressees of the book would presumably have known was only too accurate, is merely the outworking of what was anticipated in the commissioning, and a confirmation of Yahweh’s word, not a refutation of it.

Secondly, the re-presented oracles serve to provide a profound call to the exilic addressees of the book, both negatively and positively. Negatively, the disobedience of the exiles functions in exactly the same way as Ezekiel’s oracles of judgement against Jerusalem. We noted above how Ezekiel’s oracles of judgement against Jerusalem were to persuade his intended audience to sever their allegiance to Jerusalem. In just the same way, the re-presentation of the disobedience of Ezekiel’s intended audience serves to persuade the book’s addressees to sever their links with the disobedient behaviour that characterised Ezekiel’s audience. In that sense, the prophet Ezekiel’s audience is anti-paradigmatic. On the other hand, the positive anticipated response, not restricted to a particular point in time, serves to move the audience to take seriously the prophet’s ministry, and the calls that he made. The exilic addressees of the book should not give up on the prophet’s message because their predecessors (or, conceivably, they, when they were much younger) had not responded positively to his words. Instead they need to respond appropriately to the word of Yahweh in the book, since they are in precisely the same position as the prophet’s exilic addressees, confronted with the same words (hence the emphasis on the prophetic event). Discerning the response requires an act of imagination, of interpretation, because there are no calls to repentance directed explicitly at them by the author of the book, and there is not a straightforward one-to-one mapping between locutionary and illocutionary act. At its heart, the required response is this: the exiles too must respond to the call of the prophet, as set out in the book, if they are to avoid being sifted out (20:32ff.), if they are to live, and not die (18:31; 33:11).

The book, however, does not simply present a negative example, of disobedience to Yahweh’s word, and a future obedience which may well have seemed unreal in view of the failures of the prophet’s addressees to respond. It also presents, as I shall now seek to demonstrate, the prophet Ezekiel as a paradigm of the obedience to Yahweh’s word that is required. In the prophet, the future (obedience) has become a present reality. In

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62 Odell (‘Genre and Persona’, p201) interprets the proscription against mourning in ch. 24 in similar fashion: ‘the actions of Ezekiel and the exiles define their relationship to Jerusalem. They are to sever completely any remaining ties.’
63 Renz (Rhetorical Function, p138) puts it succinctly, ‘For the book to function properly, the audience of the book (the readership) needs to distance itself from the audience in the book (the original audience of the prophet)’ (his emphasis).
64 This helps explain the ‘characteristic’ of the book noted by Block (Ezekiel 1-24, p580 n123) that often the words of ‘the prophet’s interlocutors’ are heard. He lists 8:12; 9:9; 11:15; 12:22; 27; 18:2, 25; 20:32; 33:10; 37:11. To these may be added some examples he has missed and the words of others who form dialogical partners: 12:9; 24:19; 26:2; 27:3; 28:2, 9; 29:9b; 33:17, 20, 24; 35:10; 36:2, 20; 38:11. See further Applegate, ‘Narrative Patterns’.
65 Cf. Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, pp83-84; Renz, Rhetorical Function, pp140-41.
the prophet’s experience lies the bridge for the exiles between the present and the future.

D. THE PROPHET AS A MODEL OF OBEDIENCE

If we are to establish the prophet Ezekiel as a model of obedience, we need to do two things. First, we need to demonstrate conclusively the prophet’s obedience. Secondly, we need to establish that the book of Ezekiel clearly portrays the prophet as a model or paradigm, since it is quite possible that the dichotomy between the exiles’ disobedience and the prophet’s obedience is a felicitous by-product of any book which charts a prophet’s lonely call to a rebellious people. It is to the first of these that we now turn.

1. The obedience of the prophet

In view of the fact that the prophet is seen much more as object than subject within the book, as evinced by the dominance of the word of Yahweh coming to Ezekiel, it might be expected that the obedience of the prophet be a minor theme. However, within the commissioning of the prophet in chs. 1-3, in particular, and elsewhere in the book, the theme of the prophet’s obedience is a significant one.

The portrayal of Ezekiel’s obedience in the opening chapters is complicated by the fact that, as Habel observed,66 in the typical prophetic call narrative there is also an objection to the commissioning by the prophet. Glazov has recently produced a thorough analysis of the call narratives of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and has refined the analysis of these objections.67 He defines ‘a prophet as a divine messenger characterized by two “identifications”: with Yhwh and with his people.’68 These in turn give rise to two kinds of objection to the prophetic call. What he terms the ‘first objection’ arises from the ‘senses of personal inadequacy, guilt and fear of one’s own identity before the mysterium tremendum’.69 In other words, it arises from the prophet’s identification with Yahweh. It is evident, for example, in Isaiah’s cry ‘Woe is me’ (Isa. 6:5). The second arises from the identification of the prophet with the people, and is particularly associated with the call to proclaim Yahweh’s words of doom and judgement. The prophetic resistance to the message he is to utter is apparent in either ‘intercessory objection’ or ‘lament’70 on behalf of the people. It is evident, for example, in Isaiah’s question, ‘How long, O Lord?’ (Isa 6:11).

Given the customary presence of an objection, it is striking that in the call of Ezekiel there is no objection of either kind vocalised by the prophet. Glazov suggests that the first kind of objection, based on prophetic inadequacy, might be found in

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67 Glazov, Bridling of the Tongue.
68 Glazov, Bridling of the Tongue, p317.
69 Glazov, Bridling of the Tongue, pp317-18.
70 Glazov, Bridling of the Tongue, p318.
Ezekiel falling on his face before 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh' (Ezek. 1:28).\(^{71}\) For the second kind of objection, Glazov follows Zimmerli, Habel and others in finding it in the call to Ezekiel not to be rebellious but to open his mouth (2:8).\(^{72}\) Certainly Ezekiel's struggle with the task he has been given is unmistakable in some of the occasions when his voice is heard addressing Yahweh (e.g. Ezek. 9:8; 11:13).\(^{73}\) However, the lack of a voiced objection here does require an explanation. A plausible one is that, while there may be hints of reluctance, it is because Ezekiel's obedience is highlighted in these chapters. Ezekiel is obedient while knowing fully the painful path that obedience would entail. His obedience confronts personal reluctance and prevails.\(^{74}\)

At the end of ch. 1, the author recounts how Ezekiel was confronted by a vision of the glory of Yahweh himself (1:27-28). In response, Ezekiel fell on his face. Then he heard the voice of Yahweh speaking to him, instructing him to stand up, so that Yahweh could speak with him. As Yahweh spoke with him, \(?
\) entered into Ezekiel and caused him to stand. He did as he was commanded.

In 2:8, Ezekiel is instructed not to be rebellious; he is to be different from the rebellious house he is to confront. Rebellion was a real possibility for the prophet, but Ezekiel was obedient.\(^{75}\) Some commentators see in the narrative of the swallowing of the scroll a reluctance on the part of the prophet. Block questions why the prophet needs to be told three times to eat the scroll, and asks why it is that Yahweh needs to feed the scroll to Ezekiel.\(^{76}\) Greenberg sees the third command, 'whatever you find there, eat!' as Yahweh insisting on 'unqualified submission' and implying 'hesitation' on the part of the prophet to carry out the command of 2:8b.\(^{77}\) However, the narrative functions to increase the tension. As Greenberg notes, when the prophet is told in 2:8b to 'eat what I give you', there is expectation of food. Vv.9-10 do not serve to show the prophet's

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\(^{71}\) Glazov, *Bridling of the Tongue*, pp266, 320; in contrast, see p233, where he says, 'there is no time or room for any first objection'. A sense of personal inadequacy can be seen, according to Habel ('Form and Significance', p313), in Yahweh's command to Ezekiel not to be afraid of his addressees (2:6; cf. 3:9) and in the words of reassurance. This kind of personal inadequacy is rather different from Glazov's, because it does not arise from the prophet's identification with Yahweh.

\(^{72}\) Glazov, *Bridling of the Tongue*, pp229, 320; Habel, 'Form and Significance', p313; Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, pp12, 123; Zimmerli (*Ezekiel 1*, p135) asks, 'Can we see in this...a surreptitious side glance at the possibility of a personal resistance such as appears in Jer 1:6?' He answers his own question in the affirmative, because he can see no other reason for such a summons to obedience, particularly made so sharply. However Allen (*Ezekiel 1-19*, p14) doubts whether an objection is present here.


\(^{74}\) Glazov accounts for Ezekiel's silence by drawing analogies with Jeremiah and the forbidding of intercession. It still seems to be related to the prophet's obedience, but his reasoning is rather unclear. See Glazov, *Bridling of the Tongue*, p233.

\(^{75}\) For the idea of this command as a test of obedience, see Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, pp73, 77-78 and, especially, Odell, 'You Are What You Eat', pp241ff. This does not, however, exclude the notion that the scroll contains the message Ezekiel is to utter (*pace* Odell). See pp35ff. above and Glazov, *Bridling of the Tongue*, pp228-38.

\(^{76}\) Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, p12.

\(^{77}\) Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, p67. The phrase is missing from LXX. Eichrodt (*Ezekiel*, p60) and Zimmerli (*Ezekiel 1*, p92) regard it as a gloss, making connections with Jer. 15:16. Greenberg ('Ancient Versions', pp138ff.) defends the MT.
disobedience so much as to show the extraordinary, unenviable task that is before him. By allowing the addressees of the book to experience what he experienced, the possibility of disobedience is brought to the fore, but is decisively rejected. The command that Yahweh uttered is repeated in 3:1, in resumptive fashion, not because the prophet will not eat, but because the readers have now shared in his vision. This heightened tension, resulting in the prophet’s obedience, can be seen in the correspondence between Yahweh’s command to the prophet in 2:8, which is obeyed explicitly in 3:2-3. In 2:8, Yahweh told the prophet to open his mouth and eat the scroll. In 3:2, the prophet opens his mouth; then, in 3:3, he eats it. Yahweh feeding the prophet (3:2) then should be seen not as a sign of Yahweh’s overcoming of the prophet’s reluctance, but of the divine initiative at every stage in the process. Once the prophet has put the scroll in his mouth, it tastes as sweet as honey. Since the message itself was one of ‘lamentation, mourning and woe’, the sweetness cannot be derived from the content of the divine words he has been told to utter. Further, in view of the prophet’s reactions in vv.14-15, it cannot be the sweetness of being commissioned per se. The sweetness must lie either in the mere fact that God’s word is sweet to taste (cf. Ps. 19:11), or, more probably, in the act of obedience, the sweetness of being addressed by Yahweh and of responding appropriately to the divine word. 78

In 3:4-11, there are so many parallels with 2:3-7 that Block sees this ‘need for a second commissioning speech’ as reflecting ‘Ezekiel’s continued hesitation to accept Yahweh’s prophetic charge.’ 79 This second commissioning speech should be interpreted differently. It is true that this unit corresponds closely with 2:3-7, but the concentric arrangement militates against seeing it as mere repetition: 3:10-11 mirrors 2:3-5, speaking of the charge to Ezekiel; 3:4-9 speaks of the encouragement to the prophet to carry out the charge, mirroring 2:6-7. 80 Further, within the encouragement sections, the three elements (the call not to fear, the reason introduced by , and the concluding instruction to speak) are ‘structurally inversely parallel to each other’. 81 Such structuring highlights the obedient action of swallowing the scroll. In addition, throughout these opening scenes, the twin themes of anticipated opposition and the prophet’s requirement to obey are both highlighted and steadily built up. The dichotomy between the anticipated response of the exiles, as envisioned in vv.5-9, and the call to the prophet in vv.10-11 is again emphasised. The paradigmatic response to the word of Yahweh is set


79 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p128.


81 Schwartz, ‘Concentric Structure’, p111.
out again. In 2:8, the prophet was to open his mouth and eat what Yahweh gave him—he was to fill his very self with the word of Yahweh (cf. Ps. 40:9 [8]). Here, he has to receive all the words Yahweh speaks to him in his heart, hear them with his ears, then go. Ezekiel’s obedience to this commission, אֶל-יָד הנַפְּלֵי (3:11), is apparent in vv.14-15: אָנָב אֶל-יָד הנַפְּלֵי.

It might seem that the theme of the prophet’s obedience is falsified by his behaviour outlined in 3:14-15. After receiving his call, יָד lifted him up and bore him away. We are told that Ezekiel went ‘bitter in the heat of my spirit’ (噜 Gad). Then, in v.15, the prophet sits among the exiles, ‘stunned’ (יֲנָפְתָּם), for seven days. Greenberg comments, ‘Perhaps the greatest inconsistency is that between the behavior of the prophet subsequent to his commissioning and the task he was called to perform.’82 This, however, is overstating the case.

With regard to the phrase יָד רָע רָע, questions of interpretation revolve around three issues, though at points they interact. The first is the place and meaning of רָע. Both Allen83 and Zimmerli84 see it as a later addition, in view of the fact that there is no corresponding word in either the LXX or the Syriac. While Zimmerli treats it as an explanatory gloss, Allen regards the meaning as having been changed by its addition. He notes the (semantic) relationship to ‘sweet’ (v.3), and conjectures that ‘bitter’ was perhaps a marginal gloss on 2:8bג, with the contrast between something that is naturally bitter, but turns out to be sweet; he also suggests there may be a ‘clever interplay’ on ‘rebellious’ (רָע); ‘bitter’ became displaced by someone thinking ‘passion’ (רָעך) in v.14 is really ‘anger’.85 This he sees as contrasting with the LXX ‘in the “vehemence” (=surging) of my spirit’ (.lng ρομα του πνεύματος μου).86 Attractive as Allen’s suggestion is, it is not possible to be certain here. If רָע is retained, there is still the issue of its meaning. Some scholars have related it to the Ugaritic mrr, ‘to strengthen, empower’, rendering it ‘empowered’ (cf. Jdg. 18:25),87 but this link has been disputed.88 In his commentary on Ezekiel, Block retains רָע but changes his mind on the meaning from his earlier article, ‘Prophet of the Spirit’, preferring the ‘normal meaning’ (‘bitter’): ‘Ezekiel is infuriated by the divine imposition on his life and the implications of Yahweh’s commission for him.’89 However, רָע can also speak of ‘bitter’ not in the

82 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p79. He notes the close parallels with Jer. 15:17.
83 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p13.
84 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, pp94, 139.
85 As elsewhere in the book of Ezekiel, though according to Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p137, it is always used of divine anger, except in 23:25.
86 The noun ρομα occurs 7 times in LXX: Num. 11:11, 17; Prov. 3:25; 21:1; Jer. 29:3; Ezek. 3:14, 27:11. None have the meaning ‘anger’. The closest instances are those in Num. 11, where it means something like ‘burden’ or ‘pressure’, which rises up against Moses. The people are distressed. It is Yahweh who is angry.
88 See Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p136 for bibliography.
89 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p137.
sense of ‘resentful’ towards someone, but in the sense of ‘bitterly distressed’, in the
sense of suffering a bitter blow (e.g. Ezek. 27:31; Isa. 33:7).

The second issue is the meaning of the word הָרָע. Elsewhere in the book of
Ezekiel, הָרָע occurs thirty-two times. Always the meaning is ‘anger’, ‘wrath’, with
every instance except 23:25 speaking of Yahweh’s anger.¹⁰ In 3:14, however, it is
clearly Ezekiel’s emotional state that is in view, so the other instances are not
determinative. There are different possibilities here, other than ‘anger’. We have already
seen Allen’s rendering, supported by the LXX, of ‘vehemence’. Another related
meaning is ‘heat’,¹¹ or ‘excitement’, given the root גנָה (גהה), ‘to be on heat’, from
which the noun is derived.¹²

The third issue is whether the emotion encapsulated in the phrase is Ezekiel’s
attitude to Yahweh in response to his commissioning,¹³ Ezekiel’s reflecting and
embodying Yahweh’s response to a rebellious people,¹⁴ or Ezekiel experiencing the
effects that the message of the scroll will have on the people.¹⁵

If Allen’s suggestion concerning הָרָע is taken up, the phrase means something like,
‘I was passionately moved.’ If Allen’s suggestion is not taken up, the bitterness should
be associated not with the prophet’s attitude to Yahweh, but with the bitterness of the
word, now it is in his stomach. It was sweet to taste in his mouth, but now he is being
carried back to his peers, the bitterness of his task overwhelms him. He is bitterly
distressed in the heat of his spirit. The prophet obeys, because it is Yahweh’s word he is
obeying. But what is entailed in that obedience may be a difficult task that causes pain
and anguish. The sweetness lies in the fact of obedience, the bitterness and inner turmoil
in what obedience entails. At no point is Ezekiel’s obedience in doubt, for vv.14-15
recount it: נָתַת...¹⁶ כָּלָה.

With regard to the word ‘stunned (דָּסָה)’, Block discusses the use of בָּשָׂש at some
length and notices some of the nuances: ‘silence, desolation, despair, distress, shock.’¹⁶ There have been four main interpretations of the word. The first is that it speaks of the
disobedience of the prophet. His sitting for seven days was a reflection of his ‘resisting
the call of God’.¹⁷ The second is that it speaks of the prophet being overwhelmed for

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¹⁰ In 23:25, it is closely associated with Yahweh’s jealous actions and speaks of the nations, Oholibah’s
lovers, acting against her ‘in fury’.
¹¹ See G. Sauer, הָרָע הָוָה ‘excitement’, TLOT 1, pp435-36.
¹⁴ E.W. Hengstenberg, The Prophecies of Ezekiel Elucidated, tr. A.C. Murphy and J.G. Murphy,
(Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1869), p37; Iain M. Duguid, Ezekiel, NIVAC, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan,
1999), p70. Cf. Greenberg’s comment, ‘It is not clear whether his bitterness (answering to the “laments
and moaning and woe” he must proclaim, as 27:31-32 show) and his rage are reflections of God’s
feelings toward Israel (cf. the thesis of Heschel, The Prophets, ch. 18), or his own distress over the
dismal, thankless, and perhaps dangerous task imposed on him.’ Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p71. He notes
the similar ambiguity in the close parallel, Jer. 15:17.
¹⁵ Glazov, Bridling of the Tongue, pp236-38.
¹⁶ Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p138; see further Tyler F. Williams, נָשַׁך, NIDOTTE 4, pp167-71.
¹⁷ Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p138.
seven days, in similar fashion to Ezra and Job (Ezr. 9:4; Job 2:13), by the 'initial shock
and despair of the awesome judgment he had seen.' The third is that Ezekiel’s sitting
apart for seven days is part of his initiation ceremony into becoming a prophet,
borrowing some of the imagery from the ordination of priests (cf. Lev. 8:33). The
fourth is that Ezekiel is experiencing some of 'the forthcoming overwhelming
devastation of his people.'

There is no need to see, in יִּשְׁעֵשַׁה, disobedience on the part of the prophet. Each of
the other three interpretations has something to contribute. The sense of desolation
comes from the task that he had to perform – he was one of the exiles, indeed he sat
there 'among them, desolate' for seven days. By the use of an oxymoron, the isolation
of the prophet is brought to the fore, as is the distinction between the prophet and the
people. Though he is among them, and is one of them, yet he is isolated from them.
Indeed, it is precisely his obedience that isolates him. It is not his anger with Yahweh,
nor his resistance that is in view here, but his isolation and devastation at the message of
judgement. The 'seven days' speaks not of his disobedience, sitting and doing nothing
despite the charge, but of the separation of his consecration and preparation for the
ministry lying ahead.

The place of 3:16-21 within the narrative, and its relations to chs. 33 and 18, have
been discussed by commentators at great length. Greenberg defends the authenticity
and originality of its position here against Zimmerli, Cooke, and Wevers. Block, while
noting the awkwardness of these verses in terms of the change in language (and other
reasons for seeing it as an artificial insertion here) regards the unit as appropriate here.
The 'stem tone' and its 'brutally direct warning' confirm, for Block, what he noted in
3:14-15 – the stubbornness of the prophet. While Block is right to emphasise the
function of this passage in its context (as opposed to debating its originality), there is an
alternative view of its function here. Given the motif already established of the
relationship between the prophet’s obedience and the exiles’ disobedience, this passage
serves not only to anticipate the lack of repentance to Ezekiel’s message (see above),
but also to demonstrate the similarity of status before Yahweh’s word of both prophet
and exiles. Failure to obey the word of Yahweh is a sentence of death for both prophet
and people, though in different ways. The prophet, though given a specific and different
task, is aligned with the exiles in terms of his situation. What matters is how he, and
they, respond to that word of Yahweh.

98 Lamar E. Cooper, Sr., Ezekiel, NAC 17, (Nashville, Broadman and Holman, 1994), p83 n102.
T. & T. Clark, 1876), p58; Odell, 'You Are What You Eat', p236.
100 Duguid, Ezekiel, p70.
101 See Block, Ezekiel 1-24, pp140-43; Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, pp55-57; Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, pp87-97;
Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, pp142-46.
102 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p141.
In 3:22-27, Yahweh commands Ezekiel, 'Rise up, go out into the valley, and there I will speak with you' (v.22); the prophet responds, 'So I rose up and went out into the valley...'. What Yahweh had commanded, the prophet did. Though the power of Yahweh, as represented by the divine hand, has constrained the prophet, nonetheless, the prophet here is not just acted upon, he is subject too ('So I rose up and went out into the valley' (v.22)). Unlike in 37:1, where the hand of Yahweh is upon him and the רוח of Yahweh brings him, here the prophet acts too. Here, again, the prophet's obedience is evident on closer reading.

Later in the book, there are a number of other examples of the prophet's obedience. Within the vision in chs. 8-11, he is told to lift his eyes (8:5), which he does; he is told to dig through the wall that he has been shown (8:8), which he does; he is told to go in and see the vile abominations (8:9), which he does (8:10). In 12:1-6, the prophet is told to portray the exile, and so serve as a sign for the people. 12:7 recounts how 'I did just as I was commanded.' When instructed to act as a sign, the prophet is obedient. The same motif is found in chapter 24. There, the prophet is obedient, even to the point of not mourning in public for his wife (vv.17-18), for 'I did as I was commanded', an action that was to function as a 'sign' for the exiles (v.24). As Glazov comments,

'The crucial point to grasp is that by retaining silence and suppressing lament, he shows compliance with, rather than resistance to, this stroke [מגפה (24:16)]: the destruction of the city and the exile, all that was in fact part and parcel of the message of doom to which he had to open his mouth at the start and retain quietly and obediently.'

In the vision in chapter 37, Ezekiel is commanded to prophesy to the bones (v.4); in v.5, he carries it out. In v.9, he is commanded to prophesy to the breath. In v.10, he relates how 'I prophesied as he commanded me.'

The picture generated throughout the book is clear: it is a picture of a prophet who suffers, who at points struggles with his call, yet who is obedient to the call of Yahweh. The costs personally and psychologically for him were immense (cf. 3:14-15; also, later, especially ch. 24) — yet these costs came from, rather than despite, his obedience. In view of these immense costs, we might expect reluctance in the prophet, but the text focuses not on his reluctance, but on his obedience: the prophet did heed the word of Yahweh.

These references are all the more remarkable when the paucity of narrative within the book is considered. Throughout the book, it is the word of Yahweh that is at the forefront. The prophet is rarely the subject of actions; instead, he is recipient of the divine word. This in itself is significant. The addressees of the book, the intended audience, would have known how the prophet had been obedient to the call that he had received. He had warned the exiles, he had uttered the words he was instructed to utter.

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103 Glazov, Bridling of the Tongue, p273.
That this is the case is clear from the fact that Yahweh speaks of the exiles' reactions to the words that he has uttered (e.g. 12:22, 27).

The exiles, then, are confronted both with the disobedience of Ezekiel's exilic audience, and, as I have argued in this section, with Ezekiel's own obedience. The book, however, does not simply present its addressees with the obedience of the prophet as an alternative way of responding to Yahweh's word. It also establishes him as a model of obedience for those addressees.

2. The establishment of the prophet as a model

There are two main ways in which the narrative establishes the prophet as a model. First, there are explicit instances where the prophet is described as such, in particular in the sign-acts. Secondly, the narrative as a whole points in that direction. We shall look first at the explicit instances.

a) The prophet as a prescriptive 'sign' (Ezekiel 24:15-27)

In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet is not just instructed to communicate by the spoken word, he is also told to perform certain actions, or 'sign-acts' (sometimes designated by either נִיצָן or נַנִּיטָן). The precise role that Ezekiel plays within the drama of these sign-acts varies. In some, Ezekiel's role is in no sense parallel with that of the people whom he is addressing. Other sign-acts within the book give a different picture. They present the prophet as a paradigm for the house of Israel: what is true of Ezekiel within the sign-act correlates closely with those whom the sign-act depicts. Thus in Ezek. 12:1-16, Ezekiel is to act out the process of going into exile, for, Yahweh says, 'I have made you a sign (נַנִּיטָן) for the house of Israel' (v.6). This self-understanding that the prophet is to have is not merely a private one. He is to articulate it to the house of Israel when they ask him (12:9-11). In chapter 24, the prophet is again to be seen as a sign. There, his lack of public mourning is to be interpreted to the people as the prophet being...
The motif of the prophet and his actions being a sign, or paradigm, to ‘the house of Israel’ is an explicit one within the book of Ezekiel. Understanding of Ezekiel as a ‘sign’ or ‘paradigm’ can be refined further, though, since a paradigm can be either ‘descriptive’ or a ‘prescriptive’. Blank’s focus on ‘prophet as paradigm’, at least in his discussion of the book of Ezekiel, deals exclusively with the prophet as a descriptive paradigm. What is true of the prophet will be true, by analogy, of the people. While not wanting to minimise this dimension of Ezekiel as a ‘descriptive’ paradigm, I want to contend that, with regard to the prophet’s portrayed response to the word of Yahweh, Ezekiel functions as a prescriptive paradigm — his behaviour is a model that should be followed. It is not necessarily that what is true of the prophet will be true of the house of Israel, but that what is true of the prophet ought to be true of the house of Israel. That this is not a concept foreign to the book of Ezekiel is clear from the sign-act of Ezekiel’s lack of mourning for the death of his wife, though it may also be evident in Ezekiel’s release from speechlessness. In this sign-act, I shall argue that Ezekiel is portrayed as a prescriptive paradigm.

In 24:16-17, Yahweh announces that he will take away Ezekiel’s wife in death, and he instructs Ezekiel, ‘yet you shall not mourn or weep, nor shall your tears run down.’ Instead, he is to ‘groan (but) be silent (when doing so)’. In addition, Yahweh charges him, ‘Bind on your turban, and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover your upper lip or eat the bread of mourners.’ In v.18, although the timing is somewhat unclear, Ezekiel narrates how he did as he was instructed, and how his wife died. In 24:19ff., for the only time in the book, the narrative that has centred around the word of Yahweh coming to the prophet changes perspective. Here, Ezekiel’s addressees ask him the
meaning of his actions which he has obediently carried out in response to Yahweh’s command. Then the prophet actually addresses the exiles, recounting to them ‘the word of Yahweh’ which he has received.

In this word, it is apparent that the prophet’s behaviour with regard to the death of his wife is to be a ‘sign’ (םש תיט) to the exiles concerning their response to news of the fall of Jerusalem. This parallel between Ezekiel and the exiles is reinforced in a number of ways. First, explicitly, there are the phrases ‘and you will / shall do just as I have done (םש תיט עטיקה)’ (v. 22) and ‘according to all that he has done you shall do (םש תיט עטיקה)’ (v. 24). Secondly, there is the almost identical expression used to describe the one lost, whether Ezekiel’s wife or Jerusalem: ‘delight of your / their eyes (אדם עטיקה / ומגזר עטיקה)’. Thirdly, there are a number of identical verbs or phrases used to describe the reactions to the loss (e.g. עיי התשא לא זוקס (v. 22; cf. v. 17), על תמיר ולזרג (v. 22; cf. v. 17)), although the order is inverted.115

It has been debated whether Ezekiel is a sign in a descriptive or prescriptive sense. Since both predictive and instructional discourse tend to be marked by ווגהタル, and הייקוט often has a modal nuance when referring to the future, syntax alone is not determinative. Most commentators favour the descriptive sense: just as the prophet was struck dumb before the death of his wife, so too the exilic community would be struck with shock and would not mourn.116

There are potentially two main pieces of evidence in favour of the descriptive interpretation. First, the word ביס only occurs four times in the book (12:6, 11; 24:24, 27). In ch. 12, Ezekiel clearly acts as a descriptive sign of what will happen to the ‘prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel in it’ (12:10). However, in view of the different roles that Ezekiel plays in the different acts, this link is not conclusive. Secondly, in 33:10 the exiles seem to do exactly what Ezekiel has declared they will do, and there is no hint that such an action is an obedient one. In 24:23, Yahweh instructs Ezekiel to declare, ‘but you shall pine away in your iniquities’ (ורניי יUpdateTime). In 33:10, Yahweh recounts what his addressees have been saying: ‘Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we pine away because of them’ (רפי תשעתנו והמהאאינוו יליה).117 However, such a correspondence does not preclude a ‘prescriptive’ understanding. Greenberg suggests the ‘disputational’ form of the clause shows

115 These parallels make it clear that Ezekiel is not a sign representing Yahweh, a view that might otherwise seem possible because Ezekiel’s wife mirrors Jerusalem. See Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, p339. The awkwardness of the order and the change in person has led some (e.g. Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p504; Wevers, Ezekiel, pp192-93; cf. Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p345) to see vv.22-23 as secondary. However, both Block (Ezekiel 1-24, p787) and Allen (Ezekiel 20-48, p58) give good reasons to keep them.

116 E.g. Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p61; Cooke, Ezekiel, p269-71; Eichrodt, Ezekiel, pp344, 350; Wevers, Ezekiel, p194; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p508.

117 An almost identical phrase occurs in 4:17, where Yahweh declares that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will ‘waste away under their punishment’ (וטש עטיקה). See Renz, Rhetorical Function, p155 n62 for the translation. Cf. Lev. 26:39.
Yahweh’s verdict, not on their appropriate reaction to their sins, but on their inappropriate despair.\textsuperscript{118} In fact, it is possible to go further and question whether their reaction is in fact appropriate and obedient. The exiles’ protest in 33:17, 20 that ‘the way of the Lord is not just’ shows that they are still protesting their innocence; they have at best only superficially accepted responsibility.\textsuperscript{119} In fact, most commentators do not marshal this evidence. Mostly, the decision that the sign is descriptive arises from the view that the exiles’ grief at the destruction of loss of temple, sons and daughters will be so overwhelming that the exiles will be unable to carry out the usual mourning rituals. This explains Yahweh’s declaration that they will not mourn (מָסַר) or weep (לבות).\textsuperscript{120}

However, there are three factors which provide clear evidence either against the descriptive view or in favour of the prescriptive.

First, the notion that the grief would be so great that the exiles would be unable to perform the customary mourning rituals fails to deal with the fact that ‘rarely is grief so debilitating that no formal mourning customs are adhered to.’\textsuperscript{121}

Secondly, the descriptive view fails to distinguish between ‘grief’, the emotional response, and ‘mourning’, the public, social response.\textsuperscript{122} This distinction is essential both in the command to Ezekiel, where public acts of mourning are prohibited while inward groaning is sanctioned (שָׁמַע (v.17)), and in the command to the exiles in v.23, where mourning and weeping are proscribed (v.23a), but pining away on account of their sins and groaning to one another is permitted (v.23b).\textsuperscript{123} Odell concludes after surveying the David narratives in Samuel, the deaths of Aaron’s sons in Lev. 10 and prophetic commands to mourn, ‘the act of mourning appears to have little to do with the expression of grief; rather, it is concerned with establishing and severing ties between the living and the dead. Prohibitions against mourning reflect an attempt to dissociate from the deceased.’\textsuperscript{124}

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p673.
  \item Cf. Joyce, Divine Initiative, p144 n87. He suggests that פָּשְׁבָא in v.10 should be taken to refer not to (acknowledged) sins but rather to (underserved) punishments (cf. Dan. 8.12, 13; 9.24; Zech. 14.19).' This point has been criticised by Mein (Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, p207 n99), since it is hardly the most 'natural reading'. However, it is hard to evade the force of the continued complaints of injustice in vv.17, 20.
  \item See footnote 116 above.
  \item Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, p340. Friebel identifies seven other variants within the descriptive (he terms it 'predictive') view, and convincingly refutes each. See Friebel, Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s Sign-Acts, pp340-42.
  \item Odell, ‘Genre and Persona’, p201.
\end{itemize}
Thirdly, the context of the book as a whole makes it very difficult to see Ezekiel's lack of mourning as a descriptive sign: 'the concern of the book of Ezekiel is not so much the emotional reaction of the exilic community to the fall of Jerusalem, but the manner in which the community identifies with Jerusalem.'\(^{125}\)

It is better, then, to see Ezekiel's behaviour as paradigmatic in a prescriptive sense. The exiles are to feel 'joint responsibility' with those in Jerusalem for the fate of Jerusalem. Mourning as an expression of grief is wrong, because Yahweh was right to judge. Their groaning (v.23b) was not to be a mark of sorrow, but of their culpability. Understood in this way, it provides 'a contrast as to the focal point of the people's interests, shifting it from the tragedy of the judgment (the destruction of Jerusalem) to their own responsibility for their personal fate (their iniquities).'\(^{126}\) This also fits in well with the theme of the release of Ezekiel from his speechlessness, which is also a 'sign' (רָשָׁפָט) to them (24:27). There is a sense in which news of the destruction of Jerusalem signals a new era.

In summary, Ezekiel's lack of mourning, in particular,\(^{127}\) presents 'this living, breathing, radical-acting, flesh-and-blood prophet'\(^{128}\) as a prescriptive sign of how the people 'should respond to the circumstances, not predictive of how they would respond.'\(^{129}\) The prophet as a prescriptive paradigm of how the exiles should behave is not a concept alien to the book.

b) The narrative's portrayal of the prophet as a model

The conclusion that the prophet functions as a model is not based merely on the explicit instances of the prophet being termed a 'sign.' The narrative as a whole portrays the prophet as a model. This can be demonstrated by focusing on the ways in which the narrative identifies the prophet with the exiles - the similarities between the two - and on the ways in which the narrative distinguishes them in their response to the word of Yahweh - the distancing of the two.

\(^{125}\) Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, p155. In similar vein, Boadt comments, 'The prophet is forbidden to perform any sign of grief at the death of his wife. It is a very strong prophetic warning to the people. They are not to mourn for the loss of Jerusalem because it deserved the punishment it received (vv. 20-24).'</p>

\(^{126}\) Friebel, *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts*, p344. From a different perspective, that of Ezekiel 'symbolically foreshadowing, but by the same token also bearing, the punishment of exile to be meted out to his people', Glazov also sees Ezekiel's behaviour, as commanded in 24:17, as a prescriptive paradigm: 'Here Ezekiel is told that he is to suffer the death of his wife, the "delight of his eyes" without complaint as a sign to his fellow exiles that they ought to do as he has done when God takes away Jerusalem, the "delight of their eyes"'. Glazov, *Briddling of the Tongue*, pp272-73.

\(^{127}\) I suggested above that Ezekiel's release from speechlessness should also be understood in the same way. In addition, Friebel regards 21:11 (groaning) and 21:17 (crying out, striking the thigh) in a similar way. See Friebel, *Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts*, pp289-307.


The similarities between Ezekiel and the exiles

Though it is of course true that there are many experiences that are clearly unique to the prophet (such as the extraordinary visions), there are three main ways in which the similarities can be seen.

First, there are similarities as people. Though Ezekiel was to be a prophet ‘among them’ (2:5), and sat desolate ‘among them’ (3:15), he was not an alien among them. Twice in the book, Ezekiel is spoken of as a sentinel (3:16-21; 33:1-20). In 33:2, in the word of Yahweh that the prophet was to recount to the people, it is said in passing that the watchman was selected by the people. The people would ‘take one of their number as their sentinel’ (שָׂרָא הַנַּחַל שֵׁנָא). The word סְכִיּוֹן here ‘connotes scanning the entire populace to pick the best man.’ What is significant is that the sentinel comes from within, not from outside. Just as the people would take one from their own number as a sentinel to guard the city, so Yahweh had taken one from their number to warn the exiles. Ezekiel belonged to the exilic community. Closely paralleling this is Yahweh speaking of Ezekiel going to ‘the sons of your people’ (3:11; also 13:17; 33:2, 12, 17, 30; 37:18.). The force of the phrase can be seen in Lev. 19:17-18, where it is juxtaposed with ‘your brother’ (אִלְיוֹן), ‘your relation’ (אָבִית) and ‘your neighbour’ (אָבִית): the prophet is explicitly identified with the people whom he is addressing. The way in which Ezekiel is addressed also indicates the similarity between prophet and exiles as people. Throughout the book, he is never addressed as ‘Ezekiel’, but always as ‘son of man’ (שבט אֶזְכָּלָא). The phrase occurs ninety-three times in the book of Ezekiel. Twenty-three times, the focus is further emphasised with ‘and you’ (וַיִּתְּנָה). Block argues that this phrase emphasises his humanity rather than his mortality (which is not an issue in the book), his identification with his audience, and the distance from the one who has commissioned him. Though the gap between him and Yahweh is narrowed by Yahweh addressing him, the gap is re-established by the form of address. Though the prophet may speak for Yahweh, he stands with the people.

The second way in which similarities between the prophet and the exiles as people can be seen is in the similarities in their experiences. What I mean by this is not that Ezekiel was in exile, like those whom he was addressing, though this is obviously true. What I mean is that, within the context of the book, events that are true of the prophet are (or will be) seen to be true of the people too. We have already looked at one of the sign-acts that ought to be interpreted prescriptively. To this should be added other sign-acts which are illustrative of the experience of those in exile. For example, in 4:9-15, the

130 Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p672.
131 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p31; cf. also Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p131, and Renz, Rhetorical Function, p140, who comments, ‘Ezekiel is the human representative, not only as distinct from God (“only human”), but also as the first of many who are to follow his receptiveness of the word (a “proto-human”).’
diet that Ezekiel is to have, and the mode of cooking that he is to adopt, are to parallel
the experience of those in exile (v.13).

The third dimension of the similarities between Ezekiel and the exiles is the
similarity in situation with regard to the word of Yahweh. There are two ways in which
this similarity in relation to the word of Yahweh is evident. First, they both face the
same fate for obedience and for disobedience. As we noted above, though it is of course
true in chs. 3:16-21 and 33:1-20 that Yahweh’s word to Ezekiel as sentinel (i.e. ‘discharge
this commission and warn’), is different from his word to the exiles (i.e. ‘be
warned, the enemy is coming’), their destiny based on their response is the same. For
both, disobedience brings death, while obedience brings life. The second way in which
the prophet and his addressees correspond in their relationship to Yahweh’s word is one
created by the narrative as a whole. The book of Ezekiel is dominated by Yahweh
encountering the prophet both in word and vision. Of secondary importance is the
prophet’s performing of the commands he is given, uttering the words he has been told,
and the reaction of the addressees. This stress on the prophet as recipient, not as
speaker, as object, not as subject, causes the word of Yahweh (and Yahweh himself) to
be the focus of the book. As Renz comments, ‘the prophet is cast in the role not of a
mediator between Yahweh and his people, but of the first audience.’ 133 Thus ‘by
portraying himself as a listener rather than an initiator of speech, Ezekiel... through
representation of his own impressions and behavior, ...shows how hearers of God’s
word are to understand it and respond.’ 134 This is further reinforced by instances where
the ‘word’ that comes to Ezekiel is clearly meant for a wider audience, without any hint
that the prophet is meant to convey it (e.g. ch. 18, where Ezekiel is given no instruction
to speak the words he is given). When the word of Yahweh comes to the prophet
without instruction to speak, it is still in a public dialogical context.

In summary, the book portrays clearly the similarities between the prophet Ezekiel
and his exilic addressees as people, in their experiences, and in the fact that they are
both portrayed as recipients of Yahweh’s word.

(ii) The distancing of Ezekiel and the exiles
The previous section showed how the narrative highlights similarities between the
prophet and the exiles. If it is to be demonstrated that the book of Ezekiel portrays the
prophet’s response to the word of Yahweh, and not his addressees’, as the model, the
other necessary task is to show how the narrative clearly contrasts them with regard to
their response to that word. I have demonstrated above how the book portrays the
prophet’s response as one of obedience, and his addressees’ response as one of
disobedience. This section explores how these contrasting responses are exploited or
highlighted within the book.

133 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p137.
134 Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, p83; cf. Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p112.
There are three motifs, all occurring within the commissioning of the prophet, that serve in particular to contrast the two responses. First, there is that of rebelliousness. In 2:3-8, the house of Israel, Ezekiel's addressees, are clearly pictured as rebellious. Yahweh, however, makes it very clear that the prophet is to respond differently to the word of Yahweh that comes to him: 'But you, mortal, hear what I say to you; do not be rebellious (יהָלָכָה) like that rebellious house...' (2:8). Here, 'the prophet is warned not to let himself be infected by the Israelite disease - insubordination to the covenant Lord...'. The author of the book leads the addressees of the book to ask the question throughout the commissioning, and, indeed the rest of the book, 'Is Ezekiel being like that rebellious house?'

Secondly, there is the motif of 'hearing (with their ears). This is closely related to the theme of rebelliousness, since rebellion consists in not listening to the word of Yahweh. In 2:8, the prophet is instructed, 'Hear (שמעון) what I say to you.' Again, in 3:10, the prophet is told to 'hear with your ears ( uğraום תִּנְאַּקְוֹנָה)' (cf. also 3:17). The prophet's response to the word of Yahweh was to 'hear' the word that Yahweh spoke to him. The exiles' response was different. Already in the commissioning there has been an anticipation that the exiles will not hear (שמעון), reflected in the repeated 'whether they hear or refuse to hear' (2:5, 7; 3:11, 27; cf. 3:6, 7). In the narrative itself, as we have seen, they do not 'hear.' In 12:2, they, like the prophet, have ears to hear. However, unlike the prophet, they do not hear. The same is true in 33:30-33. It is with irony that the narrative recounts their call to each other, 'Come and hear what the word is that comes from Yahweh!' Again, their hearing is valueless, because it does not penetrate their hearts.

The third motif is that of the 'heart.' In 3:10, Ezekiel is instructed, 'receive in your heart (לִבּוּן) all the words that Yahweh shall speak to him. The order of the phrases, 'receive in your heart and hear with your ears' is a strange one. Blenkinsopp sees the order as reflecting 'the way in which prophetic communications were thought to be received: first, as an impulse in the heart (we would say, mind), then in a form that is intelligible and communicable...'. A more plausible explanation comes from Greenberg, who suggests that the strange order is explicable as a *hysteron proteron* 'in which what (chrono)logically is last in a series is placed first owing to its importance.' Another possible reason, he suggests, is 'the desire to resume the topic *לב* (ab) "heart," which has been suspended since vs. 7.' In view of the other contrasts

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135 They are described as 'rebellious' (יהָלָכָה) in 2:5, 6, 7, 8 (cf. 3:9); the verb יָרָם is predicated of their ancestors, and clearly of the exiles too ('to this day') in 2:3.
136 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p123.
137 Allen (Ezekiel 1-19, p13) describes it as 'awkward', and notes Ehrlich's comment that it is a mark of Ezekiel's 'inelegant diction.'
138 Blenkinsopp, Ezekiel, p27.
139 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p69.
140 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, pp69-70.
established between the prophet and the exiles, both of Greenberg’s explanations are likely. The receptivity of Ezekiel’s heart is to contrast with the hard-heartedness of the exiles (2:4; 3:7), a contrast that is developed throughout the book.

E. SUMMARY / CONCLUSIONS

We have seen, then, that the book of Ezekiel does not simply portray the disobedience of the exiles to Yahweh’s word and a future obedience to that word; it also presents to its addressees the prophet Ezekiel as a prescriptive paradigm of obedience – the exiles are to respond to Yahweh’s word as he has done. Such a paradigmatic role is apparent both from the book’s presentation of the prophet’s obedience and from its clear establishment of him as a model, both by explicit references to him as a (prescriptive) sign, and the similarities and differences between Ezekiel and his audience. Only then will the vision of the future be a present reality for the exiles.

At this point the objection might be raised that it is most implausible for a prophet to have such a significant role in a book that focuses on his oracles. However, a number of scholars have highlighted the prominence of the persona Ezekiel in the book. Collins observes that ‘Ezekiel is remarkable for the important place it gives to the individuality of the prophet whose name it bears’, and he notes in particular the strong connections between the portrayal of Ezekiel, on the one hand, and Elijah and Elisha on the other. 141 Similarly, McKeating identifies a number of parallels between Moses and Ezekiel, both of structure (the three visionary experiences) and content (especially in chs. 40-48). 142 Odell, too, in her examination of the prohibition against Ezekiel’s mourning, notes the important part played by the prophet’s persona, and suggests that at least part of the impetus for such characterisation may lie in Esarhaddon’s Babylonian inscriptions. 143 Finally, Patton explores what it means for the central figure of the book, Ezekiel, to be portrayed as a priest, and why there is such a portrayal. 144 It is certainly plausible, then, for the persona Ezekiel within the book to be a model. Whether this was at his own instigation, or was the work of the author of the book, is harder to say. Collins does not commit himself. 145 That it could come from the prophet himself is apparent from the role Ezekiel plays in the restoration of the dry bones: ‘in ch. 37 of Ezekiel the prophet is invited to stop being a mere spectator and to become an active participant in the drama he is describing. The restoration of the bones to life only happens, and happens in at least two stages, at the instigation of Ezekiel himself’. 146

141 Collins, Mantle of Elijah, p100.
142 McKeating, ‘Ezekiel the “Prophet like Moses”?’., pp99ff.
145 Collins, Mantle of Elijah, p101.
146 McKeating, ‘Ezekiel the “Prophet like Moses”?’, p106 (his emphasis). Fox sees Ezekiel as ‘an essentially passive spectator’ here (‘Rhetoric’, p9); so too Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p171.
There is also a different kind of problem that needs addressing. This is a problem for the addressees of the book. The history of the house of Israel that the book portrays is that of rebellion from first to last (ch. 20). The vision of restoration portrays a return to the land on a permanent basis (cf. chs. 38-39), which is accompanied by, and dependent upon a renewed obedience for continued residence in the land. The critical questions for the readers of the book are precisely how such obedience would come about, and how it would be ensured, given this catalogue of failure which extended even to Ezekiel’s intended audience. This will be the subject of the next chapter. The answer, as I shall argue, lies in the prophet’s experience of נַעַר, which will be mirrored in the exiles’ experience.

However, this downplays the significance of Ezekiel’s speaking. See Klein, Ezekiel, p155 n9. Renz (Rhetorical Function, p205) adopts something of a mediating position, regarding the וֹגֵּאתוּל verb forms which describe Ezekiel’s actions (vv. 7, 8, 10) as marking statements that are ‘off-line’. This is possible, given the prominence of וֹגֵּאתוּל forms elsewhere in the narrative. It is difficult to be certain, since v.2 also opens with a וֹגֵּאתוּל (וֹגֵּאתוּל) where a וֹגֵּאתוּל might have been expected, and the move away from וֹגֵּאתוּל to וֹ with the simple gatał is evident in Ezekiel (e.g. 11:6; 18:10) and characteristic of late biblical Hebrew. See Rooker, Biblical Hebrew in Transition, p101.
CHAPTER 6: RESPONDING TO YAHWEH’S WORD - THE ACTION OF YAHWEH’S SPIRIT

In the previous chapter, we observed how there is symmetry in the book of Ezekiel between the portrayals of judgement and restoration. We saw how it depicts the disobedience of Ezekiel’s addressees as something that endures throughout the prophet’s ministry. At the same time, we noted how the book also looks forward to a day when the exilic house of Israel will again be characterised by a renewed obedience. I argued that this dichotomy serves to demonstrate to the exilic addressees of the book that the unresponsiveness of Ezekiel’s addressees was not surprising; the prophet was not a failure. Further, it provides a powerful call to the book’s addressees to distance themselves from the response of Ezekiel’s addressees. Finally, I argued that the book portrays the prophet Ezekiel as a model of the obedience that is both desired and required. The chapter closed by observing that there is potentially a problem. Given the history of the house of Israel is marked at every point by rebellion, the pressing question for the book’s addressees would be how such a vision could become a reality.¹

In this chapter, I shall expand further on the paradigmatic nature of the prophet’s experience. Ezekiel provides not just a paradigm of future obedience, but also points to the way by which such a vision of the future becomes a reality. I shall argue first that is essential for the prophet’s obedience to Yahweh’s word, and that, in turn, provides the link between the present disobedience of the exiles and their future obedience. It is to this action of within transformation that we shall now turn. First we shall look at the prophet’s obedience, and then at the exiles.

A. ISR AND EZEKIEL’S OBEDIENCE

There are three main places where the impact of on the prophet and his obedience can be seen. All are within those passages that we have already examined from the perspective of prophetic inspiration. This should not be surprising, since our discussion of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration and ‘potentiating’ inspiration focused on those instances where is intimately linked not with the content of the prophet’s message, but with his life.

The first, and the most important, instance is that in Ezek. 2:2. Confronted with a vision of a figure which was ‘the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh’ (1:28), Ezekiel had fallen on his face. Then he heard ‘the voice of someone speaking’ (1:28). The voice commanded him, ‘Son of man, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you.’ V.2 continues, ‘And when he spoke to me, entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me.’

¹ Cf. ‘How then can we live?’ (33:10). See further below.
We have already examined in some detail the nature of מְרִיד here and its relationship to the word that Yahweh spoke. I concluded that, while the use of מְרִיד is deliberately ambiguous here, Yahweh is still the source of its action, and that מְרִיד functions not to communicate the words, but to revive the prophet, so that he is enabled to hear and to respond to Yahweh’s word. It is, in fact, possible to go further than this. A comparison between v.1 and v.2 (see Table 10) points to the fact that מְרִיד brings about Ezekiel’s obedience to the command that Yahweh has given.

Table 10. Comparison of Ezek. 2:1 and 2:2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>v.1 – Yahweh’s command</th>
<th>v.2 – Ezekiel’s response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>מְרִיד כִּי נִרְאָבָה וְנִקְדִּישָּה</td>
<td>נִכְבִּא אֶחָד אֶפְרָי אֵלֵי</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יִכְבִּי נִרְאָבָה</td>
<td>נִכְבִּי נִרְאָבָה</td>
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<td>נִכְבִּי נִרְאָבָה</td>
<td>נִכְבִּי נִרְאָבָה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The command to ‘stand’ in v.1 is answered directly in v.2 by מְרִיד entered me...and stood me up.' Of the eighty-five instances of the hifil of מְרִיד in the Old Testament, this instance and Ezek. 3:24 are the only ones where there is what would otherwise be understood as an ‘impersonal’ subject. Here, explicitly, מְרִיד is the agent that brings about Ezekiel’s obedience to the command that Yahweh has uttered, and sets the prophet on his feet before Yahweh, so that he may serve him. At the outset of the book, in response to the first command that the prophet receives from Yahweh, מְרִיד brings about obedience to that command. Redpath has expressed succinctly the nature of the work of מְרִיד here: ‘Man cannot fulfil God’s word without His Spirit “preventing” him (in the old sense of the word).’

The second instance is the similar phrase in 3:24, where again מְרִיד sets the prostrate prophet on his feet. Though this is not a response to Yahweh’s command, the agency of Yahweh’s ‘hand’ (v.22) and מְרִיד (v.24) follows directly from the commission in 3:16-21, where the question is raised for the readers of the book, ‘Will Ezekiel be obedient to his commission?’ Here, Ezekiel ‘is empowered by the spirit to stand and so assume the prophetic position of a servant standing in the presence of his divine master, like Elijah and other prophets’. As the readers of the book will know, Ezekiel was indeed obedient both to the immediately subsequent commands (3:25-27), and to his commission in general.

2 See above, pp77ff. and especially pp102ff.

3 For the hifil of מְרִיד being used of someone presenting another before Yahweh, see e.g. Gen. 47:7; Lev. 14:11; Num. 5:16. For the notion of a prophet ‘standing’ before Yahweh, see 1 Kgs. 17:1; 18:15; 2 Kgs. 3:14; 5:16; Jer. 15:19.

4 Cf. Hildebrandt’s comment: ‘The task of Ezekiel as presented in 2:3-8 is clearly a difficult one that will bring much opposition and thus requires much divine help. In 2:2 the rûah is described as coming into Ezekiel, implying possession by the Spirit for the completion of his role (3:1-11).’ Hildebrandt, Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God, p189.


6 Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, pp60-61.
The third place, or better, way, in which נָני can be seen to be integral to the prophet’s obedience is the compelling action of נָני within the visions that Ezekiel receives (3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 37:1; 43:5). This is particularly evident in 3:14-15. In 3:11, Ezekiel had been told ‘then go to the exiles... (נָני בָּא אֶל הַנֵּלָעָר).’ The narrative account of his movement once Yahweh’s speech finishes highlights the agency of נָני. In 3:14, Ezekiel relates, ‘The spirit (נָני) lifted me up and bore me away; I went (נָני)... and I came to the exiles... (נָני אֶל הַנֵּלָעָר).’ The fact that the action of נָני in transporting Ezekiel opens the narrative in 3:12 after the commissioning speech and is then repeated in 3:14 highlights not the movement of Yahweh’s glory (3:12aβ-13), which is ‘parenthetical’, but the action of נָני, which is ‘paramount’. These instances, along with Yahweh’s hand and verbs expressing Yahweh’s acting upon Ezekiel, point to Yahweh bringing about the prophet’s obedience to him. The prophet is one constrained by Yahweh. Sometimes explicitly mentioned, but always present, Yahweh is one who generates the obedience of his prophet.

The picture, then, is of נָני being intimately involved in bringing about the prophet’s obedience to Yahweh. This is not to say that the book portrays the prophet as passive (cf. 3:22-24). Nonetheless, the involvement of נָני in the ministry of the prophet, especially in 2:2, points to a prophet constrained by Yahweh, and whose obedience is effected by נָני. Further, the agency of נָני is clearly at the initiative of Yahweh – it is at the instigation of Yahweh that נָני brings about the prophet’s obedience. Finally, and perhaps most strikingly, the action of נָני as agent in 2:2 and 3:24 is not simply external, seizing the prophet like an object, but is now internal.

B. נָני AND THE EXILES’ OBEDIENCE

When we turn to the exiles and to their (future) obedience, we are at once faced with a tension created by two apparently contradictory facts. The tension requires exploration because Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s נָני are closely bound up with it. In this section, I shall argue that the action of נָני, rightly understood, sheds some light on a possible synthesis.

The first fact is that, as we have seen, the book of Ezekiel presents the call to repentance not as something which simply belonged to a phase in Ezekiel’s ministry, but as something which still applies to its exilic addressees. Drawing on this, the

7 Schwartz, 'Concentric Structure', p110.
8 Pace Schüngel-Straumann (Ｒｉａḥ, pp43-44), who argues that נָני does not simply replace the personal initiative of the prophet. Ezekiel can also act himself in other places at the command of God.’ (‘רֶוחַ ersetzt nicht einfach die persönliche Initiative des Propheten. Ezechiel kann auf Befehl Gottes an anderen Stellen auch selbst handeln.’) For her, it is only when his own power is lacking that נָני enters. Then it should be translated not as ‘spirit’ but as ‘(God’s) vital force’ (Gottes Lebenskraft). However, we have seen how this נָני brings about Ezekiel’s obedience and sets him on his feet. Further, the open-ended entering of נָני in 3:24 can be seen to pertain to the rest of Ezekiel’s ministry, particularly when comparisons with Ezek. 37:1-14 are borne in mind. See further below.
9 Cf. Lys, Ｒｉａḥ, p131.
relationship between judgement and restoration could, potentially, be depicted as in Figure 3. Such a picture portrays restoration as the result of repentance and future obedience.

![Diagram of relationship between judgement and restoration]

Figure 3. The place of obedience as might be suggested by the presence of ongoing calls to repentance

However, Figure 3 is clearly erroneous when the fact of these ongoing calls to repentance is set alongside another, apparently contradictory fact: restoration is the result of Yahweh’s sovereign initiative. The book of Ezekiel makes this sovereign initiative clear in a number of ways.

First, as Joyce, in particular, has pointed out, Yahweh’s motive for delivering Israel is not a quality or an action of Israel upon which Yahweh is contingent, but is something within Yahweh himself. He delivers them for the sake of his ‘name’ (36:22). This contrasts with the picture found in Leviticus 26, where blessings are contingent on the obedience of the people.

Secondly, while it is a mistake to distinguish between a ‘spiritual restoration’ and a ‘physical, national one,’ or to regard them as strictly sequential, since both are inextricably linked and the order is not maintained consistently in the book, it is important to note that the images used to describe the restoration of Israel — that of ‘a creation, resurrection, exodus, or a new gift of the land’ are ‘activities which by definition are solely the work of God.’

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10 See Joyce, Divine Initiative, pp97-103.
12 As Greenberg does when he comments ‘first, the dispersed would be gathered and brought to their land, while still in their unregenerate state... there they would be purged of their pollution – absolved from their guilt – by a unilateral act of God’ (Ezekiel 21-37, p735).
14 So 36:24-27 seems to envisage restoration to the land, followed by ‘spiritual renewal’, while 37:14 envisages a new ἁμάρτημα before restoration to the land. See Renz, Rhetorical Function, p207.
16 As reflected in the language of the exodus tradition (36:24; 37:12); cf. Hals, Ezekiel, p270.
17 Klein, Israel in Exile, p84.
Thirdly, in chs. 40-48, neither Israel nor the new king of 34:23-24 are involved in the building of the new temple, the design of the worship or the appointment of priests. As Ackroyd comments, 'reorganization depends upon the presence of God and is not a prerequisite of it.' The presence of Yahweh (43:1-5), in turn, follows from the temple built by Yahweh (40-42); it is 'his building.' It is not an exaggeration, then, to say that chs. 34-48 as a section 'describes the kingship of Yahweh as the beginning and end of Israel's transformation' or that 'the promised future in Ezekiel is solely the product of God's monergistic actions.'

Precisely how calls to repentance can be related to Yahweh's sovereign initiative at every stage has taxed many scholars. Such a question is particularly relevant for our purposes because, as Joyce's Divine Initiative explores, this apparent antinomy is encapsulated by the command for the exiles to get for themselves a 'new heart and a new spirit' (18:30-31) and the promise of Yahweh to give to the exiles 'one / a new heart and a new spirit' (11:19; 36:26).

Commentators naturally have addressed this tension between the promise and the command. Calvin sees the call in 18:31 as God showing the people 'their duty' such that when 'they acknowledge that they cannot discharge it, they fly to the aid of the Holy Spirit, so that the outward exhortation becomes a kind of instrument which God used to confer the grace of his Spirit.' Cooke reconciles the different perspectives by suggesting that 'the full truth is arrived at by combining the two statements,' and he points to Philippians 2:12-13. Greenberg, commenting on 18:31, sees this as 'a human capacity' to get 'a new heart and a new spirit.' He notes that Ezekiel is alone in ascribing to man such a capacity, that it is unique within Ezekiel, and that, elsewhere, the people's incorrigibility is stressed (chs. 16, 20). He comments: 'This singular empowering of the people, so contrary to the general mood of the book, is of a piece with the liberating, encouraging tidings of this oracle, designed as an antidote to despair.' With regard to 36:26-27, Greenberg sees that human freedom is curtailed by

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19 Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, p115 n59.
20 Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, p115.
22 Klein, Israel in Exile, p95; cf. Ackroyd's comment, 'All this is effected by divine action and by that alone. The new life is divinely given (cf. ch. 36, 37); the reordered land is made what it is by God; the new Temple is his building' (Exile and Restoration, p115); more recently, see also Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, pp239-55 and Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, pp160-73.
24 Cooke, Ezekiel, p391.
25 Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p341.
Yahweh’s action, such that there is ‘enforced obedience’. Rather than attempt to reconcile the two, he says that Ezekiel ‘vacillates between calling on the exiles to repent and despairing of their capacity for it.’ Nonetheless, ‘there is no question that for him the change of human nature was not an act of grace.’ Greenberg’s approach does not allow for any reconciliation of the two perspectives. Instead, the exigencies of the situation in ch. 18 justify the unique emphasis on human responsibility. In similar vein, Block maintains that the use of the imperative in 18:30-31 ‘does not mean that Ezekiel believes his audience capable of moral and spiritual self-transformation. The command...is a rhetorical device, highlighting the responsibility of the nation for their present crisis and pointing the way to the future.’ Thus it is ‘the contextual emphasis on personal human responsibility’ in 18:30-31 that gives rise to that call to repentance, while the dominant perspective is on Yahweh’s restorative actions. Zimmerli comments that ‘18:31...offers to faith, as something to be taken hold of, what is promised as a gift in 11:19.’ The ‘logical tensions’ serve to show that ‘in the divine salvation man never appears simply as a vague object, but always as the purposeful subject of grace for a new beginning.’ Four other contributions to the debate also merit particular attention: those of Joyce, Matties, Mein and Lapsley.

Joyce, in defending a pre-587 date for chapter 18, suggests two reasons for calls to repentance before the final disaster. The first is to ‘underline Israel’s responsibility for the inevitable punishment.’ The second is to say that ‘this is not what Yahweh would wish for Israel.’ Joyce denies, however, that an aversion of the final disaster is possible. The call functions as a rhetorical device, with no expectation of success. In his diachronic solution to the tension between the calls to repentance and Yahweh’s sovereign initiative, it is only after the fall of Jerusalem that Yahweh acts in a sovereign way to bring about the restoration without the repentance or involvement of the exiles. He concludes that, since ‘obedience is guaranteed, it would seem that the responsibility of Israel has been subsumed in the overriding initiative of Yahweh.’

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26 Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p735.
28 Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p737.
29 Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p588.
30 Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p355 n89.
31 Cf. Verhoef’s comment, ‘This admonition does not suggest what they can do, but what they ought to do: what God requires from everyone of them. God alone can give them a new heart and spirit.’ Pieter A. Verhoef, ‘דְּנַנ’, NIDOTTE 2, p36 (his emphasis).
32 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p262.
33 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p386.
35 Joyce, Divine Initiative, p57.
36 Joyce, Divine Initiative, p127.
Joyce is right to say that repentance would not avert disaster for Jerusalem, but he underestimates the significance of the fact that the oracle in ch. 18, and indeed the other calls to repentance, are directed towards the exiles. Repentance, leading to life, is a possibility, indeed a necessity, for the exiles. Even if, with Raitt, such calls to repentance were not part of Ezekiel’s preaching to the exiles after the fall of Jerusalem, still the book portrays repentance as necessary for its exilic addressees.

Matties focuses on ch. 18 as a ‘hinge text, offering a way of being in the liminal moment between judgment and transformation.’ Given this perspective, it is not surprising that he gives particular weight to the ‘call to conversion’ in 18:30-32. He argues that ‘the call to repentance is a fundamental facet of Hebrew moral discourse.’ This call should not be misunderstood either as indicating that repentance would avert judgement, nor as indicating that salvation is guaranteed. ‘Rather, the exhortation serves as the basic statement of human responsibility in a cosmos that is characterized by order.’ Yet this call is a real ‘call to life’, with a real ‘possibility of action’. He tries to reconcile this with ‘divine action’ by observing that ‘keeping tōrá is based ultimately on the prior act of God in deliverance.’ However, the ambiguity that he discerns in the place of human moral responsibility also characterises his own treatment. In his discussion of the relationship between ‘divine enablement and human responsibility’, he notes ‘the fact that people are not capable of responding faithfully’ (cf. 33:10; 37:11). He is right, in my judgement, to comment,

‘By offering the human alternative in chap. 18, in the midst of judgment, the prophet suggests that divine intervention beyond the present experience is not the only option for the exilic community. By fashioning its own character as a tōrá-keeping peoplehood, Israel in exile is already participating in the divine intention of restoration.’

The relationship between present and future is not as sharply delineated as most commentators argue. However, it is neither clear why he has privileged ch. 18 in this fashion, nor is it clear how divine enablement relates to human responsibility.

Mein reconciles the two in carefully-argued fashion. For him, the calls to repentance found particularly in chs. 14 and 18 represent genuine calls to repentance to

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37 Joyce, Divine Initiative, pp55-60.
38 Matties, Ezekiel 18, p208.
39 Matties, Ezekiel 18, pp105-109.
40 Matties, Ezekiel 18, p108.
42 Matties, Ezekiel 18, p109; the second phrase is from n200.
44 Matties, Ezekiel 18, p110.
45 Matties, Ezekiel 18, pp205-208.
46 Matties, Ezekiel 18, p207.
47 Matties, Ezekiel 18, p207. See further below.
those in exile. However, for him, the language of ‘life’ that is at stake in these chapters is not related directly to life in the land that is spoken of in the salvation that is Yahweh’s act, and Yahweh’s alone. Rather, it is related to the temple and worship there. To the extent that Yahweh is a sanctuary to some extent in the exile (cf. 11:16), the now powerless Jerusalem elite can experience some kind of ‘life’ in exile. Noting the comparisons with 1 Kgs. 8:50, he comments, ‘it looks as if repentance will bring blessing in exile rather than a return from exile’. The exilic community remain wholly passive in the ‘promises of salvation’ that ‘appear extravagant and unrealistic’ when set alongside the oracles of judgement and the ‘present status of the exiles’. Mein argues persuasively that there is in chs. 14, 18 (and 33) a more ‘domestic’ purview reflecting the change of circumstances in exile. He is also right to notice the lack of explicit links between ‘life’ and ‘land’ in ch. 18. However, within the context of the book of Ezekiel, ‘life’ in ch. 18 is associated with the acquisition of ‘a new heart’ and ‘a new spirit’ (18:31-32). In ch. 36, these are explicitly part of Yahweh’s eschatological gift to his people. Further, in ch. 37:12-14, ‘life’ is clearly associated directly with return to the land. Mein provides no obvious reason for the shift in the solution for the exiles’ hopelessness, from calls to repentance (after the cry, ‘Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?’ (33:10)) to the declaration of unconditional salvation in 37:1-14 (in response to the cry, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely’ (37:11)).

Lapsley’s work is aimed directly at the question of the relationship between calls to repentance and declarations of divine sovereign initiative in restoration. She surveys in depth the tension between these two perspectives, and concludes that the ‘inconsistencies’ found in Ezekiel provide evidence of a tension that is fundamentally irreconcilable between two different anthropologies. The call to the exiles to repent and get for themselves a new heart and a new spirit (18:30-32) reveals an anthropology that conflicts with the anthropology implicit in the deterministic language evident both

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48 Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, p207. Although he overstates the degree of responsibility claimed by the exiles in 33:10, he rightly observes the importance of the phrase ‘turn and live’ in ch. 18 and the greater emphasis on the wicked man who repents in ch. 33 over against the one in ch. 18.
49 So Walther Zimmerli, “‘Leben” und “Tod’”, pp494-508; idem, Ezekiel 1, p382, followed by Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, p210.
50 Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, pp208-11 (quotation from p211).
51 Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, p220.
52 Cf. footnote 17 on p158 above.
53 Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, p209.
54 Mein does speak of the shift ‘from responsibility to passivity’ (Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, ch. 7), but he ties both the (albeit limited) possibility of repentance and passivity to the circumstances of the exile. That the fall of Jerusalem is not the reason for the shift is clear, for ‘Ezekiel’s community in exile have already experienced this loss [of institutions the serve to mediate between the people and Yahweh], and their situation before 587 in some ways anticipates that of the whole nation after the disaster.’ Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, p214 (my emphasis).
55 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, ch. 2.
56 Her particular contribution, as I noted above (p10), is to focus on the tension not so much for what it reveals about Ezekiel’s theology, but for what it reveals about his anthropology.
in chs. 16, 20, 23, 24 and in the promises that Yahweh will give his people a new heart and a new spirit (11:19; 36:26). The former anthropology, which she sees as the dominant one until Ezekiel, but as ‘waning’ in Ezekiel, regards people as ‘capable of understanding their moral failings and transforming themselves.’ The latter anthropology sees this capacity for moral virtue as available only as a gift from Yahweh. The need for an ‘organ transplant’ (11:19; 36:26) provides evidence that their moral ‘equipment’ is ‘not right’. In chs. 1-33, Ezekiel is ‘vacillating principally between two models of the moral self’. In chs. 34(?)-48, the new moral self is portrayed as a gift from Yahweh. Further, this new moral self has its focus not in action, in doing the right thing, but in knowledge of Yahweh. This is critical for her understanding of human freedom. The main places where action is predicated of the new moral self are 11:20 and 36:27. However, this action arises willingly out of the newly created moral self. She quotes Fox with approval, ‘When one has God’s spirit in him he does God’s will because he wants to do God’s will.’ Yahweh is directly involved in obedience, insofar as he is the giver of the new moral identity. However, for Lapsley, ‘the right moral actions of these newly created people will flow naturally out of this knowledge.’ Human freedom, then, is in a profound sense preserved.

Lapsley argues clearly and, particularly in her analysis of the new moral identity, persuasively. At the same time, the polarisation of the two anthropologies that she sees in the book is a bit too neat, and it hardly helps the rhetorical persuasiveness of the book, even if the more deterministic view, giving rise to the new moral self as Yahweh’s gift, prevails. The ‘over-neatness’ can be seen, for example, if we consider the question, ‘How “virtuous” is the “moral self” in passages which call the exiles to repentance?’ In 18:31, the call to ‘get for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit’ implies, for Lapsley, an ability to respond. However, the fact that they need ‘a new heart and a new spirit’ is, according to Lapsley, itself evidence that their moral equipment is corrupt. In other words, on Lapsley’s reasoning, these verses do not in fact call for the possible, but for the impossible. Once this is recognised, calls to repentance elsewhere cannot be seen necessarily as implying an underlying anthropology which speaks of the virtuous moral self.

57 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p106.
58 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p106.
59 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, pp104-105.
60 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p157.
61 Lapsley (Can These Bones Live?) speaks on p157 of vacillation in chs. 1-36. However in her summary on p183, Ezekiel’s ‘struggle’ is evident in chs. 1-33. On p159, the final section of the book is characterised as chs. 36-48. On p186, the final chapters are chs. 35-48.
63 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p182.
64 Though not in a total sense, because there is also an ‘absence of human freedom’ implicit, for her, in the fact that ‘the people in Ezekiel who are transformed by God’s action are for the most part not depicted as possessing the freedom to choose or refuse this gracious gift.’ Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p188.
65 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, pp103-106.
It will be helpful at this moment to pause and reflect. The picture of restoration that the book paints is one where Yahweh’s restoration is not established or precipitated by renewed obedience as a self-initiated act of the exiles. Rather, renewed obedience is established and maintained by Yahweh’s restoration, and is part of that restoration. Since Ezekiel’s promises present a picture of future security, Yahweh’s intervention cannot merely provide a renewed stage in which Israel will have another opportunity to repeat her history of rebellion and failure. Yahweh’s intervention, bringing about a change in attitudes and behaviour, will ensure that the history of rebellion and failure will never be repeated. I have represented this in Figure 4.

![Figure 4. Divine Initiative in Restoration.](image)

Since the calls to repentance are for the exiles, and point to ‘a wholesale reorientation of life and an internal change in disposition’ as ‘prerequisites for positive divine action,’ yet the exiles are ‘dead’, a self-initiated response to Yahweh is inconceivable, and future salvation seems to be the work of Yahweh alone, the readers of the book would need to know how such a future vision could become a reality.

The importance of the route from the present to the future is not always acknowledged. Mein argues from a sociological perspective for Ezekiel’s salvation oracles being an example of ‘the use of dramatic future hopes as a focus of communal solidarity’ that is characteristic of communities that have experienced disaster, deprivation and not comprised of those ‘at the very bottom of the social ladder’.

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66 Though the careful guarding of access in chs. 40-48 and the presence of a renewed sacrificial system indicates that ‘the possibility of error remains’, though at a ‘level’ that is ‘presumably tolerable’. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live?*, p188.
Further, he suggests that Ezekiel instantiates a wider phenomenon, whereby ‘activism’ in the face of domination tends to give way to ‘passive revolutionism’ when it becomes apparent that action on the part of those dominated is impossible or will make no impact. This ‘passive revolutionism’ is marked by ‘reliance...entirely on supernatural action.’ The shaping of communities by such oracles is an important observation, as is the emphasis on ‘supernatural action’. However, for Ezekiel’s addressees, and, by extension, for the book’s addressees, the expansive vision of the future alone is not sufficient. The burning question for the exiles is how to be part of that future. This is clear from their question in 33:10, ‘How then can we live?’, a pertinent question in view of the sifting evident in 20:32-44 and 34:17-22. In what follows, I shall argue that Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones does just that. Integral in this vision, and indeed integral in Yahweh’s intervention for the sake of his name, is rtr.

1. How the vision of the future becomes a present reality: Ezek. 37:1-14

This is almost certainly the most well-known part of the book, and has received extensive attention. The hand of Yahweh picks Ezekiel up, and brings him by the spirit of Yahweh to a valley that is full of bones. After Yahweh has shown him the full extent of the bones, Yahweh asks the prophet whether they can live, a question ‘calculated to heighten wonder.’ Though Ezekiel answers ‘politely,’ his answer should not be interpreted as evasive. The dialogical approach has rhetorical force, engaging the readers. Yahweh’s words are an invitation, a question, that confronts not just Ezekiel, but the book’s hearers as they look around: ‘Can these bones live?’ ‘How can they live?’ ‘Who will make them live?’ The emphasis should be focused not on the locutionary act, but on the illocutionary: ‘What is Yahweh doing in asking the question?’ Similarly, the lack of closure in Ezekiel’s reply, with neither a positive or negative answer, induces reader involvement. At one level of course there was no

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72 Cf. also the despairing cry of 37:11, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ In a different context, compare the words of the man who ran up to Jesus in Mark 10:17, ‘What must I do to inherit eternal life?’
74 Fox, ‘Rhetoric’, p11.
75 Fox, ‘Rhetoric’, p11.
76 Pace Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet sein Volk neu, p326.
possibility (cf. Job 14:14). At the same time, Yahweh both ‘kills and makes alive’ (1 Sam. 2:6). More than that, he is the creator.⁷⁷ The barely believable possibility is left open.⁷⁸

Then Yahweh gives a prophetic word for Ezekiel to utter to the bones. That word stresses the כוח that Yahweh will ‘bring’ (נברך) (v.5) and ‘give’ () (v.6), for the revivifying כוח is mentioned twice. In v.5, the essence of the revivification is spelled out, ‘I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.’ In v.6, the entire process is outlined. After being embodied, the bones shall ‘live’ (םייח) (v.6) and shall, by way of climax ‘know that I am Yahweh’ (mination Qnnn vision, however, in response to that first prophetic word, culminate in a puzzling, even astonishing, anti-climax at the end of v.8, which seems to interrupt the flow: ‘but there was no breath in them (םי הנ).’⁷⁹ Within the vision, there needs to be another word uttered, summoning כוח to come from the four winds, before the embodied bones can be on their feet, alive. Such an anti-climax demands an explanation.⁸⁰

As noted above,⁸¹ the two-stage vision of life for the bones resonates with the creation account in Gen. 2:7 and its context; the presence of two stages (forming, then in-breathing), the repetition of כוח (Gen. 2:7, Ezek. 37:9), the goal of becoming ‘living’ (Gen. 2:7 - תינק; Ezek. 37:6 - מיתר);⁸² the ‘setting’ (הנ; Gen. 2:15; Ezek. 37:14)⁸³ in their ‘land’ (母校; Gen. 2:5; Ezek. 37:12, 14)⁸⁴ and the ‘movement from chaos to order’⁸⁵ point in this direction. The fact that ‘breath’ in Gen. 2:7 is תינק should not be seen as significant, since the need to exploit the polysemous nature of כוח in 37:1-14 makes it impossible for the breath that entered the bones to be תינק, and by the time of the exile, the two words clearly had overlapping semantic domains (cf. Gen. 7:22; Isa. 42:5).⁸⁶ Hals sees this link with creation as a sufficient explanation. The two-staged

⁷⁷ See further below and Kutsko, Between Heaven and Earth, pp138-39 n143.
⁷⁸ So Schüngel-Straumann, Rūah, p56.
⁷⁹ It is interesting to note that Allen’s translation can accidentally miss out this phrase ‘but there was no breath in them’, yet it still makes sense! (Ezekiel 20-48, p181).
⁸⁰ It will be apparent from what follows that I am not persuaded by those who appeal to redactional activity to explain the two stages (e.g. Höfken, ‘Beobachtungen’, pp307-308; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet sein Volk neu, pp290-93; Wahl, “‘Tod und Leben”’, pp224ff.; Pohlmann, Der Prophet Hesekiel 20-48, pp497-99). I am similarly unconvinced by those who attribute the shift in form between vision and oracle or the imagery between ‘bones’ and ‘graves’ to redactional activity (e.g. Wevers, Ezekiel, pp277-79; Graffy, A Prophet Confronts, pp83-84; Pohlmann, Der Prophet Hesekiel 20-48, p493). See Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, pp256-58; Allen, ‘Structure, Tradition and Redaction’, pp138-39; Wagner, ‘Geist und Leben’, p153; Schüngel-Straumann, Rūah, p60.
⁸¹ P191 n15.
⁸² Schüngel-Straumann, Rūah, p56.
⁸³ Kutsko, Between Heaven and Earth, pp133-34.
⁸⁴ Schüngel-Straumann, Rūah, p61. The phrase כוח הנך occurs 17 times in Ezekiel, once in Ezek. 37:1-14 (v.12) and nowhere else in the Old Testament. The notion of ‘working’ (בער) the ground is present in Gen. 2:5 and Ezek. 36:34 (though there ‘ground’ is כוח).
⁸⁵ Fox, ‘Rhetoric’, p10.
⁸⁶ Albertz and Westermann see the occurrences here as the earliest instances of כוח as ‘breath of life’, and regard them as instrumental in the semantic shift. See ‘כוח’, TLOT3, p1209. However it is not easy to see how this observation relates to their comment on p1208, in discussing the ancient notion of כוח as ‘vitality’: ‘it is unthinkable that the Israelites could conceive of the force of vitality without a perceptible expression’. LXX makes the link explicit by reading נטמך גוזך at the end of v.5.
approach, he argues, is one of two ways of introducing a message of salvation; specifically, it is 'the establishment of the continuity of divine action.' The new creation corresponds to the old creation (Gen. 2:7); the same God can do a similar thing one more time.

Others, while acknowledging the links with Genesis, stress the drama: Greenberg remarks, 'unexpectedly the process halts before life is restored to the reconstituted bodies, delaying, and thus highlighting, the climax.' All attention will now be focused on the "very, very great army" standing on its feet, ready — for what? Allen says that 'the process accentuates the power of God even as it concedes the difficulty of the enterprise', and Fox comments in similar vein that such a failure parallels that of 'the magician who invariably "fails" once or twice...in order to intensify suspense and to focus attention on the climactic success to follow.

Kutsko explains the two stages rather differently, although preserving the creational links. Drawing on what Kutsko maintains is the common understanding of Ezekiel's audience concerning the Mesopotamian imperial practices towards cult statues of vanquished foes, Ezekiel 'fills the old pattern with new content' in chs. 36-37. He deliberately 'parodies' for rhetorical purposes the refashioning of cult images before their return, evidenced in inscriptions, in order to emphasise the cleansing and removing of idolatry from Yahweh's people. It is within this framework that he interprets 37:1-14. The vision of the reformed bones he sees as reversing the punishment for idolatry declared by Yahweh in 6:4-6, where Yahweh announces, 'I will scatter your bones around your altars' (v.5). The phrase in v.8 speaking of the lack of breath in the refashioned bones קִנָּה קַר פָּנֵיהּ) Kutsko sees as echoing the prophetic mocking of idols (e.g. Jer. 10:14, וְהִנְאַה אֶלּוּ דָּ פִּ֣י. cf. Hab. 2:19). He summarises, 'It appears that the vision in Ezekiel 37 halts (in v.8) at a point that leaves Israel equal to its idols — and no better. Neither they nor the intermediate formation of bodies has קֵת. Thus the re-creation process must continue, as it did at creation, with God's breathing life into them.

The link between ch. 6 and ch. 37 is more tenuous than Kutsko maintains, since the only significant verbal link is that of 'bones', and ch. 6 relates to events in the land, not in exile, so the reversal is not exact. The bones belong to different people. However his point about the language of idols being reflected in the salvation oracles in chs. 36-37 is more persuasive. There are strong echoes of idols, both in the language of 37:8b, and in the language of a 'stone heart' which is, Kutsko proposes, a figurative way of speaking

87 Hals, Ezekiel, p.269.
90 Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p.185.
91 Fox, 'Rhetoric', p.11.
92 Kutsko, Between Heaven and Earth, ch. 4. The quotation is from p.124.
93 Kutsko, Between Heaven and Earth, p.134.
94 Kutsko, Between Heaven and Earth, p.137.
of Israel’s attraction to foreign idols (cf. 20:32, ‘serve...stone’).\(^95\) Within the critique of those who worship idols becoming in some sense like those idols (cf. Ps. 115:5-8),\(^96\) the clear implication, which Kutsko does not draw, is that the ‘bones’ addressed by Ezekiel are still idolatrous. This fits with the book’s portrayal of Ezekiel’s addressees. I shall return to this below, but need first to look at another scholar’s analysis which in many ways complements that of Kutsko.

Renz states that ‘37:1-11a expose the prophetic word as achieving at first only a gathering of bones without giving those bones life.’\(^97\) He suggests that the first stage looks like ‘a failure of the prophetic word,’\(^98\) for Ezekiel’s word has not yet come to pass; it has not had the powerful impact that might have been expected. He does not think that the increased drama is adequate to account for such a serious issue. After refuting arguments that the two-stage restoration might be ‘something to do with Yahweh’\(^99\) or a ‘spiritual restoration following a physical restoration,’\(^100\) he argues that the two-stage restoration is a way of reassuring the audience of the power and efficacy of the prophetic word.

He notes that the prophetic word was often accused of being slow to come into effect (e.g. Ezek. 12:21-28), and proposes, ‘by affirming that a second step will complete what was lacking after the first step, the text claims that Yahweh will bring about what he promised, in spite of the ineffectiveness experienced so far.’\(^101\) If the experience of people is that the prophetic word is not coming to pass, then it is more effective to portray the two stages than simply to reaffirm dogmatically the power of the prophetic word. He sees confirmation of this in the behaviour of the audience portrayed in 33:30-33. The editor, Renz comments, clearly regards the fall of Jerusalem as the confirmation of Ezekiel’s prophetic authority, but the original audience of the prophet is presented as still unconvinced about the claims Ezekiel makes: ‘The prophetic word has, so to speak, gathered “the bones” without yet breathing life into them.’\(^102\) He then reapplies Hals’ understanding, noted above: the link to Gen. 2:7 then points not to failure because of the two stages, but to the continuity of divine action. The “small things” that shaped and formed the community in exile should not be seen as a failure, but as ‘the first step towards full restoration.’\(^103\) A prophet is present. The hopeless sentiment expressed in 37:11 is precisely, Renz suggests, because the audience do not

\(^{95}\) Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, pp128-29. He also draws particular attention to 20:16 and 14:4.

\(^{96}\) Cf. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, pp137-38. Cf. Isa. 41:29 where images are מְצָא, and 44:9, where those who make idols are similarly מְצָא.

\(^{97}\) Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, p207.

\(^{98}\) Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, p207.


\(^{100}\) Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, p207.

\(^{101}\) Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, p207.

\(^{102}\) Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, p208.

\(^{103}\) Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, p208.
believe the prophetic word. ‘The book presents the vision as Yahweh’s reassurance to his prophet that the prophetic word will accomplish its task.’

Renz’s argument has much to commend it. First, it makes sense psychologically. Since Ezekiel was not instructed initially to report the vision, any explanation of the two-staged vision must account for the effect of the vision on Ezekiel himself. Here, it serves to reassure him that his prophetic word will do its work, even though it appears feeble and frail at the moment, and people are not listening to him. They are still, to borrow Kutsko’s phrase, ‘equal to...idols’ because they are still idolatrous.

Secondly, it explains the sense of anti-climax. Purely ‘dramatic’ explanations underestimate the anti-climax and downplay the significance of the ‘failure’ of the prophetic word. If initially the vision served to reassure the prophet, it reappears in the book of Ezekiel with the same perlocutionary aim, that of reassurance, but with a different audience: it aims to provide reassurance and confidence to the readers that this seeming delay in the restoration was part of God’s purposes – the two stages are part of Yahweh’s vision.

Thirdly, the correspondence between Ezekiel’s ministry to the bones and to the exilic addresses fits this picture. The goal of the proclamation in the vision was that the bones would ‘live’ and ‘know that I am Yahweh’ (vv.5, 6). Ezekiel prophesied to the bones (v.7). He has prophesied to the exiles, as instructed (vv.12-14). The goal is the same, that they ‘live’ and ‘know that I am Yahweh’ (v.14). The exiles are not yet alive, nor do they yet ‘know that I am Yahweh’. The purpose of the oracle is to convince them that the next stage is coming. They are located at the end of v.8, gathered but lifeless. It is an interesting point whether Kutsko and Renz differ in how positive this stage is. It might seem that Kutsko’s is more negative, because Israel are effectively still idols, having ‘no breath in them.’ However, against the backdrop of the refashioning being an unfinished process, with the next stage coming, there is no reason to think Kutsko would regard this stage as wholly negative. What both Renz and (my extrapolation of) Kutsko have in common is that this perspective is entirely realistic. Ezekiel has prophesied to the bones. They have to a degree been reformed, in that they are gathered around the prophet, but they are still rebellious. There is something transitional about this stage.

Finally, Renz is right to refute the notion that the two stages correspond to ‘consecutive acts’ of physical, and then spiritual, restoration, both because it does not fit with what is said elsewhere in the book (e.g. 11:17-20, where removal of idols implies some internal workings by the exiles, yet it precedes the giving of a new heart and a new spirit), and because ‘the order in 37:14 is reversed.’

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104 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p209.
106 Kutsko, Between Heaven and Earth, p137.
107 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p207 (his emphasis); see further p191 above.
However, the role of the divine רוח needs revisiting. Renz says that 'the present text does not support the contention that Yahweh needs...the help of the Spirit (understood as an independent entity) to accomplish his task.' He goes on, rightly, to point out that 'Yahweh's spirit is Yahweh's efficacy' which 'makes life possible' and 'enables people to accomplish deeds they could not otherwise do.' Further, 'winds and breath are completely at Yahweh's disposal.' He concludes that the two stages are not explicable in terms of Yahweh, and therefore must be to do with Israel. While Renz is right to stress Yahweh's authority over רוח, such that he does not need the help of the Spirit, yet Yahweh may choose to use רוח as his instrument. After the bones have been formed into lifeless bodies, there is no further word addressed to them. A further word to them is not needed for them to come to life. In that sense, the vision is an apologia for the book of Ezekiel itself; no further word beyond the words of the prophet Ezekiel, as recorded in the book, is necessary. It is at this point, though, that my understanding diverges from Renz's, for it is of great significance that the vision calls neither for a passive waiting, nor for an active response on the part of the reformed bodies (i.e. repentance of the exiles), until the apparently weak, 'failed' word proves itself to be powerful by bringing about the desired effects in due time. What is needed is something different, something radical, something from the outside breaking in to bring to completion what the word has started. What is needed is רוח. It is this רוח that will move the exiles from being in their idolatry like idols to the final goal of knowing that 'I am Yahweh.'

In other words, what is at issue in the two stages is not so much the power of the word per se, but how that word can become effective in their experience. Ezek. 37:1-14 is not about 'affirming the absurd.' Rather, it explains how the absurd will happen, and makes it seem less absurd by using language redolent of creation. While it is true, with Renz, that the exiles are the bones gathered and re-formed by the prophetic word of the prophet, they are still idolatrous and still disobedient to that word. They are awaiting not a further word, nor a fulfilment of the original word, but רוח to come and make that word effective in their experience. Further, the agent of this change is not simply רוח as 'life-breath' that will revivify the 'dead' exiles, for in 37:14, there is the dynamic shift in meaning from רוח as 'breath of life' to רוח as Yahweh's spirit. 'Ezekiel introduces a new idea by subterfuge just by adding the possessive suffix.' In ch. 37, רוח moves beyond the Lebenskraft, the 'vitality' that was lost, to Lebensodem, the 'breath of life' for those who were dead. In 37:14, it moves beyond Lebensodem to Geist Gottes.

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108 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p206.
109 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p206.
110 Renz, Rhetorical Function, p206.
111 I shall look at the significance of v.9 below.
112 Fox, 'Rhetoric', p1.
113 Fox, 'Rhetoric', p15.
Not simply revivification, but moral transformation and a new community united in their knowledge of Yahweh is in view. It is as the exiles respond in repentance to the call made to Ezekiel’s audience, and now made, indirectly, through the book, to the addressees of the book, that Yahweh’s נרוֹת works to bring about precisely that response, breathing new life into them, as part of the holistic restoration.

The continuity in divine action that Hals maintains, and that can be seen in the disputation oracle that explains the vision (37:12-14), serves, then, to show two things. From a divine perspective, it shows the intimate link between the prophet speaking the word and the response that is both desired and will be produced by Yahweh’s נרוֹת. From the perspective of the exilic addressees of the book, it shows how their response to Yahweh’s word is appropriate, indeed essential, as an integral part of one event – the revivifying of the ‘dead’ that they themselves are. Here, then, Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s נרוֹת are intimately related. Here, too, divine initiative and sovereignty, expressed in the action of נרוֹת, are held together with human responsibility, expressed in the ongoing need of repentance. The response to their helpless complaint, ‘How shall we live?’ (33:10), was met there by the call to repent (33:11). The response to their helpless complaint, ‘Our bones are dried up’ (37:11), is that Yahweh will put his spirit qua breath in them (v.14). The two passages provide complementary perspectives. The initiative lies with Yahweh. It is he who commands Ezekiel to address נרוֹת, while the reformed bodies are still not alive. But the image of נרוֹת revivifying the bones should not be interpreted as obviating the need for a response.

Before we look at evidence that supports such a view, it is necessary to address one notion that would invalidate such an understanding, and that is the notion that the word itself is inherently powerful. Were this the case, then there would be no need for נרוֹת to effect Yahweh’s word.

It has often been said that the ancient Israelites had a different conception of the word from that of modern western thinking. So, for example, Eichrodt has written that it ‘possessed an importance quite different from that which it enjoys today.’ This different perspective is, exponents say, seen particularly in the power that the ancients supposedly saw as inherent in the word. So Koch comments, ‘in the prophet’s view the dynamic aspect of the word, which calls forth historical events, is more important than the dianoetic information it contains.’

Such a notion could potentially be seen in both the first and the second stages of the vision in 37:1-10. Thus Rabinowitz argues that speech directed to inanimate objects such as dry bones reflected ancient Israel’s understanding that ‘the speech was designed to create a physical reality.’ In similar vein, Eichrodt says that the prophet ‘has experience of the effectiveness of the divine word of power which he has been ordered to proclaim.’ What the word has declared in vv.4-6 comes to pass in vv.7-8, even as Ezekiel is prophesying. Further, in v.9, the divine word spoken by the prophet summons נוֹח, and נוֹח comes.

However, such a conclusion, of the inherent power of words in general in the ancient world, and of the power of the word in Ezek. 37, is mistaken. The notion that words in general in ancient Israel were understood to be powerful has been subject to a devastating critique by Thiselton. Of particular significance is his criticism that proponents of the ‘powerful word’ do not give adequate attention to the fact that often it is Yahweh (or, in the ANE, the deity) who speaks the word, thus confounding the issue of where the power actually lies. More significant even than that for our purposes is the fact that it is not Yahweh’s word per se that is seen to be powerful in Ezek. 37 at all. Thus in the first stage, although Ezekiel addresses the bones, the word that he utters in vv.5-6 is a declaration of what Yahweh, not Yahweh’s word, will do for the bones. There is silence on how the bones came together; Yahweh’s word reveals Yahweh’s will, and no more; it shows that Yahweh’s actions are not arbitrary. In the second stage, it is true that the prophetic word spoken by Ezekiel summons נוֹח, but that does not mean that the word itself is powerful to act, independently of Yahweh, whose word it is. What it does serve to show is that the action of נוֹח is intimately linked with the prophetic word spoken through the prophet Ezekiel, and now re-presented to the exilic addressees. נוֹח comes in and through the words of the prophet. There is no hope for revival and renewal separate from the words of the prophet; there is also no hope for revival and renewal separate from the revivifying work of נוֹח. Schüngel-Straumann comes close to summarising it neatly, though her strict distinction of roles is unwarranted:

‘The all-powerful word of Yahweh admittedly brings the נוֹח, but the making alive happens through the power of God, נוֹח, alone; so neither a super- nor a sub-ordination between נוֹח and word can be maintained, rather something like a complementarity.’

118 Rabinowitz, A Witness Forever, p55.
119 Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p508.
122 Schüngel-Straumann, רוח, p59.
123 Schüngel-Straumann, רוח, p65. ‘Das vollmächtige Jahwewort bringt zwar die נוֹח herbei, aber das Lebendigmachen geschieht durch die Gotteskraft נוֹח allein; so läßt sich weder eine Über- noch eine Unterordnung zwischen נוֹח und Wort behaupten, eher so etwas wie eine Komplementarität.’
Though arguments about the power of Yahweh’s word do not refute the understanding put forward above, that הָרֹץ effects the word in the experience of those who hear it, such an understanding still needs positive evidence. Three pieces of evidence point in this direction.

First, the outcome of repentance to the prophet’s call elsewhere in the book is identical to that produced by the action of הָרֹץ in ch. 37. In a number of places (e.g. 13:22; 18:32; 33:11), ‘life’ for the exiles is explicitly portrayed as the product of Ezekiel’s addressees’ repentance or of obedience to Yahweh’s laws (e.g. 20:11). In ch. 37, ‘life’ is clearly the outcome of the action of הָרֹץ that comes in and through the words of the prophet. I have argued above that the addressees of the book are still confronted with calls to repent. From the perspective of the book as a whole, as it confronts its exilic addressees, הָרֹץ can be seen to bring about in their own experience the response that is required of them.

Secondly, the parallel with creation traditions, already noted in the presence of the two stages in the process of restoration, extends further, as evinced in the relationship between the divine word and the divine הָרֹץ in Gen. 1.124 Yahweh’s הָרֹץ acts to bring about Yahweh’s word. It needs to be acknowledged at this point that such an interpretation of Gen. 1 is by no means universally accepted. The phrase הָרֹץ ‘הָרֹץ in 1:2 has been interpreted in four main ways, as a ‘great wind’,125 as ‘the wind of God’,126 as ‘the breath of God’,127 and as ‘the spirit of God’.128 The difference between the first of these interpretations and the other three cannot be underestimated. The first suggests

124 Caution over speaking of allusions to creation in Ezekiel has been rightly expressed by Petersen (David L. Petersen, 'Creation in Ezekiel: Methodological Perspectives and Theological Prospects', in Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers Number 38, (Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), pp490-500). He is, however, unduly sceptical about the presence and significance of creation traditions in Ezekiel. Some parallels with the Genesis creation account attributed to J (2:4b-3:24) have already been noted; see further Levenson, Theology of the Program of Restoration, pp25-36; Kutsko, Between Heaven and Earth, pp129-34. Although Zimmerli (Ezekiel 1, p52) states that ‘the specific theological ideas of the historical outline of P…find no echo in Ezekiel’ and Kutsko’s argument that Ezekiel knew and built on the notion of humans as ‘in the image of God’ relies perhaps too much on circumstantial evidence, there are still pointers towards common ideas (e.g. הָרֹץ ‘הָרֹץ; 36:11; the role of הָרֹץ in (re-)creation; the emphasis on Yahweh’s spoken word (Zimmerli, ‘Leben’ und ‘Tod’, p507)). My argument is not that Ezekiel is alluding to Genesis 1. Rather, there is a similarity of ideas present in both places.
that נֶרֶס refers to the substance out of which God creates the universe, while the others suggest that this phrase refers in some sense to the creator of the universe. The difference between the second, third and fourth interpretations lies not in the source of נֶרֶס, since all agree that the phrase refers to the deity as origin, but in the primary referent. The second interpretation, while acknowledging that God may be responsible for the wind, sees the text as describing what is essentially a meteorological phenomenon. The third interpretation argues that the phrase נֶרֶס refers to a life-giving force that underpins all of creation. The fourth interpretation sees God's נֶרֶס being portrayed as separate from God, not in the sense of being independent of God, but rather speaking of 'the impending creative activity of the deity.' 129 The Targumim capture some of the difficulty. Targum Onqelos has 'a wind from before the Lord', 130 while Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Targum Neofiti I have 'a wind/spirit of mercy from before God/the Lord.' 131

Syntactically, the phrase parallels 'the earth was desert-like and empty' 132 and 'darkness covered the deep'. The parallelism is further enhanced by the virtual synonymity of 'deep' and 'waters' in v.2b and v.2c. Thus v.2 consists of three parallel clauses which describe the situation prior to God speaking in v.3.

This parallelism leads some scholars, such as Westermann, to see any kind of positive connotations in נֶרֶס as inappropriate. Thus they prefer the translation 'a fearful wind'. 133

However, this view is not without its problems. There are six main arguments against this, the first interpretation. First, this interpretation regards נֶרֶס as expressing a superlative, yet נֶרֶס is never elsewhere used with 'wind' to express a superlative. 134 Secondly, such a rendering ignores the parallels with the next occurrence of the phrase in Exod. 31:3, where Bezalel is filled with נֶרֶס. According to Hamilton (following Fishbane), 'this key phrase unites... via an intertextual allusion, world

129 DeRoche, 'The ríah 'élóhim', p318.
130 Bernard Grossfeld, The Targum Onqelos to Genesis, The Aramaic Bible 6, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1988), p42. In the quotation, I have removed Grossfeld's square brackets from 'and a wind'. His brackets indicate that the text is missing from Vat. 448, but present in the Sabbioneta text (see p36).
131 McNamara renders the phrase 'a spirit of mercy from before the Lord' (Martin McNamara, Targum Neofiti I: Genesis, The Aramaic Bible 1A, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1992), p52. Maher, on the other hand, prefers 'a merciful wind' (Michael Maher, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis, The Aramaic Bible 1B, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1992), p16 (his emphasis). Maher notes the possibility of translating as 'a spirit of mercy', but expresses his preference for 'wind' because of the verb 'blow' (p16 n5). Both note that there is the same phrase in 8:1.
132 David T. Tsumura, The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation, JSOTSup 83, (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1989), p42. Tsumura argues cogently that 'both the biblical context and extra-biblical parallels suggest that the phrase tōhā wābōhā in Gen 1:2 has nothing to do with “chaos” and simply means “emptiness” and refers to the earth which is an empty place, i.e. “an unproductive and uninhabited place”' (p43).
133 Westermann, Genesis 1-11, p107; cf. n125 on p206.
134 Wenham, Genesis 1-15, pp16-17.
building and tabernacle building. 135 Thirdly, of the 35 occurrences of רוח אלוהים in Gen. 1:1-2:3, 34 clearly refer to the deity; it is unlikely that its occurrence in this clause would have a different meaning. 136 More particularly, רוח אלוהים in v.2 would hardly have a different meaning from that in v.1 and v.3 without any indication. 137 Fourthly, there are other unambiguous ways of expressing 'a mighty wind.' Fifthly, this wind can hardly be part of the 'unproductive and uninhabited place' before God spoke, since there is no logical reason for its inclusion. 138 Finally, the main argument in favour of this position, the textual one based on the parallelism in v.2, can be answered by saying that simultaneity rather than synonymity is in view. 139

Distinguishing between other interpretations is more difficult. The most obvious place to look is at the participle which qualifies רוח אלוהים, but discussions here are inconclusive. The piel participle describing רוח אלוהים in v.2 comes from the verb רוח, which only occurs in the piel elsewhere in the Old Testament in Deut. 32:11. There, it describes the eagle that 'hovers' (ירר) over its young before they fly off. However, the rendering of ירר there is not without its difficulties. For example, the verb parallel with ירר in Deut. 32:11, יער, may not mean 'stir up' but rather 'watch over'. Evidence for this includes the LXX, which has οἰκονομος, and, in Hamilton's view, the Ugaritic parallel גור. 140 This may suggest a meaning for the piel of ירר of something like 'watch over' rather than 'hover'. However, the LXX for רוח in Deut. 32:11 is ἑπετελεθησαν ('yearns over'), a meaning somewhat removed from the Ugaritic usage of the verb Ჱ?p, which is always associated with eagles, and means something like 'soar'. On this basis, Hamilton says that רוח 'describes the actions of birds, not winds', 141 and prefers to render רוח with 'spirit of God.' Wenham, however, commenting on the same data, adopts the rendering 'Wind of God'. 142

Comparisons with texts elsewhere in Genesis or the Pentateuch are also not conclusive. In Gen. 8:1, ‘God made a wind blow (רוח הרוח) over the earth, and the waters subsided.’ This may be an echo that illuminates Gen. 1, pointing to the unstated action of רוח in the separating of the waters. The close relationship between the wind as a meteorological phenomenon sent by God and God's own breath is apparent from the parallels between Exod. 14:21 and Exod. 15:8, 10. In Exod. 14:21, ‘Yahweh drove the sea back by a strong east wind (רוח הרוח) all night.’ The same action is

136 DeRoche, 'The ūraḥ 'ēlōhîm', p307.
137 Childs, Myth and Reality, p35.
138 As the wind of God, drying out the waters at his disposal, there is a place. See 'רוח', ThAWT 7, pp405-407; cf. Ps. 104:4-9.
139 DeRoche, 'The ūraḥ 'ēlōhîm', p315 n26. He also notes that appeals to Ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies have proved indecisive. See DeRoche, 'The ūraḥ 'ēlōhîm', pp307f.
140 Hamilton, Genesis, p115.
141 Hamilton, Genesis, p115.
142 Wenham, Genesis 1-15, p17.
expressed in 15:8 with the words, ‘At the blast of your nostrils (רוּחַ) the waters piled up’, an unmistakable reference to Yahweh’s breath. Yahweh is again involved when the sea swamps Pharaoh’s army, ‘You blew with your wind/breath (רוּחַ, רוּחִית), the sea covered them’ (15:10). Further evidence for the parallels between the two, and with Gen. 1, are found in the effects of this רוּחַ in revealing ‘dry ground’ (Gen. 1:9; Exod. 14:22; 15:19). These links point to an ambiguity in Gen. 1:2 that is surely deliberate. There is some kind of reference both to Yahweh’s breath and to a wind sent by Yahweh. It should of course be noted that רוּחַ in Ezekiel 37 is at one moment the wind summoned by the prophetic word (v.9), at the next moment the creative revivifying breath of life (vv.5, 6, 8, 10), a breath that is itself interpreted as God’s spirit (v.14).

On balance, I think it preferable to see the primary referent here not as a meteorological phenomenon, the wind of God, but as theological, the creative ‘breath/spirit of God’. This rendering is supported by other similar texts (Isa. 40:13; Ps. 33:6; Job 26:13), in which רוּחַ functions ‘not as a created element, but as a creating power.’ It is also supported by the comparison noted above with Deut. 32:10-11, where Yahweh’s guiding is like an eagle ‘hovering’ (רוּחַ) over the wilderness (רוּחַ). It is also supported by the next occurrence of the phrase, where the parallel between the making of the world and the making of the tabernacle is striking. As Sailhamer comments, ‘in both accounts the work of God (מלִקּוּﬠַ, Gen 2:2; Exod 31:5 [also v.3]) is to be accomplished by the “Spirit of God” (רוּחַ ה’). As God did his “work” (מלִקּוּﬠַ) of creation by means of the “Spirit of God” (רוּחַ ה’), so Israel was to do their “work” (מלִקּוּﬠַ) by means of the “Spirit of God.”’ The notion that רוּחַ performs no useful function (see footnote 125) misses the point. While רוּחַ as ‘wind’ never reappears in Gen. 1, רוּחַ as spirit ‘joins the God of creation in v.1 to the same God in v.3, maintaining the continued action of the creative God’ and can be seen, in parallel with Ps. 33:6, to have a close link with the creative word. ‘The spirit of God is the creative power of God which joins with the word, bearing and articulating it, in the creative act.’ In other words, the spirit of God makes effective the spoken word; it has an integral function within creation. Such a point has also been expressed by Fretheim, who, in discussing the role of God’s word in creation, maintains that ‘God’s creative activity’ should be understood not just in terms of what God said, but also with reference to ‘the work of the Spirit of God’ in Gen. 1:2. At this point, his reference to

143 Neve, Spirit of God, p68.
144 See footnote 77 on p13.
146 Sailhamer, Genesis, p25.
147 Neve, Spirit of God, p69; Montague, Holy Spirit, pp67-68.
148 Neve, Spirit of God, p69.
149 Fretheim, ‘Word of God’, ABD 6, p965. In his commentary on Genesis, Fretheim comments, ‘God’s speaking does not stand isolated from God’s making (e.g., 1:6-7, 14-16; see also Ps 33:6; Isa 48:3). This
Isa. 34:16 is particularly significant. The function of חַדַּר there is to give 'expression' to the word not by uttering it, nor by gathering it into the book of Yahweh, but 'by executing it'. For Fretheim, then, spirit and word go together: 'it is not suggested that there was no divine activity apart from speaking. God's spirit and power follow in the train of the word and produce certain effects.' The same view has been articulated clearly by Warfield: 'God's thought and will and word take effect in the world, because God is not only over the world, thinking and willing and commanding, but also in the world, as the principle of all activity, executing.' In Gen. 1, God's חַדַּר is the power by which Yahweh brings to effect what his word expresses. Ezek. 37:14 mirrors the creation accounts not just at the point of 'two stages,' but also with regard to the relationship between divine word and divine חַדַּר. Yahweh's חַדַּר makes effective the word that has been uttered.

The third piece of evidence pointing to חַדַּר making effective Yahweh's word is the symmetry between Ezekiel, in his commissioning, and the experience of the dry bones of the exilic community. In 2:2, the prophet, prostrate before the vision of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh, is set on his feet by חַדַּר that enters him. In 37:10, the hopeless exiles (cf. 33:10b; 37:11) stand on their feet because of חַדַּר that enters them. The similar wording in the two points strongly to conceptual links.

speaking-doing rhythm may reflect earlier forms of the text that have now been decisively integrated. Hence, the word itself does not explain sufficiently what comes to be; the word is accompanied by the deed. God does not create by "word events" but by "word-deed events." T.E. Fretheim, 'Genesis', in The New Interpreter's Bible, vol. 1, eds. Leander E. Keck et al., (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1994), p343; cf. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, pp82-87.

150 ‘Seek and read from the book of Yahweh:
Not one of these shall be missing;
none shall be without its mate.
For the mouth of Yahweh has commanded (ביֹרֵם אֲדֹנָי צוֹאֵם)
and his spirit has gathered them (וָאָרְצוֹ אֲדֹנָי צוֹאֵם).
151 Ma, Until the Spirit Comes, p77-78 (quotation from p77). Ma is swift to add that 'they are not separate actions by different agents.'
152 'Word of God', ABD 6, p965.
154 Note how a similar understanding of the work of God's spirit has been combined with speech-act theory by Vanhoozer, such that God's spirit brings about the perlocutionary effects of an illocutionary act of speaking. He comments, 'there is a connection...between pneumatology and perlocutions...a perlocution is what one brings about by one's speech act. Speech frequently presents an argument, but arguments are intended to produce assent. Perlocutions have to do with the effect on the hearer of a speech act.' Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 'Effectual Call or Causal Effect? Summons, Sovereignty and Supernovent Grace', TynBul 49 (1998), p248; cf. idem, 'God's Mighty Speech-Acts: The Doctrine of Scripture Today?', in A Pathway into the Holy Scriptures, eds. P. E. Satterthwaite and D. F. Wright (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1994), pp143-81; idem, Is there a meaning in this text?: The Bible, the reader and the morality of literary knowledge, (Leicester, Apollos, 1998); idem, 'From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts: The Covenant of Discourse and the Discourse of the Covenant' in After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation, eds. Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene, & Karl Möller, Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, vol. 2, (Carlisle, Paternoster / Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2001), pp1-49.
Before the prophet himself can have a hope for the future, before he can stand in Yahweh’s presence, hear his word and obey, he himself must experience the divine רוחת,155 the same is true of the exiles. As I argued above, it is רוחת that makes effective the divine word in 2:2; in the same way, in ch. 37, what the reformed bones of the exiles need is Yahweh’s רוחת to come so that they can stand on their feet – to make effective in their experience the word that has been spoken to them by the prophet, and which is recorded for them in the book.

Similar links are present in 3:22-24. There, רוחת enters Ezekiel and sets him on his feet (נשא רוחתיי על רגליו נבצב). What is particularly striking is that this happens in the ‘valley’ (הobutton). The only other occurrences of this word in the book are in 8:4, where Ezekiel refers to the vision that he saw ‘in the valley’ and in 37:1-2, where it is referred to again as ‘the valley’ (הBUTTONDOWN). Just as רוחת caused Ezekiel to stand in the valley (3:22-24), so רוחת enables the refashioned bones to stand ‘in the valley’ (37:1-2, 10).156 Such parallels between the experience of the prophet and the experience of the exiles are reinforced by three further links, all internal to ch. 37.

The first can be derived from structural observations about the construction of the unit 37:1-14.157 Although it is not necessary to agree with Fishbane that there is a chiastic structure in these verses, he notes several inclusios which serve to tie the prophet’s experience to the exiles’:

(A) the text opens with a reference to Ezekiel’s inspiration by means of the divine spirit (רוות) and his relocation (מניית) in a death valley (vv.1-2), and it concludes (A’) with references to Israel’s resuscitation through YHWH’s spirit-breath (רוות) and its relocation (מניית) in its ancestral homeland (v.14).158

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155 That it is divine is clear not from the immediate context, but only retrospectively. See pp102ff.
156 The reason for the move from נפש as subject in 2:2 and 3:24 of נוש (hif) to the refashioned bones being the subject of נפש (qal) in 37:10 is not certain. It could be to encourage the possibility of a theological understanding in 2:2 and 3:24 (cf. Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet sein Volk neu, p303), generating deliberate ambiguity. The alternative is that it serves to stress the action, not the mere passivity, of the refashioned bones in 37:10. Enabled by נפש, they, as agents, stand on their feet.
157 That these verses form a literary unit is clear from both the start and the conclusion. See Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p370; Allen, ‘Structure, Tradition and Redaction’, pp127-42. The start is marked by the ‘hand of Yahweh’ coming upon the prophet and bringing him out, something that is clearly distinct from what has preceded. The conclusion is marked by a combination of the recognition formula, the formulaic ‘I have spoken and I will do it’, by the concluding signatory formula in v.14, and by the word-event formula introducing a new unit in 37:15.
158 Michael Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985), p452. Allen (Ezekiel 20-48, p183) also draws attention to the inclusios. Fox (Rhetoric, p14), however, disagrees, arguing that the author does not conspicuously draw attention to v.1 in v.14 and that the two
Secondly, and derived from the first point, there is the link between הָרְעָד in 37:1 and הָרְעָד in 37:14. Carley sees the occurrence of the explicit ‘spirit of Yahweh’ as being something significant at this point in the book. He argues that throughout the rest of the book, הָרְעָד is not specifically Yahweh’s חֲשִׁימ. This enables Yahweh’s חֲשִׁימ to be used exclusively in the book ‘in connection with the restoration of the nation, or the revival of the people as those who “know Yahweh.”’ The shift marked by the introduction of ‘spirit of Yahweh’ is due, in Carley’s view, to the ‘difference between the old and the new Israel...In the context of the hope of restoration, common phenomena no longer served as satisfactory images to describe the new, dynamic power which would enable the people to honour Yahweh’s name’. Thus, in 37:1, ‘the promise of the future is realized in the prophet’s own experience.’ Carley’s basic observation about the relationship between prophet and people stands, even if the self-evidently theological references to חֲשִׁימ in 11:5 and 11:24 are accepted. Within the prophet’s experience, there is a move from חֲשִׁימ as the breath of life that enters and restores the prophet, and sets him on his feet (2:2) to the spirit of Yahweh that explicitly is seen to transport him (within his vision) in 37:2. In the same way, the meaning of חֲשִׁימ with regard to the exiles permutes within ch. 37 from חֲשִׁימ as revivifying ‘breath’ (v.5) through חֲשִׁימ as Yahweh’s ‘spirit’ in v.14.

Thirdly, it has already been noted how the prophet is addressed by Yahweh throughout the book of Ezekiel as ‘son of man.’ The Targum of Ezekiel does not render it with a phrase that connotes the ‘mortal unworthiness of the prophet’, such as the Aramaic bar ’énāš or its variants, but on every occasion translates it with bar ʿadām. Levey comments, ‘the Targumic phrase can only mean “son of Adam” or “Adamite”’, for in Aramaic, ʿadām is a proper name. Levey notes that ‘while it seems evident that the intent is deliberate, we can only conjecture as to the purpose of the phrase.’ One way of reading it might be derived from Ezek. 37. We have already observed how the two distinct stages of resurrection parallel closely the two phases of the creation of Adam in Gen. 2:7; as Block observes, ‘the two-phased process of resurrection also serves a theologically-anthropological function, emulating the paradigm of Yahweh’s creation of ʿadām.’ If the prophet is a paradigm of the people in his experience of the divine חֲשִׁימ, then he can be seen as the first human in Yahweh’s new occurrences of חֲשִׁימ ‘function too differently to be able to combine into such a summary.’ This is not compelling, since the presence of the other links (חֲשִׁימ and the theme of ‘place’) do establish the links.

159 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, pp28-31.
160 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p31.
161 Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, p31.
164 Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p379.
work of creation amongst the exiles. Twice, he is addressed as מֹשֶּה in these verses (vv.3, 9). In the context of these verses, the prophet, as the first one who has received the life-giving נְניָה of Yahweh, is indeed ‘son of Adam’ in another sense.

In summary, we have seen that Ezek. 37:1-14 serves to show to the exilic addressees of the book how the vision of the future, modelled by the prophet, can become ‘real’ in their experience, despite a history of constant failure to respond aright to Yahweh’s word, right up to their fathers, Ezekiel’s addressees. If the gathered, but lifeless, exilic community is to follow the prophet’s call to repentance, נְניָה, intimately linked to the word spoken by the prophet, is essential. Only then can it be the revivified, restored, united house of Israel in the land once again, knowing that ‘I am Yahweh’. Further, just as Ezekiel, in contrast to his intended audience, is paradigmatic for the readers in his response to Yahweh’s word, so too he is paradigmatic in his experience of Yahweh’s נְניָה as that which enables an appropriate response. Seitz asks quizzically, ‘Are the condemned people now to undergo the same transformation that the prophet experienced at his call?’ We can answer in the affirmative.

This picture of נְניָה as essential for the obedience of the exiles is not restricted, however, to their response to Yahweh’s word as spoken by the prophet (situation ‘2’ in Table 8 on page 154); נְניָה is also essential for their ongoing obedience to Yahweh’s statutes and ordinances (situation ‘3’ in Table 8), as can be seen from 36:26-27. It is to this that we now turn.

2. How Israel’s long-term future is secured: Ezek. 36:26-27

In view of the organic link between the behaviour of those in Jerusalem and the judgement that had come, future obedience would be essential if the exiles’ long-term future back in the land was to be secure. Ezek. 36:26-27 speaks directly of an effected future obedience. In v.26, Yahweh promises to the exiles, in words very similar to the promise in 11:19 and the command in 18:31, ‘A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.’ This promise is then extended in words not found elsewhere: ‘I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances’ (v.27).

The context of the promised נְניָה is the literary unit from 36:16 to 36:38, marked at the beginning by the characteristic word-event formula. Vv.17-21, in which ‘Ezekiel

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165 Targum Onqelos reads וַיָּצֶא in Gen. 2:7. Grossfeld observes in his comment on מָצָא in Gen. 1:26, ‘from the moment of his actual creation, depicted in this verse, the Targum treats this term as referring to an actual individual, hence Adam.’ Grossfeld, Targum Onqelos to Genesis, p43 n11.

166 Cf. Renz, Rhetorical Function, p140. Renz suggests Ezekiel is ‘proto-human’ in view of his designation ‘son of man.’ This suggestion is not tied specifically to ch. 37. Cf. Lys, Rüaich, pp143-44 n1.


168 It should be noted that the oldest LXX manuscript, Papyrus 967, does not have 36:23b-38. It also follows a different order in chs. 36-39 from the MT. Wevers explains the omission as parablepsis (Ezekiel, p273). This is unlikely given the length and the significant content (Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p340).
appears to function as Yahweh’s confidant and friend, outline the crisis for Yahweh’s honour brought about by profanation of his holy name among the nations (cf. v.20). In vv. 22-32, framed by two inclusios, ‘not for your sakes’ and ‘house of Israel’, Yahweh explains how he will restore the honour of his name. If his name is not to be profaned again, it is vital that the ‘deity-nation-land’ relationship is fully restored once more. This requires two things. First, Yahweh must make sure that the fundamental problem of Israel’s disobedience is tackled. It was their behaviour that had caused the land to be defiled (vv.17-18) and had led to Yahweh pouring out his wrath upon them and scattering them (vv.18-19). Therefore Yahweh must effect their cleansing and obedience. Secondly, the land must be restored, so that the nations will not be appalled at it (cf. Ezek. 36:30; Lev. 26:32-33). Both these things are dealt with in vv.24-32. There follow two other oracles that are marked off as separate by the citation formulae in v.33 and v.37. However, they are not out of place in the current literary context, since they have a number of themes in common with the preceding material, and in v.37 clearly assists integration.

The significance of these two verses, and of v.27 in particular, for our analysis of the relationship between Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s work, can be summed up by answering two questions. First, ‘What is understood by work in these verses?’ Secondly, ‘How does what is being promised relate to the word of Yahweh?’

a) work in Ezek. 36:26-27
Without v.26, Yahweh’s promise that he would give ‘my spirit (רוֹעַ)’ in the midst of the exiles (v.27) could be nothing other than a promise of revivifying breath within the reconstituted ‘person’ that is the new house of Israel; in so far as Yahweh is the source of the new person, it is Yahweh’s while it remains outside the person, but becomes that person’s once it is ‘inside’ them. It would then be a picture of new life coming to what is dead. However, the close correspondence in the wording of v.26 and v.27 points in a different direction: the new mit promised in v.26 is further identified as none other than Yahweh’s work:

\[\text{However, Papyrus 967 is probably not a reflection of the original text, since the inclusio (v.22 and v.32) points towards the MT as being correct; further, the announcement that Yahweh will ‘act’ (v.22) and will ‘sanctify’ his great name (v.23) is left hanging, if Yahweh’s actions themselves are not present (Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p245). For a fuller discussion, bibliography of the issue, and defence of the authenticity of the MT, see Block, Ezekiel 25-48, pp337ff.; also Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, pp739-40 and Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, pp177-78.}\]

169 Block, Chapters 25-48, p344.


171 Links from the first oracle (vv.33-36) include: ‘cleanse’ (v.25); ‘resettle / rebuild’ (v.10b); ‘tilled’ (v.9b). See M. Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p732. There is also the reaction of the nations (v.30). Links from the second oracle include the increase in population (36:10-11, 33, 35) and ‘sheep’ (ch. 34).

172 The language is better understood as corporate, rather than individual. See Joyce, Divine Initiative, pp112-13.

173 Cf. Psalm 104:29-30; see p103 above.
Table 12. Comparison of Ezek. 36:26a and 36:27a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ezek. 36:26</th>
<th>אֶת הָאָזְנֶנֶּךָ</th>
<th>אֶת הָאָזְנֶנֶּךָ</th>
<th>אָזְנֶנֶּךָ</th>
<th>אָזְנֶנֶּךָ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ezek. 36:27</td>
<td>אֶת הָאָזְנָשְׁתָּן</td>
<td>אֶת הָאָזְנָשְׁתָּן</td>
<td>אָזְנָשְׁתָּן</td>
<td>אָזְנָשְׁתָּן</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To understand what is meant by Yahweh’s הָאָזְנֶנֶּךָ in v.27, then, we need to do two things. First, we need to explore the significance of הָאָזְנָשְׁתָּן הָאָזְנֶנֶּךָ in v.26 and, in particular, its relation to אָזְנֶנֶּךָ. Secondly, we shall need to look at how the two occurrences of הָאָזְנֶנֶּךָ in these verses relate to one another.

As we turn to the significance of הָאָזְנָשְׁתָּן הָאָזְנֶנֶּךָ in v.26, we shall look first at אָזְנֶנֶּךָ, since how אָזְנָשְׁתָּן is understood will affect our interpretation of הָאָזְנָשְׁתָּן הָאָזְנֶנֶּךָ.174 In 11:19 and 36:26, Yahweh promises to give the exiles ‘one heart’175 (הָאָזְנָשְׁתָּן בָּלָה) or a ‘new heart’ (שָׁבְעָה בָּלָה). This is expanded upon later in both verses by the promise that Yahweh will change the ‘heart of stone’ (חָדָשׁ בָּלָה) for a ‘heart of flesh’ (מְצ֥וֹר בָּלָה). The heart here stands neither for the whole ‘person’, since this ‘heart’ is removed and replaced, nor for the seat of emotions (cf. 36:5), since obedience not emotional response is in view, nor even for the intellectual faculty, the mind (cf. 3:10; 38:10), since it is not their understanding, but their response that is wrong, as is evident from the words qualifying ‘heart’ here. Rather, it speaks metonymically of the human will, especially the moral will, the deepest orientation in a person for a particular direction.176

174 For more on אָזְנֶנֶּךָ, see Johnson, Vitality, pp75-87; Wolff, Anthropology, pp40-58; F. Stolz, אָזְנֶנֶּךָ leb heart, TLOT 2, pp638-42; Alex Luc, אָזְנֶנֶּךָ, NIDOTTE 2, pp749-54. For אָזְנֶנֶּךָ in Ezekiel, see especially Joyce, Divine Initiative, pp108-109, 119-21. I follow his categories in what follows.

175 The reading רָצַח is debated, because LXX reads here καρδιαν εὐεραν (suggesting a Vorlage with רָצַח), Syr. reads ‘new’, and Targ. (‘fearful’, ‘fear’) could be a paraphrase of either רָצַח (cf. LXX) or כֶּלֶת (cf. Syr.) but not רָצַח (MT). Further, the MT of Jer. 32:39 reads רָצַח בָּלָה אָזְנֶנֶּךָ, giving a close parallel here, while the LXX of Jer. 32:39 reads δοῦναν αὐτοῖς δόον ἑτέραν καὶ καρδιαν ἑτέραν, paralleling the LXX of Ezek. 11:19. In addition, 1 Sam. 10:9 has רָצַח בָּלָה which LXX renders with καρδιαν ἀλλην. Those who favour ‘another’ include Allen, Ezekiel 1-19, p129; H.L. Ellison, Ezekiel: The Man and his Message, (London, Paternoster Press, 1956), p48; Wolff, Anthropology, p54; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p230; Dominique Barthélemy, “Un seul”, “un nouveau” ou “un autre”? A propos de l’intervention du Seigneur sur le cœur de l’homme selon Ez 11,19a et des problèmes de critique textuelle qu’elle soulève’, in Der Weg zum Menschen: Zur philosophischen und theologischen Anthropologie, eds. Rudolf Mosis and Lothar Ruppert, (Freiburg, Herder, 1989), pp329-38. Those who favour the MT reading here include Block, Ezekiel 1-24, pp342, 353; Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p190 (he speaks of ‘rich overtones’); Joyce, Divine Initiative, pp160-61 n8. If the MT is allowed to stand, ‘one’ speaks of an undivided heart in two possible senses that overlap. First, it ‘could possibly reflect hopes of renewed national unity’, suggesting a singleness of purpose (Joyce, Divine Initiative, p161; also noted but not adopted by Ellison, Ezekiel, p49; cf. Ezek. 37:22). This usage is found in 1 Chr. 12:39 [ET 38]. The alternative is that of an undivided heart as the antithesis of insincerity (cf. Deut. 6:4-5; 1 Chr. 12:34; 2 Chr. 30:12 and especially Ps. 12:3 [ET 2] ‘they speak with double-heart’ (אָזְנָנָּה אָזְנֶנֶּךָ לְכָל בְּלָה)). See Block, Prophet of the Spirit, pp45-46; Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p190. On the other hand, Barthélemy argues that the MT reading reflects a deliberate and straightforward scribal change from רָצַח to רָצַח because of perceived negative connotations in the word רָצַח (cf. הָאָזְנָנָּה אָזְנֶנֶּךָ), and positive connotations in רָצַח (cf. הָאָזְנָנָּה אָזְנֶנֶּךָ אָזְנֶנֶּךָ). See Block, Prophet of the Spirit, pp45-46; Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, p190. On the other hand, Barthélemy argues that the MT reading reflects a deliberate and straightforward scribal change from רָצַח to רָצַח because of perceived negative connotations in the word רָצַח (cf. הָאָזְנָנָּה אָזְנֶנֶּךָ), and positive connotations in רָצַח (cf. הָאָזְנָנָּה אָזְנֶנֶּךָ אָזְנֶנֶּךָ).

176 Cf. Joyce, Divine Initiative, pp108-109. Joyce suggests (p109) that in 11:19-20 and 36:26, אָזְנֶנֶּךָ is the ‘the locus of the moral will’ (cf. 2:4; 3:7) and ‘the symbol of inner reality as distinct from mere outward appearance’ (cf. 33:31; 14:3).
where their heart is hard (בְּלֵב בָּשָׁן; 2:4)). This adjective is used in 3:9 in conjunction with ‘flint’ and ‘rock’. However, the precise significance needs to be derived also from the heart with which it is replaced: a ‘heart of flesh’. This positive sense of בְּלֵב is ‘absolutely unique’. Greenberg accounts for this by suggesting that the heart will now be ‘of the same element as its body.’ This certainly suggests that the house of Israel is currently in some sense less than human. This may be because to have a heart of stone is to be like an animal, for Leviathan has a heart like stone (Job 41:16 [ET 41:24]). However, there it is used positively, speaking of a quality of invincibility, impenetrable to any weapon, rather than pejoratively, of the impossibility of Leviathan being tamed. More likely is Kutsko’s suggestion that Israel takes on the characteristics of the idols they have taken into their heart. On both these readings, there is something profoundly deficient in the very humanity of the person Israel. There may also be a further nuance here, which certainly fits with 37:1-14. In 1 Sam. 25:37, the narrator comments on Nabal’s death, ‘when Nabal’s heart died within him, he became like stone.’ The exiles’ heart is not simply ‘hard’ in the sense of unresponsive, but even dead to Yahweh. In this way, while the main thrust of the picture in 36:26 is that Israel will be responsive and malleable now to Yahweh and his word, the ‘heart of flesh’ might also suggest that one who was less than human will now be truly human, and the one dead to Yahweh will now be alive again.

When we turn our attention to בַּלָּע, it is clear that the ‘new spirit’ in 11:19, 18:31 and 36:26 is anthropological. Many scholars regard בַּלָּע and בְּלֵב here as synonymous, chiefly because they ‘both refer primarily to the gift of a renewed capacity to respond to Yahweh in obedience.’ Further evidence pointing to synonymy here comes from the fact that בְּלֵב elsewhere in Ezekiel can be the seat of moral thinking: in 11:5 of those in Jerusalem, and in 20:32 of those in exile (cf. Jer. 51:50). This clearly parallels the usage of בַּלָּע (e.g. 2:4; 3:7; 6:9; 14:3; 38:10; cf. also the parallels in 13:2-3).

177 Wolff, Anthropology, p29.
178 Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p730.
179 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p104.
180 Kutsko, Between Heaven and Earth, pp128-29.
181 In this regard, it is interesting in the case of Nabal that the body’s turning to stone is associated with the death of the בַּלָּע; though his heart died, he went on living for another 10 days. See 1 Sam. 25:38.
184 For the close links between anthropological uses of בְּלֵב and בַּלָּע, see Schüngel, Riäh, pp48ff.
Others, however, see וֹרָחֶד and רְוחֶי as complementary (cf. Deut. 2:30). Wolff maintains that 'the new ruah brings to the perception and will of the heart the new vital power to hold on steadfastly in willing obedience,' and Knierim comments that 'the “heart” is the anthropological complementation to the cosmological or theological “spirit” and as such is structured to be susceptible to the influences of “spirit” and its notions.

With Block, I think it likely that they are not synonymous in 36:26. Block gives three reasons: first, synonymy is rarely exact in Hebrew poetry; secondly, different prepositions are used (‘to you’ (אָל), ‘within you’ (בְּעֵינֵי)); thirdly, and most significantly for him, the distinction is confirmed by the elaboration. Although Yahweh supplies both the new heart and the new spirit, the new heart is not said to be Yahweh’s, but a ‘heart of flesh’; the new רוח, however, is Yahweh’s. To this can be added the observation that while the ‘new heart’ involves replacing something that is present and defective, the ‘new spirit’, while hinting at something present because of the parallel with ‘new heart’, seems to involve supplying something that had once been present but now is absent, for there is no mention of an old ‘driving force’ being removed. Care, however, should be taken in overstating the case based on the third reason, because the elaboration, as I shall argue below, plays on the different meanings of רוח. The shift in the meaning of רוח evident when moving from v.26 to v.27 should not then be read back into v.26.

The implication, then, is that the ‘new רוח’ of 36:26 is not so much the ‘new center of volition necessary for repentance and new obedience to the commandments’, as something like the new ‘driving force’ that empowers the locus of the moral will, the heart of flesh.

Secondly, then, we turn our attention to how Yahweh’s רוח (v.27) relates to the new ‘driving force’ within Israel. There are three main choices.

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186 Schoemaker, ‘Use of רוח’, p29; Cooke, Ezekiel, p125; Lys, Rûach, p141; Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p499; Wevers, Ezekiel, p97; Wolff, Anthropology, pp38, 54; Donald E. Gowan, Eschatology in the Old Testament, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1986), pp70-71; Knierim, Task, p282; Ohnesorge, Jahwe gestaltet sein Volk neu, pp269-70; Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, pp104-105 n118; Matties (Ezekiel 18, p206) notes the synonymity elsewhere, but suggests that the presence of the ‘new spirit here seems to nuance the parallelism to suggest a holistic personhood.’
187 Wolff, Anthropology, p54 (my emphasis).
188 Knierim, Task, p282. Knierim makes this point based on his understanding of רוח and of the differences between the כָּל and וֹרָחֶד. For him, רוח is perceived ‘not only as the vitalizing power as such, but also as that endowment which disposes human(s) toward the fulfillment of God’s manifold purposes for the world and for the life of humans...’ (p277). The differences between כָּל and רוח reside in the fact that כָּל is created, while רוח exists. רוח ‘signifies the concept of life, God’s life, its coming to humans and their dependence on it’, while כָּל ‘signifies the concept of the central relay-station in humans in which the inspired life – or the influences of other “spirits” – can be received’ (p282, his emphasis).
189 Block, Ezekiel 25-48, pp355-56.
190 וֹרָחֶד, TLOT3, p1212.
First, it is logically possible to view these two different uses of רוח as univocal. This understanding obtains if the רוח of the house of Israel is used in the same literal way of the personified Israel as רוח is used (anthropomorphically) of Yahweh. One who seems to regard the relationship between the two senses as univocal is Greenberg. Yahweh ‘will replace Israel’s hopelessly corrupted spirit with his own impulsion to goodness and righteousness.’ Univocal explanations require that the ‘new spirit’ of v.26 corresponds directly with Yahweh’s רוח in v.27. If רוח is ‘the driving force in a person’, then it is essential to see רוח in v.27 as something akin to ‘the driving force in a person,’ and that ‘person’ is Yahweh. Another who seems to regard the two senses as univocal is Lapsley, though she speaks of רוח as ‘mind’ here. For her, ‘Yahweh is not simply the source of the new spirit; in 36:26 it is Yahweh’s spirit (רוחו) that will animate and suffuse the people. In a sense, then, the people will receive the “mind” of God…’ Lapsley’s first sentence is straightforwardly true. It is Lapsley’s final statement, treating the two uses as univocal, that is more debatable. While it is true that the book of Ezekiel is accustomed to bold anthropomorphisms, it is unlikely that language of Yahweh’s רוח should be understood of as simply univocal at this point. This is chiefly because 36:27a anticipates 37:1-14.

A second way is to regard the two uses of רוח in vv.26-27 as equivocal. In other words, the two instances need to be clearly differentiated, although happening to use the same word (روح). Lind seems to see the two in this light, when he comments, ‘God’s fourth act is to put the divine Spirit within them (36:27). This is to be distinguished from the new spirit of 36:25 [sic].’ The correspondence, then, is at the level of words chosen, but not at the level of what the words denote or connote. This, however, is unlikely, for the two instances of רוח are ‘quite clearly intended to refer to the same reality’, because of the almost identical wording in the two phrases (see Table 12).

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192 Univocal: ‘any word or phrase used in the same way on two or more occasions is used univocally.’ Edward L. Schoen, ‘Anthropomorphic Concepts of God’, Religious Studies 26 (1990), p134. This is the opposite of ‘equivocal’: any word or phrase used in more than one sense which bear no relation to each other is used equivocally (an example is ‘run’ in the phrase ‘colours run’ and ‘run a business’).
193 The distinction between ‘literal’ and ‘non-literal’ is ‘assumed to be determined by the actual practices of linguistic communities. Words or phrases are used literally if they are used in accustomed, standardized ways’ (Schoen, ‘Anthropomorphic Concepts’, p134).
194 Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p730 (my emphasis).
195 Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p166 (the emphasis on the final phrase is mine).
197 See further below.
198 Lind, Ezekiel, p291.
199 Joyce, Divine Initiative, pp110-11.
The third way of regarding the two senses is as analogical.\textsuperscript{200} This presupposes some kind of correspondence between the two different instances of רוח, but not that of univocity. Yahweh’s רוח that he will put in the people is analogous to their own רוח. This must be partly correct, since, as we have seen, the two uses of רוח are clearly meant to speak of the same reality. However, 36:27 expands the horizon limited by 36:26 (and 11:19; 18:31). Though the house of Israel’s ‘driving force’ is in view in 36:26f., רוח as the absent ‘breath of life’ lies beneath the surface, only to appear in 37:1-14.\textsuperscript{201} Such a view is supported by Hals’ observations about the strong links between 36:26-27 and 37:1-14, to be seen in the shift from ‘spirit’ to ‘my spirit,’ in the language of the exodus tradition (36:24; 37:12), and in the language of covenant restoration (36:28; 37:2-13).\textsuperscript{202} It is also supported by the fact that there is no mention of the old רוח being taken away, although mention of ‘a new spirit’ in 36:26 leads us to believe there is an old one, and we have already met the exiles’ corrupt רוח in 20:32.\textsuperscript{203} If רוח in 36:26 was simply ‘breath’ that was absent, there would be no need to qualify it with the adjective ‘new’.

This analysis of רוח should not be seen as a case of ‘illegitimate totality transfer,’\textsuperscript{204} adding the semantic value of a word in one context (‘breath of life’ (37:5-10)) to its semantic value in another context (‘driving force’ (36:26)), then reading the sum of these values into a particular case. While Nida is right to say that as a general principle that ‘the correct meaning of any term is that which contributes least to the total context,’\textsuperscript{205} the fact that רוח as ‘driving force’ in v.26 is not described as ‘corrupt’ or ‘hard’, but seems to be absent here, points to a deliberate play on רוח as ‘driving force’ and רוח as ‘breath of life.’ In 36:26, then, רוח as ‘driving force’ merges seamlessly with רוח as absent ‘life-breath.’ Just as in 37:1-14, where רוח shifts from ‘breath of life’ to Yahweh’s life-giving רוח, so here there is a shift from רוח as ‘human driving force’ to רוח as Yahweh’s spirit. This development, caused by the juxtaposition of v.26 and v.27, means that the presence of 11:19-20 is not an ‘insoluble problem’\textsuperscript{206} because of its anticipation of the very similar passage in 36:26-27. Rather, there is a dimension of רוח

\textsuperscript{200} ‘Analogical’: according to Soskice’s understanding of Aquinas, a way of talking ‘between’ univocal and equivocal (such as ‘Tom is happy’; ‘this song is happy’). See Janet M. Soskice, Metaphor and Religious Language, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985), pp64-66. Soskice wants to affirm that analogy is not a form of metaphorical speech, but a form of literal speech. She comments that ‘analogical usage...from its inception...seems appropriate’ (p65), for it is concerned with ‘stretched uses, not figurative ones’ (p66). In her example, if we came across a Martian who could not speak, but arranged its fibres in a particular way such that it could communicate, then we could say, by analogy, that the Martian ‘told me’.

\textsuperscript{201} Cf. Block (‘Prophet of the Spirit’, p39), who proposes that 37:1-14 serve as an expansion of 36:27; also Lys, Riach, p133; Allen, ‘Structure, Tradition and Redaction’, pp140-41.

\textsuperscript{202} Hals, Ezekiel, p270.

\textsuperscript{203} In Ezek. 20:32, Ezekiel is to declare concerning their idolatrous desires to worship wood and stone like the other nations, ‘What is in your mind (טֹבִיסְךָ מַלְאָלָה,) shall never happen.’


\textsuperscript{205} Eugene A. Nida, ‘The Implications of Contemporary Linguistics for Biblical Scholarship’, JBL 91 (1972), p86.

\textsuperscript{206} Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p111.
that is absent in 11:19 and 18:31. The addressees of the book, faced with the already prominent role of הנר within the ministry of Ezekiel, are left to wonder on the significance of הנר in 11:19, and its ultimate identity. It is only in 36:27a that this identity is revealed. The stubborn, rebellious house of Israel has no ‘driving force’ to obey. It needs Yahweh’s dynamic, potentiating, revivifying הנר.

b) Relating the word of Yahweh and הנר

We have just observed how the ‘empowering spirit of Yahweh’ will come as the ‘new spirit’, the new ‘driving force’ acting on the ‘heart of flesh.’ In the second part of 36:27, Yahweh declares that he will ‘make’ the exiles ‘follow’ his ‘statutes’ and ‘be careful to observe’ his ‘ordinances’ and do them (ַיָּשְׁרוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר הָעָבָדָם אֶל לְאַדְמִית יָהֲウェָה הָאֵל הָאָדוֹן אֵבֶן חֲלִיא אֶת תָּנֵכֶד נַטֵּץ אֲשֶׁר נָשַׁה לְאֵל הָאָדוֹן).

The syntax at the start of v.27b, of הנשׁ followed by משׁנה, usually entails a description of the subject ‘doing that which’ had been said. משׁנה משׁנה introduces a noun clause which serves as the object of the verb הנשׁ. The construction here is unique for yielding the meaning ‘cause.’ Cooke cites Eccl. 3:14 as the only other instance of משׁנה followed by the relative having the same meaning (‘cause’), but notes that there is no sign of the accusative there. Although the syntax is unusual, the force of the sentence is clear. Yahweh declares that he will cause obedience to his word, expressed in his statutes and judgements.

Most scholars judge that it is by the action of the ‘new spirit’, Yahweh’s הנר (36:27a) (and the new heart) that the new obedience of the house of Israel will be ensured. Allen, however, while acknowledging the role of the ‘new spirit’, puts much greater emphasis on the correspondence between 36:27 and ch. 37. He regards the first half of 36:27 as resumed in 37:1-13, highlighted with v.14a, and the second half as resumed in 37:15-24a, highlighted with 37:24b. His conclusion is that ‘the editorial function of 37.1-13 in its present position is to throw light on the gift of the spirit in 36.27a. That of 37.15-23 is to clarify a means by which Yahweh would bring about the obedience of 36.27b, namely via a Davidic king who would

207 Cf. also the ambiguity surrounding הנר in 2:2 and the transporting הנר.
209 E.g. Gen. 28:15; 1 Sam. 16:4.
210 Cooke cites Eccl. 3:14 as the only other instance of המשׁנה followed by the relative having the same meaning (‘cause’), but notes that there is no sign of the accusative there. Although the syntax is unusual, the force of the sentence is clear. Yahweh declares that he will cause obedience to his word, expressed in his statutes and judgements.

211 Cooke, Ezekiel, p395.

213 Allen comments, ‘thanks to him [Yahweh], their lives would be governed by a new impulse that was to be an expression of Yahweh’s own spirit’ (Ezekiel 20-48, p179).
impose order among God’s people, uniting southern and northern elements with his royal staff or scepter.\textsuperscript{214}

This observation concerning how 36:27 relates to ch. 37, confirmed by the shift in meaning in יִנְרָה between 36:26 and 36:27 for which I argued above, and the right recognition of the role of the Davidic king in obedience might suggest a diminution in the role of the new heart and the new spirit in the renewed obedience.

However, this is not so. First, the Davidic king\textsuperscript{215} in the book of Ezekiel plays no part in the restoration of the nation; he neither gathers the people nor leads them back; he is not an agent of peace or righteousness (cf. Isa. 9:6-7), for Yahweh does these. Renewed obedience has already been ascribed to the work of Yahweh in giving a ‘heart of flesh’ and a ‘new spirit’ (11:19-20). In that sense, the king is not an agent of the transformation, but a feature of the transformed people. The declaration in 37:24b that the united people of Israel will follow Yahweh’s ordinances and be careful to observe his statutes under the new יִנְרָה does not specify how they will do them, although it does give a role to the Davidic king.

Secondly, the link between יִנְרָה and renewed obedience depends ultimately on the action of Yahweh’s יִנְרָה. In the lamentation of ch. 19, any hope envisaged for the exiled king Jehoiachin dies;\textsuperscript{216} indeed, the lamentation means ‘a judgement upon all existing members of the Davidic dynasty.’\textsuperscript{217} Death pervades the scene.\textsuperscript{218} However, as Duguid argues, the end is not permanent: ‘it is an end which does not inherently rule out the possibility of a new beginning by means of divine intervention and for the sake of the divine name.’\textsuperscript{219} He sees the heart of this divine intervention in 37:1-14, ‘where a scene redolent with death gives way to unexpected new life through the intervention of the spirit of Yahweh.’\textsuperscript{220} In other words, where life comes out of death, there Yahweh’s יִנְרָה can be seen; the vision of the future for the Davidic dynasty should be seen to depend on the operation of the divine יִנְרָה, though יִנְרָה itself is not explicitly linked with the renewal of Davidic promises. Such a view makes good sense when we also observe the role of יִנְרָה within the Davidic tradition: ‘the spirit of Yahweh’ ‘rushed’ (נְפָעַל) upon David when Samuel anointed him king (1 Sam. 16:13); the spirit of Yahweh speaks

\textsuperscript{214} Allen, ‘Structure, Tradition and Redaction’, p140.

\textsuperscript{215} Though LXX reads ἐργα in 37:22, 24 and 25, while MT has יִנְרָה in 37:22, 24, and elsewhere Ezekiel is reluctant to use יִנְרָה of the Israelite monarchy, thus suggesting a possible original אַרְגָּה. Block (‘Bringing Back David’, p179 n38) defends the MT on two main grounds. First, LXX varies in rendering יִנְרָה; secondly, the presence of ‘kingdoms’ (מְלָדּוֹת; v. 22) and ‘nation’ makes יִנְרָה preferable here, for it ‘highlights the restoration of Israel to full nationhood.’ See also Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p190; Block, Ezekiel 25-48, pp413-15; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, pp269, 275, 277-78.

\textsuperscript{216} For the identification of the second cub as Jehoiachin, see Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, pp355-56, who notes the parallels with Jer. 22:10-12 (Jehoahaz) and 22:24-30 (Jehoiachin).

\textsuperscript{217} Duguid, Ezekiel and the Leaders, pp45-46.

\textsuperscript{218} Cf. Hals’ comment, ‘To conduct a dirge beside the hospital bed of a still living patient would be incredibly crass. Something of that dimension of bizarre crudity is inherent in prophetic dirges.’ Hals, Ezekiel, p130.

\textsuperscript{219} Duguid, Ezekiel and the Leaders, p46.

\textsuperscript{220} Duguid, Ezekiel and the Leaders, p46 n226.
through David (2 Sam. 23:2); Isaiah's vision of an eschatological, Davidic, ruler gives ḫוֹרֶג great prominence (Isa. 11:1-5). It also makes good sense when it is remembered that the Davidic king, Yahweh's anointed, was described as 'the breath of our life (נשפָּה וְּלֵב)' (Lam. 4:20).

In summary, the obedience which is made possible by 'one heart and a new spirit' in 11:19, and which will be the case under the new king (suspendo) in 37:24 will be brought about by the divine ḫוֹרֶג in 36:27a. Here, again, the apparent antinomy of divine initiative and human responsibility reappears. The house of Israel is to be marked by repentant shame (36:32), even in the present; yet the obedience that is envisaged (36:27b) is clearly brought about by the initiative of Yahweh. The presence of a new heart and a new driving force, in fact Yahweh's own ḫוֹרֶג, within the house of Israel points to willing action by them in obedience – yet the fact that both are the gift of Yahweh points to Yahweh's sovereign initiative. Yahweh's action is more than simply 'creating the conditions for human responsibility, for Yahweh 'causes' obedience (v.27). Yahweh's ḫוֹרֶג moves Israel to go (צֵלֶב) where he wills, just as in the chariot vision the living creatures would 'go' (צִלֶּבוּ) 'where the spirit (רוח) would go' (1:12, 20; 36:27). However, Davis is right to say that 'it is no more true that the divinely given heart of flesh obviates human responsibility than that the first bestowal removed Israel's culpability.' Both are held together. Further, and critical for our study, is the observation that, as in 37:1-14, Yahweh's ḫוֹרֶג is instrumental in bringing about obedience to Yahweh's word, though this time it is Yahweh's word as seen in his statutes and ordinances.

3. The outpouring of Yahweh's ḫוֹרֶג: Ezek. 39:21-29

In 39:29, there is the third and final instance of Yahweh speaking of 'my spirit' (רוח) in the book. It occurs in the conclusion of the Gog oracle, from 39:21-29, a conclusion that was shaped with the whole of chs. 38-39 in view, and that gives integrity to the whole. Vv.21-24 focus on the impact of Yahweh's acting in judgement, both in the

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221 Ma sees this pre-exilic passage describing the coming king (Isa. 11:1-5) as 'redactionally deroyalized' because of subsequent references to ḫוֹרֶג in the servant figure (42:1-4) and the 'prophet-like person' in 61:1 (Until the Spirit Comes, p201). At the same time, he notes how 'the ḫוֹרֶג of Yahweh...becomes an eschatological element in the "messianic" expectation.' (Op. cit., p42). Blenkinsopp (Ezekiel, pp176-77) suggests a correspondence between the reduced role of the eschatological ruler in Ezekiel (as reflected both in the common title for this ruler, סֵפֶר, and in the designation קֶסֶף) and the servant in the first 'servant song' in Isa. 42:1-4. There, too, ḫוֹרֶג is prominent in the servant's ministry. The reduced role of Ezekiel's future Davidic ruler should not be exaggerated, though. He will not simply be 'among' them as a servant (34:24; cf. Klein, Ezekiel, p123), but he will also be king 'over' them (37:24; cf. Duguid, Ezekiel and the Leaders, p49), his rule will be for ever (לִבְּלוֹן), a 'continuous state of righteous rule' (Duguid, Ezekiel and the Leaders, p49 n248), and his work will be to unite a divided country (cf. Werner E. Lemke, 'Life in the Present and Hope for the Future', Int 38 (1984), p180). He will be a 'powerful ruler' but also a 'gentle shepherd' (Duguid, Ezekiel and the Leaders, p55).

222 Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, p115.

223 Davis, Swallowing the Scroll, p116.

224 The connection between these verses and the Gog oracle has been disputed (as indeed are many things about the Gog oracle). Cooke (Ezekiel, p422) comments, 'These verses have nothing to do with the
future, on Gog (39:21-22), and in the past, on the house of Israel (vv.23-24). Such an impact lies in the future, the other side of the anticipated salvation. With v.25, there is a shift in focus back to the present, to the scene of the exile, highlighted by יִגְדּוּ. In vv.25-29, Yahweh again speaks of the future restoration, and the effect that it will have on the house of Israel (vv.26, 28). As with the destruction of Gog, Israel’s restoration shall prove to Israel Yahweh’s covenant relationship with them. It is in this context that Yahweh declares, ‘I shall not leave any of them still there [i.e. in exile], and I shall not again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon יִגְדּוּ. the house of Israel – oracle of the Lord Yahweh.’

There are two questions that are important for our purposes. The first one is about the authenticity of the phrase: the textual question. I shall argue, against Lust, that the MT should be retained. The second is about the scope of the phrase, its relation to 36:27 and 37:14 and hence its relation to Yahweh’s word: the significance question. I shall argue, principally against Block, that the more concrete imagery of the pouring of Yahweh’s רוח does not indicate a significant shift in meaning from the ‘giving’ of Yahweh’s רוח among the people that assures their future, but the permanent transformation effected by the outpouring.

apocalypses 38:1-39:16 and 39:17-20; they give a summary of Ezekiel’s teaching and form a conclusion to Part III.b., chs. 34-37. Eichrodt (Ezekiel, p521) regards 39:25-29 as a conclusion not of the Gog oracle, to which it ‘shows no acquaintance’, but of chs. 34-37. Zimmerli (Ezekiel 2, p319) sees some connection. He notes the links between 39:21-22 and the Gog oracle, but regards 39:23-29 as ‘a final oracle looking back on Ezekiel’s total message’, linking ‘directly’ to 39:21-22. However, Block makes a strong case for the structural unity of chs. 38-39 as a whole, as well as of 39:21-29. See Daniel I. Block, ‘Gog and the Pouring Out of the Spirit: Reflections on Ezekiel xxxix 21-9’, VT 37 (1987), pp257-70. Further, he notes several significant links between 39:21-29 and 38:1-39:20 (pp265f): the link of Yahweh’s glory and the concern for his holy name (v.21 paralleling 39:13; v.25 paralleling 39:7); the temporal, historical ‘now’ (יִגְדּוּ) of v.25 which contrasts with the eschatological phrases to be found in 38:1-39:20; the transitional vv.21-22 presuppose what has gone before. More recently, Cook has argued, as part of his thesis that ‘deprivation’ is not essential for the production of ‘apocalyptic’ literature (p86), that there is essential continuity in ‘idioms, style and theology’ (p103) between the book of Ezekiel and chs. 38-39 (pp97-105), and that Ezek. 39:21-29 ‘presuppose’ the rest of the Gog narrative because of many links between them (pp117-21) and is probably ‘one of the last layers in the book, postdating the proto-apocalyptic redaction’ (p120). See Stephen L. Cook, Prophecy & Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting, (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1995). His analysis of the links is persuasive, even if his dating (as mostly post-exilic) and genre classification (as apocalyptic (p109)) can be challenged (see Block, Ezekiel 25-48, pp424-32), and if his thesis on the insignificance of ‘deprivation’ needs qualification (see Mein, Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile, pp228-31).

225 So Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p480.
227 The syntax of the phrase is somewhat awkward. יִגְדּוּ is treated in one of three ways: causal, ‘because’ = יִגְדּוּ המ; cf. LXX ὅτι; Ov; Vg. eo quod (so Cooke, Ezekiel, p424 and Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p478; but they point to Ezek. 12:12 whose occurrence and meaning is disputed (see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 1, p267); a better example is 21:9 [ET 21:4]); temporal, ‘after’ (so Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p295; Hals, Ezekiel, p280); relative, ‘(I) who will have...’ (so Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p202; he regards the relative as giving the literal meaning, but translates more idiomatically (and temporally), ‘once I have’ (p199)). The perfect יִגְדּוּ may be explicable in terms of ‘relative time’ (for which term, see especially Goldfajn, Word Order and Time), indicating an event preceding that of Yahweh not hiding his face again (cf. Vg. effuderim).
a) The textual question

With regard to the textual question, most scholars accept the reading of the MT, as cited above. Lust, however, noting that the LXX speaks of Yahweh pouring out his ‘wrath’ here (ἐξέχω τὸν θεμύλον μου), argues strongly for a different Vorlage from the MT. He observes that the phrase ‘I pour out my spirit’ is ‘transformed’ from one of Ezekiel’s favourite phrases (‘I pour out my wrath’ – ἐκβάλλειν τὴν δυνάμειν ἐπὶ πάντας) (Ezek. 7:8; 9:8 etc.), and that ἐκβάλλειν can function as a synonym for both ἐκβαίνειν and ἐκβάλλειν. He acknowledges that, on these grounds, the different readings in MT and LXX could be explained by the LXX translator treating the (unusual) ‘I pour out my spirit’ as if it were the more usual Ezekielian phrase. However, he disagrees for two reasons. First, he states that the LXX translator does not tend to increase the stereotypical character of the language – rather, he uses synonyms, avoids repetition and stereotypical language. His second argument is based on the sequence of Pap. 967, which he regards as a trustworthy witness of the LXX in its early form. In that papyrus, ch. 37 follows ch. 39. Lust says that it is unlikely that the writer, seeing what was coming up with the significant role of Yahweh’s ἐκβάλλειν (in what is now 37:1-14) would have translated ἐκβάλλειν with ὠμός. He integrates this observation with a number of other observations about 39:26-29, and suggests that the LXX worked initially from a different Vorlage from our Hebrew text, where ἐκβάλλειν had not yet replaced either ἐκβαίνειν or ἐκβάλλειν. It was in a later period that ‘more hopefilled connotations were added. One of these ‘hopefilled connotations’ that was added was the replacement of ἐκβαίνειν or ἐκβάλλειν by ἐκβαίνειν.

While Lust’s arguments are plausible, Allen is probably right that the explanation for the LXX variant is ‘exegetical’. There are a number of strands of evidence to support this conclusion, which need to be taken together. Some explain the appearance of the LXX variant, while others support the originality of ἐκβάλλειν. First, as Lust himself notes, the semantic domains of ἐκβάλλειν and ὠμός overlap. Thus ἐκβάλλειν is sometimes translated by ὠμός (though it should be noted that this is only when ἐκβάλλειν is used in an anthropological sense (Zech. 6:8; Job 15:13; Prov. 18:14; 29:11; cf. Isa. 59:19)).

Secondly, as Allen notes, the LXX translation ‘relates ν 29βακ to’ Israel’s ‘experience of past judgement and defeat’ (cf. vv.23-24), and to 36:17-19, in the middle of the passage.
of which the phrase ‘pour out my wrath’ occurs (36:18). This linking is also apparent from the language of uncleanness that is found in 36:17 and 39:24.\textsuperscript{234} If Lust is right about Pap. 967 (that this is a ‘trustworthy witness’ of the early LXX, and therefore likely to be trustworthy as an indicator of the order of the Vorlage from which the LXX was derived), then that in fact strengthens the ‘exegetical’ case, since 39:29 occurs even closer to 36:17-19.

Thirdly, Allen makes point that the whole context is positive. Even if it were granted that some of the more ‘hopeful connotations’ were added later, the context at the start of v.29 and of vv.25-29 as a whole (especially v.25) is sufficiently positive that it is probable v.29a had a positive sense.\textsuperscript{235} As it stands, this argument might make it all the more puzzling that the LXX translator should have misinterpreted the phrase so drastically. However, there is a clear strand of thought especially after the exile that the exile was necessary in order to participate in the new age (2 Chr. 36:21; cf. Lev. 26:43),\textsuperscript{236} so it would not be strange for the LXX translator to link Yahweh’s not hiding his face with the experience of Yahweh’s outpoured wrath.

Finally, elsewhere in the Old Testament, there are striking links between Yahweh hiding his face, and the presence of הנר. In Ps. 104:29-30, Yahweh’s hiding his face (בשם ירו ומקらい) occurs in parallel with Yahweh taking away (הנקז) breath (נל) (v.29); it also occurs as the opposite of Yahweh sending forth his הנר, a sending forth that creates (v.30). In Ps. 143:7, the psalmist’s lament that his הנר is failing is closely linked with Yahweh hiding his face from him. These suggest that Yahweh’s sending his life-giving הנר is effectively the opposite of Yahweh’s hiding his face. In Ps. 139:7, going from Yahweh’s spirit (רוח ויו) is in parallel with fleeing from his face (רח ויו) (cf. Ps. 51:13). Therefore, Yahweh not hiding his face in Ezek. 39:29 points to the authenticity of the MT, and the originality of הנר. It could, of course, be argued in reverse, that the presence of Yahweh hiding his face suggested to a scribe the possibility of הנר here. However, it is more likely that הנר was original, fitting appropriately both with the notion of Yahweh hiding his face (as a contrast) and with Yahweh ‘pouring out’ his spirit, not his wrath, than that there were two, independent, reasons why הנר fitted so naturally into this context when it was not there originally.

In conclusion, though it is possible that there was an alternative Hebrew reading from which the LXX acquired its ἔχων τόν θημόν μου, it is more probable that the MT reading, ‘I pour out my spirit’ (אני רוזו עליך), is original, and LXX represents an interpretative development.

\textsuperscript{231} Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p202.
\textsuperscript{232} Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p202.
\textsuperscript{236} Sklba, “Until the Spirit from on High Is Poured out on Us”, pp16-17.
b) The significance question

The precise relationship of the phrase, ‘when I pour out my spirit’ (נַחֲלָה יְהֹוָה אֶל-רֶעֲךָ), to Yahweh’s promise that he will ‘give’ (נָתַן) his רוח ‘within them’ (נָשַׁבָּתי) or ‘in you’ (נָשַׁבָּתי) in 36:27 and 37:14 has been disputed. In particular, the debate revolves around the significance of the different verbs and prepositions found in chs. 36 and 37, on the one hand, and in ch. 39 on the other. This is reinforced by the fact that this ‘pouring out’ (נָשַׁבָּתי) of Yahweh’s רוח is more closely paralleled externally (in Joel) than internally (within the book of Ezekiel).

Zimmerli sees the promise of Yahweh ‘giving his רוח’ (36:27; 37:14) as being transformed by ‘the late redactional formulation of 39:29 to the more concrete image of the pouring out of the spirit by Yahweh’, 237 which ‘paves the way’ for Joel 3:1ff. This concept of ‘pouring out’ ‘must envisage the concept of the fructifying, beneficent rain from heaven giving growth and nourishment.’ 238 He contrasts this with ‘the inner transformation of man, which enables him to keep the commandments’ in 36:27 (and 37:14). 239 Yahweh’s spirit in 39:29 serves ‘as the final irrevocable union of Yahweh with his people.’ 240 For Zimmerli, there is, then, a shift in meaning of רוח from 36:27 and 37:14 to 39:29.

Block, too, sees a shift in meaning between the occurrences. 241 While he regards the vision of the dry bones coming to life in 37:1-14 as an exposition of 36:27 (where Yahweh promises Israel that ‘I will put my spirit within you’), he says that there is a ‘fundamental difference in significance’ 242 between 36:27 and 39:29. In 36:27 and 37:14, רוח was ‘within’ or ‘in their midst,’ (נָשַׁבָּתי). He notes that this was ‘obviously associated with the renewal of the covenant’, 243 but ‘it seems to relate more immediately to the rebirth of the nation, her receiving new life.’ 244 He sees this as very different from ‘pour my spirit upon’ in 39:29, which he regards as ‘a sign and seal of the covenant.’ 245 He then goes on to look at the other contexts of Yahweh ‘pouring out’ his רוח (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Joel 3:1; Zech. 12:10). He comments,

‘it would appear from all these references that the pouring out of the Spirit of Yahweh upon his people signified the ratification and sealing of the covenant relationship. It represented the guarantee of new life, peace and prosperity. But it signified more than this. It served as the definitive act whereby he claimed and sealed the newly gathered nation of Israel as his own.’ 246

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237 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p567. The terminus ad quem of the redaction is the date of Joel 3:1ff.
238 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p567.
239 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p567.
240 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p321.
Thus, he interprets this ‘pouring out’ of Yahweh’s נזר to be the divine mark of ownership, accounting for Yahweh’s intervention before Israel is touched in the Gog oracle. The focus is on the presence of Yahweh’s נזר, not on the transformation effected by his נזר. This is one argument that he brings in favour of the integration of the Gog oracle at this point. The destruction of Gog functions as a visible evidence of the truthfulness of Yahweh’s word ‘for the prophet’.247

Eichrodt and Allen, however, see the reference to Yahweh’s נזר in 39: 29 as fundamentally similar to those in 36:27 and 37:14. For Eichrodt, the outpouring of the spirit on the house of Israel ‘serves as a guarantee of their being continual objects of divine favour and of the future unbroken fellowship between God and his people’.248

That this is not different from the promise of Yahweh’s נזר in 36:27a and 37:14 is evident from his comments on 36:27. There he sees Yahweh ‘giving’ his נזר as referring to the ‘outpouring of the spirit.’249

Allen regards the outpouring of the spirit as forming a contrast with the outpouring of wrath (a phrase which occurs 12 times in the book of Ezekiel, and most recently in 36:18). His interpretation thus gives the phrase a ‘different nuance’250 than in the other instances of the ‘pouring out’ of Yahweh’s נזר (Isa. 44:3; Joel 3:1 [ET 2:28]; Zech. 12:10).251 ‘The new age would be characterized by the gift of Yahweh’s enabling spirit, as 36:26 and 37:14 had proclaimed.’252 Israel is now secure from the onslaught of nations from afar.

While scholars are agreed that the outpouring of Yahweh’s נזר serves to guarantee the future of the exiles, in that never again will Yahweh hide his face from them, as he had done (39:23-24), it is preferable, with Allen and Eichrodt, not to see a shift in essential meaning between Yahweh ‘pouring out his נזר’ and Yahweh ‘giving his נזר (with)in them’ for three reasons.

First, an analysis of Yahweh ‘giving’ נזר and Yahweh ‘pouring’ נזר points to them describing essentially similar actions. In the Old Testament, there are 16 instances of Yahweh giving (מך) נזר. As is evident from Table 13 and Table 14, the phrase can be used with different senses of נזר, and, more significantly, with different prepositions following.

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248 Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p529.
249 Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p502.
250 Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p209.
251 He does not mention Isa. 32:15
252 Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p209.
Table 13. Occurrences of Yahweh ‘giving’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Yahweh’s spirit</th>
<th>Num. 11:25, 29 (v.29 shows that ‘the spirit’ in v.25 is Yahweh’s); Isa. 42:1; Ezek. 36:27; Ezek. 37:14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A spirit</td>
<td>1 Kings 22:23 (// 2 Chron. 18:22) – ‘a lying spirit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Anthropological – the breath of life</td>
<td>Eccl. 12:7 (// to רוחות; Isa. 42:5 (// to רוחות); Ezek. 37:6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Anthropological – the ‘driving force’ within a person</td>
<td>Ezek. 11:19; 36:26 – Yahweh giving Israel ‘one/a new spirit’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Prepositions used with occurrences of Yahweh ‘giving’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יק</td>
<td>Ezek. 36:27 (‘A’)</td>
<td>Ezek. 11:19; 36:26 (Both ‘E’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ע</td>
<td>Num. 11:25, 29; Isa. 42:1 (All ‘A’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ש</td>
<td>Isa. 42:5 (‘D’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>עט</td>
<td>Eccl. 12:7 (‘D’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main point to note from Table 13 is how Yahweh is seen to be the giver of רוח, even though רוח may have different senses (and our categorisations may serve to mask the fluidity and flexibility of the word); the use of רוח is not confined to a particular sense of רוח. Snaith is right to observe that רוח is properly ‘of God.’ With regard to Table 14, the important observation to make here is that different prepositions can be used with the different senses of Yahweh giving רוח. In particular, Yahweh can put his רוח ‘upon’ (עט) a person (see row 3), where רוח is Yahweh’s רוח.

These observations about Yahweh ‘giving’ רוח need to be juxtaposed with observations about the pouring of רוח, a phrase that itself needs to be set within a wider context, since in the Old Testament, רוח in a number of places is associated with a ‘fluid’ metaphor, without always necessarily being used of Yahweh’s spirit.

On five occasions, רוח is linked to the language of ‘filling’ (Exod. 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Deut. 34:9; Mic. 3:8). Of these, Exod. 28:3 and Deut. 34:9 speak of being filled with ‘the spirit of wisdom.’ That this ‘spirit’ is somehow independent of the recipient, external to him, and not merely an anthropological description, seems clear from the fact that Joshua has this רוח through the laying on of Moses’ hands. Exod. 31:3 and 35:31 speak of being filled [with] רוח. Here, too, this is linked to being filled with wisdom. The fifth occurrence, which we examined above, is Mic. 3:8.

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254 Snaith, *Distinctive Ideas*, p150.
256 Deut. 34:9; though cf. Num. 27:18.
On two other occasions, apart from the language of pouring, יָדַר is associated particularly with liquid (Isa. 4:4; 30:28). First, in Isa. 30:28, in strongly anthropomorphic language, Yahweh’s ‘breath’ (יָדַר) is likened to an overflowing wadi. The picture is of a once dry wadi bursting its banks, overpowering all that goes before it. There is no reason why Yahweh’s יָדַר sensu ‘breath’ could not be thought of in liquid terms. Therefore, language of Yahweh pouring out his יָדַר (Ezek. 39:29) should not necessarily be distinguished from language of Yahweh giving his spirit qua vivifying יָדַר-breath (Ezek. 37:14). Secondly, in Isa. 4:4, everyone will be called holy ‘once the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit (יָדַר) of judgement and by a spirit (יָדַר) of burning.’ It is not certain what is meant at this point by יָדַר – whether it refers to the storm wind that is at Yahweh’s disposal (there has been storm imagery used of the coming day in Isa. 2:19, 21), or to an independent spirit at Yahweh’s disposal (cf. 1 Kings 22:21-23) or to Yahweh’s own spirit. What is striking to notice is that this יָדַר (Yahweh’s agent) is involved with cleansing and washing the people of Jerusalem. This liquid metaphor is very close in thought to Ezek. 36:17-19 and 39:24. In Isa. 4:4 (indeed from 3:16), Zion has been personified in her ‘daughters’. Though the reference to ‘blood’ is probably a reference to Zion’s bloodshed, it is possible that it is deliberately ambiguous, and could refer to the unclean menstrual flow. If that were so, that would provide a close semantic link to Ezek. 36:17-19, where Israel’s behaviour has been likened to a woman’s uncleanness (v.17), a behaviour that in v.18 is identified in terms of ‘bloodshed’ (דִּם). The יָדַר that is at Yahweh’s disposal is involved in cleansing the people from their uncleanness and filth.

For our purposes, though, it is the instances of Yahweh ‘pouring’ יָדַר that are of particular significance. Again, as with Yahweh ‘giving’ יָדַר, there is variation both in the nature of יָדַר poured, and in the prepositions associated with the verb of pouring. There is also variation in the verbs for ‘pour.’

Table 15. Occurrences of Yahweh ‘pouring’ יָדַר

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Anthropological - ‘an interior disposition’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh’s spirit</td>
<td>Isa. 32:15 (יְבִיא- nif. ‘be emptied out’); 44:3 (יְהוָה); Ezek. 39:29 (יְהוָה); Joel 2:28-29 [ET 3:1-2] (יְהוָה)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isa. 19:14 (יְהוָה); Isa. 29:10 (יְהוָה); Zech. 12:10 (יְהוָה)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16. Prepositions used with occurrences of Yahweh ‘pouring’ יָדַר

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>בּוֹקֵר</th>
<th>Isa. 19:14 (‘C’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יָנָה</td>
<td>Isa. 29:10; Zech. 12:10 (Both ‘C’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; (All ‘A’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

257 There are other instances which are close to the ‘fluid’ metaphor. In Num. 11:17, Yahweh ‘sets aside’ (יתן) some of the יד ל which is on Moses and puts (למד) it on the elders. In Isa. 63:11, Yahweh puts (למד) his יד within (למד) his people.

258 Though the LXX does not have Ezek. 36:18b. Allen (Ezekiel 20-48, p176) and Zimmerli (Ezekiel 2, p241) regard this explanation as secondary. Cf. Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p344; Greenberg, Ezekiel 21-37, p728.

A comparison of the four tables above gives rise to two observations that point to the essential similarity of the two concepts, that of 'giving' וּנְדָנָה and of 'pouring' יָרָה. First, the prepositions are to some extent interchangeable. Yahweh can 'pour' יָרָה 'in the midst' (בְּתוֹךְ), though 'pour upon' יָרָה is much more common. In the same way, Yahweh can 'give' יָנָה 'in the midst' (בְּתוֹךְ), but Yahweh also can 'give' יָנָה 'upon' (עַל). Secondly, the desired democratisation of prophecy that in Num. 11 is due to Yahweh 'giving' יָנָה 'upon' (עַל) all people, is promised in terms of Yahweh 'pouring' יָרָה 'upon' (עַל) in Joel 3:1-2; 'giving' and 'pouring' are not fundamentally different. This essential similarity is not to say that the pouring of יָרָה always is identical. Language of pouring implies an extravagance to Yahweh's action not necessarily self-evident in 'giving.²⁶⁰ In Ezek. 39, this extravagance is appropriate both as a reversal of the pouring out of wrath and as the climax of the section that is full of hope, culminating in Yahweh showing mercy for the first time in the book (v.25). It is, however, to deny that there is a 'fundamental difference' (Block) between the two. It is better to account for the variation in Ezekiel's usage by seeing a deliberate exploitation of the ambiguity inherent in יָנָה, as it moves from the new driving force (36:26) and the new life-breath (37:4-10) to Yahweh's 'spirit' (36:27; 37:14). This 'play' requires that יָנָה is 'within' or 'in' because that is the locus both of the anthropological 'driving force' and of the 'life-breath.'

The second reason why it is preferable to see the conceptual similarity of the three instances of Yahweh bestowing his spirit, despite the different fientive verb in 39:29, comes from the links with the notion of Yahweh hiding his face. Such a concept, not found elsewhere in the book of Ezekiel apart from the three instances in ch. 39 (vv.23, 24, 29),²⁶¹ implies a break in communication²⁶² with Yahweh. Such a break came because of Israel's 'iniquity' (עֲוֹרָא v.23), because they had 'dealt treacherously' בְּעַל v.23) with him, because of their uncleanness (בְּכַלמָּה v.24), and because of 'their transgressions' (בְּכַלמָּה v.24). Here, then, is the organic link between Israel's behaviour and Yahweh's judgement, reflected in his hiding his face. In v.29, Yahweh promises that he will never hide his face again 'when יָרָה I pour out my spirit...'. Whether יָרָה is taken temporally or causally, there is clearly a link between the pouring out of the spirit, and the result that Yahweh will no longer hide his face.²⁶³ The clear implication is that the pouring out of Yahweh's יָרָה will serve to reverse what caused

²⁶⁰ It is striking in this regard to note that the link with 'rain' and a verb of pouring is only explicit in Isa. 44:3. יָרָה is never used of rain (see Schüngel-Straumann, Rūāḥ, pp26-27; also Dreytza, Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH, pp225). What seems to be in view is the metaphorical unreserved boundless giving of Yahweh's יָרָה rather than the connotations of rain. See Dreytza, Der theologische Gebrauch von RUAH, pp224-26; Schüngel-Straumann, Rūāḥ, p26; pace Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p367; Koch, Der Geist Gottes, p33; Lys, Ḳīṭāb, pp154 n1.

²⁶¹ Though Yahweh 'turns away' בְּהַה יָרָה his face in 7:22.

²⁶² Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, pp208-209.

²⁶³ A causal sense makes my argument stronger, but even a temporal sense supports my argument, given the organic link between behaviour and the hiddenness of Yahweh's face.
the hiding of his face, according to vv.23-24. In other words, Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל will ensure the obedience of the restored people. This is precisely the force of Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל in 36:27. These links are further buttressed by the fact that Yahweh’s ‘face’ (קדש) as Yahweh’s presence is linked elsewhere with Yahweh’s spirit. In Ps. 104:29-30, Yahweh’s hiding his face is tantamount to death, to the taking away of a person’s breath. Hence, Yahweh’s turning his face towards a person is tantamount to the giving of הַנַּחַל, or the giving new life (cf. Ezek. 37:14). In Ps. 51:13, the taking away of the ‘holy spirit’ is parallel to being cast from Yahweh’s presence (קדש), it is likely, then, that the reverse is also true – being in Yahweh’s presence is to have Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל. In other words, the linking of הַנַּחַל with הַנַּחַל points to the fact that the ‘pouring out’ of Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל in 39:29 should be seen in the same terms as that in 36:27 and 37:14; it also points to the life-giving, as well as the ‘obedience-ensuring’ dimension of הַנַּחַל.

Thirdly, although there is scholarly debate about the relationship between 39:21-29 and the Gog oracle of 38:1-39:20, it is clear that the ‘now’ (אֲנִי) of v.25 shifts the focus from the future back to the present. Vv.25-29 have the same provenance and perspective as the earlier salvation oracles, looking forward to a return to the land and to restoration. It is unlikely, therefore, that the ‘pouring out of Yahweh’s spirit’ speaks of something other than the same promise of Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל mentioned already.

In conclusion, the change in terminology expresses both a symmetry with the pouring out of Yahweh’s anger and the extravagance of Yahweh’s actions, but does not signify something fundamentally new or different from that which is envisaged in 36:27a or 37:14. This being so, here again Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל is directly linked with Yahweh’s word. It is Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל that ensures that a rebellious people (cf. 39:23-24) will never again experience Yahweh turning his face away. This can only be ensured by the renewed obedience of the exiles. Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל is the means whereby transformation is effected.

4. Summary

If Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל in 37:14 served to show how it would be that the ‘dead’ exiles would come to respond in repentance to Yahweh’s word, the references in 36:27a and 39:29 (partially, in view of the links with Yahweh ‘hiding’ his face) point to the role of Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל in effecting obedience: ‘I will put my spirit within you, and make you...’

265 Cf. Ps. 139:7, ‘Where can I go from your spirit (קדש)? Or where can I flee from your presence (קדש)?’
266 This is not to say that the extravagance of the metaphor should be restricted to bringing about obedience. It is to say that entailed within the pouring out of Yahweh’s הַנַּחַל is renewed obedience.
267 Block, Ezekiel 25-48, p485, comments that ‘the divine speech...opens abruptly with ’אֲנִי, “Now,” snatching the hearers’ attention away from the distant utopian future, and returning them to the very real needs of the present.’ Cf. Allen, Ezekiel 20-48, p209.
268 If there is after all an echo of ‘rain’ brought by the wind (קדש), then this would provide a neat reversal with the scorching הַנַּחַל that Yahweh has sent in judgement (Ezek. 17:10; 19:12).
follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances’ (36:27a). What Jeremiah
sees as achieved by Yahweh writing the Torah on the hearts of the house of Israel (Jer.
31:33), what Deuteronomy ascribes to Yahweh circumcising the hearts of Israel (Deut.
30:6-8), Ezekiel ascribes to the giving of the divine קְדָשָׁתָם.
CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. SUMMARY

This study began by noting the conceptual link between a person’s word and the breath that carries that word. This link is sometimes paralleled in the Old Testament by a theological association (e.g. Ps. 33:6). This study has explored further the relationship between Yahweh’s word and Yahweh’s rūāh. The main focus for this exploration has been the book of Ezekiel, both because of its comparatively short composition history and because of its dual emphasis on word and rūāh. The investigation has fallen into 3 main parts.

In Part I: Gathering the Data, there were two chapters. Chapter 1 did four things. First, it introduced the subject of the study. Secondly, it surveyed the current scene of Ezekiel scholarship, expressing methodological sympathies with the more recent English monographs that focus holistically on the book of Ezekiel, and noting seven fields in which Ezekiel studies have flourished as a result. Thirdly, it reviewed scholarship on rūāh, and commented on three areas: the development of rūāh-language in the Old Testament, insights from lexical semantics about rūāh, and the relationship between rūāh and the prophetic word. Finally, it outlined the thesis, which can be summarised as follows: The relationship between Yahweh’s rūāh and Yahweh’s word in the book of Ezekiel is to be understood not so much in terms of the inspiration and authentication of the prophet but in terms of the transformation of its addressees.

Chapter 2 looked more closely at ‘word’ and rūāh in Ezekiel, focusing on them separately before exploring the relationship in the rest of the study. First, it discussed where Yahweh’s word is to be found in the book of Ezekiel. Although the book itself is dominated by reports expressed in the 1st person of the word coming to the prophet, I identified and explored four distinct types of speech event: Yahweh addressing Ezekiel; Ezekiel addressing his audience; Yahweh’s ordinances and statutes; the book of Ezekiel itself. As part of thinking further about Yahweh’s word and its addressees, I drew on insights from speech-act theory to show how the illocutionary force of Ezekiel’s oracles can shift by virtue of their being re-presented within the book of Ezekiel. In the second part of this chapter, I analysed all 52 instances of rūāh in the book, identified those occurrences where there is significant scholarly disagreement over meaning, and discussed important cases which would not be discussed later in the study (e.g. 1:12, 20-21). It became apparent that the wide semantic range of rūāh, combined with the fluidity in categories, created the potential for significant deliberate or unintended ambiguity, and made closer analysis a necessity. Part I concluded by arguing that there a number of places where there is some kind of relationship between word and rūāh.

In Part II: Word, Spirit and Inspiration, I turned to the question of rūāh-inspiration and prophecy. Part II set out to explore some of the issues surrounding the prominence
of *ruah* within the ministry of Ezekiel, a prominence that is particularly striking when set against the absence in other classical prophets. Three questions shaped the discussion. The first was whether *ruah* in Ezekiel is or can be understood as Yahweh’s breath on which his word is carried. The second was whether Ezekiel recovers *ruah* as foundational in prophetic inspiration. The third was whether the emphasis on *ruah* within the prophet Ezekiel’s ministry is best explained in terms of the authentication of the prophet. This is the usual explanation for the importance of *ruah* within the ministry of Ezekiel.

Chapter 3 surveyed the different scholarly perspectives on the place of *ruah* within classical prophecy. Next, it examined the concept of inspiration, and suggested two theoretical distinctions should be acknowledged. The first was that between ‘potentiating’ inspiration, where *ruah* inspires the prophet, and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration, where *ruah* inspires words. The second was that between the prophetic event, of Yahweh’s word coming to the prophet, and the rhetorical event, of the prophet speaking Yahweh’s word. The chapter then examined *ruah*-inspiration within the book of Ezekiel, and argued that there is evidence of both ‘potentiating’ and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration, although more evidence of the former, and that each can be found in both the prophetic and the rhetorical events.

Chapter 4 examined the relationship between *ruah* and prophetic inspiration in the pre-classical prophets, the classical prophets, and in selected post-exilic works. With regard to the pre-classical prophets, I argued that there is strong evidence both of ‘potentiating’ inspiration and of ‘word-communicating’ inspiration, but that *ruah* is not especially prominent. With regard to the classical prophets, I argued that, while it is certainly true that *ruah*-inspiration is not prominent, both ‘potentiating’ inspiration and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration as concepts may be found. The classical prophets did not repudiate *ruah* in their own inspiration, but downplayed their own inspiration by *ruah* for rhetorical reasons. In post-exilic literature, again both ‘potentiating’ and ‘word-communicating’ inspiration may be found. In terms of the three questions raised, I concluded that *ruah* as the ‘breath’ of Yahweh’s mouth is not linked with Yahweh’s word in Ezekiel. Secondly, Ezekiel cannot be said to ‘recover’ *ruah* as foundational in his inspiration because the pre-classical prophets are not depicted as inspired as often as is sometimes said and because the classical prophets are more inspired than is sometimes allowed. Ezekiel does have a greater emphasis on *ruah* in his own inspiration, but that is one of degree, not of kind. Thirdly, regarding language of *ruah* as part of the prophet’s own attempt at self-authentication fails to account for the reasons for the almost total silence on *ruah* in the classical prophets. Regarding it as part of the book’s attempt at authenticating the prophet makes more sense, but does not do justice to the book’s overriding purpose of transforming its addressees.
Part III turned to the question of the role of ru'ah in the transformation of the people, effecting obedience to Yahweh’s word. In Chapter 5, we observed how there is symmetry in the book of Ezekiel between the portrayals of judgement and restoration. We saw how it depicts the disobedience of Ezekiel’s addressees as something that endures throughout the prophet’s ministry. At the same time, we noted how the book also looks forward to a day when the exilic house of Israel will again be characterised by a renewed obedience. I argued that this dichotomy serves both to demonstrate to the exilic addressees of the book that the unresponsiveness of Ezekiel’s addressees was not surprising, hence did not discredit his ministry. Further, it provides a powerful call to the book’s addressees to distance themselves from the past response of Ezekiel’s addressees, and to identify with the future, if they are to live and not die (Ezek. 18:31; 33:11). Finally, I argued that the book portrays the prophet Ezekiel as a prescriptive paradigm of the obedience that is both desired and required. The chapter closed by observing that, for the readers of the book, the vision of restoration and renewed obedience does not rest easily with the history of the house of Israel, characterised by rebellion from first to last (ch. 20). The critical questions for them are precisely how such obedience would come about, and how it would be ensured, given this catalogue of failure which extended even to Ezekiel’s intended audience, and given their current plight in exile (cf. 33:10; 37:11).

Chapter 6 argued that ru'ah is fundamental for renewed and long-term obedience to Yahweh’s word, whether it is the prophet’s word, or Yahweh’s statutes. It is precisely in this context that ru’ah within the book assumes its greatest significance. The chapter began by contending that the book of Ezekiel portrays not just the prophet’s obedience, but also his experience of ru’ah as paradigmatic. In the rest of the chapter, I argued that ru’ah is essential for the obedience of the prophet, and that this is mirrored in the future vision for the exiles: ru’ah provides the key to how the vision of the future becomes a present reality (Ezek. 37:1-14). The two-staged vision points to the need of ru’ah to effect a penitent response to the prophetic word, now written in the book of Ezekiel, in those who hear it. It also provides the key to how the vision of the future will remain a permanent reality (Ezek. 36:27a; 39:29). Yahweh’s ru’ah will so infuse the house of Israel, acting upon its new heart, that it will cause the people to obey in a permanent way – a way that will ensure they are never cast from the land again, even if the renewed sacrificial system points to the possibility of sin. Yahweh’s ru’ah transforms the people by effecting Yahweh’s word in their experience.
B. CONCLUSIONS

1. The study of רוח in the book of Ezekiel

Although references to רוח are undoubtedly based in the personal experience of the prophet,1 their place in the book needs to be understood within the ferment in thinking precipitated by the exile. By its very fluidity, רוח is able to fuse a number of things that resonate not simply with the personal experience of the prophet, but also with the transformation of the people. Although of necessity these have to be discussed in linear fashion in a thesis, these instances are better characterised as exhibiting a network of connections.

There is רוח as the breath of life for those who see themselves 'dead', 'separated from Yhwh's beneficent acts' and 'forgotten by him'2 (Ezek. 37; cf. 2:2; 3:24). By the agency of this רוח the exiles can and will live again. Yet the problem is not simply that they are dead, for they also have a 'mind' (רוח), synonymous with their לם, that is corrupt (11:5; 20:32; cf. 13:3) and needs replacing. There is, though, another anthropological רוח, for רוח is also the 'driving force' that acts upon Israel's לם (11:19; 18:31; 36:26; cf. Deut. 2:30), rather than being simply synonymous with it. These notions of 'life-breath' that is absent, 'mind' that is corrupt, and 'driving force' that needs renewing are all answered by the multi-faceted gift of Yhweh's own רוח, promised to the exiles. Yet that by no means exhausts the polyvalency of רוח.

As the power that transports Ezekiel from place to place (37:1 etc.), רוח encapsulates the action of Yhweh (by his רוח) in transporting the people back to their land from exile (37:14). As the means by which Yhweh brings about obedience to his word (2:2; 3:24; cf. 36:26-27; 37:1-14), the action of Yhweh's רוח echoes the equipping power that clothed the judges, enabling them to fulfil Yhweh's will.3 Further, it points to the transforming power by which the book's addressees can share in Ezekiel's vision of the future, and by which Yhweh himself can 'participate directly in man's new obedience.'4 As the inspiring power that takes Ezekiel, though in visions, to the place of revelation where he comes to know Yhweh and his will, so רוח will bring the book's addressees to a true knowledge of Yhweh (cf. 36:27; 37:6, 14).5 As the outpoured רוח of Yhweh, 'fécondante' in its effects (39:29), an end is signalled to the scorching רוח of Yhweh's judgement, metaphorically represented by the storm wind (13:11, 13) or east wind (17:10; 19:12). As the means by which a divine act of

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1 Volz, Der Geist Gottes, p69; cf. Carley, Ezekiel among the Prophets, pp71ff.
2 Olyan, "We Are Utterly Cut Off", p48.
3 Cf. Block, Ezekiel 1-24, p12.
4 Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, p249. For Lapsley, (Can These Bones Live?, p62), it is this divine dimension that separates the promise of renewal in Ezekiel from that in Jeremiah, a reflection of Ezekiel's greater pessimism about human ability.
5 Cf. Lapsley, Can These Bones Live?, p167.
6 Lys, רוח, p154.
recreation, replicating the creation of Adam, is accomplished, rūāh points towards the recreation of a new people (37:1-14). In addition, the role played by rūāh in effecting Yahweh's spoken word mirrors that found in Gen. 1:2. The importance of Yahweh as creator, and of the role of Yahweh's rūāh in creation, is often highlighted in discussions of exilic Isaianic theology. The same emphasis is present in Ezekiel.

Finally, in the exilic and post-exilic periods, rūāh begins to be seen 'as a representative or manifestation of Yahweh on earth' (cf. Isa. 63:7ff.). There are nascent signs in the book of Ezekiel of rūāh acting as the means by which a transcendent deity is present and acts immanently (1:12; 20; cf. 39:29 and the links with pānîm). Although for Ezekiel as a priest, divine presence is clearly focused in the mobile kôbōd yhwh, yet Ezekiel is not simply a priest, he is a prophet, inspired by rūāh. The cultic and the charismatic merge. The fructifying and life-giving effect of the stream flowing from the temple in 47:1-12, where kôbōd yhwh is present (cf. 43:1-5), is not far from the thought of the life-giving effects of rūāh in 37:1-14 and the renewal of the land in Edenic fashion that accompanies the renewal of the people. Such connections are closer after the exile, where rūāh is said to have performed actions that are predicated elsewhere of Yahweh's glory in the cloud (Neh. 9:19-20; Isa. 63:11-14; Hag. 2:5). The relationship between the two would be a fruitful avenue for further research, particularly if not restricted to Ezekiel.

In terms of the number of occurrences related to the prophet himself, Ezekiel deserves the title, 'prophet of the spirit'. However, discussion of rūāh in Ezekiel needs to be carried out not by isolating the prophetic rūāh from the transforming rūāh, for the book of Ezekiel takes the prophetic rūāh and marshals it not chiefly for the authentication of Ezekiel as prophet, but as an integral part of the book's wider rhetorical function of transforming its addressees.

2. The study of rūāh in the Old Testament

It has been axiomatic amongst many Old Testament scholars that rūāh does not really relate to the prophetic word until the exile. According to this reading of the evidence, rūāh was associated with prophecy in the pre-classical period only insofar as it gave rise to ecstatic prophetic behaviour. In the classical period, the prophets either repudiated rūāh or would not have attributed their prophetic inspiration to rūāh. It was after the exile, when rūāh had been subject to a number of developments, that the pre-exilic

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prophets were seen to have prophesied under the inspiration of *rūāḥ* (Neh. 9:30; Zech. 7:12). Such an analysis should be revised.

While it is certainly true that *rūāḥ* was associated with ecstatic behaviour, such prophets did produce words which were clearly understood as related to the activity of *rūāḥ* (1 Kgs. 22:6, 10-11). Whether it was Yahweh’s *rūāḥ* or an evil *rūāḥ* sent from Yahweh was a matter of debate, but *rūāḥ* was related to prophetic speech even in early times. For the classical prophets, while prophetic behaviour clearly changed somewhat, and clear statements of their own inspiration are very rare, there is no evidence of their repudiating *rūāḥ*, and there is sufficient evidence to point towards their own *rūāḥ*-inspiration, albeit downplayed for rhetorical reasons. The prophet Ezekiel is not a strange anomaly in his consciousness of *rūāḥ*-inspiration. Rather, the change in rhetorical situation, the message of transformation, and the carefully constructed prophetic persona in the book of Ezekiel explain the prominence of *rūāḥ* in the book.

3. The study of the book of Ezekiel

This study has highlighted the significance of Ezekiel the prophet as a *persona* with a significant role to play in the message of the book, and not simply as a vehicle of Yahweh’s word. It has also provided evidence that the prophetic book of Ezekiel is a carefully shaped whole with a clear rhetorical purpose. However, it is in a different area that this study has greatest implications.

The place of calls to repentance in the book and how such calls relate to apparently unilateral and unconditional declarations of salvation by Yahweh has been much debated. Whether the product of different layers, chronological development, rhetorical technique, different moral worlds, conflicting anthropologies or something else, within the book of Ezekiel the two remain side-by-side, with neither revoked. Indeed, oracles not originally aimed at eliciting repentance have been re-presented within the book of Ezekiel, as indirect speech acts with different illocutionary force, to bring the exilic addressees to repentance. Within the framework of the book of Ezekiel, I have argued for a different perspective on this antinomy, that they provide *complementary* perspectives on the same event, albeit with divine initiative working through *rūāḥ* enabling a response impossible for the inveterately rebellious nation.

Elsewhere in the Old Testament, there are clear links pointing to Yahweh’s word as carried by Yahweh’s breath. The book of Ezekiel makes a distinctive contribution to our knowledge of Yahweh, Ezekiel’s God, in highlighting the effecting power of *rūāḥ*: Yahweh, by his *rūāḥ*, brings about moral and ethical transformation and renewal, creating a new community obedient to his word.
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