SUMMARY

'KNOWING THE LORD':

MORAL THEOLOGY IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

by

JR SOZA

Degree: DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY

Subject: OLD TESTAMENT

Promoter: DR WJ WESSELS

This thesis is a moral and theological interpretation of the book of Jeremiah (primarily chapters twenty-one through twenty-nine). The prime focus is on the Hebrew term ידע and associated vocabulary and terminology which enable an understanding of how the book of Jeremiah sets up knowledge of Yahweh as a primary concern. Such a concern reinforces the rhetorical and ethical nature of the textual witness and elevates the significant and profound challenge that is put forth. For instance, Jeremiah 22:16 is a prime example within the book where an understanding of ידע of Yahweh should be given adequate attention, although it has not in Old Testament scholarship, to arrive at the kind of moral and theological interpretation that is voiced in this ancient Israelite prophet.

Knowledge of Yahweh in the text of Jeremiah is to be distinguished from a purely cognitive knowing that removes from the equation, in any way, living a certain kind of life with Yahweh - a life which is measured only by the highest of moral and religious standards. Indeed, there is a direct relationship between a certain kind of action/way of living and a genuine knowledge of Yahweh. Key texts explored in this thesis then, are those which bring the challenge of a true knowledge of Yahweh to the Judean king, priest, prophet, and people. An overall coherent vision of what it means to know Yahweh, the God of Israel, in the text of Jeremiah, is the aim of this thesis.

Key terms:

Old Testament theology; moral theology; biblical theology; knowledge; falsehood; heart; turn; return; repent; justice; righteousness; truth

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To my father

EUGENE SOZA (1928-1998)

who has led by example what it means to pursue a knowledge of the Lord,

and for my daughter

SHARI (JEAN) SOZA

who I pray will carry on the purpose that my father so well established

ABBREVIATIONS

ABD Anchor Bible Dictionary

ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BDB	Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
HAR	Hebrew Annual Review
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBT	Horizons in Biblical Theology
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NDBT	New Dictionary of Biblical Theology
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis
NIV	New International Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
TLOT	Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament
TWOT	Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Research problem statement, purpose, and method

The nature of the study of the Old Testament (OT), including the prophets contained therein, has historically experienced a diversity of approaches and questions as to its meaning and relevance. Much biblical scholarship in the last few centuries has given attention to the OT as a history of Israel's religion without much interest as to how the OT might be appropriated in matters of faith and life for present generations. The classical (i.e. writing) prophets in the OT provide especially good material for theological and moral /ethical reflection for those interested in such readings. The rise of modern and post-modern scientific study of the bible, however, has often times marginalized and neglected this rich field of biblical approach. We intend in this manuscript to bring to the foreground of our concerns a theological and moral/ethical reading of an OT prophet which can also be applied in a practical sense based on a biblical theology. This is a field of theological inquiry that, ever since J.P. Gabler's 1787 inaugural address at the University of Altdorf, and progressing through the nineteenth century, had been seen as a purely historical, descriptive and objective discipline, separate from the concerns of biblical interpreters. Hence, as biblical theology became increasingly pursued in an academic setting, it in effect became more and more divorced from the life, faith, and practice of the church. The discipline of biblical theology has not always been viewed in a positive fashion by research specialists, in so much that its very right to exist has been called into question. Literary theory and social sciences in more recent years, for example, have introduced factors that challenge the repute of biblical theology. Nonetheless, biblical theology may be distinguished from say, philosophical theology, which relies more directly upon reason, or natural theology, which looks to the natural world and order for knowledge of God. Comparatively speaking, there has been a neglect of the theological interpretation of the bible within the so-called theological disciplines. This thesis examines this frequently neglected topic with a view towards investigation of two main questions: (1) How might a biblical theology, with a primary focus on moral theology in particular, be developed in the book of Jeremiah so as to serve as a model for doing biblical theology in great depth? (2) How might the issue of

knowing God in the book of Jeremiah, with Jer.22:15-16 being a focal point, contribute to doing biblical, and even moral theology in a biblical book?

Before taking on a study of biblical theology in the book of Jeremiah, it might be useful to mention the views and challenges of research specialists that are working in the area, or thereabouts, of biblical theology. Philip Davies may be taken as a rigorous example of those who think that biblical theology in any sense is impossible for those who are not confessionally committed. He argues that there are two quite different strategies for reading biblical texts, the confessional method and the non-confessional method. The task of the interpreter who adopts the former is to affirm the values and claims made by the text; the task of the interpreter who adopts the latter is to accept or reject claims made by the text at his or her own discretion. Clearly the former assumes or finds some sort of internal coherence; the latter does not. Davies insists that the two methods are mutually incompatible. They should never be intermingled. They generate opposed polarities: Scripture versus biblical literature; Bible study versus biblical studies; and theology versus non-theology. Davies might consider this some sort of hopeless methodological mess in attempting to do biblical theology; but it is more likely that it is a reflection of his own non-confessional stance.[1] Unlike Davies, the thesis contained herein has a confessional stance as a working hypothesis and sees congruency and coherence in the biblical text. But postmodernism, a term notoriously difficult to define and yet strongly influential in present biblical scholarship, sees little in the way of unity in the bible. It promotes relativity, and that there are no facts, but only interpretations as regards the biblical text. This might be along the lines of a Dennis Olson, who sees little by way of unity of content in the bible; whereas Walter Brueggemann, who could be considered postmodern, nonetheless manages to see unity and congruency in the biblical text as he stresses the virtue of imagination on the part of the biblical writers.[2] Brevard Childs is a research specialist who has in particular championed the view of a unity in the final form of the biblical text in which to shape a theological synthesis. His influence shall be seen

[1] See D.A. Carson, 'Systematic theology and biblical theology' in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (T.D. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, editors) (Leicester, England and Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 95-96.

[2] Brueggemann has in mind of course, OT authors.

implicitly and explicitly in this thesis, which promotes a high view of scripture and a unity with a revelatory base. Thus the methodological orientation contained herein, although recognizing the diverse texts in the Jeremiah tradition, nevertheless works to uncover and articulate the unity of the larger Jeremiah corpus taken as a whole, while recognizing the categories of the texts themselves. It is however, impossible to have any sort of responsible biblical theology apart from careful exegesis. Exegesis has as its core the analysis of individual terms and vocabulary unique to a biblical author, thus word study will be important to our pursuits. But sometimes a biblical author will pursue concepts which have a slim lexical base and yet can lay no less a claim to be of central importance. We shall in this thesis explore key terms and concepts which enlighten our concerns of a moral theology and the knowledge of God in the book of Jeremiah. Inevitably, our exegesis shall control our biblical and moral theology, and we shall marshall the resources of rigorous exegesis throughout. It is our hope that this thesis will contribute toward readings of the bible which make biblical and moral theology a normative, and even a confessional enterprise. Beyond the possible pitfalls then of endless discussions of definition and method, this thesis moves toward a call to work out of the biblical text, in this case the book of Jeremiah, a faithful and penetrating biblical theology.

This thesis in particular, shall be an exploration of the knowledge of God in the book of Jeremiah with a primary concern for Jer.22:15-16, which states

> 'Do you become a king because you are competing in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He pled the cause of the afflicted and needy; then it was well. Is not that what it means to know me?' Declares the Lord.[3]

'Knowing' God is an important concept in many parts of the Bible and in the faiths rooted in the Bible. Because this text offers a quasi-definitional account of its meaning, then it ought to be a key text in any account of this important concept. The theology that is developed in our account is indeed a moral theology which involves not only the

witness of Jeremiah, but a concern for the larger field of OT theology in its own right. We are defining OT theology in the broad sense as the logic or understanding of the nature and character of God as revealed in the OT.[4] Moral theology is being defined more specifically as the demand on humans to respond appropriately to the nature and character of the revealed deity. Moral theology has a practical outworking which relates to true knowledge of God. It issues forth a divine challenge to live a certain way. It is our hypothesis that any cognitive knowing of God is not to be set apart and distinguished from a knowing which necessitates obedient response. Thus our concerns with knowledge of God has to do with knowledge in the moral sense of the word. Appropriate response to God matters. There can be no true knowledge without this element. The larger field of OT theology as an academic discipline in the modern period has pursued a variety of avenues of approach to understanding the presentation of the nature and character of God as revealed in the OT. Although this one crucial theological issue that we are exploring (i.e. knowledge of God) has been discussed by modern scholars, knowledge of God as it applies to moral theology, with a particular focus on Jer.22:15-16, has had insufficient discussion. It is our goal to bring Jer.22:15-16 more readily into an understanding of what it is to know God in the moral sense of the word, while also doing a broader based study in much of the moral theology presented in the book of Jeremiah.

In the remainder of this first chapter of this thesis, we shall survey literature on OT theology in general and the moral theology of Jeremiah in particular, followed by stating the importance of knowing God in Jeremiah, analyzing the present state of study of the book of Jeremiah, and structuring the book of Jeremiah as a whole. Chapters two, three, and four focus on key terms, with 'knowing' being central. Chapters five through nine are exegesis of key texts where the theme of knowing God and related topics yield a model for knowing the Lord. Chapter ten concludes that the book of Jeremiah provides a

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[3] NASB translation. A variety of English translations may be referred to throughout the thesis. Where no specific source is cited, the translation is the author's own.

[4] We define this term from the literal breakdown of the two Greek words in "theology" (**qeov~** - "God", and **lo;go~** - "logic/word").

model for a biblical and moral theology which should provoke one's thinking beyond Jeremiah to the larger biblical text and other areas of interest.

A survey of literature on Old Testament theology in general and the moral theology of Jeremiah in particular

a. Prologue:

As a starting point, we will begin our study with a brief review of some of the literature that has been written over the past one and a half centuries[5] in regards to approaching the larger field of OT theology so that we may initially gain a broad perspective before pursuit into the theology of Jer.22:15-16. We shall also examine other scholarly literature written about the OT that are not theologies per se, as well as recent monographs on the Hebrew prophets and Jeremiah in particular so as to get a feel for the environment of OT and Jeremiah studies in the modern period. Our findings at the larger level shall reveal that in as much as OT theology has had trouble in definition and methodology, theology of a moral kind, and knowledge of God as it applies to moral theology, has not had adequate treatment, especially in Jeremiah. Suffice it to say that although numerous scholars have included significant Jeremiah texts in their written works, texts which shall be of concern to us (e.g. Jer.7:1-15; 18:1-12; 23:9-40), nonetheless these texts have generally been placed under religio-historical categories. For instance, the Temple Sermon in Jer.7:1-15 (which we shall deal with in chapter eight of our thesis) is most often viewed as Jeremiah's Deuteronomic influence, without great regard for how the sermon might be morally and rhetorically charged. The lesson Jeremiah learns at the house of the potter in 18:1-12 (discussed in chapter four of our thesis) is generally catalogued as Yahweh's sovereignty over the nations, while the dynamics of human and divine repentance are too often neglected. The importance of the conflict between true and false prophets, as to be found in Jer.23:9-40 (to be studied in the seventh chapter of this thesis), has been consistently and rightly picked up on by scholars, but is often placed under a larger OT rubric of true and false prophecy without close examination of how the issue functions for the book of Jeremiah. The desire in this

[5] We have chosen the mid-nineteenth century as a starting point because the rise of modern biblical scholarship is so much affected by the German higher critical school and the advance of the sciences.

work is to attempt to grasp the profound moral challenge and message of the book of Jeremiah in regards to the key text of our study - Jer.22:15-16. The vast review of literature that we shall set forth in this introductory essay will result in demonstrating that the knowledge of God in Jer.22:15-16 has been void of much needed extensive treatment. Although much of the reviewed literature does have citations and commentary on our other key Jeremiah texts already mentioned (7:1-15; 18:1-12; 23:9-40), they have been generally systematized as afore-discussed. We therefore shall give full focus in this initial part of our introduction to how OT theologians and scholars have made use of Jer.22:15-16 and its moral challenge of knowledge of God.

Before taking on a survey of the historical literature in question, it would be worth mentioning that a theology of the OT, particularly a moral theology, and even more particularly a moral theology that gives some definition as to what it is to know God, has always been of interest to practicing Jews and Christians.[6] To a great extent, Jews and Christians in synagogue and church respectively would expect that as peoples of 'The Book',[7] a moral theology about the challenging nature of God would be a first priority in a reading of that which is regarded as sacred text. The ultimate goal of biblical study for the believer should be, not only exegesis and interpretation, but also appropriation. Hasel, who has attempted to inform his readers on the basic issues of debate in the arena of OT theology, states

> Thus the task of the Biblical theologian is to interpret the Scriptures meaningfully, with the careful use of the tools of historical and philological research, attempting to understand and describe in 'getting back there' what the Biblical testimony meant; and to explicate the meaning of the Biblical testimony for modern man in his own particular historical situation.[8]

The hope of the communities of faith is that this will result in responsible application, which results in a better community that honors the God they seek to serve.

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[6] Although we do not want to assume that Jews and Christians approach the larger category of OT theology in the same way; see Jon D. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 33-62.

[7] Tanak for Jews, Old and New Testaments for Christians.

Goldingay uses the analogy of the difference between one who inspects a car as opposed to the feel of the one actually driving the car, or likewise examining the frame of a building as opposed to what it is like to live in the building.[9] To enlarge and update the first analogy, one who works on supersonic aircraft or spacecraft does not have the same feel, understanding, and experience of the one who pilots such machinery. It seems that it would be a proper proposal therefore to recognize that the best in biblical scholarship should come from those who not only master the intricacies of the academic disciplines needed, but also have an interest in, to continue the analogy, 'riding the aircraft/spacecraft'. That is, it is from a faith perspective and an interest in the moral challenge to respond appropriately to the deity of the texts that the best readings and interpretations should arise.[10] Because of this, we have attempted in this thesis to contribute to the study of the OT, in this case Jeremiah, in not just a theological way, but in a morally theological way, particularly for faith communities who remind us why such an endeavor into biblical study is a worthy enterprise.

b. A survey of Old Testament theologies from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century with regards to Jer.22:15-16:

We begin to trace in a general sense, the history of how theological thought about the OT developed in the Western world since the mid-nineteenth century, with our specific concern being the role Jer.22:15-16 and its issue of knowledge of God has played. We recognize that although we are able to survey some literature, an exhaustive and comprehensive sampling of the written works on the topic is a task too monumental for this particular introduction.[11]

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[8] Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (revised edition) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 130.

[9] John Goldingay, *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 169.

[10] Nicholas Lash contends that the exegete, historian, systematic theologian etcetera all share in this same interpretive task, and cannot function properly in biblical analysis without concerns beyond their own fields of study. For his fully developed essay see, Nicholas Lash, *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London, England:SCM Press, 1986), 75-92.

[11] Childs takes us past Gabler to the pre-modern era of classic Christian approaches to biblical theology. He discusses Irenaeus and the 'rule of faith', Origen and Augustine's combined ethical, allegorical, speculative, philosophical interpretive approaches and the various levels of Scripture, Aquinas' Aristotelian and Catholic influence, Luther's Jesus Christ as the key to Scripture, and Calvin's literal sense

Among those which we shall survey are: Hengstenberg, Shultz, Oehler, Burney, and Davidson. Hengstenberg wrote his *Christology of the Old Testament* in 1847.[12] In it he defended his pietistic orthodox Lutheran position maintaining that Jesus Christ is the center of the OT (as the title of his book demonstrates). He only comments on those OT passages he determines to be messianic, thereby leaving any discussion of Jer.22:15-16 out of his work. Shultz's two volume *Old Testament Theology* appeared in 1869 in which he set out two main divisions of OT theological thought: 'The Development of Religion and Morals in Israel Down to the Founding of the Asmonaean State' and 'Israel's Consciousness of Salvation and Religious View of the World, the Product of the Religious History of the People'.[13] He, like Hengstenberg, had no comment on the importance of Jer.22:15-16, which is somewhat surprising for a work that has morality as a key concern.[14] Contemporary with Schultz was the Liberal Protestant Gustave Friedrich Oehler, whose *Theology of the Old Testament* has only one quick passing remark about Jer.22:15-16; and that is to call Jehoiakim 'a king who surpassed the worst of his ancestors in badness'.[15] Beyond this, there is nothing more said regarding what it means to know God in the passage. *Outlines of Old Testament Theology* by C.F. Burney published in 1902 is a systematic theology which provided no contributory thought on Jer.22:15-16.[16] So also the Scottish scholar A.B. Davidson whose *The Theology of the*

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combined with Holy Spirit illumination approach. Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible) (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1993), 30-52. In this way, Childs provides a larger interpretive context in the ongoing discussion of biblical theology and interpretation, as he does with his well known canonical approach to Scripture. Thus, according to Childs, the ancients might have had greater insight than enlightenment and post-enlightenment thinkers have generally given them credit for. Calvin, who wrote a multi-volume commentary on Jeremiah, although not engaged with in the thesis as readily as more contemporary commentators, shall nonetheless be referred to on occasion.

[12] Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament* (reprint from the Francis and John Rivington edition, London, 1847) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1970).

[13] Hermann Schultz, *Old Testament Theology* (The Religion of Revelation in its Pre-Christian Stage of Development) (2nd English edition) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1898).

[14] Clements views this firm moral foundation in Schultz as an apologetic motive because of Schultz's move away from the more traditional Christian interpretations of the OT as a book of prophetic promise and messianic predictions about the coming of Jesus Christ. Ronald E. Clements, *A Century of Old Testament Study* (Cambridge, England: The Lutterworth Press, 1976), 146-147.

[15] Gustave Friedrich Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1883), 417.

[16] Charles Fox Burney, *Outlines of Old Testament Theology* (2nd edition) (New York, New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1902).

Old Testament was published posthumously in 1904.[17] Davidson, like Burney, took a systematic approach to the OT, in his case establishing twelve points of doctrine.

By the beginning of the twentieth century no OT theological work had made mention of the importance of Jer.22:15-16 for serious moral engagement with the knowledge of God. However, Barth's focus on early church and reformation theologians and his renewed emphasis on biblical theology had far reaching implications, and in a sense, became a primary force for the inauguration of what is often referred to as the 'golden age of OT theology' in the mid-twentieth century. He no doubt opened up the way for biblical scholars to work in new directions and to allow for a new theological era and some great biblical theologians to come forth, for instance, Walther Eichrodt. In fact, the 'golden age of OT theology' referred to above is mostly associated with having its origins in Eichrodt, the Swiss OT scholar whose much read two volume *Theology of the Old Testament* was written between 1933-1939.[18] Eichrodt used the idea of the 'covenant' as the organizing principle unifying OT theological thought, thereby stimulating a debate as to locating the focal point of the OT, which eventually led to similar discussions in NT theology. Eichrodt had much to say about the nature of God. For instance, he had sections in his *Theology of the Old Testament* on the power of God, the lovingkindness of God, the righteousness of God, the love of God, the wrath of God, the holiness of God, the fear of God, faith in God, love for God, etc. He did not have a separate section on knowledge of God in itself, but he did equate the knowledge of God with the love of God.[19] Eichrodt, unlike the other OT theologians up to this point, does have some useful, albeit short, commentary on Jer.22:15-16, which we shall refer to in chapter six of our thesis. He also has a large section on piety and morality in which he relates the knowledge of God to a certain kind of human morality[20]

> ... the moral effect of the new knowledge of God makes itself felt ...

[17] Andrew Bruce Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904).
[18] Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (volumes 1&2, English translation) (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster, 1961 & 1967).
[19] Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT* (vol.2), 290-292. We also equate knowledge of God with love of God to some extent in our thesis, not only in regards to Jeremiah, but also in our brief discussion of Hosea.
[20] Ibid, 316-379.

> The dominant feature throughout is respect for the rights of everything that has a human face ... because of the *nobility of Man*, (emphasis his) which is now recognized as a binding consideration for moral conduct ... The knowledge of God as one who confronts men in personal encounter, and calls them into his service, leads to an awareness of the distinctive position of Man as compared with all the rest of animate Nature.[21]

In a larger sense, Eichrodt contributes to our concern for moral theology in that he is largely responsible for assisting a generation of scholars who thought in historical terms to begin thinking in theological terms.[22] This move toward a more theological emphasis, that is, thinking about the nature and character of God, opened doors for pursuit into a moral theology with its practical concern, which is actually reflected in the biblical text. Thus Eichrodt helped to advance the kind of God concern which comes about from theological readings of the OT that we are interested in in this thesis.

Numerous OT theologies were produced in the 'golden age' following the work of Eichrodt. A survey of Köhler,[23] Heinisch,[24] Burrows,[25] and Baab[26] reveals that the basic approach to writing an OT theology at this time was to systematize the OT into Christian theological categories, not unlike Davidson and Burney before them. The result for our purposes is virtually nothing said about Jer.22:15-16 and the knowledge of God, except in the case of Baab, who anticipates well the kind of moral concern we have in this thesis in the one paragraph he writes on the two verses from Jeremiah. We quote

> Knowledge means an intimate, spiritual relationship and personal loyalty that produces conduct in harmony with the will of God. It is not found when halfhearted allegiance is mixed with the worship of other gods. Rather it suggests an absolute devotion, unequivocal in its demands. When men seek the Lord with all their hearts, such knowledge is the

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[21] Ibid, 321.
[22] So also Ernst Sellin. See John H. Hayes and Frederick C. Prussner, *Old Testament Theology* (Its History and Development) (London, England: SCM Press Ltd., 1985), 179.
[23] Ludwig Köhler, *Old Testament Theology* (translated into English by A.S. Todd) (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1957).
[24] Paul Heinisch, *Theology of the Old Testament* (revised edition) (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1950). Heinisch does have one reference to Jer.22:15-16, but with no comment.
[25] Millar Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1946). As the title of the book might reveal, this is a Christian theology of both Old and New Testaments.
[26] Otto Justice Baab, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949).

result.[27]

Dentan's *Preface to Old Testament Theology*[28] written mid-century is a history of OT theological approaches up to his time, and not a theology in itself. Consequently, there is no commentary on biblical texts in this work, including of course, Jer.22:15-16. Dentan also wrote *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel*,[29] which is an OT theology focused on the doctrine of God. He heads chapter two of this work with Jer.22:16 and proceeds to discuss 22:15-16 near the end of the chapter. He states of these verses

> There is still a third dimension to the idea of knowing God. If it includes the emotions as well as the activity of the cognitive intellect, it also includes the will, for the true knowledge of God always issues in ethical behavior.[30]

Or again,

> In ancient Israel, knowledge that did not issue in appropriate action was not true knowledge at all; genuine knowledge involved the whole of a man's personality - his mind, his feelings, and his deeds.[31]

Edmond Jacob, whose *Theology of the Old Testament*[32] was originally written in French in 1955 had categories similar to Eichrodt (e.g. holiness of God, righteousness of God, faithfulness of God, love of God, wrath of God, wisdom of God, etc.), but nothing particularly on the knowledge of God. He does make some contribution to our exegesis of Jer.22:15-16, which we shall make use of in the main body of the thesis. He moves away from what might be termed 'mystical' understandings of God as being knowledge of God, and is more interested in 'action' as being identified with knowledge of God;[33] which of course is related to our understanding of Jer.22:15-16 as shall be demonstrated.

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[27] (Ibid, 149). Yet it is interesting that there is nothing here by Baab about the public practice of justice which is Jeremiah's stated concern in the text.
[28] Robert Claude Dentan, *Preface to Old Testament Theology* (revised edition) (New York, New York: The Seabury Press, 1963).
[29] Robert Claude Dentan, *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel* (New York, New York: The Seabury Press, 1968).
[30] Ibid, 39.
[31] Ibid, 40.
[32] Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (translated into English by Arthur W. Heathcote and Philip J. Allcock) (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1958).
[33] Ibid, 177.

As already mentioned, and from a larger perspective, the work of Eichrodt launched OT theologians toward a pursuit of locating a center, or organizing principle to unify the OT.[34] TH.C. Vriezen, whose *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*,[35] written in Dutch in 1958, developed the concept of 'communion' as the central theme of the OT. In his defining what he means by this, Vriezen has much to say about the knowledge of God, although disappointingly, none of it comes from Jer.22:15-16. In his only reference to the passage he turns the question from the Jeremiah text ("'is this not to know me', says the Lord") into meaning in an overly-generalized way, 'Yahweh is honoured'.[36] It is surprising that although Vriezen has so much material on morals and ethics[37] as well as the knowledge of God, he has obscured the fundamental importance of Jer.22:15-16. Nonetheless, some quotes from his work assist in laying a foundation for the kind of moral theology concerning the knowledge of God that we shall see in our study of the book of Jeremiah. For instance, Vriezen states

> Indeed, theology is no more than the systematic exposition of all that is to be found in living religion concerning the knowledge of God ... The Old Testament always speaks about *knowing God* (emphasis his) ... and makes it the first demand of life ... It is something altogether different from intellectual knowledge: it is a knowledge of the heart.[38]

> The knowledge of God is something altogether different from having a conception of God, by which one defines the nature of God. The knowledge of God does not imply a theory about the nature of God, it is not ontological, but existential: it is a life in the true relationship to God. In the Old Testament no attempts are made, therefore, to arrive at a theology which defines the Being of God.[39]

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[34] A number of fairly recent works in OT theology have devoted chapters to discussing the one main unifying theme of the OT as developed by scholars up to their own day, something that is only of tangential importance to us in this introduction. A few examples include: *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology* (Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, volume 1)(David W. Baker - General Editor)(Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1992)**,** 43-372; Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems of Old Testament Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1985), 125-133; and Hasel, *Basic Issues*, 77-104.

[35] TH.C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Second English edition) (Oxford, England and Newton, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell and Charles T. Branford Company, 1970).

[36] Ibid, 389.

[37] He has a large section devoted to ethics (377-404).

[38] Vriezen, *An Outline*, 128.

[39] Ibid, 129.

Thus Vriezen elevates the knowledge of God and its morally demanding challenge in ways which shall be consistent with this thesis. His substantial discussion on 'man as the image of God'[40] also highlights the significant nature of humanity and one's treatment of humanity as being an expression as to whether or not one really knows God.

A few other works on OT theology that came out in the latter part of the so-called 'golden age' were by John Barton Payne[41] and George Ernest Wright.[42] Payne's effort is a somewhat familiar systematic theology in Christian terms with nothing of substance on Jer.22:15-16. Wright's work is notably brief in comparison with other OT theologies, and does have some discussion on knowledge of God, but not in regards to Jer.22:15-16.

If Eichrodt's work could be considered the 'bookend' at the beginning of the 'golden age' of OT theology, then most certainly Gerhard von Rad's two volume *Old Testament Theology*[43] is the 'bookend' that concludes the same 'golden age'. He was the most influential Old Testament theologian of the post World War II era,[44] who in fact, as a German scholar, defended the OT in the Nazi period against anti-Semitism. He rejected systematic categories and focused on the biblical testimony to God's continuing activity in the history of Israel. After him, and perhaps, because of him, many Roman Catholic scholars began to enter the field.[45] Von Rad most certainly has a moral concern in his writings on OT theology, and although his one reference to Jer.22:15-16 is rather thin,[46] he does become a conversation partner in chapter nine of our thesis on Jeremiah and Hananiah in Jer.28. Nonetheless, outside of the broader interest of knowledge of God by Eichrodt, Vriezen, and Dentan, our examination thus far of OT theological thought and

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[40] Ibid, 170-175.
[41] John Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962).
[42] George Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology* (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969).
[43] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (volumes 1&2) (London: SCM Press, 1960. A translation of *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, published by Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Munich, in 1957 and 1960).
[44] C.H.H. Scobie in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (T.D. Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, editors) (Leicester, England and Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 15.
[45] Ibid, 15.
[46] He actually says nothing about the stinging rebuke to Jehoiakim, but only alludes to Jeremiah's positive attitude toward Josiah (Von Rad, *OT* Theology[vol.2], 197).

writings from as far back as the mid-nineteenth century up until Von Rad at the end of even the 'golden age' of OT theological inquiry, has yielded very little fruit in defining the knowledge of God according to the text of Jer.22:15-16.

c) A survey of Old Testament theologies from the mid-twentieth century to the present with regards to Jer.22:15-16:

After the work of Von Rad, we might consider the theological thinking on the OT which follows brings us to the modern period. Since him, a host of scholars have made their contributions to the field. Walther Zimmerli, for example, wrote an *Old Testament Theology in Outline*,[47] a work we will utilize more fully in an exploration of the name 'Yahweh' in our thesis. However, Zimmerli's work is not overly-substantial, and his two references to Jer.22:15-16 are only concerned with passing positive references to king Josiah without regard for the moral challenge to king Jehoiakim to 'know the Lord'.[48] Westermann wrote a work entitled *Elements of Old Testament Theology*,[49] where it appears that the term 'element' is a select term to suggest a non-exhaustive approach and an attempt to random sample the theological thought world of the OT. His work balances two primary elements: 'The Saving God and History' and 'The Blessing God and Creation'. Westermann does not discuss Jer.22:15-16 in this work. We have already briefly alluded to Brevard Childs whose work in biblical theology in general has been quite impactful in the latter part of the twentieth century, particularly in regards to 'canonical criticism'.[50] He does have one chapter on 'how God is known',[51] but nothing on Jer.22:15-16. However, Childs will be used rather extensively in our discussion of the Jeremiah and Hananiah conflict. We have also mentioned John Goldingay's *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament*. Here also there is no referencing or comment on Jer.22:15-16. So also his more recent OT theology, where he has just one

[47] Walther Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978).
[48] Similar to Von Rad (Ibid, 200&202).
[49] Claus Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology* (translated by Douglas W. Stott) (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1982).
[50] Some titles include: Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1979); Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1986; and Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*.
[51] Childs, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*, 28-42.

passing reference to the passage.[52] Horst Dietrich Preuss's large two volume *Old Testament Theology*[53] has sections devoted to the knowledge of God,[54] but as is the case in most other OT theologies, there is nothing on Jer.22:15-16. Rolf Knierim, who contends for a systematic theology of the OT,[55] but one based on different assumptions than those done in the past, cites Jer.22:15-16 on two occasions, both in the context of sections on the knowledge of God, yet without any substantive comment on the two verses.

A number of other OT theologies have recently come forth from the Conservative-Evangelical scholarly community, including: Kaiser, Dyrness, Hubbard, and Martens. Kaiser's *Toward an Old Testament Theology* ,[56] whose central theme is 'promise', is part of a three book series on other OT subjects including ethics and Christian use of the OT. He has no commentary on Jer.22:15-16. So also Dyrness, whose *Themes in Old Testament Theology*[57] was written as a teaching tool for a cross-cultural context. He is a systematic theologian and not an OT scholar, which consequently led him to cast his OT themes in Christian theological categories. The work serves its own purpose, but not for exploration of the meaning of knowledge of the Lord in Jer.22:15-16. The work of Robert Hubbard, along with Robert Johnston and Robert Meye, is organized around two groupings of threes: first, the three categories of the Tanak; and second, images of Yahweh, images of Israel, and images for today.[58] It has a special concern for the contemporary Christian church, but does not address a moral theology in the book of Jeremiah, or Jer.22:15-16 in particular. Elmer Martens frames his OT theology with the

[52] John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology* (Israel's Gospel, volume 1) (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2003).
[53] Horst Deitrich Preuss, *Old Testament Theology* (volume 1, English translation 1995; volume 2, English translation 1996) (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press).
[54] 'The Self-Introduction and Knowledge of Yahweh' appears as a section on pp.204-206 in volume 1, and 'Knowledge of God' appears as a section on p.170 of volume 2.
[55] Rolf P. Knierim, *The Task of OT Theology* (Method and Cases) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995).
[56] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978).
[57] William A. Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1979).

title *God's Design*,[59] thereby attempting to demonstrate that the overarching theme for OT thought is that God has a design in all the various fragments of OT thinking. Martens breaks this design down into four major progressive components: deliverance, community, knowledge of God, and abundant life. His having as a foundational category 'the knowledge of God' is of course of interest for our purposes here in this thesis. However, Martens does not offer any insight to Jer.22:15-16 beyond a very brief comment.[60]

One can hardly speak of OT study in the present time without making mention of the work of Walter Brueggemann, who has been prolific in his output of literature. His rather large *Theology of the Old Testament*[61] approaches ancient Israel's witness to Yahweh as 'testimony/counter-testimony', in an attempt to capture the multi-faceted nature of Yahweh and OT theological thought as a whole. We shall have some interaction with this work in our own analysis of Jer.22:15-16, but much of what Brueggemann has to say about the passage he says in his commentaries on Jeremiah, to which we shall give much attention. Of all the OT theologians mentioned thus far, he, and to some extent Goldingay, are the ones who actually set out to work considerably on the text of Jeremiah either in commentary or monograph form. Very recently, Bernhard Anderson has written a *Contours of Old Testament Theology*[62] in which he mentions Jer.22:15-16 one time, but as we have typically seen, without any substantial comment or interpretation. Lastly, one might also note the weighty volume by James Barr entitled,

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[58] Robert L. Hubbard Jr., Robert K. Johnston, and Robert P. Meye (editors), *Studies in Old Testament Theology* (Historical and Contemporary Images of God and God's People) (Dallas, London, Vancouver, Melbourne: Word Publishing, 1992).

[59] Elmer A. Martens, *God's Design* (A Focus on Old Testament Theology) (second edition) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1994).

[60] He states, "Knowledge here is linked with action. Knowledge of God involves ethical action. The will to follow through is part of what it means to 'know'. In characteristic Hebrew fashion, the thought is holistic. The person as entire person enters into knowing" (Ibid, 88).

[61] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy) (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1997).

[62] Bernhard W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1999).

The Concept of Biblical Theology.[63] His work, which overviews recent work in the field of OT theology, does not address Jer.22:15-16.

d) A survey of other Old Testament theological literature with regards to Jer.22:15-16: Our examination of written works on OT theology since the mid-nineteenth century has left the area of a moral theology of the knowledge of God with regards to Jer.22:15-16 relatively under-explored. Of course, much other literature pertaining to the OT has been written over the last few centuries. A sampling of a variety of more recent monographs, as well as works more specifically on the Hebrew prophets, will yield the same results concerning Jer.22:15-16. It is also necessary to say something about a Jewish perspective of our topic, and to look particularly at the most current monographs on the book of Jeremiah itself.

First, a word about some monographs on the OT. Various of the scholars discussed above who have written OT theologies have also written books in basic understanding and approach to the OT. For instance, Westermann's *Handbook to the Old Testament*,[64] which is organized around the divisions of the Tanak, has two citations of Jer.22:15-16. On one occasion he has no commentary on the passage outside of quoting it,[65] on the other occasion he only states that Jehoiakim 'exploited his subjects'.[66] Bernhard Anderson has produced a historical and chronological survey of the OT in which he has a section devoted to the conflict between Jeremiah and Jehoiakim.[67] He makes an interesting comparison in likening Josiah to David and Jehoiakim to Solomon, that is of course Solomon in the pejorative sense.[68] Goldingay's *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation*[69] is mostly concerned with the OT as it relates to the New Testament (NT)

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[63] James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology, An Old Testament Perspective* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1999).
[64] Claus Westermann, *Handbook to the Old Testament* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1967).
[65] Ibid, 173.
[66] Ibid, 161.
[67] Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (third edition) (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 368-380.
[68] Ibid, 372.
[69] John Goldingay, *Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, updated edition 1990).

and the life of faith. He is content to sit light to the debate that has been looming large on the horizon of OT theological scholarship in the Western world that we have been briefly giving attention to in this introduction.[70] The work has nothing on the knowledge of God or Jer.22:15-16. OT theologian and scholar James Crenshaw has written an *Old Testament Story and Faith*,[71] which is, like Westermann's book, organized around the divisions of the Tanak, with additional appendices on the apocrypha and the like. He has nothing elaborate on a moral theology or the knowledge of God in Jer.22:15-16, but he does have a paragraph on a key Jeremianic term about self-deception/falsehood (שקר), a term which is discussed in chapter three of our thesis. In this paragraph Crenshaw makes a statement that is consistent with our own construal of the nature of the indictment for lack of knowledge of God that Jehoiakim receives in Jer.22:15-16. Crenshaw states

> The sovereignty of wickedness among the lower classes was just what Jeremiah expected, but the discovery of a similar situation among the nobility came as a shock to him. The ancient concept that ruling officials were responsible for maintaining the well-being of impoverished citizens - widows, orphans, the landless poor - had been abandoned by people who thought only of their own welfare.[72]

Obviously, numerous other similar works could be cited, but the anticipated results would more than likely be the same; that is, allusions to, and only brief statements about the importance of Jer.22:15-16 for developing a moral theology pertaining to the knowledge of God.

Lindblom and Blenkinsopp wrote classic works on the prophets of the OT. Lindblom's concern is with prophecy as a phenomenon, including prophecy outside Israel, as opposed to what might be considered the more conventional survey of Israel's canonical prophets.[73] He does mention Jer.22:15-16 one time, but he does not define it beyond the terminology of the text itself. Blenkinsopp's work is the more standard historical

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[70] Ibid, 11.
[71] James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Story and Faith* (A Literary and Theological Introduction) (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986).
[72] Ibid, 197.
[73] Johannes Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell, 1962).

presentation of each canonical Hebrew prophet.[74] He cites Jer.22:15-16 three times, but with no substantive comment. Robert Carroll has written extensively, including his *When Prophecy Failed*,[75] in which he does not have a specific Jeremiah concern, although he does refer to Jeremiah on occasion.[76] However, he has written a commentary on Jeremiah which shall be discussed in our thesis. More recently, Willem VanGemeren has written *Interpreting the Prophetic Word*.[77] He has much to say about Jehoiakim and Jer.22, but nothing about vv.15-16 and the knowledge of God. Ronald Clements, in his work entitled *Old Testament Prophecy*,[78] works around Jer.22, but says nothing more about 22:13-17, the larger oracle to Jehoiakim, other than that it is a "sharp invective".[79]

As regards biblical/theological scholarship in general (momentarily leaving Jer.22:15-16 aside from the discussion), mention should also be made of the work of Leo Perdue. He has focused on the larger issue of how Old Testament theology is done, using Jeremiah as an exemplar.[80] Apparently, Perdue views Jeremiah as a natural draw for imaginative interpretive alternatives.[81] The major attempt of Perdue's work was to redefine and rehabilitate the task of Old Testament theological interpretation that, according to him, languished in the wake of historical-critical methodology of the likes of scholars such as Wright and Eichrodt. For Perdue, the work of the scholars just mentioned had its day in the sun, but it was now time to recognize that theology was moving in new directions. Imaginative interpretation that would include such methods as sociological analysis and

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[74] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1983).
[75] Robert P. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed* (New York, New York: The Seabury Press, 1979).
[76] His concern, as one can tell by the title, is to show Israel's reaction to unfulfilled expectations and disappointments through dissonance theory and adaptive techniques. He discusses prophetic conflict and its resolution by abolition of the phenomenon and the rise of Jewish apocalyptic literature.
[77] Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990).
[78] Ronald E. Clements, *Old Testament Prophecy* (From Oracles to Canon) (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).
[79] Ibid, 117.
[80] Leo Perdue, *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology* (Overtures to Biblical Theology) (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1994).
[81] Perdue has collected a series of essays that focus on six major issues relating to Jeremiah studies. But what is most important for our concerns is his section on "New Directions in Jeremiah Studies" where he introduces the rhetorical criticism of Lundbom, the canonical shaping of Childs, and the social dimensions of Carroll; all as viable interpretive alternatives. See Leo Perdue and Brian Kovacs, *A Prophet to the Nations: Essays in Jeremiah Studies* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1984) 28-30.

literary criticism has become a more legitimate avenue of approach to the biblical text.[82] The historical-critical method, according to Perdue, kept the text suppressed, trapped by a limiting engagement of what could be accomplished by newer, creative methodologies. Perdue has no concern for the opening of the proverbial 'Pandora's box'; for with the so-called 'collapse' of the historical-critical method in his argumentation, it would be unlikely that any new single method would establish the kind of dominance it recently had. For Perdue, biblical understanding is a process of collapsing and emerging worlds of thought, a journey that involves constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing continuously. Perdue has probably over-stated his case, for the earlier works of Wright and Eichrodt, not to mention the much earlier contribution of Julius Wellhausen (*Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, 1883) are hardly stale and unimaginative when read carefully. Wellhausen was especially imaginative. Nevertheless, Perdue's point does give a warning that to approach the bible from a historical perspective only, without room for imagination and creativity, risks keeping this field of study stagnant.

Let us give a brief word about a Jewish perspective pertaining to our concerns for OT theological pursuits. A moral concern in the life of the synagogue has always been of great importance, as mentioned early in this essay, for the practicing Jew. The work of Solomon Schechter, for example, is concerned with knowledge of God as being related to man's conduct.[83] It seems likely that rabbis such as himself were influential upon the magisterial work on the prophets by later Jewish author Abraham Heschel.[84] Heschel contends that there are two types of the knowledge of God: what God does ("kindness, justice, and righteousness", referring to Jer.9:23-24), and what man does ("kindness, justice, and righteousness", referring to Jer.22:15-16).[85] Thus he sees Jer.22:15-16 as half of the equation as to what it means to know God. Also, Heschel's 'theology of pathos' is well known.[86] He argues that God can only be known by understanding his moral concern for humankind, and that 'anthropopathy' - God having human-like

[82] Cf. Seitz, *Theology in Conflict*.
[83] Solomon Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York, New York: Schocken Books, 1961).
[84] Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (volumes 1&2) (New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962).
[85] Ibid, vol.1, 211.

emotions and passion - has been mistakenly rejected on the grounds that it is lowering God to human status.[87] He states, 'divine emotions are always morally conditioned and morally required'.[88] In a sense then, Heschel, and Schechter before him, remind the Christian scholarly community that questions of life and faith are a significant and integral aspect of the interpretive process.

Lastly, we are aware of the many recent monographs that focus on, and specialize in, aspects of the book of Jeremiah. The majority of works however, are interested in either text/structure/linguistics, or genre. There has been limited theological investigation in these Jeremiah monographs. A listing of the following titles makes obvious that a moral theology of the knowledge of God or an interest in Jer.22:15-16 has not been on the horizon for analysis; these include: *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*,[89] *The Architecture of Jeremiah 1-20*,[90] *A Philological Analysis of Jeremiah 4-6 in the Light of Northwest Semitic*,[91] *The Greek Text of Jeremiah*,[92] *Versification and Syntax in Jeremiah 2-25*,[93] *The Structure and Composition of Jeremiah 50:2-51:58*,[94] *A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric*,[95] and *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah*.[96] The preceding have been interested in text, structure, and linguistics in the book of Jeremiah. The following titles are more along the lines of genre investigations: *Preaching to the Exiles*,[97] *The Prophetic*

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[86] Ibid, vol.2, 1-11.
[87] Ibid, 49.
[88] Ibid, 51.
[89] John Gerald Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973).
[90] William L. Holladay, *The Architecture of Jeremiah 1-20* (London, England: Associated University Presses, 1976).
[91] Robert Althann, *A Philological Analysis of Jeremiah 4-6 in the Light of Northwest Semitic* (Rome, Italy: Rome Biblical Institute Press, 1983).
[92] Sven Soderlund, *The Greek Text of Jeremiah* (A Revised Hypothesis) (JSOT, Supplement Series 47) (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1985).
[93] Walter Theophilus Woldemar Cloete, *Versification and Syntax in Jeremiah 2-25* (Syntactical Constraints in Hebrew Colometry) (SBL Dissertation Series 117) (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1989).
[94] Alice Ogden Bellis, *The Structure and Composition of Jeremiah 50:2-51:58* (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 1995).
[95] Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah, A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1997).
[96] Geoffrey H. Parke-Taylor, *The Formation of the Book of Jeremiah* (Doublets and Recurring Phrases) (SBL Monograph Series) (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL, 2000).
[97] Ernst W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles* (A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah) (New York, New York: Schocken Books, 1970).

Persona,[98] *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah*,[99] *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context*,[100] *The Confessions of Jeremiah: Their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1-25*,[101] and *The Laments of Jeremiah and Their Contexts*.[102] The only title that has a predominant theological concern is *From Repentance to Redemption*.[103] This monograph from Jeremiah Unterman, although lacking in an in-depth moral theology, does have three references to Jer.22:15-16. One useful comment he makes in regard to the passage and the knowledge of God is

> Outside 24:7, the phrase 'knowledge of Yahweh' and its variations appear nine times in the book of Jeremiah (twice in 31.34). In five of its appearances, the expression refers to moral conduct (4.22; 9.2,5,23; 22.16), while in the other four instances it implies service to God (2.8; 10.25; 31.34). These two meanings do not contradict each other, for the commandments of YHWH include both - morality and service together.[104]

Unterman has seen a two-fold definition to the knowledge of God in the book of Jeremiah as Heschel has.

Besides monographs on the book of Jeremiah, there are of course a number of Jeremiah commentaries which do address Jer.22:15-16 in the midst of their larger studies of the entire book. These works, and we shall give preference to the most recent ones as dialogue partners, may not have lengthy dissertations on Jer.22:15-16, but shall most certainly be cited and interacted with throughout this entire thesis.

e) Epilogue:

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[98] Timothy Polk, *The Prophetic Persona* (Jeremiah and the Language of the Self) (JSOT, Supplement Series 54) (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987).
[99] Louis Stulman, *The Prose Sermons of the Book of Jeremiah* (A Redescription of the Correspondences with the Deuteronomistic Literature in the light of Recent Text-critical Research) (SBL Dissertation Series 83), Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1986).
[100] A.R. Diamond, *The Confessions of Jeremiah in Context* (Scenes of Prophetic Drama) (JSOT, Supplement Series 45) (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987).
[101] Kathleen M. O'Conner, *The Confessions of Jeremiah: Their Interpretation and Role in Chapters 1-25* (SBL Dissertation Series 94) (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988).
[102] Mark S. Smith, *The Laments of Jeremiah and Their Contexts* (A Literary and Redactional Study of Jeremiah 11-20) (SBL Monograph Series, Number 42) (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990).
[103] Jeremiah Unterman, *From Repentance to Redemption* (Jeremiah's Thought in Transition) (JSOT, Supplement Series 54) (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1987).

What we hope to have established in our review of OT literature/theology from the mid-nineteenth century up to the present day, is that 'knowledge' in the moral sense of the word, and specifically, the moral theology of Jer.22:15-16 and the knowledge of God contained therein has not received attention proportionate to its intrinsic significance. Our broad survey has left us with the general impression that such a study could be both fresh and helpful in reminding us of the challenging nature of the biblical texts that communities of faith have always seen as essential to relating to God and the world we live in.

Importance of 'knowing God' in Jeremiah

The book of Jeremiah, the most lengthy of the Hebrew prophetic tradition, has been handed down over the centuries in what is now a highly complex finalized form. The question of what aspects of the work are actually autobiographical, or biographical, and what aspects belong to the exilic community, and even to the later post-exilic community, poses difficult problems of analysis. However, authors, editors, and redactors of the Jeremiah tradition, no matter what era they lived, were all in some way responsible for not only the life of this particular portion of Hebrew scripture, but for the very life of the nation itself.[105] Because the book of Jeremiah deals with life and death issues that concern the welfare of the nation, it is the proposal of this thesis that the process of transmission, from its earliest writings to its latest editorial work, leaves clues that give evidence for the continued struggle over such life and death issues. Knowledge of God is just one such crucial issue in the book of Jeremiah. Related to this is the question; how can Israel know their covenant God Yahweh, especially when the claim by prophets contemporary with Jeremiah to speak on behalf of Yahweh is, at times, vast and conflicting? Of course, other issues are relevant in the book, but the events of the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C.E. forced the issues of knowing Yahweh, and discerning his spokespersons, to a priority level. It is the conviction of this thesis that the

[104] Ibid, 79.

[105] Gerstenberger notes that "the Old Testament is a book which is full of life and which belongs to life; as such we need to pick it up and keep it with us". Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Theologies in the Old Testament* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2002), 18. His view of the changing theologies in ancient Israel

issue of true knowledge of Yahweh, and discernment of his intentions and character, remains to be explored in the book of Jeremiah. What is left to be explored is the learned wisdom of those who lived during and beyond the events of the Babylonian crisis, who attempted to impart their understanding, and their struggle, to generations which would follow.

In the modern era (or perhaps we should say the 'post-modern' era), wisdom as pertains to human existence, faith, and the knowledge of God has expanded, for good or for bad, to areas outside of the domain of the purely religious leader. The sociologist and psychologist, for example, contribute to the field in ways that were unavailable to, say, the ancient Hebrew writer/editor of a canonized work of literature such as the Bible. A possible pitfall today might be the tendency for a professional in the field of the humanities to quickly gloss over the contribution of such a writer/editor in favor of purely contemporary approaches. Modern categories can make it difficult for the ancient voices to be heard. It may not be that the ancient does not have his say in contemporary society, but it is more likely that the ancient might not have his *full* say. Or it might be that important and critical concerns in the present are viewed as not having any legitimate or comprehensive approach toward a resolution by one such as an ancient biblical writer/editor. Although ancient and modern might be different, they should nonetheless be seen as complementary. Our concerns in this thesis seek to develop through scrutinized research of a Hebrew prophetic book, Jeremiah in particular, an approach to understanding the nature of God and the nature of the human person from the biblical text itself. That is to say that within the text of Scripture, again specifically the book of Jeremiah in this case, there is embodied a valuable resource for human self understanding and the knowledge of God that is all too easily overlooked. Or in other words, an attempt at a 'biblical theology' is made in this thesis. We have already defined the term 'OT theology' as that which seeks to give understanding as to the nature and character of God. We have also used the term 'moral theology' to speak of the need for appropriate human response to the nature and character of God. 'Biblical theology' is simply allowing texts

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that developed in small groups at the family, clan, village, and tribe levels; reinforces the statement just made in our main text about the problematic nature of authorship analysis in Jeremiah.

of Scripture to set the parameters of theological interpretation. Thus the flow and contours of the sacred writings (i.e. the book of Jeremiah for our purposes) sets the agenda for theological meaning as opposed to reading with non-theological intentions in mind. This aspect of biblical and religious studies has often been maligned, neglected, and debated over as to its worth. However, it is considered here not only relevant, but indeed a priority task in doing biblical analysis. B.S. Rosner states the matter plainly

> Biblical theology is not just one of a number of ways to read the Bible, as if there is theologically motivated interpretation alongside historically, aesthetically or ideologically motivated interpretation. Not to attend to theological interpretation is to stop short of interpretation, to ignore the interests of the texts themselves. If not to misinterpret, at best it is to engage in incomplete interpretation. Biblical study is incomplete until biblical theology has been done.[106]

It shall be argued here, with a theological - indeed a morally theological approach in mind, that Jeremiah does indeed attempt to instruct as to how a reader can get their thinking straight and where it is in need of renewal. An analysis of select critical concepts, terms, and passages in the book of Jeremiah should yield a coherent vision of what it means therefore, to have understanding of self and, in Jeremiah's context, knowledge of the God of Israel, issues which came to the forefront of Judean society in the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C.E. As far as concepts and terms go, we shall begin with an analysis of  in the book of Jeremiah. Where is it used? How is it used? How is it used in reference to knowledge of God? We shall also explore  in other places in the OT which might enlighten its use in Jeremiah, such as the books of Hosea, Exodus, and Ezekiel, where it is used in significant ways, as shall be seen. It is of course the primary term in our primary passage (i.e. Jer.22:15-16) for the purposes of this thesis. The idea of "falsehood", "lie", or "deception" is connoted by the word  . It is a term of significant use in Jeremiah, thirty-seven times, and is a primary part of the moral vocabulary used in the book. It might even be considered an antithesis to  . That is, Jeremiah devotes much attention to the notion of falsehood/lie/deception which is competing against his desire for a genuine knowledge of the covenant God of Israel. After early analysis of the term,  will appear throughout the thesis as we explore

[106] Brian S. Rosner, "Biblical Theology" in *NDBT*, 4.

relevant passages in regards to our concerns. The "heart" is an important Hebrew concept which defines the central core of the human person. Specifically, 🏲☹ means the place of thought, will, emotions, and affections. This is where ✌☠✞ and 👎✋✠ appear to be competing. We will devote some attention to this concept as well. A result of genuine 'knowing' is 'returning' (🏲✡✍) on the part of Yahweh's covenant people to the covenant standards once established. We will investigate Jeremiah's use of 🏲✡✞, and in the process, look at other terms which are key to understanding the concept of covenant (e.g. ✞☠✋🖫, ☜✌✞☺, ☪☺❝). All of the Hebrew terminology mentioned in the above paragraph will be analyzed through exegesis of the Hebrew text of the passages in Jeremiah where they have the most profound use for yielding understanding of the knowledge of God. As it turns out, the primary foci of this investigation will be, although not exclusively, Jer.21-29, because in these chapters the issue of knowledge of God, and related issues, are most readily found. Also, the first twenty chapters provide a variety of prose, poems, sermons, oracles, and narratives, but at chapter 21, the messages to the Davidic kings begins, and this helps set the context for our primary passage of concern. In particular, Jer.22:15-16 and its quasi-definitional statement of knowing Yahweh ('is this not to know me?', says the Lord[107]) is the focus of this study.

State of the study of the Book of Jeremiah

Before delving into the previously mentioned concepts, terms, and passages in Jeremiah which hopefully enlighten our pursuit of such issues as divine and human knowledge, we seek first to contextualize the discussion within present theological debate, especially recent studies concerning the book of Jeremiah. The most recent studies in Jeremiah scholarship have been influenced by the 1986 commentary class of William Holladay,[108] Robert Carroll,[109] and William McKane.[110] After 1986, any work on Jeremiah has been focused and defined through the contributions of these three. Another notable commentary on Jeremiah appeared in the New Century Bible Commentary series in 1992

[107] The full quote, including the surrounding text of vv.13-19, is presented in chapter six of the thesis, where it is dealt with extensively.
[108] William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1&2* (Hermeneia) (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1986,1989).
[109] Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah* (Old Testament Library) (London: SCM Press, 1986).
[110] William McKane, *Jeremiah 1&2* (ICC) (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1986, 1996).

thanks to the work of D.R. Jones - a work of thorough scholarship and substantive theological insight.[111] Holladay, in his substantial work, stayed for the most part with a historical-oriented study. Although scholarship since then has not followed Holladay per se, the sum of all three 1986 commentaries is of greater value than any of the individual three parts. Holladay may be the least recognized or interacted with of the 1986 commentators, which is rather unfortunate because he employs in his work what might be called a 'God concern' - that is, he takes seriously issues relating to how Israel in the book of Jeremiah relates to Yahweh, and what the implications might be for the reader. Carroll's writing on Jeremiah stood at an opposite pole from Holladay's historical orientation. For Carroll, any significant historical connection between the text of Jeremiah and a person named 'Jeremiah' is out of reach. His counterperspective proposes complex ideological assumptions on the part of the writers and editors of the book of Jeremiah. In his view, a system of social values and interests is what is being forwarded in the literature. Carroll's initiative and his minimalist approach have gained the following in scholarship that Holladay and his maximalist approach has not, which suggests that contemporary trends in Jeremiah scholarship have followed suit with present post-modern thinking and approaches. McKane, who is less interested in theological and ideological issues than the others, is strong on language and text-based analysis, which is typical for himself and the ICC series. He has paid careful attention to the ongoing development of the book of Jeremiah over several generations with a diversity of voices and interests giving the book its shape.[112]

The introduction of Carroll's work in particular, has moved Jeremiah studies away from questions of the conventional historical-critical method and has instead opened new venues of opportunity for interpretation. One of the most recent commentators on

[111] Douglas R. Jones, *Jeremiah* (The New Century Bible Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Compnay, 1992).

[112] Christopher Seitz has especially researched diversity in Jeremiah and the exilic period through first, socio-historical analysis, and second, literary analysis. He concludes that the diversity in Jeremiah is the result of theological conflict concerning the nature of the judgments of 597 and 587 B.C.E. The result is the present complex form of Jeremiah. Christopher Seitz, *Theology in Conflict: Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah* (BZAW, 176) (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1989). See also H. Lalleman-de Winkel, *Jeremiah in Prophetic Tradition* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

Jeremiah, Walter Brueggemann, gives definition to the possibilities that await the Jeremiah interpreter:

> The book of Jeremiah is not a 'record' of what happened, but rather a *constructive proposal of reality* that is powered by *passionate conviction* and that is voiced in cunning, albeit disjunctive *artistic form*. This means that the book of Jeremiah is a rich and open field for venturesome interpretation, none of which can claim to be 'objective' and none of which is likely to dominate or defeat alternative perspectives.[113]

Such literary readings can bring a fresh approach to the book of Jeremiah. Although historical approaches have been common in the past, and contemporary scholarship has tended to press ahead with suggested imaginative and literary readings, it is advisable to build upon the foundation of historical approaches while simultaneously attempting to press ahead with so-called suggested imaginative and literary readings. Nonetheless, our concern is with the received portrayal of Jeremiah rather than the 'historical Jeremiah'. Both approaches alike can help ensure that questions concerning the nature and knowledge of God and the nature and knowledge of the human self are taken with full seriousness. This we shall attempt to do.

This thesis therefore aims to employ some venturesome interpretation concerning 'knowing God' in the book of Jeremiah. Carroll's pursuit of ideology, McKane's pursuit of the emerging shape of the book, and Holladay's 'God' concern are all interwoven into this particular work. The God-claim of the text is especially taken seriously and affirmatively. We shall attempt to move in the direction which the text points with a special interest in such questions as "What Does it Mean to Know the Lord"? Certainly, such an issue is worthy of pursuit, and may be the urgent concern of the text itself. Those responsible for the writing, editing, and collecting of the Jeremiah tradition recognized, and even experienced a deep public disruption that demands attention to the issues pursued in this thesis, issues which are central to a thorough understanding of the book of Jeremiah.

The Book of Jeremiah as a whole

Before pursuing, "What Does it Mean to Know the Lord"? in Jeremiah, let us briefly survey how the book as a whole may be broken down into manageable, smaller sections. The commentaries of Holladay, McKane, and Carroll end the first section of Jeremiah after chapter 25. Holladay and McKane have divided their commentaries into two distinct large volumes with the second volume devoted to chapters 26-52. This two-part structure to Jeremiah is given specific attention by the title of Walter Brueggemann's two-volume piece called respectively: *To Pluck Up, To Tear Down (chs.1-25),* and *To Build To Plant (chs.26-52).*

The theme verse for the book which serves to give its two-fold judgment and salvation structure[114] is found in the initial call narrative

> See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant (Jer.1:10).

The two visions which follow the call narrative, that is, the almond rod and the boiling pot, set the tempo, that Yahweh will watch over his word, and that word is judgment poured out, even as a boiling pot. From this chaos, Yahweh has instructed Jeremiah to build and plant afresh. What follows through chapter 17 is a series of prose, poems, sermons, and oracles that basically pronounce the judgment that will come. Chapters 18-20 engage narrative where a biographical account akin to a partial 'life and times of Jeremiah' is first encountered. Pottery and clay jars are the illustrative tool of Yahweh's message in this section. From chapter 21 through 23:8 are a series of messages to the Judean kings, from whence we take our keynote text on knowledge of Yahweh (22:15-16). In a similar vein, in the next section are a number of messages, encounters, and visions that challenge false prophecy (chs.23:9-29:32). Chapters 30-33 have been termed

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[113] Walter Brueggemann, *A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), ix.

[114] For our concerns, this two-part structure will not be of great significance, other than to note here its legitimacy because of 1:10.

the ‘Book of Consolation’; otherwise known as the ‘Book of Comfort’ because they contain numerous messages of hope and salvation. In this section we most clearly see salvation as a major theme of the second half of Jeremiah’s prophecy. Chapters 34 and 35 are woven together in that they contain the similar theme of covenant keeping, in the first instance, Zedekiah’s failure as covenant breaker, in the second instance, mentioned as a foil to Zedekiah, the faithfulness of the Rechabites, who keep their traditions and heritage of old. Chapters 36-39 could be considered biography of Jeremiah before the disaster of 587 B.C.E., and chapters 40-44 could be considered biography of Jeremiah after 587 B.C.E. The message to Baruch about the coming worldwide calamity in chapter 45 serves as a good introduction to the oracles against the foreign nations in chapters 46-51 which illustrate the predicted coming calamity. Finally, the book of Jeremiah concludes with a historical appendix (ch.52) that details the fall of the city of Jerusalem as was warned by the prophet Jeremiah.

We will then, in this thesis, pay special attention to key terms, encounters, and passages that might illuminate the word  , keeping in mind Brueggemann’s ‘imaginative’ suggestion, but yet attempting to establish one coherent vision of the larger theme of what it means to know the God of Israel. After this initial introductory chapter, chapter two will be devoted to a profile of the term  in general, and in the book of Jeremiah in particular, so as to help contextualize our study, and because it is the key term in our focus passage (i.e. Jer.22:15-16) and the title of our thesis. This is followed by an addendum on the use of the term in other places in the OT, to be specific, Hosea, Exodus, and Ezekiel, as has already been mentioned. Other key terminology in Jeremiah is explored after the initial investigation into  . This includes a look at  and  in chapter three, and a discussion of  in chapter four, terms which, it shall be seen, are representative of our larger concerns. Chapter five of the thesis begins explanation of key texts for our concerns in Jeremiah; the first being 14:1-15:9. Chapters six to nine then, are basically an interpretation of most of the received canonical text beginning at 21:1 and going through Jer.29. More specifically, chapter six will explore the messages to the Judean kings in 21:1-23:8, including the aforementioned key text where Jeremiah challenges on the issue of knowledge of Yahweh. Chapter seven will pursue the nature

of true and false prophecy in 23:9-40 and relate the findings to the issue of knowing Yahweh. Chapter eight analyzes the temple sermon as recorded both in Jer.7 and 26 because it is a primary account of Jeremiah's moral vocabulary and demands. The ninth chapter is an interpretation of Jer.27-29, which includes Jeremiah's going head to head with a prophet of a conflicting claim. A conclusion and wider reflections (chapter ten) will then bring all the information together to give a coherent vision of what it means to know the Lord in the book of Jeremiah.

CHAPTER 2: A PROFILE OF ידע IN JEREMIAH

Introduction to the term ידע

Before beginning a study of ידע in the book of Jeremiah, let us first have a broader look at the term in its general usage. There is a common approach in treating the word ידע in standard sources and reference works. For instance, TWOT and NIDOTTE have three basic categories: derivations of the basic Hebrew root, wider biblical and extra-biblical usage, and other definitions and meanings of the term.[115] TLOT has the same basic three categories, only it reverses the order of items number one and number two.[116] TDOT has the most comprehensive analysis of ידע.[117] It shows the uncertainty of its etymology and the need for analyzing each usage only in its context because of such uncertainty. TDOT also broadly investigates the three letter root in other Ancient Near Eastern languages, and notes that the root occurs approximately one thousand times in the OT (According to NIDOTTE the verbal form is used in every stem, primarily the qal - eight hundred and twenty-two times). Discussion on the religious usage of ידע in the OT under the categories of God's knowledge (Jer.1:5 cited in TWOT as God's

[115] R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke (eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (vol.1) (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1980), 366-368; and Willem A. VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (vol.2) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 409-414.

[116] Ernst Jenni & Claus Westermann, with English translation by Mark E. Biddle, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (vol.2) (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 508-521.

knowledge of man) and the knowledge of God as well as the discussion of derivatives of the term come near the end, even though these appear to be the starting point in some of the other standard dictionaries and reference works. NIDOTTE develops specifically the importance of the concept of 'the knowledge of God' by highlighting three areas: knowing God is being in right relationship with him, recognizing God is familiarity with his divine acts,[118] and witnessing to God is the task of Israel making Yahweh's words and deeds known. TWOT discusses the various noun forms of ידע with a special emphasis on the prophetic concept of ☺✞✝☹❝ ☪ידע, with Hosea leading the way.[119] Also mentioned is that 'knowledge of God' appears at times in parallel with the important OT concept of 'fear of the Lord' (Isa.11:2; with a special emphasis on Jer.22:15-16, although it is not made quite clear how this parallel is to be made) as a description of true religion. There is of course the prophetic view of 'knowledge of God' covering the earth as water covers the sea (Hab.2:14; Isa.11:9).

NIDOTTE is consistent with TDOT in its regard for ידע needing to be interpreted contextualy because of the potential for broad range of meaning. We quote

> The meanings of ידע are difficult to relate to one another. They range from sensory perception to intellectual process to practical skill to careful attention to close relationship to physical intimacy ... It is probable that precision in nuancing is not to be sought in such words in isolation; only the context enables some distinctions to emerge. In the broadest sense, ידע means to take various aspects of the world of one's experience into the self, including the resultant relationship with that which is known. The fundamentally relational character of knowing (over against a narrow intellectual sense) can be discerned, not least in that both God and human beings can be subject and object of the vb.[120]

ידע is used in the OT to express acquaintance (e.g.Gen.29:5; Ex.1:8; 2 Sam.3:25), sexual intercourse (e.g. Gen.4:1; 19:8; Num.31:17,35; Judg.11:39; 21:11; 1 Sam.1:19; 1 Kgs.1:4), or may mean, in some contexts, 'to distinguish' both morally and by

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[117] Johannes G. Botterwick & Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (vol.5) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 455-478.
[118] To be more carefully investigated in Addendum A, part III on ידע of Yahweh in Ezekiel.
[119] Addendum A, part I which follows this chapter shall give some attention to this concept in Hosea for the purpose of enlightening our understanding of ידע in Jeremiah.
[120] VanGemeren, *NIDOTTE* (vol.2), 410.

contemplative perception[121] (e.g. Gen.3:5,22; Deut.1:39; 2 Sam.19:36; Prov.1:4; 2:6; 5:2; Eccles.1:18; Isa.7:15; Jon.4:11). The participle form describes capability in many areas, such as hunting, sailing, playing an instrument, and a host of other skills as well. One derivative of 👎✋✠, 👎✋✡😐, has the meaning of ‘relative’, and thus suggests a familial kind of intimacy that the verb form itself seems to naturally suggest. For instance, ☪👎✋😐 as a derivative, is used only one time in the OT, and that in Ruth 3:2 where it carries the meaning of ‘kindred’ or ‘kinship’.

There is also the esoteric use of 👎✋✠ which is the kind of knowledge that the fortune-teller, magician, sorcerer, etcetera have - a knowledge forbidden by Yahweh (Lev.19:31; 20:6,27; Deut.18:11). As this Hebrew term for these types, ✠🏱👎✋✠, is used for sorcerers and the like and is related to 👎✋✠, so also in English is the relationship between the words ‘wizard’ and ‘wisdom’.

<u>👎✋✠ in relationship to Yahweh</u>

There are more than seventy uses of the word 👎✋✠ in the book of Jeremiah,[122] the majority of which refer to ordinary and common knowledge or knowing about something (i.e. 2:23;3:13). It is at times used repetitively in phrases such as ‘a land that you do not *know*’ (14:18;15:14;16:13;17:4;22:28) and ‘gods you have not *known*’ (7:9;9:15;19:4;44:3). This latter usage suggests in the book of Jeremiah that one can know Yahweh, and that indeed, Yahweh has been known by his people. This thesis is less interested in ordinary/ everyday uses of 👎✋✠ as just described and is particularly concerned with uses of 👎✋✠ that give insight into what it means to know Yahweh. There is of course a special concern with 👎✋✠ as used in Jer.22:16 where a certain moral and ethical content is given to the term in Jeremiah’s challenge to king Jehoiakim to ‘know’ Yahweh. Again, this shall be a focus of chapter six of the thesis. There shall first be, at least in this chapter, an examination of passages in Jeremiah which envision knowledge of Yahweh in the community as an ideal to be attained. This may appear

[121] Often times being associated with ‘seeing’ (1Sam.6:9; 12:17; Isa.41:20; Jer.12:3) and ‘hearing’ (Ex.3:7; Isa.33:13).

[122] As concerns verb stems it appears twice in the nifal (28:9;31:19), three times in the hifil (11:18; 16:21 2x), and all others in the qal.

axiomatic, but nonetheless is an important foundation from which to build, that is, the pursuit of knowledge of Yahweh in Jeremiah is a worthy pursuit because the compilers of the book deemed it so. Such passages include 9:23 (Eng.9:24), 24:7, and 31:34, although we will not study them in that order. Interwoven with this, we shall explore passages which employ the wording ידע את where knowing something *about* Yahweh is the focus. Once again, 9:23 (Eng.9:24) and 24:7 are involved because these verses have such wording, as does 16:21. In so doing, it is our desire to attempt to distinguish between knowing something about Yahweh (ידע את) and knowing Yahweh in a way which is personally appropriated where Yahweh is the direct object of the knowing (e.g. 'know me'). One need not be inferior to the other, but indeed they presuppose one another so that intellectual recognition of Yahweh is not separable from wider responsiveness with Yahweh.[123] Knowledge of Yahweh is therefore a transformative knowledge.

There are a number of examples in the OT where ידע את is found in reference to statements about Yahweh. For instance, Deut.4:35, and 4:39 have Moses giving a monotheistic charge to the second generation of Israelites since the departure from Egypt. ידע את in these verses is set in a climactic position because it concludes the profound theological exposition of Deut.4 and precedes the giving of the Decalogue in Deut.5. A similar monotheistic charge is given by Solomon at the temple dedication in 1 Kgs.8:60, but his prayer is not just for Israel to know Yahweh, but 'that all the peoples of the earth may know that (ידע את) Yahweh is God; there is no one else'. In David's challenge to Goliath he charges that 'all the earth' and the present 'assembly will know that (ידע את) there is a God in Israel' whose act of deliverance is not by weapons of war (1 Sam.17:46-47). Thus three prime voices are heard in Israel's tradition as using the phrase ידע את in climactic contexts in the OT to proclaim Yahweh's uniqueness. Any personal appropriation of knowledge of Yahweh will be engaged with an understanding of such uniqueness and character. A less likely Judean king, Manasseh, comes to a place of 'knowing' Yahweh in 2 Chron.33:13, 'Then Manasseh knew that (ידע את) Yahweh, he is God'. The context here is after tremendous rebellion and

[123] Jas.2:19 is one example, at least from a NT perspective, that shows the possible problem of intellectual recognition that is not matched by personal appropriation.

disobedience on the part of this king and the people who had paid no attention to Yahweh (2 Chron.33:10). After judgment at the hands of a foreign aggressor, Manasseh humbled himself greatly in his distress and sought after Yahweh (2 Chron.33:11-12). It is the responsiveness of Yahweh, who even after such disobedience is willing to listen to penitent prayer and restore Manasseh to his kingdom (2 Chron.33:13a). Based on this, the Chronicler makes the summary statement and observation that 'Manasseh knew that Yahweh, he is God' (2 Chron.33:13b). The point would appear to be that it is Yahweh's faithful covenant keeping in the midst of such failure, yet repentive attitude, that demonstrates who he really is, and that a true knowing of Yahweh is associated with this characteristic of his. Even important non-Israelites are portrayed as giving similar proclamation as do important Israelites concerning the nature of Yahweh. Naaman the Aramean for example, is capable of making a true confession concerning the God of Israel using the phrase ✟✂ 👁✋✟ (2 Kgs.5:15). Nebuchadnezzar, although not expressing the precise idiom, nonetheless gives high praise to the nature and character of the God of Israel in the manner of an inclusio in Dan.4 (vv.1-3, 37).

Finally, and to be distinguished from knowing something about Yahweh as was just discussed, this chapter of the thesis will conclude with a look at 👁✋✟ in 2:8, 4:22, 9:2 (Eng.9:3), and 9:5 (Eng.9:6) where Yahweh himself is the direct object of 👁✋✟. We shall also examine 5:4-5 and 8:7 where the 💻✍✋ of Yahweh and the 👈✌✝😐 of Yahweh are the direct objects of 👁✋✟. It is hoped that an examination of 👁✋✟ in these passages and in these categories will yield a particular kind of ethical vocabulary and moral content in giving definition to what it means to *know* Yahweh in our key text for the larger study that is to follow (22:16) as well as for the larger portion of Jeremiah which shall be our focus (primarily chs.21-29).

<u>👁✋✟ of Yahweh as an ideal</u>

Envisioning knowledge of Yahweh as an ideal to be attained in the book of a Hebrew prophet like Jeremiah is not difficult in light of the use of 👁✋✟ in the Abraham story

> For I have known (👁✋✟) him, in order that he may command his children and

> his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice; in order that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham what he has spoken about him (Gen.18:19).

It should be noted that contrary to what we are looking at in Jeremiah, the knowing in Gen.18:19 has Yahweh as the subject of the knowing and Abraham as the object of the knowing. Likewise in Amos 3:2, another relational use of ידע in regard to the unique and privileged position of Israel, Yahweh is the subject of the knowing and the people of Abraham are the object of the knowing. The difference of object and subject in these two passages does not diminish the Judean community's understanding in Jeremiah's day of the responsibility such a privileged relationship entailed. In Gen.18:19 the knowing between God and Abraham was for the instruction of future generations to keep the way of the Lord, a religio-ethical lifestyle that embodied the practice of righteousness and justice. The antecedent 'knowing' of Yahweh - often considered tantamount in these two passages to the concept of 'election' or the 'choosing' of Yahweh (given normative expression in the book of Deuteronomy with the verb בחר) requires a responsive 'knowing' by Israel. Part of the investigation of this thesis will be to examine if this was understood and assumed in the book of Jeremiah, and how the people of that day were challenged to respond to Yahweh in a 'knowing' way as defined by Jeremiah.

For purposes of Jeremiah and the ideal of a community that has knowledge of Yahweh at the forefront, we begin with the new covenant passage in 31:31-34, if for no other reason, because of its high regard in Christian thought and the extensive literature on the passage.[124] It may be suggested that the book of Jeremiah as a whole describes a time of cultural transition made poignant by the Babylonian invasion, during which time alternative perspectives of the future are considered. The new covenant passage is surrounded by hopeful 'Days are coming' oracles (vv.27-30; 38-40) and is itself one (v.31). Immediately following the passage is a hymn of hope because of the faithfulness of Yahweh (vv.35-37), and of course, the saying of the new covenant is found in the wider recognized Book of Consolation (chs.30-33).

It reads in Jer.31:31-34 as such

> 'Behold days are coming,' says Yahweh, 'when I will make with the house of Israel and the house of Judah a new covenant, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by their hand to bring them out from the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,' says Yahweh. 'But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' says Yahweh, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and upon their heart I will write it; and I will be their God and they will be my people. And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'know (✡🗣✋) Yahweh,' for they shall all know (✡🗣✋✙) me, from their least even to their greatest," says Yahweh, 'for I will forgive their iniquity and their sins I will not remember again.'

Many interpretations of the new covenant passage have been offered, and we will briefly review a number of these to help us analyze how 🗣✋✙ in the new covenant might contribute to the particular concerns of this thesis.

According to Lundbom[125] the real ground for the new covenant is God's gracious forgiveness because the forgiveness of sins did not undergird the Mosaic covenant. The gracious act which undergirds the Mosaic covenant is Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from the bondage in Egypt, whereas the forgiveness of sins did not play any part in the understanding of that covenant. Deuteronomy makes no provision for a restored divine-human relationship once the covenant is broken and the curses have fallen. Lundbom is quick to sum up the theology of Deuteronomy in the words of Joshua to the people in Shechem, 'If you disobey the covenant, Yahweh will not forgive your sins; instead he will punish you' (Josh.24:19-20). In so doing he ignores the rhetorical aspect of the passage in which Joshua is challenging Israel to real commitment, and he makes more out of the forgiveness of sins motif than should be made. Also, the whole context of Ex.32-34, and particularly Ex.34:7a, would seem to challenge his understanding. The forgiveness of sin and iniquity in Jer.31:34, which is surely climactic within vv.31-34, works in the fashion of an inclusio with the nullification of the proverb in v.29 -

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[124] Not without some risk however, for we realize the difficulties such a controverted text can pose.
[125] Jack R. Lundbom, in "New Covenant", *ABD*, David Noel Freedman ed. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1992).

especially in light of the strong challenge to personal responsibility in v.30. It represents a clean slate and a starting over for a new generation, which will not be held accountable for sins of previous generations.[126] It is not a departure from the Deuteronomy covenant (Deut.24:16). What is imagined in the new covenant passage is an instinctive knowledge of Yahweh because Yahweh has written the law on their hearts (v.33). Because the לב/לבב[127] in Hebrew thought was conceived of as the seat of thought, will, emotion, and affections,[128] it is likely that the house of Israel is being told that they will get their thinking straight, a thinking which is Torah oriented, and from this will issue forth knowledge of Yahweh (v.34). It is especially striking that 'know Yahweh' is envisaged as what might be said.

Brueggemann offers insightful interpretation of Jer.31:31-34. He recognizes the high regard in which the passage is held (e.g. 'best known and most relied upon of all Jeremiah's promises'[129]). He makes room for the mystery of the new covenant, allowing God to give it without reason or explanation. He understands its implementation as being the priority of Yahweh out of his own resolve for the relationship he desires to have with his beloved chosen people. This is a key point in Brueggemann. He then goes on to show how the Torah written in the hearts of his exiled people will serve as an identity marker. Because of their estrangement, Jews will want to identify themselves as Jews so as to keep themselves separate and unique in a foreign land. The best way to do this would be to internalize Torah. The knowledge of Yahweh for an exiled Jew would be an ability to recite the identity giving story of the exodus (Jer.2:6-8), as well as a willingness to obey the commands for justice in the present (Jer.22:15-17). 'Thus community both embraces a concrete memory and acknowledges a present loyalty'.[130]

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[126] The idea of sins of previous generations/people piling up a store of the wrath of God to be added to sins of future generations can be seen in Gen.15:16 and Jer.15:4.
[127] A term more carefully analyzed in chapter three of the thesis.
[128] John A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* (NICOT) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 350.
[129] Walter Brueggemann, *To Build, To Plant* (Jeremiah 26-52, International Theological Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 69.
[130] Ibid, 72.

Jones also holds the passage in high regard and sees it as anticipating Joel 3:1-2 (Eng.2:28-29) where there would be no divisions among teachers and people in knowledge of Torah, and therefore, knowledge of Yahweh. He rejects the earlier negative notions of Duhm of which he said, 'Duhm turned gold into sand',[131] as well as the more recent interpretation of Carroll who called the new covenant passage a 'pious hope'[132] and 'utopianism'.[133] This is typical of Carroll's interpretation of most passages of hope in Jeremiah as well as Hebrew prophecy in general.[134] We do agree with Carroll's observation that in prophetic tradition the key message is repentance combined with the practice of justice and righteousness.[135] However, because there is no mention of repentance in the new covenant passage, Carroll understands the prophets to have 'conceded defeat and have withdrawn from the moral struggle to persuade people to change their ways'.[136] But the larger book of Jeremiah, with emphasis on repentance and moral change, both of which precede and follow the hope oracles of the Book of Consolation, indicates that the book of Jeremiah is not giving up on its call to repentance and ethical response. The nullification of the proverb quoted in 31:29 sets forth a new opportunity for a new generation, but this opportunity is an opportunity to do the right thing without the attachment to the sins of previous generations. Certainly the new covenant passage is not envisioning Yahweh making moral robots out of the people, but rather serves to create an expectation that with Yahweh's help, the people can attain a society where sin is not at the forefront of the activity of the society, but knowledge of Yahweh is. In other words, the more sin is eliminated and forgotten, the more  of Yahweh is experienced, and thus where there is knowledge of Yahweh a certain moral atmosphere that reflects Yahweh's law is present.

Holladay writes concerning the new covenant passage, 'Yahweh will draw up a fresh contract without the defects of the old, implying in turn that he could improve on the old

[131] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 399.
[132] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 612.
[133] Ibid, 612.
[134] Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed.*
[135] Robert P. Carroll, *From Chaos to Covenant* (New York, New York: Crossroad, 1981), 217.
[136] Ibid, 220.

one ...'[137] He believes that the riddle of the new situation where Yahweh is injecting his law into the heart of the people seemingly against human freewill is unanswered in Jeremiah. In the passage itself, discontinuity between covenants is stressed in that v.32 states, '*not like* the covenant ...', and v.34 states 'And they shall *not* teach *again/any more*'. In v.32, the verb form ✞☪☹✞✂ could mean to rule over as a husband, or a master.[138] If translated in a marital sense,[139] it emphasizes the similarity between marriage relationship and the covenantal relationship with God. Like an unfaithful wife, the Israelites broke the covenant with God.

Holladay refers to the idea of a fresh covenant being implied by Hos. 2:20-22 (Eng.2:18-20) which has resonance with Jer.31:31-34. His linkage is most helpful in developing an understanding of the new covenant passage and the meaning of ✞✋✞ of Yahweh therein. The idea of a fresh covenant in Hosea along with the symbolic pursuit of marital intimacy is instructive for Jeremiah's vision of a new covenant because there is widespread agreement that the book of Hosea has generally impacted the writing of the book of Jeremiah. Themes in Hosea are taken up in Jeremiah, and as was just mentioned, the new covenant passage contains a marital theme (v.32).

In sum, Holladay's treatment of the new covenant passage puts us on the right pursuit of ✞✋✞ via an investigation of Hosea's understanding of the term in relationship to knowing Yahweh in an intimate, and even marital, way.[140] Covenant faithfulness, which can be understood by a variety of moral terms, is what is envisioned in an ideal society which has the knowledge of Yahweh at the forefront as evidenced in the new covenant passage.

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[137] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 197.

[138] There are textual variants of ✞☪☹✞✂ in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS). The Septuagint (LXX) reads in v.32, 'and I loathed them', a slight change that occurs by reading the Hebrew as ✞☪☹✞⚐ instead of ✞☪☹✞✂. Aquila and the Vulgate, as well as the context of the passage, support the Masoretic Test (MT).

[139] As both the NIV and NASB do.

[140] The addendum which follows this chapter shall take this into account.

In Jer.24:7 the exiled community is described as the model community upon eventual return from exile in that they are likened to a basket of good figs, and once again 👎✋⌖ of Yahweh is at the core of such a community ideal. The positive vision of good figs in vv.4-7 is to contrast[141] the negative vision (vv.8-10) of bad figs representing Zedekiah, his officials, and the remnant in Jerusalem. In the positive vision there is a build-up of activity of Yahweh starting at v.5 and leading to the v.7 vision of the people being Yahweh's people with knowledge (👎✋⌖) of him, having returned (🏱✡✞)[142] to him with their whole heart (🏱☹)[143]. Whereas in 31:34 Yahweh put his law in the heart of the people which led to the knowledge of him, in 24:7 law is not mentioned, but instead Yahweh gives (✌☪☝) the people a heart which leads to knowledge of him. Yahweh is the direct object of the knowing, and they will specifically know that he is Yahweh (✞✡✞⌖ ⌖☝❝ ⌖✈ ⌖☪❝ ☪👎✋☹). The only other instance of ✌☪☝ with 🏱☹ as object in Jeremiah is 32:39 where the ❝✍⌖ of Yahweh ('I will give them one heart ... that they may fear me') is in mind rather than the 👎✋⌖ of Yahweh ('I will give them a heart ... to know me'). By this linkage knowledge of Yahweh corresponds with the fear of Yahweh, which is very much consistent with the wisdom tradition in Israel (Prov.1:7). Because fear of God is obedience to him (Gen.22:12), knowledge of God itself can be equated with obedience to God. Verse 7 is not necessarily clear as to what comes first - Yahweh giving a heart by which the people return, or the people return followed by Yahweh giving a heart? The verse leaves enough ambiguity to suggest that there is a meeting halfway. That is, as one party makes a move toward the other, the other party will respond appropriately.[144]

Jer.9:22-23 (Eng.9:23-24) does not speak of a model community as such, for the challenge of knowledge of Yahweh here is addressed more individualistically

[141] Jones states, 'The clue is to discern the essential simplicity of the contrast' (*Jeremiah*, 320).
[142] The topic of chapter four of the thesis.
[143] As previously mentioned, a topic of chapter three of the thesis.
[144] For instance, John H. Walton interprets the book of Jonah by stating, 'This is the message of the book of Jonah. God delights in responding to small steps in the right direction with gracious acts of compassion.' Andrew A. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 387. A similar scenario can be seen in the story of the prodigal son (Lk.15:20).

> ‘Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows (👂✋🕴) me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness (✋👉☼), justice (👈✌✝😐), and righteousness (✝☠✋🖫) on earth; for I delight in these things,’ declares the Lord.[145]

The passage follows a series of laments and continues the theme of the search for wisdom spoken of in v.11 (Eng.v.12). Duhm called it ‘a harmless unimportant saying’[146] with which Carroll agrees.[147] Not so for Jones, who said, ‘It is difficult to be patient with those who still quote Duhm’s view’.[148] Like Jones we would see the passage as a classic statement of what knowledge of Yahweh entails, embodied in the wisdom style. As in 24:7 Yahweh is the direct object of 👂✋🕴, but unlike 24:7 the 🕴✂ 👂✋🕴 which follows gives content to the knowing. Yahweh does something, and this something is done on earth (9:23, Eng.9:24), in the sphere of human living, in moral and ethical application. The triad of wisdom, might, and riches as objects to be boasted about are contrasted with true understanding and knowledge which is a triad of Yahwistic characteristics, namely: lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness.

The knowledge of Yahweh is not reserved for the royal establishment, or for the sage, or the soldier, or the wealthy, for these are subordinate to knowledge of Yahweh which is expressed in ✋👉☼, 👈✌✝😐, and ✝☠✋🖫, terms concerned with attitude and action toward those who are in positions of weakness (e.g. the oppressed, the poor, the defenseless, and the basically marginalized).[149] Yahweh is one who practices these things on earth, and he ‘delights’ (💣✳✌☼)[150] in them. To understand and know Yahweh is awareness that in such things is the very nature of Yahweh, coupled with corresponding action. Boasting should not be in great thoughts, tremendous military accomplishments, or glorious riches. Rather, boasting should be in deeds of kindness,

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[145] NASB.
[146] Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Kurzer Hand-Commentar Zum Alten Testament XI) (J.C.B. Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1901), 97.
[147] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 249.
[148] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 169.
[149] Chapter four of the thesis elaborates on these key moral terms.

justice, and righteousness. Positions of weakness are in no way inferior to positions of power and fame when it comes to knowing Yahweh. Jeremiah, as a prophet called and commissioned while yet a ✍👎🖗 (1:6) is not to be dismissed as a prophetic candidate based upon the common conventions of knowledge of Yahweh being evident by wisdom (perhaps age), might (Jeremiah was preaching military surrender), and riches (Jeremiah attacked the House of David for greed and pomp - 22:13-17).

According to the following verses (9:24-25, Eng.9:25-26), it was possible for Judah to become indistinguishable from the nations. That is, knowledge of Yahweh was not a pre-determined position, but rather was to be gained through imitation of Yahweh's practice of ✋☞☼, ☜✌✞☺, and ✞☠✋🖫.

Another verse in Jeremiah which states ✥✂ 👎✋✥ in regard to Yahweh is 16:21 which envisions a return from exile, but is primarily an emphatic response (👎✋✥ stated three times in the passage) of Yahweh to the prayer concerning the nations (vv.19-20) who are departing from the ✍☠✞[151] of idolatry. The emphatic use of 👎✋✥ here connected in the last line with the name of Yahweh is reminiscent of Israel's first departure from a foreign land.

<u>Yahweh as the direct object of 👎✋✥</u>

Thus far we have attempted to establish 👎✋✥ of Yahweh as a concept which the writers of the book of Jeremiah cherished as an ideal to be attained (e.g. 31:31-34). We have then isolated those instances where knowing the nature and character of Yahweh (✥✂ 👎✋✥) are stated. The next task is to look specifically at how 👎✋✥ with Yahweh as the direct object of the knowing is used in the book of Jeremiah for the purpose of building up a profile of what the phrase 'know me/Yahweh' might mean.

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150 The 💣☀✌☼ of Yahweh is also found in Hos.6:6 where ✋☞☼ and ☪👎✋ is what Yahweh wants as opposed to offerings and cultic rituals.

151 Again, a topic of chapter three of the thesis.

Three of the passages previously discussed (31:34; 24:7; 9:23, Eng.9:24), passages which envision knowledge of God in the community, all have Yahweh as the direct object of 👎✋⌖. The following passages to be investigated have either Yahweh himself as the direct object, or the 'way', or the 'ordinance' of Yahweh as the direct object of 👎✋⌖. What remains true of all of these passages is that there is a negation of the knowledge of Yahweh (❝☹), that is, these passages are examples of the people not knowing Yahweh. Again, we will continue to build a profile of key vocabulary and terms for the purpose of establishing what knowledge of Yahweh entails in the Jeremiah tradition.

In 2:8 a certain kind of speech pattern is important in knowing Yahweh. The priests failure to say 'Where is Yahweh'? is in synonymous parallelism to 'Those who handle the law' (the priests once again) not knowing Yahweh. This is a repetition of the sins of the fathers who themselves failed to say the shaping story of Israel's identity in the exodus from Egypt (2:6). Verse 6 and verse 8 begin the same way, '✞✡✞⌖ ✞⌖❝ ✡✍☺❝ ❝☹✡', except that the priests are specifically identified in v.8 as the subject whereas the fathers have already been identified in v.5 as the subject pertaining to the v.6 violation. There is no need in v.8 to repeat the long recitation of v.6, for the initial statement, "and they did not say 'Where is Yahweh'?" is a shortened form of Yahweh's act of deliverance already catalogued in v.6. If the priests had knowledge of Yahweh, especially since they handle the law, that is they work consistently with the traditions that tell of Yahweh's great act of deliverance, they would have spoken of this deliverance rather than finding grounds of accusation against him and abandoning him (v.5). The prophets also show no knowledge of Yahweh in their speech patterns because of prophesying by Baal (v.8). The priests' failure to speak of the remembrance of Yahweh, that is their passive voice, might be on a par with the voice of the prophets who actively speak out on behalf of Baal (v.8), and therefore such silence might embody a certain amount of idolatry. Also, the parallelism in v.8 of 'they did not know me' (⌖✍✡👎✋⌖ ❝☹), with 'they transgressed/rebelled against me' (⌖🏳 ✡👎✞💧), signifies a deep moral association with knowledge of Yahweh.

In 4:22 Yahweh is the direct object of ☹✋✦ with the negation as in 2:8 except that there is an inversion in the Hebrew text with the object pronoun coming first (‘me they do not know’) for the purpose of emphasizing that it is indeed Yahweh who is not known. On this occasion the people are indicted for stupidity and no knowledge of Yahweh because they have skill in doing evil but are ignorant of how to do good. The two uses of ✡☹✋✦ ❝☹ in the verse parallel personal knowledge of Yahweh with the knowledge to do good. ‘Knowledge’ (☺✦😐✂✡) to do evil is an illegitimate knowledge which does not equal a God-related kind of knowledge. There are a number of terms in 4:22 which resonate with a wisdom theme (☹✦✡❝, ☹✂☞), but the use of ☺✦😐✂✡ most clearly ties in the knowledge of God to the wisdom pursuit of the sage. The description of the people as ☹✂☞ is a description used six times in the wisdom writing of Qoheleth. The term ☹✦✡❝ is found twice in Job and nineteen times in Proverbs and can be used to speak of foolish speech patterns (Prov.10:8,10) and therefore has some connection back to Jer.2:8 which has linkage of patterns of speech to either knowledge of, or no knowledge of God. 4:22 might be understood as the voice of the schoolmaster[152] who scolds a child-like people for their lack of wisdom in understanding the knowledge of God because of their propensity to do evil. The fourteenth and fifty-third psalms critique negative attitudes toward God by highlighting an attitude which lives as though God did not exist through a lifestyle of corruption, wickedness, and injustice.[153] These do not do good nor do they seek after God. They are not called ☹✦✡❝ as in Jer.4:22, but a synonymous term, ☹☜☝, again, meaning to be a fool.

In 9:2 (Eng.9:3) Yahweh is the direct object of ☹✋✦, and as in 4:22, the object pronoun comes first (‘me they do not know’). Also as in 4:22, Jeremiah passes from personal lament into direct speech of Yahweh. The lament is again because of the evil in society (e.g. ‘they go from evil to evil’) and lack of knowledge of Yahweh (☹✋✦ ❝☹ - which is in parallelism with ‘they go from evil to evil’). To do evil is to not know Yahweh. At the forefront of the community breakdown specified from 8:23-9:5 (Eng.9:1-6) are

[152] In this case it is the voice of Yahweh sandwiched between laments of Jeremiah.

[153] Calvin noted, ‘ ... All right knowledge of God is born of obedience ...’. John Calvin, Institutes of Christian Religion, I, vi, 2 (Library of Christian Classics [Philadelphia: Westminster; London: SCM, 1960]), 72.

speech patterns which deceive (, , , juxtaposed to) through the instrument of the tongue. The tongue can be used as a weapon, particularly a 'bow', a launching instrument which can exert a deadly force.[154] The context is furtiveness, as in an ambush, verified by v.7 (Eng.v.8) in which the concealment is speaking . Such peace-speaking in a context of slaughter (8:23; Eng.9:1) leaves the people not only unaware of Yahweh, but also unaware of their immediate treacherous circumstances. It is the improper use of speech here which has deadly and disastrous consequences for the community and which amounts to a personal rejection of the knowledge of Yahweh (v.5, Eng.v.6). The lack of knowledge of Yahweh also serves as a conclusion to the lament of 8:23-9:5 (Eng.9:1-6).

In 5:4-5, although Yahweh is not directly the object of , the and the of Yahweh are. As was noted in the passages which have Yahweh as the direct object of , speech patterns are involved in the communal problem (v.2), along with a refusal to repent (, v.3). Knowing the 'way' of Yahweh and the 'judgment/ordinance' of Yahweh seemingly are not very indistinguishable from knowledge of Yahweh himself. This 'way/judgment/ordinance' is characterized in v.1 by the doing of justice and the seeking of truth. The passage from 5:1-6 makes the same point as was seen in 9:2-8 - a sweeping condemnation of the community; but in this case, in the fashion of a merismus, from to the 'way/judgment/ordinance' of Yahweh is not known. The statement that they have all 'broken the yoke and burst the bonds' (v.5) likens Jerusalem to an animal that has broken away from the very thing which keeps her tame. The 'way/judgment/ordinance' of Yahweh acts like that which restrains the people from going wild, and it is ironic that Jerusalem who has behaved like a wild animal in loosening herself from Yahweh, is to be preyed upon by other wild animals (5:6).

The direct object of in 8:7 is not Yahweh, neither is there mention of the of Yahweh, but here the direct object of is the of Yahweh as occurred in 5:4-

[154] Jas.3:1-12 is the best known NT critique of how the tongue can be used as a deadly force, and thus is a concept which spans biblical literature. Note especially how the tongue may be used as a weapon (Jas.3:8) and how Jas.3:9-12 warns of the same ability to be 'fork-tongued' as in Jer.9:2 (Eng.9:3).

5. Animal imagery is once again part of the message; in this case, the ☜✌✞☺ of Yahweh should be as natural to the people of Yahweh as migratory birds' instincts about nature and the seasons of migration. Another similarity with 5:4-5 is the statement 'they refused to return (✍✡✞) (5:3; 8:5)' coming before the statement 'they do not know (✆✋✙) me (5:4-5; 8:7)'. In fact, 8:4-6 uses ✍✡✞ six times, including some word plays, and ☺✡☤ once. The main theme of the verses is the act of turning away and the prospect of turning back, and as we have seen earlier, the speech patterns of the people (v.6) are part of the indictment associated with no knowledge of Yahweh (v.7).

Summary

In sum, an analysis of ✙✂ ✆✋✙, and ✆✋✙ with Yahweh as the direct object in the book of Jeremiah suggests that appropriate ways of living are indeed what is envisioned when there is knowledge of Yahweh. What is appropriate is such moral conduct which seeks proper relationship with Yahweh and others based on key ethical terms such as ☜✌✞☺, and ✞☠✋🖫, terms which denote what it really means to have turned (✍✡✞) to Yahweh, and terms which shall feature in the discussion in chapter four. Where there is idolatry or moral failing there is no knowledge of Yahweh. As is taught in Hebrew wisdom literature, where there is the fear of Yahweh, there will also be obedience to Yahweh, and in such obedience there is knowledge of Yahweh. A leading indicator of this knowledge is discerned in appropriate speech patterns, patterns which do not deceive, speak foolishly, or prophesy by idols, but patterns which actively tell the shaping and identifying story of Israel's history and the acts of Yahweh in that history. For Jeremiah's Judah, what was said externally with the mouth had to have a corresponding internal reality, 'You are near in their mouth but far from their mind (12:2b)'.

This examination of ✆✋✙ in Jeremiah is in no way exhaustive, but rather serves to help us probe 22:15-16, the key passage in Jeremiah which has Yahweh as the direct object of ✆✋✙. The moral and ethical content given to ✆✋✙ by all previous discussion shall be applied to Jeremiah's rebuke of king Jehoiakim in his question, 'Is not that to know me' (✙☪❝ ☪✆✋✞ ❝✙✞ ❝☹✞)? says the Lord. The scenario is a direct encounter

between prophet and king of such magnitude that the question posed of what it means to know Yahweh here is the pinnacle of the other passages which have Yahweh as the direct object of ידע. Before giving full attention to this and other passages, as well as related Jeremianic terms, we briefly, in the addendum which follows, expand our understanding of knowledge of Yahweh by viewing the concept in three other places in the OT: Hosea, Exodus, and Ezekiel.

Addendum A: Other Usages of ידע in the OT

As mentioned in our introduction, many scholarly discussions concerning the OT have often revolved around locating a central theme for OT theology. The 'knowledge of God (Yahweh)' as a theme has at times surfaced as a candidate for this distinguished privilege.[155] There are select passages in the OT where the moral content of knowledge of Yahweh is explicit (e.g.1 Sam.2:12). However, we wish to be merely illustrative of usage of ידע in other places in the OT and will limit the treatment of knowing Yahweh outside the book of Jeremiah to studies in Hosea, Exodus, and Ezekiel because the concept is more predominate as a continual theme in these books. We begin with reflection on Hosea, rather than staying with the canonical order of Exodus first, because of recognized similarities between Jeremiah and Hosea. Also, we are interested in Walther Zimmerli's work on knowing Yahweh in Exodus and then later in Ezekiel. We shall therefore look at the theme in these two books side by side.

I. ידע of Yahweh in Hosea as a Marital Theme

In Hosea, the dramatic love narratives of chapters one and three[156] set the stage as an interpretive key to the book, namely, God's struggle for intimacy with Israel. The love story involving Yahweh and Israel (typified by Hosea and Gomer) in the book of Hosea sets forth 'knowing'[157] as a key concept of the message and can enlighten our understanding of it in Jeremiah.

The first major usage of ידע for our purposes is found in the introductory material of the book of Hosea, specifically, 2:21-22 (Eng.2:19-20) where the notion of a fresh covenant has been mentioned (2:20, Eng.2:18). Following a survey of this passage, primary investigation of the knowledge of God in the book of Hosea will revolve around 4:1-3,6 and 6:1-3,6, both of which enlighten ידע to the highest degree in the prophet's message.

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[155] For example, Sailhammer discusses the 'knowledge of God' as the single integrating theme of the OT. John H. Sailhammer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 21. House locates 'knowledge of God' as one of four major themes permeating the OT, including: salvation, covenant community, 'knowledge of God', and life and land. Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 105.

[156] Chapters 1-3 serve as an introduction to the primary oracles of chapters 4-14.

Hosea 2:21-22 (Eng.2:19-20) reads

> And I will betroth (👌🤏❝) you to me forever; yes I will betroth (👌🤏❝) you to me in righteousness (💀✋🖫) and in justice (👈✌✞😐), in lovingkindness (✋👉☼) and in compassion (☺✙😐☼🤏), and I will betroth (👌🤏❝) you to me in faithfulness (✞☝✡😐❝). Then you will know (👁✋✙) the Lord.[158]

This betrothal, emphasized by the three-fold usage of 👌🤏❝, contains a vision of what the relationship between Israel and Yahweh can be. Andersen and Freedman state, 'The emphasis on the betrothal, rather than the marriage, makes the situation more dramatic, highlighting the thorough-going rehabilitation secured in this miraculous re-creation of all relationships'.[159] But this rehabilitation of Israel as an estranged wife must be done right, hence the legal terminology of 💀✋🖫 and 👈✌✞😐. Adultery, represented by Israel's idolatry,[160] is not only immoral, it is also illegal.[161] The starting point for a repaired relationship with Yahweh must come through the legal means of a re-established covenant. Once the covenant vows are legally renewed by means of righteousness and justice, the betrothal to Yahweh can only be continued through Israel's moral responsiveness, indicated by the terms ✋👉☼ and ☺✙😐☼🤏. ✋👉☼ is especially a term of covenant faithfulness, and ☺✙😐☼🤏, essentially 'compassion', involves an emotional attachment and devotion that goes beyond mere legality in relationship. In fact, the legality of the relationship cannot be separated from the emotive and responsive aspect of the relationship for there to be any real relationship at all. In other words, Yahweh envisions starting over again with Israel, but the covenant and legal aspect of the

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[157] Keeping in mind that the first canonical appearance of 👁✋✙ is in an intimate and marital context (Gen.4:1).

[158] NASB. BHS text critical apparatus states that in the last line many manuscripts have the variant reading, 'you will know *that I am the Lord*'.

[159] Francis I. Andersen and David N. Freedman, *Hosea* (The Anchor Bible) (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1980), 283.

[160] The text indicates that idolatry is on a par with 'forgetting' (v.15, Eng. v.13). In this case, following after the Baals is equivalent to pursuing other lovers so that Israel has 'forgotten' her God. It is hoped in the passage that the 'forgetting' of v.15 will become 'knowing' in v.22 (Eng. v.20). 'Forgetting' and 'knowing' can be paired in proximity again in 13:4&6.

[161] In this way, adultery in human relationships can be seen as not only immoral, but also illegal in the context of an established covenant, for it denies something fundamental to what personal vows are all about.

relationship is only made valid by proper practice and response to the character and nature of Yahweh.[162] The result is ✞✇✡☺❝, a husband and wife who live together in 'faithfulness'. Only in this scenario will Israel 'know the Lord' (2:22, Eng.2:20).[163] The 'knowing' that is in mind, therefore, involves the intimacy and mutuality of both a legal and ethical relationship.

The opening accusation of the main oracles begins at chapter four with the imperative to 'hear' (✆☹✞),[164] followed by a covenant lawsuit and an indictment, which involves no knowledge (✪✆✌) of God linked by positive terms such as 'faithfulness' (✪☺❝) and 'kindness' (✌☞✡)

> Listen (✆☹✞) to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, for the Lord has a case (✍✝✎) against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness (✪☺❝) or kindness (✌☞✡) or knowledge (✪✆✌) of God in the land (4:1).

The charges that indicate no knowledge of God are also attested to by a whole host of ethical and moral failings

> There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed (4:2).

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[162] A.A Macintosh comments, "It is significant that in a speech by Yahweh, Israel is to 'know Yahweh' (i.e rather than 'me'). Thus it is the name and nature of her God that Israel will perceive, will take to heart, will attend to with single-minded devotion. Such knowledge of Yahweh corresponds to Israel's corrected understanding whereby no longer is she inclined to the perversity of calling Yahweh 'my Baal' (v.18); indeed knowledge of Yahweh is consistent alone with the repudiation of Baal." A.A. Macintosh, *Hosea* (The International Critical Commentary) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 85.

[163] In some respects, 'knowing the Lord' in Hosea is not far removed from 'loving the Lord' in the Shema. For Hosea, the removal of idolatry and restoring the relationship with Yahweh in moral terms and responsiveness is basically one and the same as 'knowing' Yahweh. Deuteronomy 6:5 admonishes Israel to love their God with all their heart, soul, and strength. Meaning is given to this sort of loving by the larger context in Deuteronomy, where, according to the first words spoken by God in his part of the covenant, are the first and second commandments, which are warnings against idolatry (Deut.5:7-10). Also, Deut.7:2-5 indicates that Yahweh is very serious about the destruction of idolatry, thus, one might conclude that in order for one to love God properly, all idolatry must be completely removed and abolished.

[164] ✆☺✞ used in Hos.4:1 is akin to ✆☺✞ used in Deut.6:4 in so much that both are attention grabbers that follow some introductory material. In Hosea, chs.1-3 prepare for the oracles of chs.4-14. In Deuteronomy, ch.5:6-21 are God's first words in the Ten Commandments, followed by a statement of the importance of Moses as prophetic mouthpiece (Deut.2:22-33), a brief preamble (Deut.6:1-3), and then the first words of Moses which pertain to the entire Deuteronomy covenant starting with the Shema (Deut.6:4).

These charges speak of inhumane behavior and indicate that knowledge of God has a relationship to one's treatment of other human beings.[165] The vocabulary of Hos.4:2 resembles the vocabulary of Jeremiah in his famous temple sermon (Jer.7:9).[166] Such crimes against humankind echo the latter portion of the Decalogue, and are therefore fundamental to what being in covenant relationship with Yahweh is all about. The very name 'Yahweh' connotes such moral language, as is revealed to Moses after the first national covenant violation (Ex.34:6). The conclusion that is drawn from the lack of knowledge of God and numerous societal violations in Hos.4:1-2 is that suffering will in fact be the natural result. Sadly, the suffering touches everything, to the point of bearing on the environment as a covenant curse would

> Therefore the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky; and also the fish of the sea disappear (4:3).

Once again, Jeremiah envisions a similar picture (Jer.4:23-26) and is even told by God that the land will be barren (16:1-4).

To know Yahweh according to Hosea can be pursued through some very real and tangible ways, primarily through moral and ethical devotion to both God and people. Lack of knowledge of God is rejecting and forgetting Torah, which leads to a dire result

> My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (דעת). Because you have rejected knowledge (דעת), I also will reject you from being my priest. Since you have forgotten the law (תורת) of your God, I also will forget your children (4:6).

Nonetheless, the invitation to know Yahweh is clear in 6:1-3, especially upon Yahweh's withdrawal until the appropriate action on the part of Ephraim is taken (5:15)

> Come, let us return (שוב) to the Lord. For he has torn us, but he will heal us; he has wounded us, but he will bandage us. He will revive us

[165] The history of interpretation of the Shema shows that already by the time of Jesus the love of others was interconnected to love of God (Mk.12:28-31; Lk.10:25-28).
[166] A passage to be discussed in chapter eight of the thesis.

> after two days; he will raise us up on the third day that we may live before him. So let us know (✞👎✋☝), let us press on to know (☪👎✋) the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and he will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth.

The numerous use of first person plural pronouns provides a corporate context and a communal sense of public repentance, shame, and humiliation, even as the nature of the idolatry/adultery was public and on a national scale (9:1). Ephraim's voice here, is sandwiched between Yahweh's voice (5:13-15 and 6:4-6). Yahweh, who tears like a lion (5:14), is seemingly given free reign by Ephraim to do so (6:1), yet, Yahweh is still not convinced of Ephraim's ability to show loyalty (6:4,6). Israel's turning is apparently too often superficial and transitory. The hortatory appeals at the beginning of both verse one and verse three are parallel with each other, thereby equating ☞✡✞ to God with ☪👎✋ of God. There is a relationship between turning to God and knowing God, and it seems, the latter is dependent upon the former. Verse three especially shows forth that it is possible to know God, for the admonishment to know is emphasized with an appeal to 'press on', taken from the word ☹✋✍.[167] This is as profound an invitation as Hosea gives, and the invitation is to return to Yahweh and know him (keeping in mind the intimacy suggested by the marriage of Hosea and Gomer).

For Hosea, the process of ☞✡✞ may be a painful one, but it ultimately gives way to healing (v.1), living (v.2), and the knowledge of God (v.3).[168] The passage actually suggests quick healing, that Israel can be revived, on her feet, and on her proper way once again so that life may be lived, not in any fashion, but specifically 'before him' (v.2).[169] The point is that Israel can get on with true living,[170] which clearly involves the knowledge of Yahweh (v.3a).

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[167] The sense of ☹✋✍ here is to follow after with an aim to secure (*BDB*, 922). It is possible to attain knowledge of God following repentance (v.1). Paul's personal quest to know Christ in the NT (Phil.3:8-14) carries an expression similar to Hosea here.

[168] A classic example of being wounded by God for the purpose of change would be Jacob's encounter with the mysterious wrestler (Gen.32:24-32).

[169] Tertullian was the first to offer a view of the resurrection of Christ concerning interpretation of v.2. Making that jump too quickly however, risks minimizing the impact the Hosea tradition may have desired to make in bringing healing and restoration to the immediate community that it was concerned with.

[170] Hosea's encouragement to 'press on' in v.3 is in the context of being given life ('that we might live before him', v.2). This has a similar resonance with Amos 5:4,6 which tie together 'seeking' and 'living'.

Yahweh will be consistent for Israel on a daily basis as sure as the sun will rise every morning, 'His going forth is as certain as the dawn ...' (v.3b). He will also be faithful on a long-term basis, for he will come as sure as the seasonal rains in Israel could be counted on (v.3c). As the rains could be relied upon, not only for refreshing and washing, but for a chance for growth and new life, so Israel's pursuit of the knowledge of God could result in a chance for a new season of national and religious growth, even though Israel itself has been unlike steady rain, and more like '... a morning cloud, and like the dew which goes away early' (v.4).

The question of how one can know God according to Hosea is given a practical answer-through moral and ethical devotion. According to G.I. Davies, knowledge of God is 'something to be achieved by deliberate effort'.[171] This quote from Davies is probably not quite the right wording, as it tends to undercut divine initiative. It would be better to envisage knowledge of God as something demonstrated in, or inseparable from, a proper kind of moral diligence. In one sense then, knowledge of God can be practical.[172] ✇✋✍, as used in some places in the OT, encourages incorporation of all aspects of human life through pursuit of proper ethics and standards in society, such as: peace (Ps.34:14), justice (Deut.16:20), and righteousness (Prov.15:9; 21:21). The pursuit of the knowledge of God in 6:3 is in a first person plural, or communal, sense. The metaphorical 'spring rain' envisions a society which has true knowledge of Yahweh demonstrated by such attributes as peace, justice, and righteousness. The role of the cult is diminished when compared with such societal ethics, morality, and loyalty

> For I delight in loyalty (✋☞☼), not sacrifice, and in the knowledge (☪✋) of God rather than burnt offerings (Hos.6:6)

Real life is therefore only lived in turning to, seeking, and striving to know God.

165 G.I. Davies, *Hosea* (The New Century Bible Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 162.

[172] The basic meaning of ✇✋✍ in Hos.6:3 as 'striving' is a near equivalent of what Islamic jihad is, 'striving in the path of God'. For the Muslim, this striving is to be incorporated into every aspect of human life. Islam is itself a witness to the enduring legacy of the God of Israel because Muhammad was in many

Yahweh prefers loyalty and knowledge of God to religious ritual and sacrifice. The polemical rhetoric here is not a proposal to abandon religious rituals, but rather is a deeper call to reflect on what the reality of sacrifice and burnt offerings involve. Micah's portrayal of virtually the same theme echoes strongly in Mic.6:1-8. He paints the ridiculous picture of the worshipper in Jerusalem ascending Mount Zion towards the temple with 'thousands of rams' (an impossible task), and even 'ten thousand rivers of oil' (an even more impossible task) (Mic.6:7). The kind of acceptable worship Micah has in mind does not necessarily take place in the temple precincts, but occurs out in society in the practical manner of, 'doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God' (Mic.6:8).

In Hos.8:2, Israel claims to 'know' (ידע) God. God is portrayed as a predatorial animal in v.1,[173] lying in wait for the right moment to pounce upon Israel; but Israel has responded in v.2 by playing the trump card of invoking privileged relationship. The present urgent plea of v.2 is covenantally related language which assumes an irrevocable relationship regardless of Israel's behavior. But it is both 'covenant' (ברית) and 'law' (תורה) that Israel has violated (v.1). Yahweh's response in v.3 is that Israel has rejected the 'good' (טוב) - probably a reference to what the 'covenant' and 'law' are. As a result, Yahweh will reject Israel in his stating that the enemy will yet pursue her so that what is initially said in v.1 stands. In sum, Israel's claiming privileged status via ידע of Yahweh carries no weight without proper responsiveness to 'covenant' and 'law'.

II. ידע of Yahweh in Exodus

In the book of Exodus, where Yahweh's name is first revealed, one would find the name-theology contained in the book associated with usages of ידע in the book. It is the intention of this part of the addendum to analyze these usages.

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ways influenced by Judaism and Hebrew scripture. The Quran's understanding of Allah, at least in a moral sense, has similarities with Israel's ancient understanding of her God.

[173] The Hebrew text is difficult in vv.1-3, but the basic idea of rejection of Israel, and judgment upon her, remains.

Before doing so, we desire to pay brief attention to the contribution made by Walther Zimmerli on the subject of the name of Yahweh in the book of Exodus. For Zimmerli, the revealing of the name Yahweh, which of course takes place in the book of Exodus, is the 'point of departure'[174] for doing OT theology. He states that the Ex.3 revealing of the divine name to Moses is given in a 'veiled way'[175] and is Yahweh's 'free gift'.[176] Yahweh retains his 'freedom'[177] in both the giving of his name as well as choosing whom he shall give it to (Ex.6:2ff.). In other words, when he gives his name he retains an element of mystery and intrigue that is captured in the 'I am' formula which can carry the nuance of Yahweh being whatever he chooses to be without humans relegating him to exact definition (as might be understood by Ex.33:19). The refusal to reveal the divine name upon the request of Jacob (Gen.32:30) is a case in point. Whether or not the divine name is given, Yahweh refuses to put himself at the disposal of humanity or allow humanity to comprehend him. To summarize the view of Zimmerli on the revelation of the divine name in the book of Exodus:

> And this freedom of Yahweh must be taken account of in all other statements about the faith of the Old Testament. In the only passage where the Old Testament itself attempts to provide an explanation of the name 'Yahweh,' it refuses to 'explain' the name in a way that would confine it within the cage of a definition. It seeks to express the fact that we can speak of Yahweh only in attentive acknowledgment of the way he demonstrates his nature (in his acts and his commandments).[178]

Or again, in Zimmerli's classic essay 'I am Yahweh', he says "Our interpretation may then assert that everything Yahweh has to announce to his people appears as an amplification of the fundamental statement 'I am Yahweh'".[179] That which is a mystery or inaccessible on the one hand, namely the realization of all that is entailed by the divine name 'Yahweh', nonetheless has an element of invitation to pursue what knowledge of the being associated with that name means. Thus, an important part of what is being

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[174] Zimmerli, *OT Theology in Outline*, 17.
[175] Ibid, 18.
[176] Ibid, 19.
[177] Ibid, 20.
[178] Ibid, 21.
[179] Walther Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh* (translated from his 1953 essay by Douglas W. Stott; edited by Walter Brueggemann)(Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 9.

established in the book of Exodus is the nature and character of the God of the patriarchs in Genesis who reveals himself in a more profound way in Exodus.

As concerns usages of ידע in the book of Exodus, we can begin with the first chapter. In Ex.1:8 the new king of Egypt does not 'know' (ידע) the Israelites living within his land. This leads to their enslavement and eventual cry for deliverance to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a God whom the children of Israel do not know by name. Upon hearing the plea for help from the descendants of Abraham, God responds to their cry, for it is said that he 'knew' (ידע) (2:25).[180] This leads to the burning bush event in the next chapter where God reveals his name to Moses (3:14). What is taking place between God and Moses is very personal and intimate. Moses stands in a privileged position as mediator between God and the Israelites, for he will make known the personal name of the God of the patriarchs, men who had not had the divine name revealed to them (6:3).

Upon Moses' first appeal to Pharaoh to let the slaves go, Pharaoh responds by saying

> Who is Yahweh that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I do not *know* (ידע) Yahweh, and besides, I will not let Israel go (Ex.5:2).

Much of the developing theology of the book of Exodus moves from this point in order that Yahweh may demonstrate to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and even to Moses and the Israelites that he, Yahweh, is God. The statement, 'you shall know that (כי ידע) I am Yahweh' is repetitively used (in delivering Israel from Egypt [7:5], in striking the Nile [7:17], in setting apart Israel in the land of Goshen [8:18, Eng.v.22], in the miracle at the sea [14:4,18], in his presence at the tent of meeting [29:46], and in his sanctifying Israel through Sabbath observance [31:13]). The proclamation of who Yahweh is as the God of Israel is a major theme of the book of Exodus. We shall have a more careful look at the statement, 'you shall know that I am Yahweh' and how it is used in the book of Ezekiel in a brief section shortly to follow.

[180] No object is specified in relation to the verb ידע here. It is likely that the meaning is that Yahweh took notice of the Israelites in their bondage.

After Yahweh's great and miraculous opening of the Red Sea and Israel's final deliverance from Egypt, Moses, in his song of victory proclaims, 'Yahweh is a warrior, Yahweh is his *name*' (15:3). Yahweh is now known by his people because his name is associated with being the warrior who has granted the victory.

Beyond the might and miracles of Yahweh, however, there is a knowledge of him that is associated with his very being and character, a knowledge which is somehow related to his divine name. Yahweh the warrior (Ex.15:3) becomes Yahweh the covenant God (Ex.19-24), who in turn proves himself to be a covenant-*keeping* God (Ex.32-34). The first covenant failure of the new nation as the people of Yahweh (via the golden calf) leads to a test of Yahweh's temperament, nature, and character. Ultimately, Yahweh chooses to renew his covenant with the nation of Israel (Ex.32-34). In the interim Moses' request to see the glory of Yahweh (Ex.33:18) is actualized in the pronouncement of the divine name and the moral implication inherent in that name (i.e. compassionate, gracious, merciful, etc. Ex.33:19; 34:5-7).[181] This proclamation of the divine name by Yahweh himself to Moses alone is the fullest statement about the character of God within the entire Old Testament. The repetition of the name Yahweh (Ex.34:6) could be Hebrew idiomatic emphasis, although the force of the repetition is surely unclear. Nonetheless, it might suggest the possibility of Yahweh's unchangeableness and that the glory of God that Moses has asked to see is bound up in the divine name 'Yahweh'.[182] The comparison of Yahweh's actions in mercy and judgment (Ex.34:6-7) demonstrates that his mercy predominates over his judgment. What follows in the chapter is the outworking of this fact in that Yahweh renews the covenant and is willing to start again after the golden calf episode. However, Yahweh does take opportunity in the covenant renewal to remind the Israelites that they had better not worship other gods again, for his

[181] The very life of Yahweh emanates such moral characteristics (e.g. Jer.4:2, 'as the Lord lives, in truth, justice, and righteousness'). The account in Exodus is an establishment of the nature and person of Yahweh. Such Yahwistic qualities were ultimately to be expressed in the society of Jeremiah's day. However, the moral dimensions mentioned in Ex.33:19; 34:5-7 are not necessarily those which are emphasized in the book of Jeremiah.

[182] LXX does not repeat the name, although LXXA has a second **kuvrio~**.

jealousy is emphatically stated concerning loyal requirements in covenant relationships, and this jealousy is linked with the divine name (Ex.34:14).

The canonical position of the events of Exodus 32-34 is key to the rest of the Old Testament, regardless of questions of authorship and date of composition. This is because the larger theological issues of the book of Exodus regard Israel's nationhood as a people of Yahweh, and Yahweh's response towards Israel's first covenant failure is one of mercy, which demonstrates the character of the God of the patriarchs who has revealed himself to Moses and the Israelites.

III. יהוה of Yahweh in Ezekiel

One of the things Zimmerli established in his 1953 essay 'I am Yahweh' is that there could never be any other association with the divine name, other than that of being Israel's God.[183] Israel knew of Yahweh in no other terms except as, 'Yahweh - the God of Israel'.[184] To know Yahweh therefore, is to know that Yahweh is God. This he concluded primarily from his reflection on the book of Exodus.

Zimmerli later extended his investigation of the divine name and knowledge of that name into the book of Ezekiel in his 1954 essay entitled 'Knowledge of God According to the Book of Ezekiel'.[185] His primary concern here was Yahweh's self-introduction, or what was termed 'the statement of recognition'.[186] Specifically, this is the repetitive statement 'You will know that (כי יהוה) I am Yahweh' (e.g. Ezek.6:7,10,13,14; 7:5,27, etc.). The statement is most noticeable at the conclusion of larger speech units in Ezekiel, with the end position being its normal position. Zimmerli contends that 'knowing Yahweh' in Ezekiel is therefore the intended goal of all of Yahweh's activity. He views the statement as an oath, or 'event of loyalty',[187] thus explaining why the statement of recognition often ends with the substantive attribute 'your God' ('I am Yahweh *your God*', e.g.

[183] Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh*, 4.
[184] Ibid, 4.
[185] This essay is included in *I am Yahweh*, 1982.
[186] Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh*, 4.
[187] Ibid, 11.

Ezek.20:20), which works as a reinforcing command to disconnect with other gods and forms of idolatry. This statement of recognition is a rare formula in the OT with the exception of occurrences in Deutero-Isaiah, and the Holiness Code.[188] However, Zimmerli demonstrated that the formula, though rare in the OT, could nonetheless be traced back to a much older tradition of prophetic discourse manifested in prophetic groups of the Northern Kingdom.[189] The statement of recognition, so characteristic of the book of Ezekiel, is therefore by no means an original coinage of Ezekiel himself, and had served as an underlying influence in Israel's prophetic history.

The specific term which interests us, ידע, is found in Ezekiel some one hundred times, predominately in the qal stem in its verbal usage (86x). Seventy-eight of these occurrences of ידע in the qal stem are bound in one way or another to the formulaic structure of the statement of recognition. We will not attempt to examine the many passages from Ezekiel that include ידע and the statement of recognition, for Zimmerli has done that for us in his essay. We shall however, attempt to summarize the fruit of Zimmerli's work. Zimmerli might classify knowledge of Yahweh in Ezekiel into two possible categories: the first being a sort of intellectual or existential knowing, the second, and certainly more crucial, yet based on the first, a knowing that is evidenced by obedience to Yahweh.[190] As concerns the former, Zimmerli notes that what is expected from the perspective of common epistemological processes familiar to us is that a knowing of Yahweh would seemingly be based upon some sort of human effort or intellectual exercise that leads to the goal of recognition of Yahweh.[191] That is,

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[188] The inclusion of 'I am Yahweh' here is central to the legal statements of the book of Leviticus and of course stands as the preamble to the Decalogue (Ex.20:2), thus underscoring its significance.

[189] Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh*, 41.

[190] This is not to downplay an intellectual type of knowing that is based upon the learning of certain facts about Yahweh. In the opening paragraph of this addendum, mention was made of the moral content of knowing Yahweh in 1 Sam.2:12, certainly a crucial negative commentary on the sons of Eli. In the following chapter of 1 Sam. (3:7), Samuel's not knowing Yahweh is related to his youthfulness and ignorance in having not yet heard the voice of the Lord or knowing certain things about him. This not knowing of Yahweh is obviously different from that referred to concerning the sons of Eli, and is in no way a moral commentary on young Samuel. In sum, the two differing perspectives of knowledge of Yahweh in 1 Sam.2:12 and 3:7 are akin to what Zimmerli determined in his studies of Ezekiel.

[191] Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh*, 33.

knowledge comes by simple observation and reflection (e.g. Judg.13:21).[192] However, as VanGemeren observes, and in agreement with Zimmerli, 'knowledge is seen in fundamentally relational terms'.[193] Knowledge by observation, reflection, and thought, is not a comprehensive knowledge, there must be the inclusion of some sort of experiential aspect. In addition to the essentially cognitive knowing that ידע represents in the OT, the verb has a purely experiential side. The 'knower' has actual involvement with or in the object of knowing.[194] Although Wolff saw the subject matter of 'knowledge of God' as being not God himself but 'the acts of God in the early period of Israel and the ancient sacral law',[195] he nonetheless also stated 'this knowledge never appears in isolation, but always in contact with its object'.[196] To know God in the OT ultimately includes those things often understood by 'religion' in the broadest sense of the word.[197] That is why for instance, to know God in the OT is paralleled to things like: fearing him (1 Kgs.8:43), serving him (1 Chron.28:9), and trusting him (Isa.43:10).

It is of interest that in the typical contexts surrounding the numerous statements of recognition in the book of Ezekiel, there is no human effort or intellectual exercise alluded to. Zimmerli states

> Nowhere does the statement of recognition speak of recognition apart from the divine acts which nourish it. There is no room here for knowledge emerging darkly from interior human meditation, from an existential analysis of human beings and the world, or from speculation. The irreversible sequence, 'Yahweh's acts - human recognition,' is constitutive for the description of the process.[198]

Therefore, that which is to be known about Yahweh is known by his demonstration in history. Yet history is ancillary to Yahweh's self-demonstration - Yahweh's name is to be proclaimed over the historical event, thus establishing the importance of the spoken

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[192] Walter Baumgartner and Ludwig Koehler, *The Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the OT* (volume 2) (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1995), 390.
[193] VanGemeren, *NIDOTTE* (vol. 2), 413.
[194] Merrill F. Unger and William White Jr., *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the OT* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), 212-213.
[195] Hans Walter Wolff, "Erkenntnis Gottes im Alten Testament" (Evangelische Theologie 15) (Munich, 1955), 428.
[196] Ibid, 427.
[197] Botterwick & Ringgren, *TDOT* (vol.5), 478.
[198] Ibid, 64.

word. Yahweh takes certain actions, his name is thus to be proclaimed in those actions, and human beings are to recognize him because of those actions. Such divine actions do not occur for their own sake, but rather are directed at human beings; they mean to influence human beings and to create knowledge in them - a knowledge which is responsive acknowledgment of Yahweh. According to Zimmerli, 'The strict recognition formula is apparently never really concerned with Yahweh's self-contained being, but rather with his coming self-manifestation and demand for obedience.'[199] To put it simply, recognition of Yahweh in the fullest sense means obedience to Yahweh. When Yahweh acts, recognition is demanded. Lack of recognition is the same as disobedience.[200] To summarize Zimmerli on the knowledge of God in the book of Ezekiel

> Ezekiel makes it clear that for him none of the preconditions for recognition of Yahweh reside in human beings or in any preliminary human understanding; they lie totally within the divine initiative. Human recognition and knowledge emerge vis à vis Yahweh's actions and are realized by Yahweh's own self-introduction to human beings: 'I am Yahweh.' This is the only manner of recognition or knowledge about which the book of Ezekiel speaks.[201]

Having had a look at ידע of Yahweh in the larger Jeremiah tradition, with brief excursions into the books of Hosea, Exodus, and Ezekiel, we now return to other specific key terms in the book of Jeremiah in the following two chapters of the thesis.

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[199] Ibid, 50.

[200] Zimmerli states that 'This holds true all the way down to Paul, who considers the heathens' disobedience in the face of God's self-revelation in his works to be an unforgivable sin (Rom.1:18ff.)' (*I am Yahweh*, 71).

195 Zimmerli, *I am Yahweh*, 88.

CHAPTER 3: 👌☠✞ AND ⚐☹ IN JEREMIAH

Introduction to the term 👌☠✞

In this chapter, we will attempt to show the profound usage of the word 👌☠👍 (‘falsehood/lie/deception’) in the text of Jeremiah and its moral dynamic, primarily because it is a significant term in Jeremiah’s moral understanding. However, let us first have a brief examination of the broader use of the term in the OT and how the term has been defined in standard biblical and theological reference tools.

The noun form of 👌☠✞ appears one hundred and thirteen times in the OT, thirty-seven of these times in the book of Jeremiah. It does not appear at all as a verb in Jeremiah, which is not surprising in that the verb form is used only a total of six times in the OT. In fact, Jeremiah is primarily cited in TWOT’s treatment of the term because of the book of

Jeremiah's predominant usage when compared with other OT books.[202] The same could be said of M.A. Klopfenstein's article in TLOT, who writes, 'Jeremiah is the first to make the phenomenon of pseudoprophecy a proper and independent theme'.[203] As concerns definition of the term, TWOT discusses the root in Akkadian, Aramaic, and Arabic, noting that cognate usage means an 'empty promise', as in an unreliable spring of water.[204] It also defines שקר as that which is 'used of words or activities which are false in the sense that they are groundless, without basis in fact or reality'.[205] Klopfenstein says 'שקר means aggressive deceit intended to harm the other, unfaithfulness, perfidy, even when only the result of words.'[206] His larger article on the term places heavy emphasis on the 'aggressive' nature of שקר. Finally, a worthy quote from NIDOTTE in helping to define שקר for our study of Jeremiah is as follows

> In summary, it might be said that this root is tied to the world of false behavior and words, of deception and deceit in dealing with things the way they are as defined by God's character, words, and deeds. Justice, faith, and covenantal/treaty stipulations were broken/disregarded. The word is closely tied to breaking faith with others by presenting deception/ falsehood rather than truth.[207]

<u>The public nature of Jeremiah as a prophet and observation of שקר in Judean society</u>

The text of Jeremiah portrays the prophet as being commanded by Yahweh to often appear in a public place: 'Stand in the gate of the Lord's house ... (7:2)', 'Go and stand in the public gate ... (17:19)', 'Arise and go down to the potter's house ... (18:2)', 'Then go out to the valley of Benhinnom ... (19:2)'. This portrayal of Jeremiah as a public prophet establishes him as one who is in contact with, and is an observer of, human behavior. His consistent observations of שקר, as for instance in ch.23[208] and ch.14,[209] and as just

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[202] R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke (editors), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (vol.2) (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1980), 955-956.
[203] Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (editors), with English translation by Mark E. Biddle, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (vol.3) (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 1399-1405.
[204] *TWOT* (vol.2), 955.
[205] Ibid, 956.
[206] *TLOT* (vol.3), 1400.
[207] Willem A. VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (vol.4) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 248.
[208] To be carefully examined in chapter seven of the thesis.
[209] To be carefully examined in chapter five of the thesis.

previously mentioned, thirty-seven times in total,[210] are indeed established by a prophet who has done his homework so to speak. One such public observation and evaluation which is designed to be rhetorical and not empirical in examining human behavior, is in Jeremiah's being commanded to explore the morality of the people of Jerusalem.

> Roam to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and look now, and take note. And seek in her open squares, if you can find a man, if there is one who does justice, who seeks truth, then I will pardon her (5:1).[211]

The imperative nature of the first four verbs of the verse strongly indicate the urgency in Yahweh's voice, similar to the lack of righteousness in Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Abraham (Gen.18:16-33). Yahweh would seem to be content if Jeremiah could find just one man of integrity, as opposed to Abraham's ten at Sodom and Gomorrah. The first verb, ✡☜☜✡✞, as a polel imperative, means 'to go eagerly, quickly, back and forth'.[212] Jeremiah is then told to 'see/look' (✞❝✍), to 'know' (✞✋✥), and to 'seek' (✞☠☙) throughout the streets and open squares of Jerusalem, if he can find one who 'seeks' (✞☠☙) 'truth' (✞☧✡☺❝) and does 'justice' (☜✌✞☺). The double use of ✞☠☙ suggests that Jeremiah is to 'seek' for 'seekers'.[213] The startling picture is that the capital city is devoid of any true seekers of those things that are pleasing to Yahweh. Their ability to speak right words is a falsehood (✍☠✞) (5:2). Jeremiah offers a momentary weak defense (5:4), but then settles back on the sad realization that this lack of integrity has affected all levels of society (5:5).

The book of Jeremiah, especially in MT, is repetitious concerning the judgment of ✍☠✞ at all levels of society. For example

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[210] While occurring only seven times in Isaiah, and no more than a few times in any other prophet.
[211] NASB.
[212] It is the only place in the entire OT that the root ☜✡✞ is used in a polel imperative form. Holladay notes that the impression is of a military order in which Jeremiah is sent on a 'search' mission, not for the purpose of gathering prisoners of war, but for the purpose of finding honest men (*Jeremiah*, 176.).
[213] For an Aramaic equivalent of the same concept, notice how the word ❝☙ ('seek/ask') is used extensively throughout the book of Daniel (12 times), but especially in 6:5&12 where Daniel's enemies 'seek' to find fault with him, but instead find him 'seeking mercy' (☌☧✡☪☺✡ ✞☙), which is roughly the equivalant of the Hebrew ✞☧✡☺❝ ✞☠☙ found in Jer.5:1.

> For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for gain, and from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely (✍☠✞) (6:13).
>
> .... For from the least even to the greatest everyone is greedy for gain; from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely (✍☠✞) (8:10b).[214]

The word play in these verses is poignant, 🗣🖫➪ 🗣🖫✡➪ ✡☹✂ (lit. 'everyone cuts off a profit'). 'From the prophet even to the priest everyone (✡☹✂, used again) deals falsely
(✍☠✞)'. The meaning of ✍☠✞ here, takes on definition by the parallelism and word play found in these two verses. To practice ✍☠✞ is to be self-seeking, or greedy for one's own gain, with a seeming ability to distort or conceal this reality.[215] Because the livelihood of the priest and prophet depended upon maintaining good favor with the people and those in power, the likelihood of being self-deceived was an increased risk. The self-seeking ✍☠✞ of the priest and prophet caused them to pronounce a pseudo societal health

> And they have healed the brokenness of my people superficially, saying, 'Peace, Peace,' (☺✡☹✞ ☺✡☹✞) but there is no peace (☺✡☹✞) (6:14).
>
> And they heal the brokenness of the daughter of my people superficially, saying, 'Peace, Peace,' (☺✡☹✞ ☺✡☹✞) but there is no peace (☺✡☹✞) (8:11).

Their ✍☠✞ was found in the words they spoke, '☺✡☹✞ ☺✡☹✞' when, in fact, the fractured relationship between the people and Yahweh was quite severe and required a serious proper response, as for instance in 6:16

> Thus says the Lord, 'Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you shall find rest for your souls'. But they said, 'We will not walk in it'.

Instead of directing the people to the ancient paths, i.e. the way of covenant with Yahweh, the prophets and priests provided a 'light' (✞☹☠👂 ☹🗣) (6:14; 8:11) answer.

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[214] Missing in LXX.
[215] As we shall see in an analysis of the temple sermon in Jer.7 in chapter eight of the thesis.

The root ☹☹☠ denotes the ability to take a matter much less seriously than required. Whereas Jeremiah wept over the condition of his society (9:1,18; 13:17; 14:17), the priests and prophets saw no real breach between God and the people, and therefore viewed inappropriate behavior as a scanty, trifling thing. Any dressing of the nation's wounds was skin-deep only. They had become completely insensitive to the evils in which they and their nation were immersed.

Inclusion of ⚑☹ in exploration of ✍☠✞ in Jeremiah

At the foundation of such ✍☠✞ and self-seeking is the condition of the human heart (⚑☹), expressed powerfully in Jer.17

> The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; with a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their *heart* (⚑☹),[216] and on the horns of their altars (v.1).
>
> Thus says the Lord, 'Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose *heart* (⚑☹) turns away from the Lord' (v.5).
>
> The *heart* (⚑☹) is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it (v.9)?

It is in these verses that Jeremiah defines the seat of societal problems, the human heart, which in Hebrew thought was conceived of as the seat of thought, will, emotion, and affections.[217] The iron tool of verse 1 suggests a permanent and deep engraving and especially says that the ⚑☹ is as a rock-hard object on which what is written ('sin') is not easily erased.[218] The sin of Judah is directly related to their cultic practices, here represented by the horns of the altars, and the term 'heart' may also speak of the central place of religious activity in Judah, namely, Jerusalem. It could be, therefore, that not only were the hearts of the people corrupt, but the heart, or center of their religious activity, the capital city itself, was corrupt, 'Wash your *heart* from evil, O Jerusalem ... (4:14)'. It is from this standpoint that Jeremiah could preach from the most religiously

[216] ⚑☹ appears 66 times in Jeremiah (Johannes G. Botterwick and Helmer Ringgren, *TDOT*, vol. 7, [Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995], 407).
[217] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 350.
[218] When knowledge of Yahweh is realized in the community the law of Yahweh has penetrated the ⚑☹ (Jer.31:33-34).

cherished locations ('the gate of the Lords' house', 7:2), and freely pronounce an indictment upon their reliance upon public icons, ' ... The temple of the Lord ... (7:4)'.

The heart that has turned away from Yahweh has done so because it has found a false security in 'man' (☺✋❝) and 'flesh' (✍👍⊱) (17:5). One of the larger issues at stake in the book of Jeremiah is that the people should not trust in alliances and military support from other nations, such as hoping for help from Egypt.[219] In poetic style ☺✋❝ is parallel to ✍👍⊱ and the verb ✡👁⊱ ('trusts') is parallel to ✡👎✍❄ ☺👍✡ ('make his arm'). To trust in the 'strong arm' is to turn the heart away from Yahweh. At the core of Jeremiah's message is the tendency for the human heart to deceive itself through the 'strong arm' of military might, religious ritual, and any number of other deceits which can, in subtle ways, become trust in public and visible icons.

One of the more climactic expressions of the condition of the human heart in the book of Jeremiah is 17:9 (quoted above) in which the 'heart is deceitful above all' (☹✂😐 ⊱☹✝ ⊱💀👎). This is the only instance in the OT in which ⊱☹ appears with the definite article. This generalization of the ⊱☹ summarizes and seals the character of any heart, and is the central topic of the passage, even as the ⊱☹ is the central faculty within the human person.[220] The adjective modifying ⊱☹ here is ⊱💀👎[221] which appears otherwise in MT with this sort of usage only in Isa.40:4 where it is used to describe uneven, bumpy, steep, or hilly ground. It is also reminiscent of

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[219] Holladay suggests that 17:5 might be intended personally for Jeremiah and that the word ✍👍⊱ could be rendered 'penis' as in Lev.15:2,3,7 and Ezek.16:26; 23:20, which would be an innuendo of Jeremiah's lack of sexuality and child-bearing due to his call to abstain from marriage (16:1-4) (*Jeremiah*, 492). The context of ch. 17, however, indicates a corporate rebuke to the idolatrous ways of the nation rather than a personal word about the prophet.

[220] The ⊱☹ is understood to be the vital center of human existence and stands for the inmost nature of the individual, known only to God and tested by him, while simultaneously being hidden from human sight, cf. Botterwick & Ringgren, *TDOT*, volume 7, 413. The LXX states that the heart is **baqei`a** ('deep'), probably demonstrating scribal confusion over the MT's ⊱💀❝ ('deceitful') and the Hebrew word for 'deep' (💀😐❝) which was translated into the LXX as **baqei`a**. If Jeremiah's life is at all a call into the divine pathos in order to know Yahweh than the LXX rendering of the human heart as 'bathos' suggests the tendency of the human heart to put forth a false 'pathos'. Therefore, what really lies in the 'depths' of the inner being is mysterious and murky, perhaps even as the Hebrews viewed the depths of the sea to hold such mystery, intrigue, and evil. Schlier notes that **bavqo~** 'may denote the general character of man', Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (volume 1) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 517.

(‘Jacob’), one known for his deceptive character, who literally attacked his brother at the heel (Gen.25:26), a further meaning of the adjective . What characterizes the human heart according to Jeremiah is ‘unevenness, deception, tracking at the foot in an insidious manner’, not in a mild or peripheral way, but (‘above all’), a rare comparison. Of great concern to Yahweh is the human heart, but an over-riding character trait of the human heart is deception and unevenness.[222]

A further description of the in Jer.17:9 is that it is ‘sick, weak, incurable’ (). This word is used more in Jeremiah than in any other OT book, and is used almost always as a passive participle, as it is in this particular verse. Its basic description is that the core of human existence is feeble, and the word itself () is similar to which occurs forty-two times in the OT and is rendered as ‘mankind’.[223] The mortal nature of and the mortal illness of make for a profound usage of in Jer.17:9 as a description of humankind represented by discussion of the .

Other passages which use the word include Jer.15:18; 17:6; 30:12,15; Isa.17:11; Mic.1:9; and Job 34:6. In six of these passages the context is medical, thus establishing ‘sick/incurable’ as appropriate translations and suggesting that the human has a serious medical condition, of course in a metaphorical sense. The final statement of 17:9, ‘ ... who can *know* () it (the) ... ?’ not only directly challenges human ability to understand itself, but by implication issues forth the greater challenge of human ability to know Yahweh, for the heart cannot move past its own self-deceit (17:9a).

This condition of human illness is not easily changed

> Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good who are accustomed to do evil (13:23).

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[221] See previous footnote on textual ambiguities.
[222] This is similar to the theology of Gen.6:5, which Holladay suggests Jeremiah may have had in mind (*Jeremiah 1*, 495).
[223] Johannes G. Botterwick & Helmer Ringgren, *TDOT*, Vol.1, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 346.

The rhetorical nature of the question posed provides an answer to a subsequent implied question: Is it possible at all for Judah to do good when they are so accustomed to doing evil? The poetic rhetoric sets forth a moral challenge, which thus, by design, is given in such a manner that the wayward might respond appropriately and thus avoid the pronounced disaster (13:24-27). The prophet's task is to bring about change (23:22), but this is no easy occupation because of the 'sick' condition of the human ☹. The verb ✌✞, rendered in 13:23 most commonly as 'change' (RSV, KJV, NIV, NASB) is used in Lev.13:55 of the changing color in a diseased spot and thus may connote that the condition of illness can be overturned[224] by health. However there seems to be little optimism on the part of Yahweh and his prophet, of whom, for instance, Eichrodt remarks

> Jeremiah is the one who ponders most over the riddle of the hypnotic force with which men are attracted to evil, and indeed cannot go on living without the narcotic of sinful pleasure.[225]

The human heart may not be easily changed, but, unfortunately, it may be easily deceived

> Now it will come about when you tell this people all these words that they will say to you, 'For what reason has the Lord declared all this great calamity against us? And what is our iniquity, or what is our sin which we have committed against the Lord our God (16:10)?'

It was predicted by Yahweh that the Judeans would respond with surprise when punishment for their sin would finally come. The response indicates human inability to discern its own evil in the midst of drastic circumstances. The fact that the means (sin) to the end (calamity) cannot be recognized reinforces the notion of the feeble and unaware

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[224] The root ✌✞ is found in all Semitic languages and is derived as 'overturning, overthrowing, upsetting, turning upside down', etcetera, and finds usage in such places as the Sodom and Gomorrah tradition (Gen. 19:21,25,29). To be ✌✞ is to be moved from one end of the spectrum to the other. In the case of Jer.13:23 the challenge is for Judah to be overturned from evil to good. Whereas ✡✞ is more often employed by Jeremiah to effect change, ✌✞ can be used somewhat synonymously to get a similar result by painting a picture (i.e. ✌✞ is used when baking bread is turned (Hos.7:8), bowls are flipped upside down (2 Kgs. 21:13), and chariots are overturned (Hag.2:22). For further discussion of ✌✞ cf. Johannes G. Botterwick & Helmer Ringgren, *TDOT*, vol.3, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 423-427.

[225] Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT* (volume 2), 389.

human condition. Only Yahweh can truly see into the depths of the human character, and the human heart (לֵב) is the testing[226] ground

> But, O Lord of hosts, who judges righteously, who tries the feelings and the heart ... (11:20a)

> I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind ... (17:10a)

Both of these passages parallel 'heart' (לֵב) with 'kidneys' (כְּלָיוֹת) thus providing a portrait of two internal organs buried away at the central core of human existence, both of which were conceived of as the seat of thought, will, emotion, and affections.[227] The duplicate terms cover the range of hidden elements in the human person's character and personality.

Another parallelism, found in 17:10, is the use of 'search' (חָקַר) and 'test' (בָּחַן). The 'heart' is 'searched' and the 'kidneys' are 'tested'. This is the only occurrence in Jeremiah of חָקַר. Its context is similar to that of Ps.139:1,23 where it is paralleled with יָדַע even as it is in Jer.17:9-10. Unlike חָקַר, בָּחַן ('carefully scrutinizing and trying' like the craftsmen might do with his precious metals, or as in the case of the potter in ch.18) is a term readily used in Jeremiah to portray the activity of Yahweh (6:26; 9:7; 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; 20:12). These passages declare that only God can probe the depths of the innermost place of the human character. Jeremiah's own conclusions are that the human heart is devious beyond all accounting. Although his immediate concern is his fellow Judeans, nonetheless, he was a 'prophet to the nations' (1:5) who encountered the human heart on a large scale.

Once again we quote 17:10, this time completing the last portion of the phrase

> I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, *even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results* (פְּרִי)[228] *of his deeds.*

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[226] There is the sense of conversation here that Israel is not a part of, but nevertheless can hear. There is the standard assumption that Yahweh is the tester of hearts and minds (Ps.7:9;17:3) and that everyone will receive their due (Isa.3:10-11).

[227] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 350.

[228] The negative fruit of v.10 is the antithesis of the fruit of the trusting man in vv.7-8.

Yahweh, the only one able to probe the inner depths of the ☹ gives out fair dealings in response to the ways and dealings of the human heart.[229] There seems to be in fact, a built-in correction system when inappropriate human action takes place

> Your own wickedness will correct you, and your apostasies will reprove you ... (2:19a)

And again

> Your ways and your deeds have brought these things to you. This is your evil. How bitter! How it has touched your heart (4:18)!

The evil mentioned here is in reference to the impending foreign siege of Jerusalem with its inevitable destruction (4:16-17). Surprisingly, the heart (☹) of Jerusalem will be probed by a source other than Yahweh. The result of their ways and doings brings the bitter (😐) evil (*)* which reaches ()[230] the heart (☹). Because humankind is incapable of recognizing what is in its heart, Yahweh, who searches and tests the heart, takes the appropriate (in this case devastating) action to get to and expose the heart of his people.

In a different context Jeremiah laments

> My soul, my soul! I am in anguish! Oh, my heart! My heart is pounding in me; I cannot be silent, because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war (4:19).

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[229] The giving of potential punishment here expressed in , stands in contrast to the established inheritance given () by Yahweh as found in v.4

[230] The meaning of is touching in the sense of striking, or reaching to smite. Verse 10 uses the verb in the same Hebrew stem and tense to indicate an action that is sure to happen. In this case the sword has 'reached' () the 'soul' (). The poetry of v.18 is similar in that the evil has 'reached' () the 'heart' (). The theological ramifications of this is that the only penetrating force into the depths and deceit of the human heart is a devastating and punishing force, and not even this is always the answer to human resistance (2:30; 5:3). Out of such carnage may come forth the foundations of repentance and response. Heschel says, 'Where signs and wonders from without fail, despair within may succeed', *The Prophets*, (vol.1), 192.

The pronouncement of disaster has certainly reached the heart and soul of Jeremiah, thus demonstrating that the human heart can hear a message, can be touched to the depths, and can respond properly. The Hebrew of 4:19 actually uses three different descriptions of the inner person of Jeremiah, all with a first person singular possessive ending: ✙✎☺ (2x), ✙🏳☹ (2x), and ✙✞✌🖗, roughly translated 'my bowels, my bowels ... my heart, my heart ... my soul'. The bowels being regarded as the instrument of feeling, Jeremiah is thus feeling the plight of Israel as his own. He is 'sick to the stomach', so to speak, and has become like an unstable cardiac patient[231] in his own prophetic imagination, his heart fluttering and palpitating. At the national level, the scattering of Judah (13:24) is the natural result of their trust in that which is false (✍☠✞)[232] (13:25).

The admonishment to Jerusalem is

> Wash (☞🏳✂) your heart (🏳☹) from evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved (4:14a).

The identification of what the evil in the heart is follows

> How long will your wicked thoughts lodge (☝✙☹) within you (🖳🏳✍☠) (4:14b)?

The meaning of the word ☝✙☹ as 'lodge' carries the sense of spending the night and challenges the baneful schemes of Jerusalem for not only staying the night in the geographical middle of the city, but also for its lodging deep within the character of the city. This last colon (4:14b) is a rhetorical question in which the expression 🖳🏳✍☠ is directly parallel to 🖳🏳☹. The first colon (4:14a) is unique in the OT in that this is the only place where the verb ☞🏳✂ takes 🏳☹ as its object. The ceremonial nature of

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231 Thompson likes preserving the physical organs such as bowels, heart, kidneys, etcetera in modern translations because the physical organs in ancient psychology were effected by emotional experiences and were both a sounding board and the end-point for other mental processes, *Jeremiah*, 228.

232 Bright has put forth the ✍☠✞ here as a euphemistic way of expressing Baalism, and has influenced a great number of more recent commentators. John Bright, *Jeremiah* (The Anchor Bible) (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), 95-96. To trust in Baal or other pagan deities was to deceive oneself into thinking that such deities were the source of care and protection. In the context of this discussion, whatever the specific ✍☠✞ may be is a result of the human heart allowing itself to be easily deceived, and hence ✍☠✞ is symptomatic of the sick human heart. More will be said of ✍☠✞ in the following pages.

☞♑✂ coupled with the ceremonial nature of ✡☹😐✞ (v.4) express calls for radical renovation of the character and will, as opposed to religious ceremony in the absence of proper moral behavior. The intensive nature of the command to 'wash' as a piel imperative continues to reinforce the awful condition of the human heart that Jeremiah was attempting to penetrate with the word of Yahweh.[233] The only other occurrence of ☞♑✂ in the OT as a piel imperative is found in the 51st Psalm, a Psalm of penitence,[234] 'Wash (☞♑✂) me thoroughly from mine iniquity ...' (Ps.51:4, [51:2 Eng.]). The Psalmist went on to state, "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold thou dost desire truth in the 'innermost being' (☪✡☼☜)[235] and in the 'hidden part' (☺☪☞)[236] thou wilt make me know wisdom". In v. 7 there is another request to be 'washed' (☞♑✂), and in v.10 the desire of the Psalmist is to have his 'heart' (♑☹) created 'clean' (✍✡✞☜).[237]

The evil heart has wickedness lodged deep within its dark hidden spaces. The accusation of Jeremiah, 'But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart ...' is repeatedly stated throughout the book (5:23; 9:14; 11:8; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17). They had devoured their prophets (2:30) as was the case with Uriah (26:23),[238] a prophet of Yahweh.[239]

The intensity of Jeremiah's language is seen in his accusing both Israel and Judah of acting faithlessly in his use of the infinitive absolute of ✋⚐♑[240] (✡✋⚐♑ ✋✡⚐♑). ✋⚐♑ occurs more frequently in Jeremiah (7x) than

[233] Only Jeremiah among the prophets uses the term ☞❝✂ in this way and applies the verb to the washing of persons rather than to the washings of garments (i.e. Lev.13:6).
[234] On a popular level at the present time, this Psalm is perhaps the best known Psalm of repentance. An analysis of the Psalm indicates grief over one's personal heart condition and sin, similar to what Jeremiah appears to be saying in his overall message.
[235] A noun found only here and in Job 38:36 where God is asking rhetorical questions related to his sovereign power as creator. BDB suggests it means the 'dark hidden spaces', which fits the context here, and the earlier discussion about the ♑☹.
[236] A passive participle meaning 'the place of secrecy, shutting up, or keeping closed'. This also fits the context of the human ♑☹.
[237] Often used to describe ethical purification of human body parts (Prov.22:11; Job 17:9; Hab.1:13).
[238] A topic of chapter eight of the thesis.
[239] D. R. Jones thinks that this might include a reference to Manasseh's probable persecution of prophets (15:4). But he is more convinced that the verse is a later comment, and points to the ruthlessness of Jehoiakim against Uriah, and for that matter, against Jeremiah as well (*Jeremiah*, 93).
[240] Used repeatedly in the more comprehensive horizon of ch.3 (vv.8,11,20).

in all OT literature, and is used to express the unstable relationship of Israel to the established regulation of covenant with Yahweh. The correlative characteristic of Yahweh in Jeremiah is his ☪😐❝ ('truth and faithfulness'). Yahweh's character and code of conduct is firmly established, and yet, Israel and Judah would not recognize that Yahweh would punish disobedience. They basically accused him of not taking action, ' ... not he, misfortune will not come on us ... (v.12)'. Of this it is said that they have stated ✞☼✂ of Yahweh. They have not spoken the truth about him. This is the only occasion of Jeremiah using ✞☼✂, and when he does, the object is Yahweh. TDOT contends that ✞☼✂ denotes something different from ✍☠✞ in that ✞☼✂ is a 'deliberate accountable act', a 'disguising, concealment, or denial of a given situation contrary to better knowledge'.[241]

The term ✍☠✞ is prevalent in Jeremiah because of the human conflicts. The religious leaders were not exempt from the deceitfulness which had saturated both 'The house of Israel' and 'The house of Judah (5:11)', and certainly were largely responsible for the situation. The guilt of the scribes (☺✙✍✌☛) is stated

> How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us'? But behold, the lying (✍☠✞) pen of the scribes has made it into a lie (✍☠✞) (8:8).

The principle teachers of the land had turned trustworthy words (✞☼✞✙ ☪✍☼☪) into falsehood (✍☠✞), thus an occasion of distorting that which is factually true[242] due to an underlying condition, which in this case, is the 'lying pen' (✍☠✞ ☚👎).

Another synonym of ✞☼✂ and ✍☠✞ is used by Jeremiah in an effective simile which describes the evil actions of the people

> For wicked men are found among my people, they watch like fowlers lying in wait; they set a trap, they catch men. Like a cage full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit (✞😐✍😐); therefore they have become great and rich. They are fat, they are sleek, they also excel in deeds of wickedness; they do not plead the cause, the cause of the orphan,

[241] Botterwick and Ringgren, *TDOT*, vol.7, 133.
[242] As we shall see in 7:4 in the eighth chapter of the thesis.

that they may prosper; and they do not defend the rights of the poor (5:26-28).[243]

The ✞☺✍☺ of the people is like the secretive hiding of the fowler who preys upon his weak and unexpecting victims. The real concern of Jeremiah is for the orphan and the poor who through the secretive measures of exploiters are entrapped and devastated by the rich and the strong. The lawcourts themselves were probably guilty of this ✞☺✍☺ in that bribery and fees were accepted, thereby subverting justice to the disadvantage of those who did not have the means to defend themselves.[244] The evil and deceit of the human heart that Jeremiah condemns matter of factly (17:9) is given fuller explanation of its deep-hidden secretiveness and treachery by such similes.

Relating ✍☠✞ and ⌲☹ to ⌲✡✞ in Jeremiah

As will be seen in the following chapter on ⌲✡✞, the heart must be emptied of deception in order for there to be a complete turning unto Yahweh

'And yet in spite of all this her treacherous (✋⚐⌲) sister Judah did not return (⌲✡✞) to me with all her heart (⌲☹), but rather in deception (✍☠✞),' declares the Lord (3:10).

A partial turning is possible, but unacceptable. The Hebrew phraseology ✞⌲☹ ☹✂⌲[245] demands the entirety of the inner self being given over to Yahweh, even the deepest, darkest places of the ⌲☹ where ✍☠✞ so easily abides. Jeremiah indeed calls for a 'breaking up of fallow ground' (4:3) and a 'removal of the foreskins of

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[243] NASB.

[244] Peter C. Craigie, *Jeremiah 1-25* (Word Biblical Commentary) (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1991), 96-97.

[245] The similarity of wording to Deut.6:5, a verse of no small importance (cf. Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-11* [WBC] [Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1991), 143.) can be seen. The only other occurrence of the wording of the latter part of the Shema ('turned to the Lord with *all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might*') outside of Deut.6:5 is 2 Kings 23:25, where it is applied to Josiah. Josiah is portrayed in this thesis as a king without parallel, especially in relationship to Jehoiakim. The use of ⌲✡✞ in 2 Kgs.23:25 instead of ⌲✞❝ as in Deut.6:5 is applied to Josiah here because it fits the context of 2 Kgs.23 where Josiah's love of God is demonstrated through the act of repentance, which itself is given content by reform and the destruction of idolatry. Josiah thus demonstrates, perhaps more clearly than any other OT figure, what it means to fulfill what has become of upmost significance in Hebrew Scripture, the Shema.

the heart' (4:4), for he understands his call to be one of digging deep (i.e. 'pluck up and break down', 1:10), and the heart of his people would be a formidable obstacle.

More is said about the 🔊💀✝ of specifically, prophets and priests in 5:31

> The prophets prophesy falsely (🔊💀✝), and the priests rule on their own authority; and my people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?

Here the prophets' prophesying 🔊💀✝ is in rhythm and on a par with the priests' ruling 'by their own hands/authority' (☺✝✦✋✦ ☹👎).[246] To take matters into one's own hands without authenticity from Yahweh is 🔊💀✝, which has been seen in other warnings against the prophets (23:16,26). This sort of 🔊💀✝ activity carried out by those religiously responsible posed a deep and serious threat to any real order and harmonious existence in the community. In the OT view of things, living in community was characterized by a common will and sense of responsibility in which the peace and wholeness of the community was based on mutual confidence. Important qualities of this existence were encapsulated in such concepts as 🌀😐❝, 👈✌✝😐, and ✝💀✋🖫, terms alluded to in the previous chapter and discussed further in the following chapter. Jeremiah complained against a superficial 'wholeness' (☺✡☹✝) (6:14; 8:11), because 🌀😐❝, 👈✌✝😐, and ✝💀✋🖫 were not practiced (4:2). According to Thomas Overholt's study, the term 🌀😐❝ is especially the correlative of the term 🔊💀✝.[247] In this way, true 🌀😐❝ involved the individual identifying with the center and the will of the total communal system. One was to respond to both the benefits and the requirements of the community. Whereas 🌀😐❝ has the strength to maintain and build the community, 🔊💀✝ is groundless; it is not rooted at the center of and in the will of the community. It is a force which operates outside of the whole, a force which could not safeguard, but only threaten, a healthy totality.

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[246] The Hebrew text is actually ambigious in that it can mean that the priests rule at the discretion of the prophets, or as we would suggest, they function by an authority that does not have Yahweh as its source.
[247] Thomas W. Overholt, *The Threat of Falsehood* (London, England: SCM Press, 1970), 102.

Over and over again in the utterances of Jeremiah one is made aware that he does not look on his own community as a healthy whole, but as tragically broken. This is expressed most obviously in the term שבר. We have already been engaged with שבר in some passages previously discussed. It would be helpful to examine שבר, along with its correlative ידע, and the larger theme of community disruption in Jer.8:23-9:8 (Eng.9:1-9).

Jeremiah is overwhelmed with emotion over the condition and impending disaster of his people (v.1), so much so, that he would prefer to no longer be a part of them (v.2). He calls them 'an assembly of treacherous men (בגדים[248])'. The overall portrait is of a community 'at war with itself'.[249] It is really a worst case scenario, in line with Micah's critique of his society (Mic.7:2-6).[250] There is the use of military imagery, 'And they bend their tongue like their bow ... (v.3)', 'Their tongue is a deadly arrow ... but inwardly he sets an ambush ... (v.8)'. Language is used as a weapon in its ability to speak 'deceit' (מרמה) (v.8), a term already noted in 5:26-28 as the secretive hiding of the fowler who entraps his unsuspecting prey. In 9:8 the trap is the mouth or tongue which speaks דבר, which in this case involves hidden intentions of doing mischief unto a neighbor. The speaking of דבר on other occasions has characterized prophets who have failed to understand the gravity of the situation they confronted (4:10; 6:14; 8:11; 14:13; 23:17), whereas in this example, they know full well of their planned and ill-intended deceit. In the Jeremiah tradition, there may not be much difference between the two, for such falsehood is actually the deep-rooted living condition of his society, 'Your dwelling is in the midst of deceit (מרמה); through deceit (מרמה) they refuse to know (ידע) me ... (v.6)'.

Such a state of affairs reveals a people who do not know Yahweh, where knowledge of Yahweh means morally ordered social interaction. The concern of this thesis, 'What does it mean to know the Lord'?, is a clear concern of this passage. In v.6 there is a

[248] A qal masculine plural participle denoting a character trait. See previous discussion of the root בגד.
[249] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 239.
[250] Although not a main point of the text, Jeremiah author/authors certainly had an acquaintance with the ministry of Micah (Jer.26:18), and Micah's influence may have had a part in the writing of this passage.

'refusal' (✌❝😐)[251] to know Yahweh, while in v.3 Yahweh plainly declares, ' ... they do not know me'. The reason cited is that 'they proceed from evil to evil', and that 'a lie (✍💀✞) and not truth (✞✌✡😐❝ - related to ✪😐❝) is mighty in the land'. Once again in v.5 the contrast of ✍💀✞ is ✪😐❝, 'And everyone deceives (☹☹✪) his neighbor, and does not speak the truth (✪😐❝), they have taught their tongue to speak lies (✍💀✞) ...' Civil unrest and loss of trust and truth do not demonstrate the knowledge of Yahweh, but rather characterize an unsettled society on a collision course for disaster. In word play, Jeremiah appeals to the treacherous path of the patriarch Jacob[252] whose potential for a disastrous end was averted because of a life-changing divine encounter (Gen.32:24-32). He is doubtful that his people would have the strength for such an encounter, for 'their iniquity has wearied them (9:5)'. All in all, communal harmony, health, and wholeness could only come about by proper response and steadfast obedience to the covenant stipulations and moral demands of Yahweh. Overholt summarizes the effect on community ✍💀✞ had in Jeremiah's day and why the prophet would repeatedly employ such a term

> The peoples' ✍💀✞ emerged as a force actively working against any amelioration of the present situation. It was able to do this by obscuring the real nature and seriousness of the illness that plagued the communal life. The lopsided confidence in Yahweh's relationship to the nation and the spurious utterances which strengthened these convictions formed a pervasive web of falsehood which encouraged muddled thinking and superficial observation. It led to actions which were not based on a perception of religious and historical reality, and could therefore do nothing to heal the sickness at the core of the community.[253]

In the next chapter, we turn our attention to the term ✌✡✞, the moral dynamic it connotes, and its use in the Jeremiah tradition.

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[251] BDB mentions that as a piel verb ✌❝😐 has a meaning akin to the stubborn resistance and refusal of a girl to honor or acknowledge a marriage contract. The application of this term by Jeremiah is appropriate in that 'refusal to know Yahweh' combines the terms ✌❝😐, refusal of a marriage-like vow, and ✪👁✋ (related to 👁✋✝), an intimate knowledge suggestive of a marital relationship. In sum, Judah has breached the covenant, and in so doing has lost the privileged position and relationship. The relationship revolves around safeguarding the covenant; and knowledge of Yahweh revolves around the relationship being in good standing.

[252] He states in 9:4, 'Every brother deals *craftily* (✌💀👁✝ ✌✡💀👁, an infinitive absolute used to strengthen the verb)'. The name 'Jacob' is related to the Hebrew tradition in that it is a reminder of their origins in the patriarchal narratives (Gen.32:28).

CHAPTER 4: 𐤁✡✞ IN JEREMIAH

[253] Overholt, *Threat*, 103.

Introduction to the term שוב

The root שוב, which we have already referred to on a number of occasions in our Jeremiah study, is well attested in the Ancient Near East and is the twelfth most frequently used verb in the OT, appearing almost always in the qal[254] and hifil stems.[255] There are one hundred and eleven uses of שוב in Jeremiah[256] - certainly making it too large a project to do exhaustive analysis here, but nonetheless, because it is used in Jeremiah more than any other OT book, and is crucial moral vocabulary, it merits some discussion as to its nuance of meaning. We shall see its importance for our pursuit of genuine knowledge of Yahweh within the Jeremiah corpus, especially 23:14,22 and 15:7 where prophetic veracity is a concern. Also, שוב from שבה, which is surely always implied, is a common theme (18:8,11; 23:14; 25:5; 26:3; 35:15; 36:3,7; 44:5), and in most of these occurrences the לב of the people is what is (שבה). Although the term can have a variety of meanings depending on its context and usage (e.g. turn, return, go back and forth, etc.), the general tenure of שוב in the OT, and certainly in Jeremiah, is repentance. TWOT states that 'all ... expressions of man's penitential activity ... are subsumed and summarized by this one verb ...'[257] and 'For better than any other verb it combines in itself the two requirements of repentance: to turn from evil and to turn to good'.[258] J.A. Soggin states in TLOT, 'especially that the central meaning of the turning is that it connotes movement in a particular opposite direction - and without evidence that this is indeed happening, one will arrive again at the initial point of departure'.[259] Joseph P. Healey puts it this way in ABD,

> The idea of walking in the way of the Lord is a common metaphor in the Hebrew Bible (Ps.1:1). And in a variety of contexts the way of Israel is contrasted with the way of Canaan, the way of the Lord with the way of evildoers, the way of the righteous with the way of sinners. Israel's religious calendar, too, is built on the core of pilgrim feasts:

[254] The qal stem itself has ten different meanings for שוב with a variety of subdivisions. William Holladay, *The Root Subh in the OT* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 59.
[255] *TWOT* (vol.2), 909.
[256] 'A concentration in Jeremiah', *NIDOTTE* (vol.4), 56.
[257] *TWOT* (vol.2) , 909.
[258] Ibid, 909.
[259] *TLOT* (vol.3), 1313.

> Passover, Booths, and Pentecost all have pilgrim contexts. It is this notion of walking and journeying, then, that illumines the meaning of שוב ... The relationship with Yahweh is envisioned as an ongoing journey requiring constant attention and vigilance and a sense of purpose.[260]

Holladay notes that שוב is used one hundred and sixty four times in a covenantal context in the OT.[261] The majority of these occurrences are in the prophets (one hundred and thirteen times), with Jeremiah leading the way (forty-eight times).[262] The abundant use of שוב in Jeremiah contrasted with, for instance First Isaiah's minimal use of the root (only six times), is suggestive of the urgent plea, and for that matter, the opportunity to respond to God that Jeremiah gives. TWOT understands the contrast this way

> Thus, we encounter the interesting phenomenon of two prophets back to back in the canon, the first virtually silent on the subject and the second quite vocal. Perhaps the paucity of references in Isaiah is the prophet's way of saying the die has already been cast [שוב is referred to here in a quote from Is.6:10] ... a point of no return has been reached.[263]

Contrary to this observation, it seems best to understand that Isaiah is not removing the opportunity for repentance because of minimal use of שוב, for that would appear to contradict an important function of a prophet; but rather, it is more likely that such a use of שוב as in Isa.6:10 is designed for rhetorical purposes. That is, Isaiah, as is so often the case with Jeremiah, is finding ways to initiate a שוב like response from the people through rhetoric, or any other variety of means. Stating 'a point of no return has been reached' by Isa.6, the very chapter in which the prophet receives his call, is eliminating a primary, if not the primary, function of why a prophet receives such a call from Yahweh. If this is at all right, that even Isaiah who employs שוב so rarely is nonetheless interested in proper responses to God, then how much more so Jeremiah, who employs the term so readily? It may be that prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah reach points of no return in allowing for human repentance to change the mind of Yahweh, but such a view

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[260] David Noel Freedman (Editor-In-Chief), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (vol.5) (New York, New York: Doubleday, 1992), 671.
[261] Holladay, *The Root Subh*, 117. Surely such covenantal contexts are theologically crucial.
[262] Ibid, 117.
[263] *TWOT* (vol.9), 909.

should not be adopted prematurely. One aspect of the root שוב in Jeremiah is that there appears to be room for the openness of God - that is, Yahweh gives ample opportunity for genuine repentance which can cause him to change a course of action. This we shall see when we investigate the incident at the potter's house in 18:1-12. But first, we look at other usages of שוב in the book of Jeremiah, a significant and key term of moral and religious transformation intergal to Jeremiah's presentation of knowledge of Yahweh.

שוב in Jer.3:1-4:4

We may gain some insight into the importance of the term in the Jeremiah tradition by evaluating early and sustained usages in the book. According to J.G. McConville 'Jer.3:1-4:4 ... features the most sustained thinking about repentance (שוב) in the book'.[264] It is therefore a worthy place for paradigmatic analysis of שוב in Jeremiah. Its longer section extends from 2:1 (following the call of Jeremiah in ch.1) and can be organized into Israel's apostasy (ch.2), the beginning of the call to repentance (ch.3), and a culminating call to repentance (4:1-4).

We begin with a brief survey and paraphrase of ch.2 so as to lead us into the call to repentance which takes greater shape in ch.3. Analyses in standard commentaries suggest that ch.2 is in the form of a covenant lawsuit where Israel is being arraigned by Yahweh (e.g. Jones and Thompson). Thompson notes that the opening call to Jerusalem in ch.2 indicates Jeremiah's obedience to his call and commission in ch.1.[265] Jones sees in 2:1 that Jeremiah begins at the beginning, with the divine election of Israel.[266] Jeremiah's charge against Judah in ch.2 is like that of a suzerain indicting the vassal for rebellion. Judah's present apostasy in ch.2 is brought into full focus in light of reminders of a past loyalty (vv.1-3). Jeremiah is to speak in the ears of Jerusalem of their one time חסד, אהבה, and their general pursuit of Yahweh in their earliest days together (v.2). With zeal Yahweh would respond to those who would trouble his people (v.3). Israel enjoyed a privileged relationship and special protection during the devotion of her youth.

[264] J.G. McConville, *Judgment and Promise* (Leicester: Apollos, 1993), 28.
[265] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 161.

Yahweh defends himself in vv.4-5 that if the relationship went bad, it did so because of the offenses of the fathers. Particularly, the fathers have failed to remember the early days that Yahweh has not failed to remember in vv.1-3 (v.6). Although Yahweh had done Israel right, Israel had done him wrong (v.7). Idolatry is the specific apostasy, characterized in such terms as 'walking after wind (☹☜✞)' (v.5), 'defiled by abomination' (v.7), 'Baal' (v.8), and 'walking after things that did not profit' (v.8).

In v.9 Yahweh pronounces a ☜✥✍ with present and future generations, as if he will make up for the contention of past generations. This appalling action of forsaking Yahweh is something that even other nations have not done with their gods (vv.10-11a), gods that have no reality while Yahweh himself is the 'glory' (✋✡☜✂) of his people (v.11b). So appalling is the action, that the heavens themselves enter into the dismay (v.12).[267] Two evils have been committed by the people (v.13). They are inter-related; for on the one hand they have left that which is obviously there and produces life - Yahweh himself, whose presence is captured in the language of 'fountain of living waters'. On the other hand, and that which is the second evil, they hew out for themselves (☜🖫✡☹) (v.13) broken cisterns, in a sense, physically exerting themselves to complete a product that not only fails to produce 'living waters', but cannot even 'hold water' (v.13). It is another attack on idolatry, particularly the kind that fashions its own graven images (cf.10:3-4).

In the next unit (vv.14-19) Israel is compared to a slave (v.14), the prey of a lion (vv.14-15), and is the object of ridicule to foreign nations (v.16). Indeed, Israel has forsaken the 💻✍✋ of Yahweh (v.17), either to be on the 💻✍✋ of exile, specifically to Egypt and Assyria, or better yet, to have been in alliance with the powers of Egypt and Assyria (v.18). The stinging questions asked in v.18 continues the drinking of water analogy begun in v.13. Their rhetorical force is a wake-up call, equivalent to something like 'where did you get off the right road to take such a detour on a wrong and dangerous road'?

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[266] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 81.
[267] A possible word play ☺✝😐✞ ✡😐✞ begins v.12.

Yahweh had long ago given Israel liberty, but Israel turned it into an opportunity for idolatry, and even denied defilement (vv.20-25).[268] Yahweh strikes at the shamefulness of the deed (v.26). He knows that when Israel has their back to the wall (lit. ‘in the time of evil’), they will call upon him to save them (v.27). That is, the reality of action comes through Yahweh. Yahweh’s response is basically, ‘you have your numerous gods; if there is any reality to them, let them save you’ (v.28).

Yahweh’s 🏱✠👌 of v.9 is now counter-acted by the people’s 🏱✠👌 with Yahweh (v.29). They contend with Yahweh in that they ‘accept no chastening’ (v.30). If he disciplines hard the people will not listen (v.30), if he refers to his past track record the people still will not listen (v.31), and if he reminds them of the earliest betrothals (v.32) as in v.2, the people still forget him.

Breaking from the 💻👌✋ of Yahweh in vv.17-18 appears again in v.33 where Israel is as an adulterer in their idolatry. They are worse than the women of adultery[269] to whom they have become teachers of an even worse 💻👌✋. The idolatrous cult of Israel is coupled with judicial bloodshed[270] of the innocent and a not guilty plea (v.35). The result shall be exile with great lamentation (vv.36-37).

Chapter 3 employs the word 🏱✡✞ eight times (vv.1,7,10,12,14,19,22) so as to prepare for the clear call to 🏱✡✞ in 4:1-2. A number of word plays can be seen with it in ch.3 such as v.12 which in Hebrew reads ✞🏱✞😐 ✞🏱✡✞ (‘return O apostate’) and vv.12&14 which both read ☺🏱🏱✡✞ ☺✠👍🏱 ✡🏱✡✞ (‘return O apostate sons’).

Paronomasia is heavily employed in the passage by the use of the adjective attributed to the northern kingdom, namely ✞🏱✡✞😐 (faithless/apostate). In vv.6,8,&11 Israel is

[268] A NT similarity might be made with Gal.5:13.
[269] lit. ☪✡👎👌✞, a feminine plural form of ‘evil’.
[270] ‘You did not find them breaking in’ (v.34) echoes the law of Ex.22:2 where violence could be excused in certain instances. This is no such instance, and there may even be reverberation of child sacrifice.

called 𐤕𐤔𐤅𐤕𐤍, and then called upon to 𐤔𐤅𐤁 in vv.12,14&22. The word play is even more explicit in these latter verses

... 𐤕𐤔𐤅𐤕𐤍 𐤕𐤔𐤅𐤁 v.12
... 𐤌𐤐𐤔𐤔𐤅𐤁 𐤌𐤐𐤋𐤔 𐤅𐤔𐤅𐤁 v.14
... 𐤌𐤐𐤔𐤔𐤅𐤁 𐤌𐤐𐤋𐤔 𐤅𐤔𐤅𐤁 v.22

The well-crafted use of the term 𐤔𐤅𐤁 (especially in the imperative verb form) in this early repentance narrative sets the stage for its continual usage throughout the text of Jeremiah. Judah is the focal point of the preaching of Jeremiah, but they did not 𐤔𐤅𐤁 at the example of the northern kingdom, and so Jeremiah will continue to probe 'returning' to Yahweh as a necessity to reestablish the intimacy of knowing Yahweh in a marital way. The text momentarily departs from the marital metaphor in v.19 by describing the relationship between Yahweh and his people in father/son terms before returning to the theme of romantic love companionship (v.20). A woman might perhaps deal treacherously with her male companion, but a son who has an inheritance with his father may be less prone to break the intimacy. Hosea had also adopted both family metaphors: (1) husband and wife (Hos.1:2; 3:1) and (2) father and son (Hos.11:1-4). The point being made is that the plea to 'return' to Yahweh is couched in powerful family metaphorical language so as to initiate response.[271]

In 3:1 Israel's idolatry is harlotry, and any attempts to 𐤔𐤅𐤁 in this condition is invalid. Nevertheless, they try. Yahweh's response to this attempt at 𐤔𐤅𐤁 is an emphatic 'no'!, as in 15:1. The rhetorical force of this is that the more Israel continues in idolatry, the further the chasm grows between them and Yahweh. As far as he is concerned, Israel is a common whore (3:2). Drought is the result, and in this way there is resonance with the ch.14 episode of drought.[272] As there are confessional pleas to be seen in ch.14 (vv.7-9; 19-22), so also there is a confessional plea in 3:4-5. But Israel's words of a confessional - even pleaing nature, have been contradicted by her actions (v.5b).

[271] Similar to the language of indictment against Jehoiakim as a family failure in 22:18. This shall be pursued in chapter six of the thesis.

The framing of the oracle of vv.6-10 in the days of Josiah (v.6) would be the early part of Jeremiah's career.[273] The lesson to be learned is how Israel in the north was a harlot everywhere via idolatry and never did find it within herself to ✡ (v.7). Judah was walking a dangerously similar path. The breech in the relationship between the north and Yahweh resulted in a divorce that was equivalent to exile (v.8). Judah witnessed first hand the bad result of lack of ✡, but nevertheless continued on in her own idolatries. Yahweh is twice dumbfounded in the passage, first by Israel's lack of ✡, and secondly by Judah's lack of ✡ at Yahweh's divorcing Israel (v.8). Whatever ✡ Judah did attempt was not with all the ☹, but rather was an act of ✡ (v.10). Jeremiah introduces here the crucial theme of spurious turning to Yahweh - spurious because it is contaminated by that other key term - ✡. Inadequate turning therefore functions in Jeremiah's appeal by intimating that the nation can deceive itself into thinking that repentance which lacks genuineness is indeed genuine. The definition of genuine ✡ in the oracle appears to be a total and complete disassociation from idolatry. A partial turning to Yahweh is a deceptive turning to Yahweh which is shrouded in idolatry. This is made valid by v.11 which gives superior commendation to the north over against the south because the north made no pretense at ✡ according to v.7.[274]

The oracle of vv.12-14 is a rhetorical call to repentance in the north where Yahweh shows himself willing to accept the ✡ of Israel. Such genuine ✡ is punctuated by ✡ of personal iniquity and idolatry (v.13) and stands in contrast to the ✡ type ✡ demonstrated by Judah (v.10). In fact, Yahweh's reception of Israel and his bringing them to Zion (v.14) is a role reversal which could serve to generate a desire to ✡ on the part of Judah so that they might take their proper place. However, the commentators are basically split on who is the subject of address in v.14; is it northern

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[272] The topic of the following chapter of the thesis.
[273] It may be worthy to note that the positive character tradition surrounding Josiah is not envisaged here.
[274] Similar in kind to Rev.3:15-16, where to be fully hot or fully cold was preferable to lukewarmness. The point here in Jeremiah is that complete ✡ or no ✡ whatsoever is preferable to a ✡ which is still connected to idolatry.

Israel, or is it southern Judah? WBC supports a southern view,[275] and Carroll seems to move in this direction, although he is unclear.[276] McKane leaves it somewhat open, but like Carroll, seems to go for the southern option. He refers to both Jerome and Kimchi as supporters of this view.[277] Contrarily, Bright sees v.14, and for that matter v.15, as quite likely being spoken to the northern tribes.[278] Thompson is clear in interpreting the address to northern Israel,[279] and Jones also emphasizes this address as to the north, although he seems a bit mis-directed by linking the command to Jeremiah to 'go toward the north' (v.12) as doing so because it is the place from which invasion is to come.[280] Holladay takes the position that v.14 is addressed to the north, although he sees in the passage a confrontation to the north,[281] when the view taken here is that the directive to the north is in reality a rhetorical confrontation to the south. It is one of a variety of modes that a book of a prophet might use to initiate response; in this case a continuation of sibling rivalry that began earlier in the chapter as a comparison of two sisters. The view taken here that vv.14-15 are indeed addressed to the north with the real rhetorical force going to the south is given validity by the use of a similar descriptive adjective for the subject of address at the beginning of both v.11 and v.14 involving the root שוב. Also, vv.11-13 make little sense without the addition of vv.14-18 referring to the northern tribes.

תשובה ('knowledge'), among other things, is offered in v.15 as the reward for שוב and disputes about the ark of the covenant will mean nothing (v.16), for Jerusalem is opened up to all nations (v.17), and Judah herself is coming in with Israel from a place of exile (v.18). In v.19 Yahweh states what could be if there was genuine שוב, but v.20 yields forth what is - Yahweh's people are adulterers. The sad picture moves ahead in vv.21-25 to a people for whom שוב appears to be hopeless, for such idolatrous and covenantal indiscretions have been practiced since Israel's beginnings. Israel's perspective of self-

[275] Craigie, *Jeremiah*, 60.
[276] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 149.
[277] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 72.
[278] Bright, *Jeremiah*, 27.
[279] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 201.
[280] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 100.
[281] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 120.

proclaimed failure since the days of their youth (v.25) connects back to Yahweh's positive perspective on Israel's youth at the beginning of the message to Jerusalem (2:2-3).

Jer.4:1-2 concludes the unit from 2:1 concerning the nature of 🖙✡✞ in which 🖙✡✞ is spelled out in breaking with false gods[282] and a renewed loyalty to Yahweh expressed in ☪😐❝, 👈✌✞😐, and ✞☠✋🖫. The challenge to Judah develops by moving past idolatry (ch.3) to moral language of covenant relationship (4:2). The three nouns (truth, justice, and righteousness) gather about them a wide range of ideas which combine to give definition to the covenant demands and would have enabled Israel to understand the kind of life God expected of those who would live in fellowship with him. Jer. 4:1-2 discusses Israel's idolatry (💻✟🖫✡☠✞) and need for repentance (🖙✡✞) respectively. The call to 'return' (🖙✡✞) in ch.4 is sounded forth in connection with how it is accomplished, namely, in 'truth' (☪😐❝), 'justice' (👈✌✞😐), and 'righteousness' (✞☠✋🖫), terms which qualify the "swearing (🗣🖙✞👂) 'as Yahweh lives'". Stating such words - 'that Yahweh lived' - lacked integrity unless there was the proper corresponding moral reality providing substance to the very nature of who Yahweh is. Abandonment of idolatrous cults was therefore a necessity if a true repentance was to be practiced. These three concepts (truth, justice, and righteousness) are closely connected with 🖙✡✞ and thereby give every indication of what it is one is to turn to. If evil is to be turned away from, ☪😐❝,[283] 👈✌✞😐,[284] and ✞☠✋🖫,[285] all of which are terms of vast moral significance,

[282] These 'apostate sons' of ch.3 are to turn away from their 'abominations', or 'hateful idols' (💻✟🖫✡☠✞) according to 4:1. The actual verb that is used in being rid of these abominations is 🙅✟☛☪ ('put away/remove') from the root 🙅✡☛. J.A. Thompson says, 'The root *sur* ... is related semantically though not etymologically to *sub* ... there may be even something of a play on the two words' (*Jeremiah*, 212). When 🙅✡☛ is used as a hiphil as in 4:1, it can mean 'cause to turn aside' or 'apostatize'. In other words, Yahweh is stating to Israel 'apostatize from your apostasy'! They had formerly apostatized by leaving him, their covenantal husband. Now they are being called to a proper apostasy, namely leaving their new lovers (gods) in the same way as they left Yahweh and returning once again to their rightful husband, Yahweh himself. The double use of 🖙✡✞☪ from the root *sub* and the single use of 🙅✟☛☪ from the root *sur* all in v.1, combine to make a powerful plea for Israel to turn *from* apostasy *to* Yahweh, the object of the returning.

[283] The term ☪😐❝ is found one hundred and twenty-six times in the OT, a dozen or so of these times in the book of Jeremiah. ☪😐❝ is a noun derived from the verb ☝😐❝ which means 'to sustain' or 'to support'. In many passages it is coupled with ✋☛✞ ('steadfast love') as in Gen.32:11 (Eng.32:10) and Ps.25:10; 26:3, and 40:11. In Deut. 7:9 it appears as the adjectival, niphal, participle ☝😐❝👂, describing Yahweh as 'faithful' or something which can be 'confirmed'. It is a word which denotes an unchanging

well beyond the bounds of this thesis, are to be turned to. The international pronouncement of blessing in 4:2b, which so much resembles the Abrahamic call in Gen.12:1-3, indicates that Israel's repentance would serve a larger purpose that would bring glory to Yahweh and benefit the nations as a whole.

✍✡✞ in Jer.18:1-12

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reality which will prove to keep true in the future. In the OT ☪😐❝ is the very thing which determines God's nature. It is applied to God not in the sense of true God versus false God, but as a reliable, covenant-keeping God, as for instance, in Deut.32:4 where Yahweh the covenant God is described as having all the characteristics of 👈✌✞😐, ✞✈✡😐❝, and ✞👤✋🖫, his key moral expectations of Israel in Jer.4:2.

[284] 👈✌✞😐 is a strong covenantal term found thirty-five times in Deuteronomy, nearly double this amount in the Psalter, and some thirty times in Jeremiah. It is a term which expresses and regulates relationship in a specific society, and 'most occurrences appear in close association with justice and law' (Johannes G. Botterwick and Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (volume 9) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 87). Yahweh had entered into covenant with Israel thereby effecting a legal relationship in which 👈✌✞😐 was the outworking of this covenant. Yahweh, as the supreme Lord and judge and practitioner of 👈✌✞😐, regulated the social relationships of the people by 👈✌✞😐. The ability to discern good and evil is the ethical concreteness implied in the term 👈✌✞😐 when examined in contexts such as: 1 Kings 3:11 where Yahweh responds to Solomon's prayer, 'Thou has asked for the understanding to hear 👈✌✞😐'; and again in Micah 3:1-2, 'Is it not for you to know 👈✌✞😐, you who hate the good and love the evil?'. The ethical aspect may be clearly seen when the term 👈✌✞😐 is brought into relation to the poor and needy. In Deut.10:18 it is said of Yahweh that he is a God who creates 👈✌✞😐 for widows and orphans. The connection of love with action can be seen in the latter portion of the verse, 'and shows his love for the alien by giving him food and clothing'. The next verse is a charge to respond in a similar manner, 'So show your love for the alien' (10:19a), with the reason stated, 'for you were aliens in the land of Egypt' (10:19b). Thus, the experiental aspect of Israel's slavery in Egypt serves the purpose of assisting Israel to never forget what it means to be in a weaker position. For in this way, Hebrew society should not easily disregard widows, orphans, aliens, and the poor and needy. Hundreds of years of slavery was to be embedded in the national identity of this emerging people of Yahweh. As God executed justice for his enslaved people (Ex.2:24,25), so should his people now execute justice for the smaller echelons of oppressed persons in their society. In short, God is particularly concerned for those whose social and economic status make them most vulnerable in human affairs. Frankly, the exhortation to 👈✌✞😐 in Jer.4:2 was a reminder of the relationship responsibilities individuals had to the community. This could involve various relationships, such as religious leaders to the common people, the common people to one another, all the people to Yahweh, etc.

[285] The definition of ✞👤✋🖫 as 'righteousness' refers to 'straightness, hardness, firmness' and is something unmoveable similar to the meaning of ☪😐❝. 👤✋🖫 is such an important root, and so much discussed, that it would require a far more extensive discussion beyond the scope of this thesis. It appears in certain OT stories which involve social relation dynamics, and 'is closely related to righteousness in an interpersonal context', Willem A. VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis* (volume 3) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 754. Take for instance Gen.38:26, where Judah confesses that Tamar is 'more righteous' than himself because he failed in his community responsibility to her; or again in 1 Sam.24:18 (Eng.24:17) and 26:23 where David spared Saul's life on two occasions and was declared to be 'more righteous' because of his regard for social standards and human life. Also, Samaria and Sodom are called more righteous than Jerusalem simply because they have committed lesser sins (Ezek.16:52).

Another crucial use of the term נחם in the book of Jeremiah is to be found in ch.18. The lesson taught by Yahweh to Jeremiah at the house of the potter in ch.18 is that although Yahweh has unilateral power over Israel and the nations, as a potter does over a lump of clay, nevertheless, the action of Yahweh is not a foregone conclusion. Yahweh's act of pronouncing judgment, as is basically envisioned in much of the book of Jeremiah, is in direct relationship to human/national behavioral patterns. In Jer.18, specifically v.8, Yahweh is willing to respond to human responsiveness using the language of divine repentance (שוב) in relation to human repentance (נחם). The imagery employed emphasizes the complete power and control of Yahweh over his people and the nations, and yet his sovereignty is not exercised arbitrarily, but responsibly, and responsively, interacting with the moral and immoral actions of his people.[286] That there is opportunity at all for human נחם is suggestive that there is both approachability and openness in Yahweh. Clements says of Jer.18

> Human destiny is not a fixed unalterable future determined by God in advance of the reality of events ... it is intrinsic to the nature of the divine glory that God shares this process of decision-making with his creatures. He enables them to fulfill their necessary role of participation in the fulfilling of creation and the shaping of human history.[287]

Other commentators have of course offered suggestions as to the basic meaning of the narrative of the potter in Jer.18. Thompson highlights the freedom of Yahweh,[288] as we do here, and Jones highlights the choice of humans as just discussed, although such choice involves for Jones, consequences of life and death.[289] The emphasis for Jones is not so much on the complete power of Yahweh, as it is on the fact that Yahweh can scrap

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[286] See Walter Moberly, 'God is not a Human That He Should Repent (Num.23:19 and 1 Sam.15:29)' in Tod Linafelt and Timothy K. Beal (eds.), *God in the Fray: A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 112-123.

[287] R.E. Clements, *Jeremiah* (Interpretation) (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1988), 167. The element of surprise from Yahweh was always a possibility. For instance, Jeremiah's contemporary, Habakkuk, was told by Yahweh, 'Look among the nations! Be astonished!' (Hab.1:5). The context here is Babylonian aggression; but, hermeneutically, it serves as an example that Yahweh reserves the right to do what he wills, even if it is something which is surprising and unsettling. Jer.18 seems open to such a theology with its offering of repentance.

[288] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 432.

[289] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 255.

his plans and start again.[290] Bright has cautioned against seeing the passage as Yahweh committing to forcing Judah into his mold by determining a positive outcome for the nation regardless of what their response should be.[291] He appropriately highlights the idea that repentance on the part of Judah will provide hope and a chance for a future in the midst of the geo-political crisis.[292] Bright especially warns, rightly so, against undercutting the challenge of repentance by understanding the passage to be a statement of Yahweh causing his intended result to fashion Judah into what he wants without regard for Judah's actions.[293] Holladay's statement, that the narrative of the potter 'is a striking presentation of divine sovereignty and human freedom' with his two-fold interpretive emphasis being 1) the non-passivity of the clay (Judah), and 2) the possibility of the potter (Yahweh) changing his mind,[294] well formulates an important dynamic related to the term שׁוּב. That is, the idea of repentance in the passage, given character by שׁוּב for humans and נָחַם for Yahweh, is the primary concern. We therefore approach an interpretation of Jer.18:1-12 in what follows by continuing our analysis of שׁוּב keeping in mind that human and divine response is key to the narrative. To quote Holladay again in his own conclusive understanding of the narrative of the potter and the clay

> The balance has not always been kept between an awareness of God's will and an awareness of the difference that human response can make; but it has rarely been so nicely expressed as in this analogy with the work of the potter.[295]

It is hoped that, in line with Holladay's statement, the meaning of שׁוּב in Jer.18:1-12 can reinforce the tremendous moral challenge that the entire book of Jeremiah issues in calling for a genuine knowledge of Yahweh.

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[290] Ibid, 255.
[291] Bright, *Jeremiah*, 125.
[292] Ibid, 126.
[293] Ibid, 125. Bright has also contended for the narrative to be in autobiographical style (Bright, *Jeremiah*, 125), which has been contested by McKane who supports much of earlier scholarship that views vv.7-12 as a prose expansion of a Deuteronomic editor (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 424). Whatever the case, McKane well states that, 'The centre of exegetical concern should be (so Thiel) how the parts of vv.1-12 relate with each other, rather than whether the passage is Jeremianic or non-Jeremianic' (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 425).
[294] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 515.
[295] Ibid, 518.

In terms of interpretation of the passage, the imperative command (☺✡☠)[296] and the causative sense of the hifil of 👎😐✞ in v.2 lend urgency to the narrative and the eventual plea for repentance.[297] The lesson is to be learned at the house of the 'potter', the noun form of 🔨🖫📍 - which is the root used to speak of God as creator of man in Gen.2:7. The imagery is therefore vivid and profound of Yahweh as creator/fashioner/designer who has complete autonomy and power over a substance which is utterly dependent and subject to the maker.[298] The fact that this substance (clay in the story,[299] but really likened unto Israel etc.) can have any part in the action of the potter is amazing in itself, as much as it would appear radical and amazing for clay to speak up or take action to move a potter to fashion it in a particular way. It is Bright's view that the verbs of v.4 are iterative,[300] which seems to be the assumption in Kimchi's exegesis, 'The potter makes one vessel after another and the second does not resemble the first; so I am shaping for you evil after evil'.[301] Such a suggestion implies that on many occasions the clay was spoiled and the potter therefore remade the clay. Or to interpret the imagery, Yahweh has set a precedent

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[296] The imperative here is reminiscent of the beginning of Jonah chapters one and three, where such a command is issued. It shall be observed that the narrative of the potter has other similarities with the story of Jonah.

[297] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 515.

[298] The notion of Yahweh in complete control is typical of most commentators, for instance Brueggemann, who says, 'Jeremiah observes that the potter completely controls the clay ... Israel is completely in the control of Yahweh' (*Exile & Homecoming*, 167). For a slightly different perspective, see Willis who states, 'The freedom human beings and nations have to change, and Yahweh's will to change in keeping with the way humankind acts toward him, assume Yahweh is not in complete control of all activities. When the clay is spoiled in the potter's hand, either the potter is not doing his work adequately or the clay has flaws which prevent it from responding to the potter's touch. The context here indicates the problem is with the clay; but this could not be if God had total control. In light of this, it is clear that the Bible does not affirm that one criterion for determining whether a prophet (and/or his message) is true or false is whether his prediction of the future comes to pass. The fulfillment of a prophetic prediction depends on the human reaction to that prediction and on God's grace and mercy'; John T. Willis, 'The Repentance of God in the Books of Samuel, Jeremiah, and Jonah' in *Horizons in Biblical Theology* (HBT) (vol.16) (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: A Publication of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1994), 165.

[299] MT, Latin, and many manuscripts have 🔨😐✡➽ ('of clay'), whereas some manuscripts suggest 🔨😐✡✂ ('as clay'). The difference between the two is the type of material. Is it clay, or is it something else that may resemble clay? McKane prefers the former view, Bright prefers the latter; and many commentators minimize the discussion altogether. The term is missing in LXX. Holladay is the most extensive of all the commentators in actually describing the particulars of the ancient craft of the potter working on his potter's wheel, (Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 515).

[300] Although the LXX and Vulgate do not support this.

[301] Quoted from McKane, *Jeremiah*, 421.

in showing that he is willing to change his mind, and perhaps Israel has set a precedent in that they have consistently been disobedient.

The rhetorical question of v.6a, 'Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter?', addresses the nation thereby involving it in the imagery and continuing that which is a main them of the story - that Israel is indeed a player in their own fate. But initially, it appears that Yahweh alone controls the fate of the nations (vv.6b-7),[302] and that Israel and the nations could be completely subject to the arbitrary actions of Yahweh. Nonetheless, there is genuine concern on the part of Yahweh for Israel so that an invitation to repentance is about to be given in v.8. The mention of nations and kingdoms in vv.7-8 is, a la McKane, not a concern about Gentile destiny, but represents rather, a hypothetical case.[303] WBC sees the conditional scenarios of Jer.18:7-10 as not unlike that which is presented in the book of Jonah.[304] And Carroll, in what amounts to bringing these two thoughts by McKane and WBC together, states, 'Outside the world of the book of Jonah it (Jer.18:7ff.) represents only a theological abstraction',[305] and; the book of Jonah is a 'paradigm'.[306] That is to say, that as in the case of Jonah, where human repentance brought a positive divine response; so also for Jeremiah do we have a similar formulation by the imagery of the potter and the clay. Unfortunately, Carroll goes on to state that such 'repentance' (שוב) as is being offered by Yahweh is 'very mechanical ... and lacks any depth of content'.[307] Yet this is hardly the case in that the passage is clearly showing that שוב involves turning away from רעה (referred to in vv.8,10,11,12), and a definitive amending of deeds (v.11). Not only is שוב on the part of the nation not mechanical in Jeremiah's message, but נחם on the part of Yahweh is not mechanical. פתאם at the beginning of both v.7 and v.9 suggests that Yahweh is not on a whim, nor acting in robotic fashion, but that he is intimately involved with the reaction of the people, and that he might quickly revert a decision if conduct merits it. The meaning of פתאם as 'in a moment' or 'at an instant' demonstrates that Yahweh has a

[302] The language of v.7 connects back to the original call of Jeremiah as prophet in 1:10.
[303] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 421.
[304] WBC, *Jeremiah*, 242 and 245.
[305] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 372.
[306] Ibid, 373.

close watch on things. He is ready to act according to the actions of the nations, whether positive or negative.[308] The saving clause in v.8 is significant in opening up the possibility of repentance and escape from doom. The appeal to בית here is typical of the office of prophet with its emphasis on the amendment of life.

Verse 11 is the logical conclusion to the argument of vv.1-10 introduced by לכן (cf. Ex.19:5; Deut.4:1 where there is transition to the application), and calling for amendment of life (as in 7:3,5; 26:13) to correspond with בית as a reality. Yahweh commands Jeremiah to 'say' (אמר) words of warning and pleading to those of Judah and Jerusalem. Besides here, only in 13:18 does Yahweh command Jeremiah to אמר, but only here in 18:11 is the modal particle נא attached to אמר in the entire book of Jeremiah. The particle נא is also added after הבית in v.11. The double use of the modal particle suggests an emotional urgency and appeal on the part of Yahweh, as if Yahweh would be delighted to change his mind concerning the pessimistic fate of his people. Holladay suggests that the הנני in v.11 adds a sense of immediacy, that is, Yahweh is about to carry out his judgment, but it is not too late.[309] The fact that Yahweh is yet 'shaping' (יצר)[310] and devising his plan of calamity against them is indicative that there is still a chance.[311]

But does v.12 suggest otherwise, that there is no chance of a changed course of action? Carroll views the verse as a later addition, written to provide an explanation for 587

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[307] Ibid, 374.

[308] Fretheim's article makes a main point out of this. He has a special concern to show that Yahweh is consistent in his actions towards both Israel and the nations. He states, 'The point of the text is that God's actions towards Israel in these respects are not unique in the world. God does not treat Israel in a different way from anyone else; this is the pattern of God's ways with people everywhere'. Or again, 'Given the worldwide pattern of God's ways of working, Israel cannot bring God into court claiming unfair treatment'. Terence E. Fretheim, 'The Repentance of God: A Study of Jeremiah 18:7-10' in Hebrew Annual Review (HAR) (vol.11) (Columbus, Ohio: Published by the Ohio State University, 1987), 81-92.

[309] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 517.

[310] The verb form here is related to the noun form of 'potter' in vv.2-6 and thus is illustrative of the same sort of double use of יצר found in Jer.1:11-12. This, and the vocabulary of v.7 provide associations with Jer.1.

[311] So Fretheim, who claims, 'Israel's future is open-ended; the possibilities could be negative or positive', 'The Repentance of God' (*HAR*) (vol.11), 85.

BCE.[312] Holladay's 'tentative conclusion' is also that it was added later.[313] We beg to differ, or at least to say that the point of the verse is not to provide an explanation for the fall of Jerusalem, but rather that its purpose is purely (and powerfully) rhetorical. The flow of the passage leading to this point has been to initiate 'repentance'; and such a move as is made in v.12 is designed to provide an imaginative depiction of Judah's response. That is, by offering repentance, in which the intended purpose of the passage has been and still is to solicit such response, while also putting words in their mouths that they basically do not have what it takes to do what Yahweh is asking of them, is precisely a way to move Jeremiah's audience to appropriate action. Or, it could be to show why Jeremiah's ministry takes the form it does take - of heedlessness by the people leading to the overthrow of Jerusalem. There is related and important debate as to the first word of the verse, which in MT is ✡✍☺❝✡, understood to be a waw consecutive with a perfect and translated as 'But they will say' (future tense). But in LXX, Targums, and Syriac the first word is a waw consecutive with an imperfect (see BHS critical apparatus) thereby yielding the past tense translation, 'Then they said'. The difference is that the latter translation provides an historic response of the people, and the former translation puts the words in their mouths without actually having been uttered. Holladay rightly contends for the former translation, understanding the verb form to be waw consecutive with a perfect because earlier verbs in the passage are waw consecutives with perfects.[314] The fact that what they say, '✞❝✡✋' ('It is hopeless!'), is a participle in the passive nifal verb stem, all the more rhetorically reinforces the notion of the people as incapable of taking the proper action. We conclude ultimately, that the words of v.12 are a rhetorical imaginative depiction of Judah's response, which is self-determined because of a stubborn bad attitude to the preaching of the prophet. It serves, as did the question of v.6a, to raise the stakes of Israel's involvement in making a choice. The entire imagery of the narrative of the potter comes against an attitude of fatalism and determinism and calls Israel to consider their opportunity to ✁✡✞.

[312] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 374.
[313] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 517.
[314] Ibid, 517.

Summary

In sum, ✍✡✞ is a concept in Jeremiah, and for that matter the Hebrew prophets as a whole, in which it is only genuine when completely breaking from false modes of life and worship. It is something which Yahweh is willing to respond to appropriately and responsibly, yet there are serious consequences when his appeal to ✍✡✞ is ignored. A departure of iniquity and idolatry comes into full focus when there is ✍✡✞. When there is ✍✡✞ there is also the highest community and covenantal standards of ☪😐❝, 👈✌✞😐, and ✞💀✋🖫. Anything less than this is 🤌💀✞, not ✍✡✞. In the next chapter, we will look at how 🤌💀✞ and ✍✡✞ may be understood in the narrative of Jer.14:1-15:9.

CHAPTER 5: THE DROUGHT (14:1-15:9)

Irony in Jer.14:1-15:9

In the previous chapters we have had an investigation into a number of key Jeremianic moral terms; namely: 🗣✋✝, 🤌💀✞, and ✍✡✞. In this section of the thesis we shall see how these terms may be inter-related in a particular passage; specifically, Jer.14:1-15:9. There are similar concerns of falsehood in prophecy found in Jer.14, the topic of this chapter of the thesis, when compared with the messages to the prophets as shall be seen in Jer.23.[315] There are especially similarities between 23:17 and 14:13 where ☺✡☹✞ is proclaimed, and 23:14,25,26,32 and 14:14 where there is an indictment for 🤌💀✞. Also,

14:14 is comparable to 23:16 where the mode of divine revelation and communication is challenged. The list of similarities can be extended to include Yahweh's declaration of having not sent (✡☹✞) or spoken (✍➱✋) to the prophets (14:14; 23:21).

Interpretive options and counter-liturgy

Jeremiah appears here in the larger context of ch.14 as a cult prophet with a liturgy in a time of national emergency, the occasion being a drought. It would be hoped and expected that Jeremiah would produce a Heilsorakel during this time of crisis. However, as it will be shown, the liturgy that Jeremiah brings has an ironic twist, as irony is to be found in other elements of the pericope as well. This chapter will attempt to explore how irony, among other surprises, is employed in Jer.14 concerning the problem of false prophecy.

Various interpretive options for Jer.14 have been offered. For some commentators, the passage consists of a number of independent strands including 14:1-9, 14:10-16, and 14:17-15:9.[316] What we have therefore are a mixed collection of oracles which have been brought together by editors as a result of some sort of internecine strife. For Carroll especially, with whom we disagree here, the attack on the prophets who preach ☺✡☹✞ (v.13) has nothing to do with the drought of vv.2-9, but rather is a way in which the prophets can be blamed for their part in the nation's downfall so that the prophetic institution might be discredited.[317] In other words, vv.13-16 are a part of an anti-prophetic polemic which reflects feuding factions in the community of a later period in a similar way which Zech.13:2-6 might. Brueggemann identifies the communal strife as specifically revolving around an attack against 'a religion of easy assurances'.[318] Such internecine strife is always a possibility in the redaction of the book of Jeremiah, but such a view does not necessitate that Jer.14 must consist of independent oracles that have been brought together, as some of the other interpretive options demonstrate. For instance,

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[315] The topic of chapter seven of the thesis.
[316] So Brueggemann, Carroll, and John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion, Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1922).
[317] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 314.
[318] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 138.

Holladay, Eissfeldt,[319] and Rudolph[320] understand the prophetic polemic not to be independent of the drought, but rather they contend that there are enough parallels and similarities from 14:2 to 15:9 to assume a unity. They argue that as the nation is prepared to hear a Heilsorakel in liturgical form, the nation instead receives an imitation or counter-liturgy which operates as a vehicle for judgment. Also, D.R. Jones contends that the sequence for ch.14:1-15:9 conforms to a ritual of a fast-day caused by the drought in Judea. 14:12 specifically uses the verb ☺✡🖫('fast'); its only occurrence in the book of Jeremiah.[321] The fast of Jer.14:12 would serve as reinforcement of the prayer of the people for relief from the drought. The petition of the prophet along with the expected Heilsorakel to follow would serve a similar purpose.[322] A counter-liturgy from Jeremiah (Holladay, Eissfeldt, Rudolph) introduces an irony which specifically indicts the people for failure to keep covenant. Also, it will be argued, the problem of prophets of 🖏☠✞(v.14) does not eliminate responsibility from the people to do right. The argument thus far is about original unity, whereas our primary concern is achieved/received unity - which can of course remain open regarding original unity.

Structure of Jer.14:1-15:9

Verses 1-10 are a poetic oracle about a drought with vv.7-9 set as a community first person plural lament. The section containing 14:17-15:9 anticipates invasion by a foreign nation in terms of Yahweh's rejection of Jerusalem, which is of great concern in this section in Jeremiah.[323] Drought is caused by sin (14:1-10), and most likely, so is invasion by a foreign nation (14:17-15:9).[324] Between 14:1-10 and 14:17-15:9 is a prose section set out as a dialogue in the Deuteronomic style[325] (14:11-16). 14:10-12 consists

[319] Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 356.
[320] Rudolph, *Jeremia* (HAT 12) (Tübingen: Mohr, 1968), 34.
[321] The related noun form is found in 36:6,9 demonstrating that there were indeed national gatherings for fasts in times of emergency during Jeremiah's day. The fourth year of Jehoiakim (36:1) would certainly have provided such a context because of the battle of Carchemish that year.
[322] Ps.12:5; 60:6-8 are examples of laments which embody oracles of assurance.
[323] Brueggemann structures vv.1-10 and 17-22 as lament speeches which surround and are related to the problem of 🖏☠✞ in vv.11-16. Thus the 🖏☠✞ prophets have given rise to the community laments, and is indeed, the central issue of the section.
[324] In fact, the seeming irrelevance of a drought in time of military disaster demonstrates that Yahweh, who can and will turn away from intercession in that particular historic difficulty (v.12), will do the same when the very life of the nation is threatened by aggressive foreign domination.
[325] So McKane, Jones, and Winfried Thiel, *Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jer 1-25* (WMANT 41) (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1973). Weippert disagrees, thinking that vv.11-16 are original to Jeremiah as

of divine statements against the nation, 14:13 is Jeremiah's questioning Yahweh about the prophets, 14:14-15 are divine statements against the prophets, and 14:16 are divine statements against the nation.[326] Also as concerns structure, intensification, or a sense of literary heightening, can be seen throughout ch.14 and on into ch.15. For example, the drought of 14:2-6 leads to both sword and famine in 14:17-18. The concern for prophets in 14:13-16 increases to a concern for both priest and prophet (14:18). A confession of sins of the present generation (14:7) expands to sins of past generations (14:20). The 'we' voice of community lament appears again in 14:19-22. The prohibition on Jeremiah not to intercede in 14:11 enlarges to the place that even the great intercessors of Israel's past, namely Moses and Samuel, could not change the judgment course of action (15:1). The pattern of 14:11 has repeated itself again in 15:1 where Yahweh has categorically and emphatically responded with a rejection of the confession. What follows in vv.2-4 is complete dismissal and rejection and a statement of lack of pity where no one will care about Jerusalem's plight (vv.5-9). Jeremiah's confession starting at 15:10 is a reluctance to have to speak of Yahweh's rejection and the horror upon horror that will come (14:18;15:17). The unit therefore, although initially concerned with a drought, reveals that the real concern is Yahweh's refusal to accept the people's repentance.

Exposition of Jer.14:1-15:9

The vivid description of the drought (vv.2-6) leads to two surprises in what follows. The first surprise is that the community lament of vv.7-9 contains a confession of sin, which, although found in individual laments such as Ps.51:7, are not readily found in communal lament psalms. This extra effort of penitential expression by the Judean community would seem to lend even more readily to an expectation of prophetic Heilsorakel - for the nature of the overall language in vv.7-9 is extremely moving (e.g. sorrow, shame, despair, etc.). But what follows instead is the response of a judgment oracle (vv.10-12). The confession apparently has not helped Judah's plight. Furthermore, the latter part of v.9 attempts to prod and praise Yahweh with statements of his majesty and affirmations

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they are written as a first person account; Helga Weippert, *Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches* (BZAW 132) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973).

[326] Jer.14:10-16 has the following chiastic pattern: nation (vv.10-12), prophets (v.13), prophets (vv.14-15), nation (v.16).

of his continued abiding presence. Holladay understands it as an act of desperation.[327] McKane suggests, and then rejects that it is Zion theology. However, he does advance the notion that Judah is expressing to Yahweh that he should act on behalf of his own reputation, which has some resonance with Zion theology.[328] Thompson views it more as a self-inflicted sense of estrangement brought on by Judah's own neglect of Yahweh; although there is no corresponding reality of shame and guilt to accompany their words.[329] For Jones, the people are 'putting the Lord to the test'.[330] Brueggemann states more poignantly what both Jones and Thompson seem to be thinking about the last portion of the prayer in v.9. He, most likely, and as we have just previously mentioned, rightly sees it as 'an attempt to prod Yahweh'.[331] That is, it is indeed a form of manipulation. In like manner Brueggemann also states

> Notice how the prayer, which opens in an act of trust, is also an insinuation that Yahweh has not been fully effective. While there is an admission of guilt, the focus is placed on what is expected of Yahweh ... The prayer is a statement of boldness that addresses a rather demanding expectation to Yahweh.[332]

Also according to Brueggemann, 'This kind of speech to God is a motivation in the lament form. Its function is to require of Yahweh what is expected of Yahweh.'[333] In other words, if Yahweh is really in the midst of Judah, then Judah should experience rain. The expectant answer from Yahweh that comes, is not the one normally anticipated. The surprise of vv.10-12, the second surprise of the passage, is that Israel, who has subtly charged Yahweh with inaction during a time of national emergency (vv.8-9),[334] is herself indicted by Yahweh in a legal sense.[335] This includes: accusation by Yahweh (v.10), verdict through the voice of Jeremiah (v.11), and punishment through the voices of both Yahweh and Jeremiah (vv.12-16). Carroll, who states that v.10 'has nothing to do with a

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[327] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 434.
[328] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 320.
[329] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 381.
[330] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 208.
[331] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 135.
[332] Ibid, 135-136.
[333] Ibid, 136.
[334] Carroll's view on v.9 is that it is a community appeal to its god in a time of disaster (Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 311); which suggests that interest in the deity is neglected during routine times.
[335] So Brueggemann, 'a clearly structured lawsuit', 136, and Holladay, who says it is 'juridical', 425. However, it does not become a full-blown prophetic ריב as in Mic.6:1-8.

drought',[336] not only ignores Israel on trial, but rather chooses to place Yahweh on trial by stating that, 'The deity behaves in a churlish manner, berates the community and ignores their sincere confession'.[337] This is because the editor has developed, according to him, a 'theodicy which will acquit the deity of viciousness whilst justifying inordinate cruelty.'[338] However, the response of Yahweh in v.10, beginning with כֹּה, 'which normally points to what has just been said,'[339] connects Yahweh's statement with the preceding verses. Contrary to Carroll, therefore, and contrary to the appearance of vv.7-9, the confession of vv.7-9 lacks for something genuine, and Yahweh's response in v.10 is connected to this insincerity. Carroll makes a critical move by equating 'sincere-sounding' with 'sincere'. The problem of drought has been lamented, but an unexpected response has followed. Most certainly Yahweh appears unimpressed with Judah's words as he chides her for being the real wanderer (v.10), the very thing in which Judah accused Yahweh (v.8). An acceptable confession here could only be marked by a change in behavior. The verb Yahweh uses to describe Judah in his accusation, נָדְדוּ (v.10), refers to an oscillating motion as in trees swaying in the breeze (Judg.9:9), or the staggering of a drunk (Isa.29:9).

The prayer of the community leading to 14:8-9 has moved towards blaming Yahweh of being a stranger, a sojourner, a man confused who has become like a helpless giant. The return accusation of v.10, along with the verdict of Yahweh's lawsuit in v.11, has marginalized any judgment against him, so as to show Judah as the true guilty party. In fact, so strong is the indictment that one could imagine Yahweh bringing the gavel down in a manner which pronounces the case is closed. He will hear no more from Judah on the matter. For him, there is simply nothing more to talk about concerning the subject. He is, in effect, withdrawing from the conversation.[340] Yahweh will accept no intercession from Jeremiah (v.11), a rhetorical response of his own to counteract the

[336] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 312.
[337] Ibid, 312.
[338] Ibid, 312-313. Clements is in agreement with understanding this passage as theodicy (*Jeremiah*, 92).
[339] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 434.
[340] The similar prohibition of 7:16 also is set in a very public context, so that whether Judah gathers at the temple for religious worship (the context of ch.7), or gathers for a community lament or fast-ritual (the context of ch.14), Yahweh demands something far beyond the external gatherings of praise and prayer.

accusatory rhetoric of the community (vv.8-9). He does not want words or excuses, but a certain kind of action that departs from sin and iniquity (v.10). The call to Jeremiah *not* to take action (i.e. intercession), is, therefore, precisely a call to the people *to* take action (i.e. forsaking sin and iniquity, v.10). Right and wrong matter on the part of the people in so much as their actions speak louder than their words of lamentation. Note for instance that in 15:7 Yahweh has determined that there is no real ✡ in spite of all the words of communal lament (14:7-9;19-22). In fact, not only is ✡ lacking, but also a certain amount of ✝ (14:18), terms integral to the larger thesis being argued here. Also, the twice used statement, 'Yahweh does not/will not accept them (✍,vv.10,12)', is itself a certain kind of rhetoric similar to the idea of forbidden prayer in v.11. That is, the notion that both prayer and people are not accepted, could be designed to promote proper response from the people.[341]

By v.12 the sentencing of Yahweh has expanded beyond the issue of the drought to an even more serious notion of survival which catalogues death curses, including military disaster, food shortages, and pestilence. The trilogy of fasting, prayer, and offerings could not counteract, and perhaps in this context, even brought on the trilogy of judgments: sword, famine, and plague. There is added irony to the overall passage in that the very judgments the prophets dismissed from the people would indeed be their own fate.

Jeremiah then abruptly directs the topic of conversation to the prophets who speak ✡ (v.13). For Carroll, this is merely 'an independent strand in the composition',[342] thus minimalizing the impact of Jeremiah's statement. For Jones, Jeremiah makes an allusion to what the prophets might have said at that particular moment, which certainly

[341] Clements maintains, according to a view of internecine strife, that Jeremiah being forbidden to intercede alleviates him from any responsibility for the fallen nation, and thus he is dismissed from the charge of being a failure as a prophet (*Jeremiah*, 94). It is the contention of this author however, that even later Jewish communities (exilic and beyond) are primarily concerned with the prophetic task of initiating proper response from the covenant people. Therefore, although the material in Jeremiah may be attempting somewhat to vindicate the prophet's role during the Babylonian crisis, the primary concern is an explanation that covenant failure and disobedience leads to tragic results, not only in the past, but in the present as well.

[342] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 314.

would have been along the lines of a Heilsorakel.[343] Brueggemann seems to think that Jeremiah is struggling with the possibility of the veracity of the prophets' message. He states that 'Jeremiah is plagued by the presence of other credible prophetic voices in the community who perceived reality very differently'.[344] According to Holladay, the response of Jeremiah in v.13 is a plea for extension.[345] McKane understands the verse actually to be a refusal of Jeremiah to accept Yahweh's verdict in vv.11-12.[346] This may be true. However, Jeremiah is also observing the inconsistency of the ☺✡☹✞ prophets' message when compared with the judgment word of Yahweh because he certainly has personal issues when it comes to the prophets. It seems best to understand that what Jeremiah wants is an explanation for the confusion. He shows concern that the ☺✡☹✞ prophets share responsibility for their guilt in the matter, a concern to which Yahweh will immediately respond (vv.14-15). Although Jeremiah questions the message of these prophets (v.13), or could himself be puzzled by the discrepancy between v.12 and what his contemporaries generally were saying, it is Yahweh who accuses them of ✍☠✞ here (v.14), not Jeremiah. An even stronger negative statement from Yahweh directed toward the prophets of ✍☠✞ ensues in vv.15-16. Jeremiah's shift in the conversation to a questioning of the prophets with the words ✞✡✞✦ ✦☝✋❝ ✞✞❝ (v.13) is similar to his sincere questioning at the outset of his prophetic calling (1:6). It is of particular interest and importance, that Jeremiah brings up the issue of prophets, not Yahweh. One might wonder that if Jeremiah had not brought up the issue of the prophets, Yahweh would have made no mention of them here. In other words, the prophets who preached ☺✡☹✞ were not an issue in the context of this drought until Jeremiah made it an issue using Yahweh's verdict of sword, famine, and pestilence (v.12) as a springboard. Therefore, it would seem, the people may share responsibility for determining the veracity of the prophetic voices so that Yahweh will in no way remove them from accountability on the issue. In fact, the people are as severely punished for their errant ways (v.16) as the ☺✡☹✞ prophets are (v.15). At any rate, the message of vv.14-16 is

[343] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 210.
[344] Brueggemann, *Jeremiah*, 137.
[345] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 434. If Holladay is right, one could then imagine that Jeremiah, who has just been forbidden to offer intercession (v.11), has taken an alternative approach to defend the people by finger-pointing at the prophets (v.13).

specifically assurance to Jeremiah himself, and functions for others only in the light of this.

Yahweh's response to Jeremiah's questioning is that ✍☠✞ is what the prophets are prophesying in his name (v.14), most certainly a reference to their message of peace when the reality is warfare. The Hebrew word order places great emphasis on ✍☠✞ by starting the sentence with the term, as opposed to the more standard verb, subject, object syntactical approach. These are prophets that Yahweh did not ☼☹✞, ✞✡🖫, or ✍🤝✋ (v.14), a triad of terms of authenticity. To be 'sent' (☼☹✞) resonates with Mosaic calling (Ex.3:13-14), is of concern in 23:21, and is a characterization of Jeremiah's own call as recorded in 1:7. To be 'sent' as Jeremiah is would mean true prophetic status revolves around indicting Judah for its wickedness, idolatry, and forsaking of Yahweh (1:16). Yahweh has not sent these prophets because their message is rather opposite of Jeremiah who *is* sent by Yahweh (1:7). Also, these are prophets that Yahweh did not 'command' (✞✡🖫, v.14), even as Jeremiah has been 'commanded' (again, cf.1:7). There are two other occasions of prophets not being 'commanded' by Yahweh in Jeremiah, both also in a similar context of prophetic conflict (23:32; 29:23), and both which might reflect Deuteronomistic notions as found in Deut.18:20. ✍🤝✋, like ☼☹✞, might also have reference to a genuine call of Yahweh because of Moses as the archetype prophet with whom Yahweh 'spoke face to face' (Ex.33:11). The mode of communication of these ✍☠✞ prophets is an alternative and unacceptable form of prophetic revelation that the people are apparently responsible to identify.[347] That is, the people are categorized in such a way as to be in league with the falsehood of the prophets. They receive similar punishment (vv.15-16). The rhetoric implies that the people are as guilty as the prophets. The description of the falsehood of the prophets words is a listing of metaphoric synonyms for emptiness. ✍☠✞ ☝✡❄☼ (v.14) begins the rhythm and often refers to visionary revelation, sometimes set parallel to 'dream', but can also describe auditory revelation (Ezek.12:21-28; 13:16). It is found only twice in Jeremiah (14:14; 23:16), and in both cases the term is used to refer to false revelation.

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[346] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 325.

[347] Although this passage is not as concerned with criteria for prophetic veracity in the same way as 23:9ff.

☹✡☹❝✡[348] ☺☞☠✡, which follows, repeats the image of emptiness. This is the only occurrence of ☺☞☠✡ in Jeremiah. The word is used only once in the OT in a positive sense (Ps.96:5); otherwise it has a sense of forbidden religious practices (Deut.18:10; 2 Kgs.17:17). McKane cites Kimchi who cites Rashbam that the intention here is to disallow a science of ☺☞☠, an unlikely interpretation. Forms of ☹✡☹❝ can connote idolatry (1 Chron.16:26) and pagan gods (Lev.19:4; Ps.96:5; Hab.2:18). And of course, the deceit of the heart (☺☜☹ ✡☺✍✡) is a prevalent Jeremianic theme which has associations with ✍☠✞.

The oscillation of the people as identified in v.10 is not an oscillation from fasting, praying, and the sacrificial system - for these things the people do (v.12). The problem is the wandering and lack of restraint, most likely related to the Mosaic Law, which has resulted in sin and iniquity (v.10).[349] Thus, the tragic fate of the ✍☠✞ prophets (v.15) is to become the same fate of the people (v.16). But also, insult is added to injury because the final and supreme indignity is their lack of burial. Yahweh is upset with the ✍☠✞ prophets, who shall suffer great loss, but it is the judgment on the people that has greater force. Not only will they lack a proper funeral but the annihilation is so great that there

[348] BHS notes in the text critical apparatus that the second vav in this word is understood by the Ketib as a shureq vowel and also that the term is to be read as ☹✝☹❝. As it stands in the MT, the second vav of ☹✡☹❝✡ appears as a consonant without the typically required vowel. Replacing the second vav with a yod makes the hireq vowel under the lamed a plene vowel. Even though the etymology of ☹✝☹❝ is uncertain, it does suggest the meaning of 'worthlessness' or 'insufficiency' and serves as an attributive adjective to ☺☞☠.

[349] Brueggemann takes the approach that in Jer.14 Yahweh is unfettering himself from any established mode of life which claims his unqualified support. That is, the recognition of the veracity of Jeremiah as true prophet by the canon-making community affords God a freedom, such as that which was exercised in his rejection of Jerusalem during the Babylonian crisis. This appears to make Yahweh's rejection of Jerusalem somewhat whimsical, whereas Israel's failure to keep covenant would appear to be the better option. The falsehood of Jer.14:14 was in claiming that God would not take harsh action, especially when disobedience was prevalant. Rather than seeing God as breaking away from Israel because he has changed his mind about them, God is actually all the more committed to his self-revelation, which in a certain sense, concerned the Mosaic covenant. Ultimately, there are proper patterns of life and speech acceptable to Yahweh, and contrarily, there are modes of life and speech that cannot co-exist in harmony with Yahweh's nature and character. The lament of the people in this chapter is rejected by Yahweh because apparently people and prophet are both playing at the concept of any genuine repentance by speaking words which have no reality in manifest action.

are no survivors left to do any burying (v.16). The final statement of the prose section is climactic, 'I will pour out[350] on them their evil' (v.16).

Summary

Overall, Jer.14:13-16 is introducing in an influential way the larger issue of false prophecy in the book of Jeremiah. The use of irony, especially the counter-liturgy in the motif of judgment during a public fast-ritual, is set in the Deuteronomic tradition in light of the threat of Babylonian aggression. The canon-makers have shown that true prophecy might speak the unexpected, or the opposite of the status-quo. The larger section that Jer.14:13-16 is set within, specifically 14:1-15:9, uses literary heightening to build some drama as there is movement from drought to the ultimate catastrophe of Babylonian military hostility. A description of the drought, which introduces the larger section, is followed by a rare confession of sin in a community lament, which is followed by the ironic judgment oracle in place of a Heilsorakel. Ultimately, the charge against Yahweh for inaction during the drought reverses to a legal indictment against Judah for sin and iniquity. The anti-intercession rhetoric of Yahweh is designed precisely to provoke the kind of response that moves away from sin and iniquity towards proper covenant obedience. The ☺✡☹✞ prophets do not become an issue in the unfolding narrative until Jeremiah makes them one, and, even so, Yahweh will not excuse the people from accountability. The fate of the prophets will be, ironically, reception of the very judgments they dismissed from the people. The fate of the people is similar, but includes annihilation and the shame of no burial.

[350] From the root word 💻✌✞. This is the only place in the OT where 💻✌✞ takes ✞👂✍ as its object. One would hope for a more positive connotation to go along with the 'pouring out' that 💻✌✞ embodies. Therefore, in this last climactic statement of the prose section of this passage, a certain sense of irony is employed. Compare for instance the use of 💻✌✞ in Joel 3:1-2 (Eng.2:28-29), where, also in a context of agricultural devastation, what is 'poured out' is the ✡✡✍ of Yahweh. The verb 💻✌✞ is closely related to the noun ✞✂✌✞, which happens to be found only in Deut.23:2 (Eng.23:1) in the OT and is translated as 'male organ'. Therefore, the Joel passage might be using 💻✌✞ in a kind of sexual imagery which suggests that the 'pouring out' of Yahweh's Spirit is as the pouring out of male seed so as to produce life out of a barren situation (i.e agricultural devastation). The covenant context between God and Israel in both Joel and Jeremiah makes the sexual imagery even more intimate and appropriate while simultaneously opposing corrupt Canaanite fertility practices.

We have thus far encountered key terms for understanding knowledge of Yahweh in the book of Jeremiah, and have seen how some of these terms are used in Jer.14:1-15:9 where the concern of false prophecy is elevated. We now turn to our primary investigation which explores knowledge of Yahweh in Jer.21-29. We begin with the messages to the Judean kings in 21:1-23:8.

CHAPTER 6: MESSAGES TO THE JUDEAN KINGS (21:1-23:8)

Introduction to the kingly cycle, the address to Zedekiah, and a test of Jeremiah's prophetic veracity

Jer.22:15-16, our key text on knowledge of Yahweh, is set within an oracle to king Jehoiakim, which itself is set within the larger context of messages to various Judean kings from 21:1-23:8. The structure of the unit might look something like this

21:1-10 Address to Zedekiah
21:11-22:9 Indictments against anonymous Judean kings
22:10-22:30 Oracles against specific Davidic kings
-22:10-12 Shallum
-22:13-23 Jehoiakim
-22:24-30 Jehoiachin
23:1-8 Shepherds of Israel and the Davidic hope

The issue of what it means to know Yahweh in 22:16 is given content not merely by the address to Jehoiakim, but also by the series of addresses to the Davidic kings. While analyzing these oracles to the house of David we will do a careful investigation of the Jehoiakim oracle, including ידע in v.16 where Yahweh is the direct object of the knowing. It is our contention that in these oracles are challenges to the Davidic kings not to suffer the coming fate of the city of Jerusalem, but that indeed, the fate of the city is in many ways dependent upon the response of the kings. A proper response which relates to a true knowledge of Yahweh could yet yield a good result. Appropriate ways of living by the Davidic house would result in a benefit for all.

The scholarly discussion of the placement of the specific address to Zedekiah in ch.21, which is the first of the Judean kings cycle, has been approached by relating it either to what precedes or what follows it. An approach which explains the Zedekiah prose portion (specifically 21:1-10) as connected to preceding material reasons that the placement after ch.20 is linked by the name Pashhur (20:1; 21:1). Although these are different persons, the name itself provides an associative link by which to place the chapters side by side. The other approach is that the Zedekiah conversation is connected to the material which follows (21:11-23:8) - material which sharply rebukes the leadership of the house of David. We take a more holistic view by combining the two approaches. However, the connection with preceding material in ch.20 is perhaps not linked only by the name Pashhur, but also by the importance of Jeremiah's last confession (20:7ff.),[351] a confession which might indicate a climactic challenge to Jeremiah's prophetic veracity. That is, if Jeremiah can come through here as a prophet of

[351] These confessions have their own unique history of interpretation ranging from being private prayers, to being corporate psalms of lament which occupied a place in the regular worship of Israel. What is certain is that these confessions have made their way into the canonical, and therefore essentially, the public literature of the nation. Baumgartner attempted to expound the relationship of the confessions to the psalms of lament, believing that Jeremiah used a variety of form-critical categories. In this way, the confessions can remain essentially the prayers of the prophet, while incorporating the nation. W. Baumgartner, *Jeremiah's Poems of Lament* (Sheffield, England: Almond, 1988), 41, 79. Reventlow had a different view, arguing that the confessions are utterances made for, and on behalf of, the community of cultic prophets. H.G. Reventlow, *Liturgie und Prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gütersloh, Mohn, 1963), 7-11. Mauser revived the individuality of the prophet by demonstrating that the prophet reflects the state of mind of Yahweh. He argued directly against Reventlow, wanting to show that any cultic elements of the confessions do not diminish the individuality and experiential aspect of them. U. Mauser, *Gottesbild und Menschwerdung* (Tübingen, Mohr, 1971), 53.

genuine character, conduct, and attitude, then he most certainly has a right to appear before the Judean kings in the cycle that follows (21:1-23:8).

Although there has been much discussion on 20:7, which is the introduction to the final complaint, the approach taken here is that Jeremiah is treated like, and even feels like a false prophet. The inquiry of Zedekiah in 21:1-2 therefore, is placed following Jeremiah's lament of his birth and prophetic calling precisely to examine whether or not Jeremiah has given up on his prophetic vocation and his preaching of impending disaster to Jerusalem and the house of David. The answer is an obvious 'no', Jeremiah will not change to a ☺✡☹✞ prophet.

The meaning of ✞☪✌ in Jer.20:7

Much depends upon the meaning of ✞☪✌, which is the starting point of the final complaint in 20:7, and so we insert a brief, parenthetical discussion of the term and the challenge to Jeremiah within the context of our larger discussion on Jer.21:1-23:8. Interpretations which suggest a sexual[352] sort of connotation for ✞☪✌ here as an allurement to seduction may do so because ✞☪✌ is used in such a sense elsewhere in the OT (e.g. Ex.22:16 [Eng.v.15]; Judg.14:15, 16:5). However, such interpretations may fail to recognize its use in prophetic passages.[353] It is in the piel stem in Jer.20:7 as it is in a number of other passages (Ex.22:16 [Eng.v.15]; Judg.14:15, 16:5; 2 Sam.3:25; Hos.2:16 [Eng.v.14]; Ps.78:36; Prov.1:10, 16:29, 24:28). But we are especially concerned with 1 Kgs.22:20-23 and Ezek.14:9 because they are similar prophetic passages which employ ✞☪✌ in the piel stem. The narrative in 1 Kgs.22 uses ✞☪✌, not with a sexual overtone, but to show that Ahab is simple-minded and foolish, easily put upon by others, deceived

[352] Heschel translated Jer.20:7 as 'O lord thou hast seduced me and I am seduced, thou hast raped me and I am overcome', Heschel, *The Prophets*, 113. Thompson agrees with Heschel's interpretation (Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 459). However, McKane opposes this sexual interpretation and notes that 'Neither Rashi nor Kimchi gives any indication that they are aware of the figure of a deceived and violated virgin in v.7a' (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 469).

[353] Brueggemann for example has determined that ✞☪✌ in Jer.20:7 brings us 'in a world of sexual abuse and violence, so that the term allows for the nuance of rape' (Brueggemann, *Theology of the OT*, 360). But his primary references to ✞☪✌ come from law, history, and poetry rather than prophecy.

by false prophets.[354] In Ezek.14 the idolatrous seeker of a prophetic word from Yahweh is warned that if their method of inquiry of a prophet is ✞☪✌, the response of Yahweh will also be ✞☪✌ through that prophet (v.9). In other words, the prophet who allows himself to be deceived by the people will be allowed by Yahweh to continue in his deception until judgment comes upon both prophet and people. Jeremiah's own feeling of having experienced ✞☪✌ by Yahweh (20:7) may be a complaint against this kind of Yahwistic response to idolatrous or self-seeking inquiries for a prophetic word, especially as Ezek.14 appears to be concerned with prophets who oblige the seeker who might shop around in hope of receiving an agreeable message. Jeremiah is therefore not feeling like the victim of a sexual predator in 20:7, but more like a puppet of Yahweh who is known to use a prophet in an almost mocking manner. He objects to being treated like a false prophet by both Yahweh and his people. The people ridicule and mock Jeremiah continuously because his words are predictable - nothing but woe (20:7b-8); and as far as Jeremiah is concerned, it is Yahweh who is responsible for putting him in such a predicament (20:7a,9). Jeremiah is caught in a vicious circle. When he speaks he can only speak of judgment, which is received in jest. When he tries to remain silent he is prevailed upon by Yahweh to utter more of the same, which is once again received with ridicule.

1 Kgs.22, Ezek.14, and Jer.21 are similar in that they are passages which provide a context of elders or kings 'inquiring' (✞✍✋ is used in all three passages: 1 Kgs.22:5,8; Ezek.14:7; Jer.21:2) for a prophetic word. What all three contexts share is a sense of self-seeking or idolatry on the part of the inquirer: Ahab is interested in land claims (1 Kgs.22:3, cf. 1 Kgs.21), elders of Israel had set up idols in their hearts (Ezek.14:1-7), and Zedekiah's approach of a polite appeal is more than likely intended to induce Jeremiah, the struggling prophet according to the last confession, to change his mind (Jer.21:2). Thus the material of Jer.21:1-10 might be connected to the last confession as a test of Jeremiah's prophetic veracity. He passes this test by holding fast to his message of

[354] Much in the same way as Hosea portrays Israel as a dove (Hos.7:11). I owe my thoughts about ✞☪✌ in 1 Kgs.22 to an unpublished paper by Walter Moberly, University of Durham.

judgment against Zedekiah and the city and by refraining from a sought after ☺✡☹✞ message.

Jeremiah continues in his prophetic stance

We return to our main discussion. One might think that such a polite appeal by Zedekiah to the 'wonderful deeds' (21:2) of Yahweh would initiate a positive response. Indeed the opposite happens, Yahweh's determination has not changed according to Jeremiah. When Zedekiah appeals to the aggressive warfare of the Babylonians (v.2) the response of Yahweh through Jeremiah is that it is Zedekiah who is warring (v.4) and that Yahweh himself is going to go to war against him (v.5). Not only will Yahweh not bring deliverance, but he is going to fight on the opposite side, a fight that is against both Zedekiah and the entire city.[355] The repetitive mention of 'this city' in vv.4,6,7,9,10 is a pejorative usage, for the city is under the judgment of Yahweh. Yahweh will not disperse Babylonian soldiers as requested, but will actually gather them from outside the wall of the city and personally bring them into the city center as an occupying army (v.4). The terminology of v.5 is reminiscent of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, but the 'outstretched hand and mighty arm' is now used to show that the 'wonderful deeds' of Yahweh (v.2) are turned against Judah rather than in favor of Judah. An extended vocabulary piles up ('anger, wrath, great rage'). The warfare will be even more intensified so as to include man and beast (v.6) and the typical total warfare reality of pestilence, sword, and famine (v.7). But there is more. Following such conventional recital of warfare curses Yahweh turns the survivors of the city over to Nebuchadnezzar and a variety of enemies for further cruelties (v.7). Verses 1-7 might therefore be understood as Yahweh responding to a request for relief from the Babylonian siege with the harsher reality that it is he who wars against Jerusalem, and that whatever is leftover when he is done with the city, the invading army will devastate so as to complete the job. Also, Jeremiah has not changed his prophetic stance.

The contour of the passage shifts at v.8 when the object of the address changes from Zedekiah to the people. The fate of the city remains unchanged, but there is a chance for

survival for the people stated in Deuteronomic covenant language (as in Deut.30:15,19). But the choice has changed from the Mosaic address of Deuteronomy and has become one of impending death or unconditional surrender to the enemy. The way of life here is not in keeping Torah and enjoying the land of promise, but is literally in remaining alive. The nature of the prophet's message is, although Jerusalem itself stands no chance for survival ('fire' represents Yahweh's wrath upon it; 21:10,12,14; 22:7), that there remains a chance for the people through the vehicle of surrender as the obedient choice.[356]

Indictments against anonymous Judean kings (21:11-22:9)

The inquiry of Zedekiah (21:1-10), which we have been observing follows the last confession and may be associated with Jeremiah standing his ground as a true prophet in spite of his feeling like a false prophet (20:7), leads to more general and generic indictments against anonymous Judean kings in the material that follows (21:11-22:9). The Zedekiah material, which has so poignantly pronounced the judgment upon him and the city, is connected by these other house of David oracles to call for a response by which, in effect, the city could be spared. The strong indictment against Zedekiah which started the cycle against kings will now hint of the possibility of an ultimately good result in some of the material which follows in the cycle. In other words, the city, which has been the dominant topic in vv.1-10, is affected by the actions of the house of David, the dominant topic of 21:11-23:8, whether these actions are good or bad. The administration of  every morning,[357] the deliverance of the oppressed from oppressors,[358] and the inferred responsibility of kings to prevent evil deeds in society (v.12), are an expectation which hint that Yahweh might do the unexpected. Particularly, Jerusalem could perhaps yet be saved when repentance and appropriate action on the part of the king takes place.

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[355] The address in v.4 is consistently in the plural.

[356] The Deuteronomic language of v.8 is not used to show the superiority of the Mosaic covenant over against the David covenant (in agreement with Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 469, in his counter-pointing E.W. Nicholson, *Jeremiah 1-25* [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1973], 176.). For the oracles to the house of David which follow indicate that Yahweh is still concerned about his covenant with David and indeed is attempting to save it through proper response and behavior on the part of the Davidic kings. If they will do right then the city can be saved.

[357] The term can mean a judgment practice that literally took place 'in the morning', or could simply be a reference to a practice that needed to be done with consistency.

[358] A royal psalm, such as Ps.72, spells out more specifically the manner in which a king might carry out such responsibilities.

The seemingly foregone conclusion of the fate of the city yet rests upon the response of the king.[359] The poem which follows (vv.13-14) presents a proverb-like image of those who believe they can never be disturbed. The symbolism is certainly of Jerusalem, who like the 'valley dweller' and the 'rocky plain' has become a place of complacency and false security.[360] Although it is difficult to know exactly why vv.13-14 are included here, a likely reason is the mention of 'fire' so as to cohere with v.10 and v.12, and to indicate that Yahweh will personally intervene and act against his people, without regard for the role of Nebuchadnezzar. The possible note of hope in 21:11-12 is quickly nullified by what seems to be a harsh reality.

Chapter 22 begins with another address to the house of the king of Judah.[361] The requirement of 21:12 is extended to include both 👈✌✝😐 and ✝☠✋🖫, terms which operate as a hendiadys (v.3). The specifics which are spelled out in v.3, particularly the defense of the oppressed strata of society, constitute the basic meaning of doing justice and righteousness as is conventionally found throughout the OT (e.g. Ex.22:21-24; Isa.1:17; Job 31:16-23). It is a rhetorical sermon which tasks the king to maintain social well-being throughout the community. One might conclude that when justice and righteousness are done to the marginal and defenseless, it will more than likely be done at all levels of society, the result being the good of everyone. The proclamation of v.4 is about positive possibilities for the future as concerns the Davidic house and all the people. It is rather significant that in light of the harsh oracle in 21:1-10 and 13-14, the material which has followed from 21:11-12, and 22:1-4 spells out that the doing of justice and righteousness by the Davidic house can change the fate of all.

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[359] The lesson learned at the house of the potter (18:1-11) has already indicated that human response and involvement matter as concerns actions Yahweh will take, as we have already seen in chapter four of the thesis. According to the illustration of the potter, Yahweh's act of pronouncing judgment is in direct relationship to the behavior of his people.

[360] Ps.26:12; 27:11 speak of how a level place is a place of safety and security. Wherever the poem of vv.13-14 was first applied might be lost to us now, but surely its application to Jerusalem here is unmistakable.

[361] In this case Jeremiah is told to 'go down' to the king's house, which might imply leaving the temple area to bring a message to the king's palace.

In spite of the positive possibilities, the weight of this sermon to the Davidic house is more upon warning than it is promise (v.5). What has been said in ch.21 about the potential fate of the city can apply to the Davidic house as well. Obedience is demanded (v.5). It matters not how fine the house of the king may look (i.e. Gilead, Lebanon), when there is moral neglect (as in 22:13 ff.), Yahweh will make it look quite the opposite (vv.6-7). Verse 8 moves the focus of the message back to the city, which has experienced a great devastation - most likely burned with fire (v.7), and the Davidic house has been added to the fire (the last line of v.7). The imagery is such that the house of the king has been cut down like wood which was to be added to the existing fire that once was the city of Jerusalem. The conversation amongst nations which follows, is a post-war picture of gentile reflection of the judgment of Yahweh upon his people (vv.8-9).[362] Deuteronomic language as in 21:8 is used again in 22:9. But the covenant failure of 22:9, which is associated with idolatry, might have resonance with the language of oppression which began the sermon (v.3). That is, the social oppressions of v.3 are equivalent to idolatry and covenant breaking in v.9. As the text now stands, its flow suggests that the immoral lack of justice and righteousness is to do idolatry.

Oracles against specific Davidic kings (22:10-22:30)

The address of 22:10-12 reintroduces names of specific kings. Zedekiah was the subject of the initial sermon (21:1-8) followed by general messages to the Davidic house (21:11-22:9). In this short section Shallum and Josiah are named. Josiah, one generally respected in Deuteronomic tradition and known to be a covenant guardian, is not to be mourned over (v.10).[363] On the contrary, Shallum is to be mourned over because the real tragedy is not death, but exile away from the land where the house of David exists (v.9). The emphasis in vv.10-12 is on going away from the land, never returning there, and

[362] For a similar portrayal of gentile awareness of Yahweh's judgment and covenant failure on the part of his people, see 40:2-3 where Nebuzaradan, captain of the Babylonian bodyguard, speaks to Jeremiah after the fall of Jerusalem. Surprisingly, this is a word from Yahweh to Jeremiah through this foreign and enemy soldier (v.1). The point seems to be a vindication of Jeremiah, who was ultimately right in his warning of the fall of the city (ch.39). For him the Babylonian victory resulted in liberation from the bonds which his own people placed upon him (v.4). Jeremiah demonstrates that he has been loyal all along by choosing to stay with his own people in the land (v.6).

never seeing it again. The repeated ✋✡👂...❝☹ suggests that Yahweh's judgment is fixed, and vv.10-12 contribute to the larger context by commanding the people to weep for Shallum as though he were already dead, even as his father Josiah, because of the inevitability and tragedy of exile. His captivity has the finality of death. To some extent there is contrast between Josiah ('him who is dead') and Shallum ('him who goes away') as if the worse fate is the cruelty of exile that Shallum faces, as opposed to the more honorable death of Josiah. The unit asserts the dread and finality of exile and is a sign of the failure and judgment of the monarchy.

The focus on Shallum in 22:10-12 leads into a series of oracles which address the Davidic kings in a chronological order: Jehoiakim (22:13-23), Jehoiachin (22:24-30), and then following the hope of a future Davidic king (23:1-8), the address to prophets (23:9-40), and the vision of the two baskets of figs (24:1-7), a brief return to Zedekiah once again (24:8), as he was the starting point of these addresses to Judean kings (21:1). The grouping of these kings together in such an order from chs.21-24 is an indication that any king from the Davidic house can respond appropriately to the sermonizing of Jeremiah. This sermonizing focuses on a departure from idolatrous, oppressive, covenant-breaking behavior in order to return to the practice of justice and righteousness.

<u>Jeremiah's challenge to 'know' Yahweh in his address to Jehoiakim (22:13-19)</u>

The strongest indictment against idolatry and social oppressions and the clearest call to practice justice and righteousness contained within these messages to the Judean kings is found in the next section. The introduction of a woe oracle here, beginning at v.13 and continuing through the lament of Jehoiakim in v.19, is central to our concerns because there is a challenge to 👂✋✞ Yahweh with Yahweh as the direct object of the knowing (v.16). The previous discussion concerning the messages to the Davidic kings has built a context which provides challenge to the Davidic house to make responsible decisions which would bring about a good result for all. We intend to sharpen the focus on

[363] The failure of the nation to keep covenant in v.9 placed next to the charge to not weep for the dead (presumably Josiah), may be a support of Josiah's covenant keeping ways, according to Deuteronomic tradition.

Jer.22:13-19 because, as repeatedly stated, it is a text which should yield a fruitful analysis of what it means to know Yahweh in the book of Jeremiah.[364] Jer.22:13-19 states

> "Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness
> and his upper room without justice,
> who uses his neighbor's services without pay
> and does not give him his wages,
> who says, 'I will build myself a roomy house with spacious
> upper rooms, and cut out its windows, paneling it with cedar
> and painting it bright red.'
> Do you become a king because you are competing in cedar?
> Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness?
> Then it was well with him.
> He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
> then it was well.
> *Is this not to know me*?" says the Lord.
> "But your eyes and your heart are intent only upon your own dishonest gain,
> and on shedding innocent blood and on practicing oppression and extortion."
> Therefore thus says the Lord in regard to Jehoiakim
> the son of Josiah, king of Judah,
> "They will not lament for him: 'Alas, my brother!' or, 'Alas, sister!'
> They will not lament for him: 'Alas for the master!' or, 'Alas for his splendor!'
> He will be buried with a donkey's burial,
> dragged off and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem."[365]

Form-critically, Jer.22:13-17 resembles an accusation speech, and vv.18-19 the announcement of judgment. The 'woe' (✟✡✝) of v.13 introduces the criticism which provides the grounds for the invective. 'Therefore' (☝✂☹) in v.18 passes indictment. The rhetorical thrust of the passage is primarily that of challenge and persuasion. In such a passage of controversy, the prophet gets straight to the point to evoke the response desired. It is the practice of justice and righteousness in relation to the knowledge of God that is sought after here. Not all that could be said in the indictment is being said, but

[364] Rudolph and Kimchi have recognized the definitional nature of knowing Yahweh, not only in Jer.22:13-19, but also in Jer.9:22-23, a passage discussed in chapter two of the thesis. Duhm has downplayed the significance of the passage, whereas Kaiser has seen the rhetorical character of the text establishing the uniqueness of Yahweh among other gods. For Kaiser, because knowledge of God has direct involvement with human life, ethics do not stand apart autonomously from human responsibility and knowledge of God. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 5-6.

[365] NASB translation.

rather selective choice of form and approach is used; or in other words, what would be the most direct and stinging method of the prophetic message that might initiate response?[366]

To begin with, the kingly house which has been the recipient of the warnings continues to be attacked in v.13, but there is now a physical house (i.e building projects - actually alluded to in vv.5-7) which gives cause to the indictment. Jehoiakim, identified later in v.18,[367] has exercised his kingly office in a display of extravagant public works through his lavish use of cedar in adorning his palace (v.14).[368] He apparently raised a work force to enlarge his private residence.[369] Once again the key terms ✞💀✋🖫 and 👈✌✞😐 occur in these Judean king oracles (21:12; 22:3; and now 22:13 and 15). Justice and righteousness are placed in contrast to cedar and vermilion, marks of affluence. The king lacks justice and righteousness because he will not pay up, but rather is self-seeking to the neglect of others. In v.14 Jeremiah discloses the attitude of the king who is speaking to himself, or even publicly, in a braggadocio manner.[370] The adjectives in the king's

[366] For example, Amos employs a funeral dirge in ch.5 which is characterized over and over again by the short and simple statement, 'Seek ... and Live'!, for the purpose of avoiding a funeral for his people (vv.4,6,14).

[367] Carroll interprets the passage as not referring to a royal building project, but to some builder who is building as if he were a king. The question is then rhetorical to the builder along the lines of 'do you think you are a king?' (Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 427). However, the fact that the person is getting away with numerous corrupt practices makes it unlikely that it is someone other than a king (cf. Craigie, *Jeremiah*, 311). We will say more about this in our main text momentarily.

[368] Excavations at Ramat Rahel have unearthed a structure which may be the one mentioned in this passage. From the fifth stratum, dated with a measure of confidence circa 608-597 BCE, remains of a royal citadel have been found, the construction of which must have required the finest in engineering techniques and skill. Noteworthy, in reference to this passage, are the window balustrades which adorned the northwestern corner of the exterior palace. They are designed as a series of small palm-like columns topped with proto-Aeolic style capitals, some still bearing remains of red paint. The enlargement of windows might have included such balconies, visible from outside the citadel. It was certainly the custom to have windows facing west to catch the fresh-air breezes, thus alleviating heat, and household and personal odors, adding to the comfort of the occupants. See the article by Yohanan Aharoni entitled 'Ramat Rahel' in *The New Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol.2 edited by Ephraim Stern (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993). Ramat Rahel is situated on a hill half way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. It is one of the most complete citadels yet unearthed. Included in the article are pictures of the balustrades discussed.

[369] It is likely that the meaning here is conscription, a system of forced labor begun by Solomon in order to raise a work force for the building of the temple (1 Kgs.5:13). This was in direct opposition to Levitical and Mosaic law (Lev.19:13; Deut.24:14-15) which restricted a man from such oppression of another, whether brother or alien, and required the payment of earned wages on the day that service was rendered.

[370] The OT condemns this kind of pride by kings in no uncertain terms. Nebuchadnezzar's attitude in the building of his royal residence is a prime example (Dan.4:30).

mouth which describe his house are extended and extensive (e.g. *roomy* house, *spacious, upper* rooms, *cut out* windows, etc.).

Textual discussion and exegesis of vv.15-16

The passage returns to direct address of the king in v.15 and a series of questions occasioned by three interrogative ✞'s in the Hebrew text of vv.15-16. The questions challenge the very purpose of kingship and contain meaning which is central to the overall messages in the Judean kings cycle. This meaning once again concerns the marginalized and has social implications for the good of all. That is, if the afflicted and needy are cared for (v.16) then it is reasonable that it will be well for all.

There are some uncertainties in the text of vv.15-16. For instance, the identity of 'father' (v.15) in the Hebrew tradition would most likely be applied to Josiah, or even perhaps to one of the earlier, godly kings in the line of David. But the LXX tradition translates ❄✍❝➱ 💻⌖➱❝ as **ejn Acaz tw`/ patriv sou** yielding the meaning that the competition that Jehoiakim is involved in is against the earlier king Ahaz rather than in the use of cedar.[371] If the text is read as 'Ahaz', then Jehoiakim may, in a sarcastic way, be involved in matching evil for evil.[372] The idolatrous reign of Ahaz would not be a basis for contrast, but rather comparison (2 Kgs.16:2).[373] It might be possible that if the text is read as ❄☼❝, 'Jehoahaz' is being inferred through a shortening of his name. He certainly was considered a virtuous monarch, and his previous reign could, in a chronological sense, place him in a predecessoral role as 'father' even though he was the biological brother of Jehoiakim.[374] Carroll, as previously footnoted, contends that the original meaning was not intended for a king at all, but was instead edited in because according to him, 'kings are not usually recepients of woe sayings'.[375] This view is counter-pointed by WBC which states

[371] The deviation between LXX and MT would be the result of the Greek translators identifying one Hebrew letter, resh, as a chet (❄☼❝ instead of ❄✍❝).
[372] It is Holladay's view that 'a reference here to Ahaz is not unlikely' (*Jeremiah*, vol. 1, 596).
[373] The traditional equating of the sins of the father with the sins of the son would be understood.
[374] Although Jehoahaz has been mentioned earlier in the cycle under the name Shallum (22:10-12), he is not indicted for specific sins.
[375] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 427.

> Carroll interprets the passage as not referring to a royal building project, the rhetorical question asking: 'Do you think you are a king, competing in cedar?' According to his view, the builder is not a king but is building like one. While his view has some merit, it does not deal with the issues raised by this person's unjust ways. How could he get away with such corrupt practices? Only a king could do so without expecting legal repercussions.[376]

It seems likely however, that since Josiah has been used as a positive contrast in vv.10-12, and that the passage is part of the received kingly cycle, he (Josiah), is once again being used as a positive contrast here in vv.15-16.[377] Josiah is therefore praised for what might be proper and plain living[378] and just administration of affairs - Jehoiakim is condemned for ostentation and oppressiveness. The kind of political and social order over which Jehoiakim presides neglects the fundamentals of good rule and lacks for quality in the corporate life of the nation. The knowledge of Yahweh (v.16) is in such awareness and commitment to the ethical texture of Yahweh's moral and social order.[379] The phrase in v.15, ✡☹ ✆✡☜ ❄❝, is more than likely most readily applied to Josiah, and that life was pleasing to him,[380] and the phrase partially repeated in v.16, ✆✡☜ ❄❝[381] is a more general statement of the overall well-being of society. The application of the statement to both king and people suggests that a harmony can be reached between the two parties, and that rebellion and the like need not be the norm. The former king is to be emulated as a predecessor, for he was able to integrate personal

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[376] Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard (*Jeremiah*, vol.1, 311).

[377] Josiah is known for proper response to the word of Yahweh, which resulted in national repentance, covenant commitment, and removal of idolatry (2 Kgs.22:10-23:25). Jehoiakim is known in the Jeremiah tradition for a lack of appropriate response to the word of Yahweh (Jer.36:22-31). OT theologies which make mention of the issue lend their support to Josiah as the father. This includes: Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT*, vol.2, 294; Zimmerli, *OT Theology in Outline*, 200&202; Von Rad, *OT Theology*, vol.2, 197; and Jacob, *Theology of the OT*, 177.

[378] Perhaps the meaning of 'eat and drink' is a kingly posture which is content to be non-competitive in royal power, and thus is a phrase set out to contradict Jehoiakim's 'competing in cedar' (v.15) by means of various elaborate building projects (vv.13-14).

[379] According to WBC, 'Is that not what it means to know me'? is a rhetorical question which is the central phrase of a larger chiastic structure (*Jeremiah*, vol.1, 311).

[380] Holladay, *Jeremiah* (volume 2), 596.

[381] BHS notes that 'then it was well' here may be dittographic. But it is likely that ❄❝ repeated a second time in v.16 may mimick ❄✍❝, which is also used twice in the passage (vv.14-15). Thus we are content to stay with the Hebrew rather than the Greek. Holladay contends that the double statement is not dittographic (*Jeremiah*, volume 1, 596).

life and governmental duty in a responsible and balanced way, as he did 'justice and righteousness ... and pled the cause of the afflicted and needy'.[382] The statement that he 'ate and drank'[383] has taken on different interpretations, such as: being socially equitable came as easy and natural to this king as eating and drinking,[384] or eating and drinking as a reference to observance and participation in cultic and religious meals on the part of the king.[385] But in the context of Jehoiakim going to elaborate materialistic extremes (vv.13-14), it seems likely that the eating and drinking of this other king is a reference to a balanced ability to enjoy kingly benefits and a good life while maintaining a proper social order to benefit all.[386] For Thompson, the saying means that the king in question did not need to outdo his predecessors or other rulers of the day.[387] His kingship was not in a competitive mode of operation. However, it appears that the most insightful and helpful interpretation on the meaning of the combination of 'eat and drink', 'then it was well', 'doing justice and righteousness' as connected to 'knowing Yahweh', is from WBC, which states, '... he went about his routine life ... nothing extraordinay, but he did justice and righteousness! The result was that good came to him'.[388] It seems then, that the main point of the charge of vv.15-16 is that to be king is not to carry out some great accomplishment or feat by which one can claim bragging rights toward other rulers. Instead, to be king, and more importantly, to know God,[389] is to live a normal, quiet,

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[382] Eichrodt speaks of the afflicted and needy as 'the deprived and wretched of the nation ... who were the objects of especial divine compassion' and who 'may consider themselves the bearers of the nation's future' (*Theology of the OT*, vol.2, 357).

[383] WBC and Holladay have called this statement a hendiadys. In fact, Holladay sees the use of hendiadys throughout vv.15-16: 'eat/drink', 'poor/needy', 'justice/righteousness' (*Jeremiah*, vol.1, 596).

[384] McKane notes that this is Volz's view (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 530).

[385] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 290. This is also Procksch's view according to McKane (Mckane, *Jeremiah*, 530).

[386] Carroll uses the phrase 'balanced life' (*Jeremiah*, 428).

[387] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 479.

[388] Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, (*Jeremiah*, vol.1, 311).

[389] As we said in the introduction to this thesis, this key issue of knowing God in Jer.22:16 has received surprisingly few comments by OT theologians over the years. However, Jacob, does in passing look through the OT and forward to the NT on the issue of knowing God demonstrating that the NT ultimately, as depicted here in Jer.22:16, shows that encounter with God can simply be in encounter with one's neighbor. For him, knowledge of God is often rather mystical in the OT in its epistemological and relational elements. But here in Jer.22:16 he sees it as praxis in the human sphere that is identified with action on behalf of the poor (Jacob, *Theology of the OT*, 177). He claims that where Jeremiah is concerned there is 'no other knowledge of Yahweh' except through exercising justice and doing right to the poor (Ibid, 238). Eichrodt stated that knowledge of God in Jer.22:16 is not to be equated 'with intellectual contemplation or theoretical knowledge of the divine will, but with the act whereby man admits the nature and will of God as these have been revealed into his inmost spiritual self, with the result that that self now seems permeated and conditioned by the essential character of God' (Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT* [vol.1],

routine life in a relative amount of simplicity in which the highest regard is given to the rights of others, especially the marginalized, via the practice of justice and righteousness. In fact, it just might be that the rather allusive and debated identity of the role model king in v.15 could be a purposeful ploy in the text to reinforce the point of humility needed by Jehoiakim. The hope for Jehoiakim is that if this other king, presumably Josiah, can enjoy a measure of prosperity which attains to a personal and corporate wellness, then he too could adjust his ways and dealings in a manner that could still benefit himself and also his subjects.

22:17-19

The questions and commentary on justice and righteousness[390] in vv.15-16 return to rebuke of king Jehoiakim in v.17 for his self-seeking ways. An interesting chiasm forms by comparing the architectural, decorative, and financial aspects of the construction project with the motive of Jehoiakim's eyes and heart. First, the workers are not given their wages (v.13) which is evidence of 'practicing oppression and extortion' (v.17c). Second, the reference of painting with bright red (v.14) could be an allusion to the shedding of innocent blood (v.17b), especially when taking into account the word ☼✞😐 can mean either 'paint' or 'anoint'. Lives had been sacrificed because of his pride. Finally, the author mentions Jehoiakim's aggressive business dealings in 'cedar' (v.15), historically a product acquired at the loss of certain property and personal liberty (1 Kgs.5:6ff., 9:11). The competitiveness could represent his 'covetousness' (v.17a). This shaping of material adds to the effect of the real crime being committed.

☝✂☹ at the beginning of v.18 brings home the sentencing upon this self-seeking king, who is now for the first time identified in the oracle as Jehoiakim. The comparison and contrast of Jehoiakim with his father in vv.15-16 that might work psychologically to

359). Part of his emphasis is on action as being a vital element of any true knowledge of God. He goes on to speak of knowledge of God as 'an act, moreover, which is something quite different from mere cerebration, namely a real personal decision and acknowledgment, and not knowledge in the ordinary, neutral sense of the word' (Ibid, 359).

[390] An addendum on 'justice and righteousness' follows chapter six of the thesis.

provide a foil[391] and even an arousal of jealousy and competition, is in fact, family language which is extended to include Judean society, a society poised *not* to mourn for Jehoiakim with traditional family language ('brother, sister'[392] v.18). The regular form of lament, 'Alas my brother' (1 Kgs.13:30), would not be used for this king. In other words, the king has failed in his familial responsibility to his people, a powerful invective in Ancient Near Eastern society. Phoenician royal inscriptions, for example, record the very words of some of their kings as stating the responsibility of the king in society is as a family member to his/her family. King Azitawadda of Adana states, 'Ba'l made me a father and a mother to the Danunites ... In my days, the Danunites had everything good and plenty to eat and well-being ... Yea, every king considered me his father because of my righteousness and my wisdom and the kindness of my heart.'[393] King Kilamuwa of Y'dy-Sam'al writes, 'I, however, to some I was a father. To some I was a mother. To some I was a brother. Him who had never seen the face of a sheep, I made the possessor of a flock. Him who had never seen the face of an ox, I made the possessor of a herd of cattle and a possessor of silver and a possessor of gold ... They were disposed (toward me) as an orphan is to his mother'.[394]

The rhetorical implications of traditional family language in Jer.22:18 mean that the king is not above society, and is subject and answerable to the principles by which he is to govern. The protection of the poor motif included in the piece (vv.13-17) indicates that those targeted, Jehoiakim in the first instance, or possibly those of later communities,[395] are those that have power and belong to the ruling classes. In this way, the passage is a formal way to compare the relative merits of a family's execution of its duties in the community. But more than this, Jehoiakim, who has denied human dignity, will also himself be denied human dignity. He will in fact be treated much less than a family

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[391] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 200.

[392] The translation 'sister' is open to speculation. It is curious at all that there should be mention of 'sister' (as the MT reads, without the possessive 'my sister') in regards to Jehoiakim, unless one understands that the mourners are referring to each other and not to the king. For a further discussion of the textual problems, see Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 597.

[393] James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East (volume 1) An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958), 215-216.

[394] Ibid, 218.

[395] Where Jeremiah may symbolize for other peoples in other contexts a struggle with those in power.

member, but indeed, treated even as an animal (22:19),[396] part of the point being lack of burial.

The linguistic elements of Jer.22:18 not only echo ancient funerary rites (cf. also v.10), but the 'woe' of v.13 can be applied to a group which practices disruptive behavior in society. The upsetting of the social order of the community provides the emotive and rhetorical thrusts of the woe. The value of the woe is not so much in a predictive element, but more so in its relationship to cursing behavior which disrupts the equilibrium of society. The statements about treatment of Jehoiakim's dead body points to the negative view of Jehoiakim in the overall Jeremiah tradition (22:18-19; 36:30). That a king should be denied burial is appalling; nevertheless, it is not the only time Jeremiah speaks such language against Jehoiakim (36:30). It may reflect Jehoiakim's treatment of the prophet Uriah (26:23), and in fact, his general treatment of society's marginalized. He treats people like animals, he will be treated like an animal (22:19). An extended merismus acting as an inclusio for the entire passage highlights the extremes of Jehoiakim's life, from the heights of his upper rooms of pride (v.13) to the depths of shame in donkey's burial (v.19). Little may be known about the historical Jehoiakim,[397] but from a reputation standpoint, he is a study in nastiness, in similar fashion as the likes of Ahab.

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[396] Brueggemann has suggested that his body is 'simply disposed of in order not to disrupt the city' (*Exile and Homecoming*, 200). When one thinks of the chaos going on in Jerusalem, which the larger cycle against Judean kings has already condemned, the king is, according to Brueggemann (202), being discarded as nuisance trash to not disrupt a city which is on the brink of disaster.

[397] The record of Jehoiakim's death in 2 Kgs.24:6, although formulaic, gives no indication of lack of burial, but in fact indicates the opposite, 'he slept with his fathers'. Carroll, for instance, has determined this as a discrepancy and contradiction (*Jeremiah*, 410). Yet Carroll, who has argued that Jeremiah's preaching can be rhetorical (417), and interprets 22:4 as 'a proclamation of possibilities of the future' (417) which might contain 'imprecise statements' (417), could apply similar interpretation to 22:19. That is, Jeremiah's preaching contains a rhetorical force that is designed to initiate response, not necessarily historical actualities. If Jeremiah could envision a positive future in an imaginative way (22:4), then he certainly could imagine a calamity or judgment in a similar fashion (22:19). One need not attempt to harmonize 2 Kgs.24:6 and Jer.22:19 by historical claims. In fact, such historicizing methodology risks putting the interpreter in a place of difficulty. The dynamics of the text could function symbolically for oppressed persons to speak against aberrant practices of corrupt people in power positions.

In sum, the approach of the prophet Jeremiah to king Jehoiakim represents an accusation and announcement of judgment.[398] The rhetoric is of challenge, persuasion, and controversy designed to give definition to knowledge of Yahweh and to seek proper ethical response towards God and human beings. And the treatment of human beings, especially the weak and marginal, is in direct correlation to knowledge of God.

Further lament (22:20-23)

Jer.22:20-23 is a poem which continues lamentation, the focus shifting from Jehoiakim's fate to the fate of the city (Jerusalem), a city which would not be bothered with a burial of Jehoiakim's body (Jerusalem being the final word mentioned in the Jehoiakim lament, v.19, thus making connection to the poem). By the end of the poem Jerusalem is personified as a woman in childbirth (v.23), language which speaks of pain and anguish. The metaphor which describes Jerusalem at the beginning and end of the poem (vv.20,23) is 'Lebanon', already established in the cycle as a place of grandeur (22:6) but used in a pejorative sense. Dwelling in 'the cedars' (v.23), like Lebanon, is also pejorative, descriptive of pride and self-indulgence.[399] Such poetic language continues the earlier attacks against a false sense of security (21:13; 22:6-7).

The imperative command to 'go up' (✞☹👎) which begins the poem (v.20) may hint of geographical high places where idols may have been worshipped - yet is also explicable, for Lebanon is so mountainous. The reason for the pilgrimage, therefore, would be for Jerusalem to see and cry out over the destruction of her 'lovers' (vv.20,22).[400] Yahweh

[398] The idea of superiority of king over commoner can be seen in ancient literature. Hershel Shanks points out how Mesopotamian texts describe the ruler as being in the 'image' of the god. He notes that the Akkadian term is cognate to the Hebrew expression of humankind being created in the 'image' of God as found in Gen.1:26-28 and 9:6. What in Mesopotamian texts was applied only to the kingly figure is, in the Hebrew Bible, applied to all of humanity. With this understanding, Jeremiah's indictment of king Jehoiakim is for violating a basic premise of God's created order - no human being, no matter how seemingly lowly, is to be mistreated and regarded as inferior. Hershel Shanks, *Insight* (Bible Review Vol.XV, Number 1) (Washington D.C: Biblical Archaeological Society, Feb., 1999), 2.

[399] The negative connotation of 'cedar' has been employed twice already in the Jehoiakim lament (vv.14-15).

[400] The crushing of the lovers in the last line of v.20, if interpreted as a reference to idolatry, may infer the invading Babylonian army destroying everything on its march to Jerusalem. Lebanon, Bashan, Abarim (the place of Moses' death, Num.27:12; Deut.32:49) are places either North or East of Jerusalem which

can justify such destruction, for the people have enjoyed prosperity and youthfulness for a time while refusing to 'listen' (שׁמע 2x in v.21). The natural element of 'wind' may be introduced as a destructive force in v.22, even as 'fire' has most commonly been used throughout the cycle (21:10,12,14; 22:7). But it is the play on words which precedes 'wind' (רוח) in v.22 which is more the focal point (i.e. רוח רעה). The common suggestion of the meaning of רוח רעה is that the shepherds of Judah, mentioned for the first time in the cycle, and anticipating 23:1-8, will be swept away like the wind. But it is possible to imagine that what 'the wind shepherds, the shepherds' has in mind after the 'lovers have been crushed' (v.20), is that there is nothing left for the shepherds to attend to. The idolatrous high places of Judah have been devastated and these so-called gods ('lovers') have themselves gone into captivity (v.22), thus proving themselves to be powerless. It is more likely however, that the lovers of vv.20,22 parallel shepherds, particularly in v.22, and refer to the Jerusalem kings, the main subject of the cycle from 21:1-23:8. The final humiliation of Judah in v.22 is because of the capture and exile of these Jerusalem kings, and the lament for Jehoiakim which precedes the poem of vv.20-23, and the rejection of Jehoiachin which follows the poem, maintain continuity of the main theme concerning the Davidic house. The reason for the catastrophe of Jerusalem is because of the evil of these kings (v.22).

Oracle against Jehoiachin (22:24-30)

The address concerning Jehoiachin (vv.24-30) is a continued rejection of the Davidic kings (Jehoiakim in vv.13-19 and 'lovers' in vv.20-23). By this point every king of Judah in Jeremiah's time has been mentioned by name in the cycle from chs.21-22 (in order of mention: Zedekiah, Shallum, Josiah, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin). Yahweh swears by himself in direct address (v.24) of the continued theme of the threat of removal of the Davidic house. The imagery is rather strong. Yahweh is as an indignant lover[401] who pulls the ring off his right hand, and according to the terminology of vv.26&28, 'hurls'

yield high ground for an observation post to view enemy troop movements. The picture here is of an enemy which is close and has trampled under foot the false places of Judah's worship.

[401] In this sense there may be resonance with Hosea.

(☹✡☜) the queen mother,[402] Jehoiachin, and his descendants into exile. Like the ring being pulled off of one hand and given over to another party (v.24), Jehoiachin is given over to the hand of his enemies in the same extended manner as Zedekiah in 21:7. And like a ring being cast away by one formerly betrothed, Jehoiachin, his mother, and his descendants are cast away from Yahweh. Instead of being as a signet ring, the imagery of Jehoiachin changes to a despised, shattered jar, an undesirable vessel (v.28).[403] As the jar is useless and discarded, so are Judean kings in exile, unable to rule their people properly. Exile from the land and lack of proper burial in the land[404] are themes throughout these addresses to the Davidic kings which capture the essence of the threats (22:10-12,19,26-27; and possibly 21:7).[405]

The subject of the address which has moved from direct address (vv.24-27) to general questions (v.28) now changes to a three-fold address of the land ('O land, land, land'; v.29). The immediate context might suggest the land being addressed here is the land of exile; Babylon, because it is presumably the 'land that they had not known' (v.28). It seems more likely however, that it is the 'land to which they desire to return' (v.27), and it is being addressed in v.29 in a mournful and regretful sense.[406] As in 14:16, where there are no survivors left in the city to bury the dead, the picture is of complete obliteration. The land is all that is left to do any mourning. It is instructed to 'write down' the obliteration of the throne of Jehoiachin, an act which suggests surety (v.30).[407]

Shepherds of Israel and the Davidic hope (23:1-8)

A woe (✟✡✞) oracle is given for the second time in the cycle (cf.22:13) and 'shepherds' are also mentioned for the second time (cf.22:22) in 23:1. The positive term 'sheep' is

[402] Identified as Nehushta in 2 Kgs.24:8-16. Seitz contends that mention of the queen mother is as an image of royal power, which in this context, is being lost (*Theology in Conflict*, 164-171).
[403] Read in the light of ch.19 the imagery more fully expresses the judgment of Yahweh.
[404] Proper burial in the land is coveted in the OT since the days of Joseph (Gen.50:25; Josh.24:32).
[405] This may illuminate why Josiah is not to be wept over (22:10).
[406] It might be possible to understand the three-fold address to the land in v.29 as the earth itself, in a more general and generic sense.
[407] The fact that Jehoiachin was not 'childless' does not negate the rhetorical force of the message. As in 22:19, the challenge of the message is not to be measured by historical actualities. We have already made mention of the similar problem of Jehoiakim not receiving proper burial. The context of v.30b suggests a non-literal sense of 'childless' as it stands.

applied to Yahweh's people, whereas the 'shepherds' are these Davidic kings that have been called out by name in the larger cycle from 21:1 up to this point. The 'destroying and scattering' inflicted by the shepherds is placing blame on the Judean kings for the Babylonian invasion and exile. Although Yahweh says that it is he who has 'driven' the people away (v.3), it is the shepherds who are actually responsible (v.2). The language may appear to be contradictory ('you have driven them', v.2; 'I have driven them', v.3), but the point is the kings have caused the exile. Whatever Yahweh does is instigated by the Davidic kings because of their 'evil deeds' (v.2). A key term in v.2 is ✋☠✌, which apparently is the task kings are to carry out for their people. The shepherds have not 'visited' or 'attended' to their people. These are the evil deeds by which definition of kingship is given. The metaphorical language of 'sheep' and 'shepherd' captures the attitude and relationship a king is to have with the people. Kings see to the welfare of the people. The word play on ✋☠✌ in v.2 is evident. If the kings will not 'attend/visit' to the people as they should, Yahweh will 'attend/visit' to the kings in the manner of judgment. This judgment is a scattering of the people away from the kings, by which Yahweh would regather them at another time and for another purpose. The vision of what life could be like under proper kingship employs the patriarchal and pre-patriarchal language of Genesis ('be fruitful and multiply', v.3). The type of kingship v.4 has in mind portrays a people who will not have cause to fear the threat of military invasion and exile. The last phrase of v.4 brings home the message through another use of word play on the word ✋☠✌, which carries the sense here of not lacking a visit, or in other words, there will be nothing left undone and no one left out. This can apply to none missing due to exile or could suggest that not even one amongst many sheep is uncared for.[408] In this sense even the marginalized would be cared for and attended to, resulting in the good of all in society. Thus this vision captures the larger vision given to the Davidic house throughout the cycle, namely, by attending to the needs of all, all will be well (21:12; 22:3,16).

[408] To some degree, the parables of Jesus recorded in Lk.10 speak of a similar theme, most particularly, the parable of the lost sheep (vv.1-7).

A new formula of speech introduced into the cycle, 'Behold, days are coming', highlights the final section of the messages to the Judean kings (23:5-8). These coming days would inaugurate the kind of vision revealed in vv.3-4 because the kind of Davidic king sought after in the larger cycle would be raised up by Yahweh like a sprout from the ground (v.5).[409] It is noteworthy that his reign will be characterized by acting wisely, which is presumably accomplished through the much sought after practice of ☜✌✞😐 and ✞☠✋🖫 (23:5) already mentioned so often in the cycle (21:12; 22:3,13,15). And although the cycle has not envisioned very positive things for Zedekiah, Shallum, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin, nonetheless, Yahweh's preservation of the Davidic line remains intact. The rhetoric not only looks forward to a coming day, but serves to inspire a proper response from any of the Davidic kings who might hear such an oracle.

Verse 6 is a climax to the entire cycle. In the days when justice and righteousness are practiced, Judah is saved and Israel dwells securely. Right action on the part of the king saves the day. Safety and security become a reality for the community based on the king's practice of justice and righteousness, and the knowledge of Yahweh (22:16) is realized. The king's name is god-like, 'Yahweh our righteousness', possibly being a play on Zedekiah's name and thereby forming an inclusio with the start of the cycle at 21:1. The 'wonderful deed' that Zedekiah sought for in the first place (21:2) is answered ultimately in a surprising way. He, and those who would reign as kings on the Davidic throne had a certain amount of control over the destiny of the nation if they would practice community responsibility, and the morality of justice and righteousness. In seeing to the needs of the marginalized, the Davidic king was in effect, seeing to the welfare of the entire community, for thus was the knowledge of God in which it could be well for all. The declaration of a new exodus in 23:7-8 sees beyond the Babylonian disaster with the ultimate express hope being a return to the soil of Israel. This theme of hope beyond exile has appeared a number of times in the cycle (21:7; 22:10-12,22,25-28). For any hope of establishing a society fashioned after the order of true knowledge of

[409] As in the Isaiah tradition (Isa.11:1; 53:2).

Yahweh is related to a remnant returning to the land (24:6).[410] And from this point, the Judean kings could rule and reign in appropriate ways which would benefit all.

Addendum B: 'Justice/righteousness' defined by Brueggemann and Miranda, and other Old Testament Parallels

'Justice/righteousness' defined by Brueggemann and Miranda

The basis of the comparison between Jehoiakim and his father in 22:15-16 that we have just investigated is how they have fared in practicing 'justice and righteousness'. Such justice and righteousness is in pleading the cause of the afflicted and needy and creating well-being for everyone. As mentioned, direct knowledge of God is in the king making things well for all and in allying himself with this Yahwistic purpose. VanGemeren states, 'Indeed, to know God is to care for the poor and the needy; without the latter, the knowing itself is called into question'.[411] The main point of exposition by the commentators on vv.15-16 is the importance of the moral dynamics contained in the 'justice/righteousness' terminology. For instance, McKane states, concerning the Jerusalem king,

> It is his responsibility to ensure that the weaker members of the community do in fact and not merely in theory enjoy equality before the law. This is a concern to preserve an effective reciprocity of rights in the community

[410] Goldingay states, "It might seem that the people who are deported in 597 must be people who are especially guilty and thus distinctively cast off by God, while the people who escape this calamity belong to God's chosen. Jeremiah 24 turns that idea on its head" (*Israel's Gospel*, 693).
[411] VanGemeren, *NIDOTTE*, vol.2, 413.

> despite differences of station, power and wealth among the individuals who constitute it. He must be vigilant that these rights are not infringed by new departures against which older forms of safeguards will not avail, and always alive to what is necessary to preserve them. It is the will to implement whatever is required to achieve these ends which constitutes 'knowledge of Yahweh'.[412]

Another good example is Brueggemann, who states

> Judging the cause of the poor and needy *is the substance* of knowledge of Yahweh (cf. Hos.6:6). And so, when the king engages in these practices in the administration of public power, knowledge of Yahweh is indeed mediated in the community of Israel.[413]

Brueggemann goes on to say 'Yahweh is present, through the Davidic king, wherever such practices of public power are undertaken'.[414] His point is not that knowledge of God will lead to correct social action, or that correct social action leads to the knowledge of God, but it is rather, that 'the practice of justice is the very reality of Yahweh.'[415] It is a worthy point, if by it Brueggemann means that the practice of such justice points to a reality of Yahweh beyond the work of justice itself; rather than making justice, or any other moral attribute, to constitute the divine reality without remainder.[416] Jeremiah is therefore envisioning, not a world fostered by royal interest and prerogative, but a world through which the very existence of the Davidic line in Jerusalem is the essence of the knowledge of Yahweh in practice. It may be suggested therefore, that if the role of the prophet is visionary and somewhat imaginative, his methodology might be somewhat imaginative, through the use of carefully crafted rhetoric, style, and approach. For above all, Jeremiah, editors, redactors, authors, and/or Hebrew communities sought response from readers and hearers, and certainly this is what Jeremiah intends for Jehoiakim in the first instance.

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412 McKane, *Jeremiah*, 531.
413 Brueggemann, *Theology of the OT*, 613.
414 Ibid, 614.
415 Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 201.
416 For further clarification, see Walter Moberly's review of Brueggemann's *Theology of the OT* in *Ashland Theological Journal 30*, Ashland, Ohio, 1998, 100-104.

To clarify Brueggemann's understanding of this text in Jeremiah further, he differentiates between what he calls 'retributive justice' and 'distributive justice'.[417] The former represents performance based reward without regard for communal obligation. The latter represents those having too much in the community being willing to share social goods and social power so as to avoid unequal and potentially destructive distribution of resources.[418] Yahwistic justice, and the knowledge of Yahweh are realized when the community freely practices such economic and social generosity and commitment.
The work of Brueggemann previously discussed has been influenced by Jose Miranda,[419] whose view is that Yahweh's intervention in history serves only the purpose of initiating justice.[420] Miranda understands that Israel's scriptures primarily support the concept that Yahweh acts out of his concern for justice. Genesis is, therefore, a prehistory of the Jerusalem kings, written to place a social demand of justice upon kings who would sit upon the throne, not only in Israel, but for all nations. For example, the story of Cain and Abel serves paradigmatically of all human relationships. The question from Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper"? (Gen.4:9) is written rhetorically. The redactor is seeking a "yes"! response from the reader. A curse follows (4:11), and from this is derived the redactional meaning of Genesis. In sum, the mission of Abraham and the nation which will come from him, is to lift the pronounced curse upon humankind. For Miranda, the practice of justice accomplishes this. The God who intervenes in Genesis is the same God who hears the cry of all those who suffer injustice.

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[417] Brueggemann, *Theology of the OT*, 736-737.
[418] In Israel's Exodus account, the concept of having too much, as well as too little, can be seen in the gathering of manna (Ex.16:18). This is applied by Paul in the NT concerning the generosity of the Macedonian churches (2 Cor.8:14-15). In fact, Brueggemann notes not only the mobilization of resources in the wilderness in the day of Moses, but also an initial principle of redeployment as seen in the Egyptians giving of their wealth to the Israelites in the exodus from slavery account. He also notes how the legal corpus of Deuteronomy and its preoccupation with 'widows, orphans, and aliens' continues the notion of distributive justice (*Theology of the OT*, 737). This, according to Brueggemann, completes what he calls the 'Mosaic revolution' (Ibid, 737).
[419] Brueggemann calls Miranda's work 'the most articulate presentation of distributive justice in the Old Testament' known to himself (Brueggemann, *Theology of the OT*, 736).
[420] Jose Porfirio Miranda, *Marx and the Bible* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1974), 78. Miranda, like Brueggemann, is generally helpful in giving defintion to an understanding of justice as it might be found in Jer.22:15 even though his larger liberation theology is open to question.

Also for Miranda, the incident at Sodom represents God's quest for justice for all peoples according to the theology of the Yahwist. The Yahwist wants to demonstrate that the Yahweh who broke in in the great act of deliverance from oppression in the Moses/Egypt episode, is the same Yahweh who spoke to Abraham about justice and righteousness concerning Sodom. Yahweh spoke of two terms: 'justice' (☜✌✝😐), and 'righteousness' (✝☠✋🖫), in Gen.18:19. The two words, used so often together in the OT, are as mentioned before, a hendiadys, an expression which signifies only one thing - particularly, a moral concept which is at the center of knowledge of God. The moral and social corruption in Sodom and Gomorrah is an 'outcry' (18:20) to Yahweh. The debate and bargaining which ensues between Yahweh and Abraham revolves around the discovery of 'righteous' (☠✋🖫) persons in the twin cities, and also, the 'justice' (☜✌✝😐) of Yahweh in his treatment and distinction of the righteous and the wicked (18:25). According to Miranda, Gen.18:22-33 is the key to the Yahwist's theology: Yahweh saves the sufferer from those who practice injustice.[421] In Miranda's own words

> The Yahwist decided to write a prehistory of the Exodus in order to explain the origin of sin and in order that a sinful world might feel the need for the intervention of Yahweh and for the election of a people which would have the mission of abolishing sin in the world.[422]

Yahweh's record in Genesis and Exodus has been acts of salvation for the oppressed according to Miranda. But also for him, the tradition of Deutero-Isaiah considers the act of shattering the Babylonian yoke as an act of Yahwistic justice, and in fact, is the action that causes certainty that Yahweh is the one behind the deliverance

> The *poor and needy* ask for water, and there is none, their tongue is parched with thirst. *I, Yahweh*, will answer them, *I, the God of Israel*, will not abandon them (Isa.41:17).

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[421] Miranda, *Marx and the Bible*, 96.

[422] Ibid, 89. Miranda, while offering some insight, does not perhaps do full justice to the meaning of the canonical text. He has marginalized Yahweh's divine mercy toward human sinfulness expressed in places like Gen.6:8; 7:1; 8:1, 21-22; 9:8-16, and especially Ex.32-34 where Yahweh restores Israel from the violated covenant.

In like manner for Miranda, knowledge of Yahweh is connected to the liberation from Egypt,[423] as already seen in Hosea

> *I am Yahweh*, your God, since the days in the land of Egypt; and you have never known (👎✋✝) any God but me, there is no other savior besides me (Hos.13:4).

Or, take once again Ezekiel, who asserts with confidence that acts of deliverance on behalf of the oppressed are to be identified with Yahweh

> They shall know (👎✋✝) that *I am Yahweh* when I break their yokestraps and release them from the hand of their captors (Ezek.34:27).

These prophets, as observed by Miranda, take it for granted that deliverance of the poor, needy, and oppressed is related to the knowledge of God. Other prophetic statements also make 👈✌✝😐 and ✝☠✋🖫 the key to well-being (Amos 5:7,24; 6:12; Hos.6:6; Mic.6:8; Isa.5:7; Hab.2:9-14). Justice and righteousness are what accomplish such deliverance. The transcendence of God becomes accessible when what is right and just takes place. Identification of Yahweh in the community is seen in the practice of this moral imperative. The prophets of Israel saw very clearly that if the nation no longer could distinguish Yahweh from other gods in this manner, then the historical mission of Israel had ended. Thus it would become necessary to disconnect the name of Yahweh from the people called Israel; as observed by Jeremiah, 'I will reduce them to a ruined country, with no inhabitants' (34:22).

We might also add that the wisdom teachers in Israel likewise make a linkage between Yahwistic obligation and commitment to the socially marginalized

> Those who oppress the poor insult their maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor him (Prov.14:31).

> Those who mock the poor insult their maker; those who are glad at calamity will not go unpunished (Prov.17:5).

[423] Knowledge of Yahweh is not to be understood only in the sense of responsibility toward those in need of liberation, but also, the one liberated has an obligation of service to Yahweh. For more on this, see

The reality of 'distributive justice' therefore means that the wealth and materials of Israel are ultimately not to be understood in privatistic ways, but as common resources that are to be managed and deployed for the enhancement of the community by minimizing the burden of its weakest and most disadvantaged members. Knowing Yahweh therefore in Jer.22:16 in a personal way where he is the object of ידע seeks to carry out such a vision for the benefit of all.

In sum, Brueggemann and Miranda further our understanding of Jer.22:15-16 by disallowing a dismissal of the literalness of knowing Yahweh as defined by praxis,[424] particularly, practicing 'justice and righteousness' to the marginalized elements of society. For Miranda, of which Brueggemann calls 'a most radical statement on the matter',[425] 'A fundamental hermeneutical principle is at stake'.[426] We are at least reminded by Miranda that any claim to an esoteric kind of knowledge of God nonetheless demands a praxis that cannot avoid one's neighbor.[427] As he himself states, 'dialectical knowledge and biblical knowledge demand praxis to the point of being identified with it'.[428] He equates Jer.22:16 with 1 Jn.4:7-8, 'he who loves his neighbor knows God; he who does not love his neighbor does not know God'.[429] His interpretation of הוא טוב in Jer.22:15-16 is 'this is good';[430] thus signifying that rather than 'good' being the result for either the Judean king or the Judean community, הוא טוב takes on a moral dimension which is pleasing to Yahweh. That is, the practice of 'justice and righteousness' is what is good according to Yahweh. Although this seems an unlikely interpretation, Miranda has nonetheless cautioned the reader of Jer.22:15-16 to take seriously the moral/societal implications of 'knowing Yahweh'.

Other Old Testament Parallels:

Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament, And Historical Criticism*, ch.6.

[424] Brueggemann alerts us to other conversation about praxis as the mode of faith, of which we are more content to understand praxis as a supplement to, or the natural outworking of faith (*Exile and Homecoming*, 201).

[425] Brueggemann, *Theology of the OT*, note 29, 738.

[426] Miranda, *Marx and the Bible*, 44-45.

[427] Ibid, 65.

[428] Ibid, 266.

[429] Ibid, 62.

Evidence of 'justice and righteousness' as the responsibility and ministry of the Jerusalem kings can be seen for example in the Isaiah tradition (Isa.9:7; 11:1-5, etc.) as well as be noted in other OT passages. For instance, Ps.72 underlines the point that there is a consensus about the responsibility of a king. The Sitz im Leben of this Psalm was most likely the enthronement of the king or the yearly celebration of his kingship which may have formed a part of the New Year Festival. It seems to have been composed in pre-exilic times for the use of successive Davidic kings on the appropriate cultic event.[431] Contained in the title of the Psalm is a reference to Solomon, which although not necessitating his authorship by any means, does nonetheless reinforce the notion of wisdom (because of the ancient king's reputation) that comes by way of practicing justice and righteousness.

Another paradigmatic narrative for the purpose of, especially justice, which also involves the notable king Solomon, is 1 Kgs.3.[432] Yahweh's approach towards Solomon in the dream at Gibeon (1 Kgs.3:5) in which Yahweh affords the young king a wish of his choosing, is probably a test to see if Solomon understood what it meant to be king, as well as what it would mean to establish a place for the name of Yahweh to dwell. In other words, 'what was Jerusalem and the temple to represent anyhow'? Solomon gives the correct answer in asking for an ability to judge Yahweh's people. The people of Yahweh are the proper concern, not personal benefits which the king could have asked for himself (1 Kgs.3:11). This becomes crucial in giving definition to kingship, and also gives insight as to why Yahweh was reluctant to have a human king replace him as king

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[430] Ibid, 293.

[431] A.A. Anderson, *Psalms 1-72* (The New Century Bible Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 518. Anderson notes that if the Psalm is indeed a part of the enthronement liturgy, the allusion may be to the handing over of the written law to the king (cf. Deut.17:18ff.; 1 Sam.10:25) as paralleled by Hammurabi receiving his laws from Shamash, the Babylonian deity concerned with justice.

[432] ✞☠✋🖫, for its part, appears in certain OT stories which involve social relation dynamics. For instance, in Gen.38:26 Judah confesses that Tamar is 'more righteous' than himself because he failed in his community responsibility to her. Or again in 1 Sam.24:18 (Eng.24:17) and 26:23 where David spared Saul's life on two occasions and was declared to be 'more righteous' because of his regard for social standards and human life. David's primary response in both chs.24&26 concerning his decision to spare Saul was based on his regard for the position of king in Israel, i.e. 'the Lord's anointed'; thereby implying a high regard for community standards. David also stated that Saul's life was 'highly valued in his sight' (1 Sam.26:24).

over Israel (1 Sam.10:17-19). A key term which marks Solomon's early kingship is found in this request which was pleasing to Yahweh, namely, understanding 'justice' (☜✌✞😐) (1 Kgs.3:11). The story which immediately follows Solomon's noble wish is one in which Solomon's ability to discern and practice justice are put to the test (1 Kgs.3:16-28). The story of the harlots and their sons has good precedent for being recorded in the annals of the kings seeing that, according to Wiseman, 'Ancient Mesopotamian kings kept records of exceptional legal decisions which were presented to their deity as a report that they had acted wisely as a just king'.[433] The Ras Shamra texts, for instance, describe their king as being accessible to the oppressed.[434] In our story of 1 Kgs.3, we have harlots and bastards who gain audience with the king.[435] The fact that 'all Israel heard' (v.28) of the king's incredible judgment, shows that justice will be granted even for the most despised of subjects in Solomon's domain. He acts with 'divine wisdom' (v.28), that is, a god-like act is performed in his exercise of justice. By doing so, all of Israel feared the king because of this seemingly god-like attribute of Solomon to administer 'justice' (☜✌✞😐). The term ☜✌✞😐 which ends the story (v.28) is the interpretive clue of the entire chapter. It is ☜✌✞😐 which is pleasing to Yahweh, and it is ☜✌✞😐 which should be the desire and practice of the Jerusalem kings. The term defines Solomon's throne once again in the queen of Sheba's reflection upon the greatness of Solomon (1 Kgs.10:9). It is not surprising that ☜✌✞😐 is part of the moral challenge of Jeremiah to Jehoiakim and other Jerusalem kings (Jer.21:12; 22:3,13,15; 23:5). Without it, no true knowledge of Yahweh could be demonstrated.

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[433] Donald J. Wiseman, *1&2 Kings, An Introduction & Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries) (Leicester, England and Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1993), 87.

[434] Gwilym H. Jones, *1&2 Kings* (volume 1) (New Century Bible Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 131. Jones also indicates that there are so many parallels coming out of ancient international culture with stories of abused mothers and their endangered children, that such stories became popular folklore in the traditions of various peoples (Jones, *1&2 Kings*, vol. 1, 130.

[435] DeVries comments 'From a moral and sociological point of view, there was nothing that was worthy of praise in this institution ... children were destined to grow up as bastards and paupers ... wretched and altogether to be pitied.' Simon J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (WBC) (Waco, Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1985), 59. Yet in Solomon's court, such receive a fair hearing. The Hebrew text of 3:26 states that the true mother of the living child had 'her bowels grow hot for her child'. It is an expression which demonstrates that this is a person, regardless of sociological standing, who had deep feelings and emotions of love,

CHAPTER 7: MESSAGES TO THE PROPHETS (23:9-40)

Introduction and structure of Jer.23:9-40

Immediately following the cycle on the royal house is a section that concerns prophets (23:9-40), thus continuing the indictments against authority figures that we have just seen from 21:1-23:8. The section might be structured in a broad sense in the following way[436]

vv.9-12 General indictments against prophets and priests
vv.13-15 Samaria and Jerusalem prophets indicted
vv.16-18 Yahweh's warnings against the prophets
vv.19-20 Judgment fragment
vv.21-22 Yahweh's rejection of the prophets
vv.23-24 Yahweh's comprehensive knowledge of the prophets
vv.25-32 Yahweh is against the prophets
vv.33-40 Appendix concerning ❝👌😐

The incorporation of priests and prophets together (v.11) links them as the most powerful and influential leaders of society - after the king - who were deemed responsible for the catastrophic events of the early sixth century B.C.E.[437] The first oracle of the section (vv.9-12) is actually against prophets and priests. Because its scope is wider than the

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compassion, and concern, and who was worthy of proper treatment, which she did indeed receive from King Solomon.

[436] The commentators are in general agreement that vv.9-12,13-15, and 16-22 are three distinct sections, with the exception of Holladay, who divides the third section into two: vv.16-20 and vv.21-22. Brueggemann categorizes the passage into three main units (vv.9-22,23-32,33-40) with the disclaimer that ' ... even these are likely formed from smaller literary fragments' (*Exile and Homecoming*, 208). Our structuring of the passage is most similar to Holladay, which includes a bit more dissecting, but without altering the flow of the text. The latter portion of the passage, vv.23-40, are most commonly taken as two main units, the dividing point being after v.32.

[437] Holladay suggests the possibility that this collection on prophets was originally appended to the end of the confessions (*Jeremiah*, 624). He makes a linkage by the words 'my heart' and 'my bones' in 23:9 and 20:9. According to Holladay, the collection on kings and Jerusalem may have been inserted later to indict both kings and prophets by placing them together in the collection.

oracles that follow (vv.13-40), it is similar to 21:1-10, which is also more comprehensive as an introduction to the oracles concerning the Judean kings in 21:11-22:30.

The switch from kings/shepherds to prophets at 23:9 by the introductory statement ☺✦❝✦⌦☹ can indicate that what follows is 'to' or 'for' the prophets (the literal meaning of a prepositional lamed), or more likely, is a comparable heading to the use of ✋✡✋☹ in the Psalter and serves as a new section heading meaning 'as for the prophets'. The thrust of the unit is that what the prophets do is even worse than what the kings have done. Particularly, the prophets have betrayed the word of Yahweh. Rudolph remarks that whereas the priests fostered the importance of the cult by focusing on the sacrosanct temple and were representatives of a well ordered practice of religion, the prophets put to work the power of inspiration and were enthusiasts in a manner which would later characterize the time of Luther.[438] At least the priests had some sort of norms. The freedom these prophets operated in might have been indicative of being the people of Yahweh. Rudolph states that Yahweh being Israel's God was their 'Kraft' (strength), but was also their 'Schranke' (barrier/weakness).[439] The real issues therefore, are that Israel's familiarity with Yahweh as their God could breed an over-confidence in their expectation of his deliverance and continued blessing. Yahweh's protection from international threat was too easily taken for granted. Jones is particularly helpful in separating the guilty roles of priests and prophets. He states

> Nowhere does Jeremiah attempt to identify false prophets by means of their association with the cult, or with priests, or by means of their characteristic modes of oracular utterance, or by their dress or their lineage, or by their institutional status.[440]

Jones is quick to point out that there is no comparable collection of oracles on the priests, but that indeed, the prophets receive further individual attention (e.g. chs.27-28; 14:13-

[438] To quote Rudolph precisely, 'Waren die Priester die Vertreter der geordneten Religionsübung (der Kirche), so die Propheten die der freien Religiosität, die nicht kraft Amtes, sondern kraft Inspiration wirkten (vgl. die Pneumatiker der christlichen Urkirche oder die Schwärmer zur Zeit Luthers)' (Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 149).
[439] Ibid, 149.
[440] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 303.

16).[441] This seems logical seeing that the book of Jeremiah is so much concerned with the larger conflict over the person and message of Jeremiah himself.

General indictments against prophets and priests (Yahweh being mis-represented by lack of 'holy words'[vv.9-12])

The author begins the passage by stating that his heart is broken as a man who is drunken (v.9).[442] The portrait of Jeremiah is that he is overwhelmed to a great degree because of Yahweh, but more precisely, because of Yahweh's 'holy words'.[443] It is suggested that the meaning of the passage concerning the prophets, and the heartbreak of Jeremiah, is related to the speech patterns of the prophets. What they are doing in essence that is so abhorred is putting words in Yahweh's mouth, while simultaneously practicing lifestyles, for instance adultery (v.10), incongruent with faithfulness to Yahweh. The description of Yahweh's words in v.9 as 'holy' is key to this section because the prophets take the claim to speak for Yahweh lightly. This is what overwhelms Jeremiah - to such a degree that he is undergoing physiological distress[444] and is utterly overwhelmed because of the horror of the contrast between Yahweh's holy words and those of the prophets. We therefore reject, for instance, Carroll's assumption that 'because of Yahweh and because of his holy words is also too general to provide a precise interpretation',[445] and we understand the passage to revolve around this description of Yahweh's words as 'holy' in this first verse of the message concerning prophets.[446]

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441 Jones is careful to note that nonetheless, prophets were closely associated with the priests, and that for instance, in 29:26 a Jerusalem priest had a supervisory role over prophets. Jeremiah himself came from a family of priests. Most denunciations of prophets in the earliest Jeremiah collections are linked with priests (2:8; 4:9; 5:31; 6:13; 18:18), (Ibid, 302-303).

442 The LXX reads **suntetrimmevno~** which would be the equivalent of Hebrew ✍✡🏲✞ instead of the MT's ✍✡✂✞. If this translation were correct the proper reading would be 'as a broken man', rather than 'as a drunken man'. Either translation would fit the context.

443 Although the LXX understands MT's ✡✞✋☠ ✟✍🏲✋ as ✡✋✡🏲✂ ✍✋✞ yielding the translation **eujprepeiva~ dojxh~ aujtou`** ('the excellence of his glory'), it is preferable to stay with MT because of the numerous occurrences of the root ✍🏲✋ in the overall passage. It is found as a noun seven times in the singular and five times in the plural, and its verb form 'to speak' is used six times.

444 As for instance in 20:9.

445 Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 452.

446 Obadiah employs ✞✋☠ in a similar fashion in vv.16-17. Whereas in Jer.23:9 the holy words of Yahweh are violated, in Obad.16-17 it is the mountain of Yahweh which has been violated, certainly a

Holladay states that 'his holy words' in v.9 is an odd expression for Jeremiah to use.[447] This is true in light of the fact that ✞✋☠ is not very frequent in Jeremiah. He notes that in 11:15 a similar phrase, ✟✞✋☠ 👌👃🏳, is understood as 'meat of my sanctuary'; so that what may be implied in 23:9 is 'words of his sanctuary'. If Holladay's assertion is correct the meaning of 'words of his sanctuary' has similar significance as 'his holy words' (v.9). That is, both 'his holy words' and 'words of his sanctuary' as suggested translations for ✡✞✋☠ ✟👌🏳✋ indicate that these prophets have the audacity to put words in Yahweh's mouth - even in the very sanctuary of Yahweh. Holladay's reading might be a forced reading, but in either case Yahweh is being mis-represented,[448] and as such is being violated.

The indictment of the whole land being full of adulterers[449] in v.10 certainly could have both literal and metaphorical meanings (i.e marital unfaithfulness and idolatry), but could also be the kind of violation one feels when someone else has spoken on behalf of such a one, and has completely mis-represented that one. In other words, the land being full of adulterers, if understood in a metaphorical sense, could imply that there are numerous prophets who are actively mis-representing Yahweh so that Yahweh feels the same kind of violation a spouse who has been betrayed might feel. The description which follows in v.10 is that of drought throughout the land.[450] Those responsible are prophet and priest (v.11) who apparently plot their 'evil course' (✞🗣👌 ☺☪🖫✡👌😐), a deliberate effort, to maintain their power positions (the meaning of ☝✂ ❝☹ ☺☪👌✡🏳⚐✡ at the end of v.10? That is, some sort of abuse of office is in mind, perhaps to be equated with the accusation of adultery at the beginning of the verse. Their power base lacks a true legitimacy in the same manner that what an adulterer does is illegitimate.). Their speech

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reference to Zion and the temple dwellings which will be made holy in a genuine sense according to Obad.17.

[447] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 626.

[448] A similar biblical portrait of this would be the reason for which Yahweh rebukes Elihu for speaking words without knowledge (☪🗣✋), words which darkened the counsel of Yahweh (Job 38:1-2). Yahweh's response is intiated by mis-representation here, as it is in Jer.23:9-40.

[449] This statement does not appear in LXX. However, the concept of adulterers reappears in MT v.14 and LXX v.14.

[450] The context of drought in Jer.14 coupled with the shorter but similar message concerning prophets in 14:13-16 makes Jer.14 a natural link to Jer.23:9-40. Of course, chapter five of the thesis has already provided an interpretation of Jer.14:13-16 as a connection to this study of Jer.23:9-40.

patterns which claim to represent Yahweh are no doubt the use of words for self-seeking purposes, words which have desolated the land and temple (vv.10-11). The resulting judgment upon them is related to their being on a slippery path from which they fall into darkness (v.12). Their own treachery is possibly related to the treachery that mis-representing Yahweh brings upon the hearers. The imagery is that of wandering on a dangerous mountain path only to be overtaken by darkness and falling blindly to their deaths. A fatal stumble is inevitable for these prophets and priests who walk a path of sure self-destruction leading to perdition or sheol-like judgment.[451]

Samaria and Jerusalem prophets indicted (prophets and ✍☠✞ [vv.13-15])

The oracle of vv.13-15 introduces prophets of Samaria as well as prophets of Jerusalem. Although prophets of Samaria here might seem a bit anachronistic, the purpose of the breakdown of northern and southern prophets is to specify more readily the type of violations of Samarian and Jerusalem prophets, and ultimately to compare the two. 'The waw at the beginning of v.14 has often been taken as introducing an antithesis',[452] thereby rendering vv.13-14 something like, 'among the prophets of Samaria I saw ... *But* among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen ...' In other words, the ✞✍✡✍☤✞ of the Jerusalem prophets is worse than the ✞☹✌☪ of the prophets from Samaria. The specific idolatry of the Samarian prophets is at least matched by the actions of the Jerusalem prophets. In fact, it is likely that the adultery, mentioned now for the second time in the passage, and falsehood (✍☠✞) of the Jerusalem prophets (v.14) are prophetic speech patterns which mis-represent Yahweh as much as blatantly prophesying by Baal like the northern prophets had done (v.13). Although ✍☠✞ here is but one of a number of Hebrew roots which convey the basic notion of 'falsehood', it is the only one that has

[451] Similar word choice and imagery are found in such Psalms as Ps.35, a prayer of contention against enemies (35:6); or Ps.73, a Psalm which perceives the end of the wicked (73:18).

[452] Overholt, *The Threat of Falsehood*, 52. This is not Overholt's understanding of the waw at the beginning of v.14, but it is Holladay's understanding (*Jeremiah*, 631). Holladay contends that the more extreme language and the five cola of description of Jerusalem prophets over against the two cola of description of Samarian prophets is an intentional contrast. In the history of interpretation there was a tendency to see the waw at the beginning of v.13 as a scribal error, especially because it is difficult to find a double use of the waw elsewhere as it is used at the beginning of vv.13-14. Rudolph, Carroll, and Drinkard (WBC 1) comment that the statements at the beginning of vv.13-14 correspond to each other because of the waws that begin each verse, but without much further explanation of the purpose. Most other commentaries leave it out of the discussion altogether.

been systematically used by Jeremiah in his prophetic utterances.[453] In this passage concerning prophets it is used not only in v.14, but also four more times between vv.25-32 (v.25,26, twice in v.32). שקר is bogus prophesying and lifestyle which only serves the cause of those who already do evil and wickedness (v.14). It is the moral term, of which we are now familiar from our study in chapter three of the thesis, which is used by Jeremiah in an attempt to expose self-seeking ways which lay at the foundation of the inner person. The prophets' pretense to speak the words of Yahweh actually serve other causes, namely self-serving ones, not the causes of Yahweh.

An evidence of the self-serving speech patterns and ethos of the prophets is that 'no man turns back (שוב) from his evil (רעה)', key terms for our wider concerns (v.14). John Goldingay says, 'If the false prophets encouraged adultery[454] and deceit instead of resisting it, an authentic prophet will be one who brings home God's moral demands',[455] and that the opposite characteristics of false prophecy 'will characterize true prophecy'.[456] In stating this Goldingay is highlighting the ethics and message of the prophet so that the response of the people to the message becomes secondary. On the other hand, Robert Carroll takes very literalistically 'turning everyone from evil' thereby emphasizing the results of the prophet's message. He argues, 'If failure to turn the people is evidence of not having stood in the council then Jeremiah had no more stood in the council than had the other prophets'.[457] This is, it seems, overinterpreting the phrase. The turning the people back of v.14, which is basically an anticipation of v.22, is oversimplified if one attempts to understand it as matter of factly as the prophet speaks and the people heed with a favorable response, for that has not been the norm in Hebrew prophecy or in responses to Jeremiah himself. We will deal with this issue more carefully in our discussion of prophets turning people back from evil in v.22.

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[453] Overholt, *The Threat of Falsehood*, 87.
[454] In its traditional sense.
[455] John Goldingay, *God's Prophet God's Servant* (Devon, England: Paternoster House, 1984), 50.
[456] Ibid, 50.
[457] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 463.

Hebrew prophets were fully aware of the difficulty of their task because of the nature of the people to whom they were sent. The major call/commissioning narratives as in Jer.1, Isa.6, and Ezek.2 all in one way or another envisage resistance to the prophetic message. Even though in a situation different from Jeremiah, Ezekiel was told by Yahweh that his responsibility, like Jeremiah, was to warn the wicked to בשׁוּב, and if they did not, Ezekiel had delivered himself (Ezek.3:19; 33:9). The metaphor in Ezekiel is a military one. His work as a prophet is that of a sentry (3:17) whose duty in a city or fortress carries responsibility for the lives of all the people who have appointed him to his task. But it is equal responsibility. If the sentry gives proper warning, the responsibility for the people's inaction and complacency rests on their own heads. R.E. Clements states, 'There is a responsibility in hearing as well as in speaking.'[458] Both ch.3 and ch.33 of Ezekiel are within call narratives[459] and precede important sermons and larger units of Ezekiel's two part structure: 'I am against you' (chs.4-24), and 'I am for you' (chs.34-48). It is therefore fundamental to the prophetic call, to preach בשׁוּב, even though the people may not respond to it. In fact, Ezekiel was told over and over again 'the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you' (3:7). What is characterizing the false prophet in Jer.23 and therefore establishing criteria for their identification, is that their actions actually 'strengthen the hands of evildoers' (v.14). It is as Goldingay says, 'They follow the people in their sin, instead of leading them from it'.[460]

To become like Sodom and Gomorrah (v.14) is to be completely degenerate. It may serve the purpose of being a sign of imminent judgment and destruction, or be a reminder of the consequences of sexual sin. But also, the metaphorical use of Sodom in Ezek.16:48-52 applied to Jerusalem shows that the perversion of Sodom led ultimately to a disregard of the poor and needy. The distortion of Sodom's public life affected economic and political policy, resulting in the kind of neglect of justice and righteousness so prevalent in the Judean kings cycle in Jeremiah (21:1-23:8). It is not surprising that the judgment on the prophets in v.15 is spoken in the language of ingesting poison

[458] Ronald E. Clements, *Ezekiel* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 18.
[459] Jeremiah's call narrative indicates that, like Ezekiel, Jeremiah would not be especially successful (Jer.1:17,19).
[460] Goldingay, *Servant/Prophet*, 47.

through their mouths, for their mouths have been the vehicle of poisonous speech patterns (the likely meaning of ✞✌☼). In modern parlance, the prophets of Jerusalem[461] who have tainted the entire land will receive a taste of their own medicine.

Yahweh's warnings against the prophets (prophets and the council of Yahweh [vv.16-18])

Verse 16 begins another oracle within the narrative. It continues, like v.15, with direct address of Yahweh to the people. He warns, 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you ...' The community is the recipient of the command and seemingly shares responsibility for being led into the futility of the prophets' words which really are not the words of Yahweh. The 'words of the prophets' here is something far from Yahweh's 'holy words' in v.9. It is all ☺✦☹✍✞😐 (v.16), a hifil participle that is a hapax legomenon in the OT. The root ☹✍✞ is of course of great notoriety in Qoheleth, where the sense of being without meaning at all has been popularized by KJV's 'vanity'. There is literally 'nothingness' to what the prophets say. The causative verb stem places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the prophets. There is nothing genuine or of reality in their words - only false hopes. In fact, the words are a vision of the prophets' own heart and not from the mouth of Yahweh suggesting that the words they speak are related to the self-seeking which lies deep within. The rhetorical force of Jeremiah in the latter part of v.16 strikes at the moral base of why it is the prophets say what they say. What they say to an audience unreceptive to the word of Yahweh is ☺✡☹✞ rather than ✞✆✍ (v.17), which has obvious resonances with 5:12; 6:13-15; 8:10-12, and once again it is an issue of the heart (✍☹ in vv.16&17, but only as it is qualified by two connected words: ☝✡❄☼ and ☪✡✍✍✞ in construct relationship). Verse 17 is concerned with what the prophets 'say', continuing the emphasis in v.16 on the words, prophesying, and speaking of the prophets. The 'holy words' of Yahweh in v.9 which begin the passage concerning prophets have become here in vv.16-17 words which suggest what is really in the hearts of the prophets - more than likely a maintaining of their 'might' (v.10) and a

[461] This indictment of the city of Jerusalem as responsible for the corruption of the land continues the negative evaluation of it as seen in the messages to the Davidic kings in the previous portion of the Jeremiah collection.

keeping of the status quo by prophesying ☺✡☹✞.[462] The hearts of the hearers in v.17, characterized by 💣✳❝❜ and ☪✡✍✍✞ (‘stubbornness’),[463] have been given over to what the prophets say, somewhat resembling the same sort of deception committed by Absalom who used appealing words to ‘steal away the hearts of the men of Israel’ (2 Sam.15:1-6). The self-seeking ways of Absalom, and his eventual tragic end, is the kind of biblical story which illuminates a sense of understanding of just what it is the prophets here are involved in. The judgment warning of v.12 is not a far cry from the fate of an Absalom, who because of deceit and attractive, yet errant, words, died a horrible and premature death.

Yahweh is being spurned or despised (💣✳❝❜) in v.17.[464] The questions posed in v.18 are a judgment upon the prophets for failure to be true prophets of Yahweh.[465] The picture is one showing there is a place for seeing and hearing the word of Yahweh. This ‘council of Yahweh’ is described by Jones as a ‘transcendental source’[466] associated with ‘Hebrew mythology’,[467] and by McKane as more than membership of a ‘heavenly cabinet’, but actually is a ‘one-to-one closeness of the prophet to Yahweh’.[468] It is best understood as a metaphorical element used as a literary device in biblical literature (e.g. Gen.1:26; 1 Kgs.22:19-23; Isa.6:8-11; Job 1-2) for the purpose of vividly portraying access to the

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[462] The NT carries similar themes of speech patterns revealing what is already in the deepest recesses of the human inner-person (Mk.7:20-23; Matt.15:18) and gives clear warnings about the use of the tongue and its dangers (Jas.3:1-12).

[463] Found almost exclusively in Jeremiah, always in connection with ➪☹ (3:17; 7:24; 9:13; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17). The only other places outside of Jeremiah are Deut.29:18 and Ps.81:13.

[464] ✦🖫❝❜☺☹ is to be read in BHS as Yahweh being the one despised. However, the Septuagint’s **toi`~ avpwqoumevnoi~ tovn lovgon** for ✍➪✋ ✦🖫❝❜☺☹ (so also Peshitta) suggests that it is the word of Yahweh which is despised. The pointing problem concerns the vowel under the tsade. Is it a patah, thus making the ending a first common singular suffix as in BHS? Or is it a tsere, making it a construct (i.e. ✞✡✞✦ ✍➪✋ ✦🖫❝❜☺☹ as ‘to those who are despisers of the word of Yahweh’)? Such a translation nicely parallels those who spurn Yahweh’s word with those who walk in the stubbornness of their heart. In sum, the moral point can be made that a rejection of the word of Yahweh is to be stubborn.

[465] There are a number of textual problems with v.18. BHS suggests adding ☺✞☺ to ✦☺ ✦✂ (‘but which of them’) at the beginning of the verse so as to make v.18 applicable to the ☺✡☹✞ prophets only and to eliminate any possible contradictions with v.22. Also, the LXX has **kaij ei`\de** for ❝✍✦✡ - ‘so that he might see’. The Syriac adds a verb suffix (✡✞❝✍✦✡) yielding the translation ‘so that he might see it’. The last word of the verse, which is the second usage of 👁☺✞, can be read as a hifil when pointed differently. The suggestion of the text is that the prophets first hear themselves, then cause others to hear the word of Yahweh. In any case, the rhetorical force of the questions are intact.

[466] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 308.

[467] Ibid, 309.

[468] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 584.

mind of God, most often with regard to commissioning someone to fulfill the divine will.[469] Jeremiah is denying that the prophets have entered into this council of Yahweh, and charges that they have failed to announce the kinds of words consistent with turning the people away from evil as is anticipated in v.22.[470] The double use of 🗣😐✞ in v.18 reinforces that the word of Yahweh has not been properly heard until it is properly obeyed, and that indeed, such hearing and obeying is what gives genuine content to a prophet having stood in Yahweh's council.

Judgment fragment (poetic element and the council of Yahweh [vv.19-20])

The poetry which follows in vv.19-20 describes the anger and wrath of Yahweh in terms of natural elements such as storm and wind[471] and give a picture of what is really going on in the council of Yahweh. It is quite an opposite portrait from that which the prophets of ☺✡☹✞ have painted. Both Thompson and Jones agree with this understanding of vv.19-20. For Thompson, the storm and wind are 'calling attention to what was really spoken in Yahweh's council'.[472] Jones notes the repetition of the judgment oracle in 30:23-24, and that '... the editor may have chosen to introduce a characteristic oracle of Jeremiah as an example of what the prophet who has stood in the council of the Lord says'.[473] The statement in v.20b 'In the latter days you will understand it with understanding' (cf.30:24) indicates that the promised soon-coming punishment of Yahweh will be what McKane calls, 'a hard lesson' - 'in the aftermath of judgment'.[474] Later, the phrase ☺✥😐✥✞ ☪✥✍☼❝✋ would take on an eschatological sense as in Dan.10:14.

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[469] A very clear example of standing before God for access to the mind of God of a moral/spiritual kind can be seen in Deut.5:22-33. It is interesting that Israel disperses while Moses is left alone with God. This appearing before God is set between two of the most significant moral passages in the Torah: the decalogue (Deut.5:1-21) and the shema with its preamble etcetera. (Deut.6:1-9).

[470] Holladay notes that the 'council of Yahweh' is identical to the 'council of holy ones' in Ps.89:8 (Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 635). His observation is useful in that 'holy words' in v.9 of Jer.23 has been highlighted as key to interpretation - which is that Yahweh is not to be mis-represented in any way. In 23:22, immediately following the challenge of standing in Yahweh's council, is the criterion of announcing Yahweh's words; which are by implication to be holy words. That is, those who stand in Yahweh's council are 'holy ones' who announce 'holy words'.

[471] Similar to 22:22 and 25:32.

[472] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 498.

[473] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 310.

[474] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 583.

Yahweh's rejection of the prophets (the council and need for 🏱✡✞ [vv.21-22])

What comes next in vv.21-32 are the words of Yahweh speaking in the first person. Or in other words, what he says here *is* the council of Yahweh, and Yahweh spends a considerable amount of time addressing prophets who have put words in his mouth and mis-represented him. In v.21 Yahweh's not 'sending' the prophets parallels his not 'speaking' to them, and the prophets' 'running' parallels their 'prophesying'. What these prophets do is in stark contrast to Yahweh's command. They are eager to go quickly without proper warrant from Yahweh.[475] Certainly some note of hurried attempt or excitability characterizes these prophets who have failed to hear Yahweh's words. This can be detected somewhat in the dream claims of v.25. But the words of Yahweh sought for in v.22 are synonymous with 'his holy words' at the beginning of the message in v.9. These words of Yahweh are characterized by 🏱✡✞ from 👎✌. The words of Yahweh to be spoken must be connected with a deep sense of moral responsiveness in order to truly be words of Yahweh heard in his council. The prophet who heeds Yahweh's word (v.18) and proclaims a moral message of 🏱✡✞ and proper response to Yahweh is the one who has truly stood in Yahweh's council,[476] and is the one who is an accurate representative of Yahweh. Or as Jones states the matter, ' ... it is the total and complete harmony of the witness with the content of his testimony which gives ground for confidence'.[477] That is, the truth issue is to be seen in Jeremiah's overall life.

Carroll counterpoints here in that he finds 23:22, particularly the idea that the prophets cause people to 🏱✡✞, to be in conflict with Jeremiah's own admission in 25:3-7 that he himself had 'failed' to cause the people to 🏱✡✞.[478] Is not the natural conclusion that

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[475] The prophets 'running' (💣✡✌) to prophesy in v.21 does not fit the Moses-like model of being 'sent' (Ex.3:10-14), if his call narrative should at all be seen as paradigmatic, and contrasts with the charge to 'stand' (✋☹👎) in the council of the Lord (vv.18&20) as Moses had at the burning bush.

[476] McKane calls it 'moral pressure on the community' (*Jeremiah*, 584).

[477] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 308.

[478] Robert Carroll, 'Synchronic Deconstructions of Jeremiah: Diachrony to the Rescue? Reflections on Some Reading Strategies for Understanding Certain Problems in the Book of Jeremiah' in Johannes C. de Moor (ed.), *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis* (Brill:1995), 39-51. In this essay Carroll focuses on two seeming contradictions in the book of Jeremiah: Jeremiah's indictment of false prophets at the risk of being false himself (23:22; 25:3-7), and Nebuchadnezzar being

Jeremiah, who had given such harsh criticism of other prophets, was himself in the end to be categorized with the other so-called false prophets? When read synchronically the text of Jeremiah deconstructs for Carroll precisely because of such contradictory and discrepant material in the book of Jeremiah. Any holistic reading of Jeremiah through synchrony 'renders the contradictions and discrepancies stark and unresolvable'.[479] Carroll is much more in favor of a diachronic approach to Jeremiah, but in the end still does not hold out much hope for complexities to be solved, and finds the deconstructive turn unavoidable.[480]

In general, Carroll's work has contended for incoherence and implausibility within the book of Jeremiah, especially as concerns synchronic readings. He views Jeremiah's own inability to persuade the people of Judah to turn back from evil as a parade example of contradiction within the text. However, it would seem, to avoid synchronic readings is to avoid the final form and received edition of the text. If there is to be any flow and development of theological thought, the text must be appreciated for its synchronic value. It would seem wise to take seriously the final form of the text as it now stands while also demonstrating accountability to it and working hard at interpreting the flow of the text.

Kevin Vanhoozer's recent work in hermeneutics[481] may provide a rebuttal to Carroll's minimalist approach as well as a solution to the threat of deconstructing Jeremiah, especially as concerns comparing 23:22 with 25:3-7. Vanhoozer differentiates between 'illocution and perlocution'[482] and 'result and consequence'[483] in an author-oriented approach to hermeneutics. When an author/speaker utters words, that is 'locution',[484] but the intent of the locution is the illocution. Illocution is what is actually being done by what is being said. It is what the author/speaker was actually doing in order to bring

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represented on the one hand as servant of Yahweh (25:9; 27:6), and on the other hand as monster dragon (51:34). Our concerns deal only with the first issue.

[479] Ibid, 51.

[480] Ibid, 51.

[481] Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998).

[482] Ibid, 251.

[483] Ibid, 251.

[484] Ibid, 209.

about a result. The result is what actually occurs by the action of the author/speaker. For Vanhoozer, the author/speaker's role in uttering something is actually at the forefront of how to interpret what is said. In this sense the illocution, what the speaker really intends, is the force to be reckoned with by the interpreter of utterances. Contrarily, perlocution is what comes about by what is said, but not by design or intent of the author/speaker. It is that which is caused by the action of communication as a consequence, perhaps as well as an intended result.

Applying this to Jer.23:22 we might suggest that the locutionary act of relating genuinely standing in Yahweh's council to announcing words which result in ✠, is to be understood for its illocution. The rhetorical force of such illocution here intends for the prophets to be preachers of ✠ from . The result of the speech of 23:22 is a challenge to the prophets to utter speech which is morally consistent with having stood in Yahweh's council. Even in a synchronic reading, Jer.25:3-7 does not necessarily contradict 23:22, for although ✠ has been the message resisted (25:5), the concentration of the passage is on the people's failure to ☺✠ (25:3,4,7,8). In fact, Jeremiah and an un-named assortment of prophets had preached ✠ which qualifies them as actually having been sent by Yahweh (25:4). A good synchronic reading reveals dual responsibility: prophets' failure to speak words of ✠ from (23:9-40), and the people's failure to ☺✠ genuine prophets of ✠ (25:3-7). Thus we conclude that the text of Jeremiah need not be deconstructed based on Carroll's argument of contradiction between 23:22 and 25:3-7, but rather be appreciated for its tremendous rhetorical and moral force.[485] The terrible fate of Jerusalem in the 6th century B.C.E. can therefore be associated with the kinds of failures that both those who utter and those who hear public speech can be responsible.

<u>Yahweh's comprehensive knowledge of the prophets (Yahweh is against these prophets [vv.23-32])</u>

[485] McKane has called Carroll's view a 'non-cogent argument' which he has built on a single verse while ignoring the greater degree to which the Hebrew Bible is interpreted. Jeremiah, according to McKane, is in no way imposing a test of prophetic success being based on a change of heart from the people. He understands the 'turning them' of v.22 to be equal to 'exerting themselves to turn them' (*Jeremiah*, 584).

A series of rhetorical questions are asked in vv.23-24. The basic point is that Yahweh sees from a distance in the sense of having unrestriced vision, and nothing escapes his notice.[486] The prophets may not be aware of the goings-on in Yahweh's council but Yahweh certainly is aware of the words they are speaking.[487]

After establishing Yahweh's all-knowingness in vv.23-24, it is demonstrated that Yahweh knows what is going on with the prophets in the oracle beginning at v.25. Although the prophets have not heard what Yahweh has said in his council, he has heard what they have said in their prophesying. Yahweh's judgment on their prophesying is that it is [illegible] This [illegible] may have some relationship to the method of receiving the so-called divine communication. 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed' ([illegible]) is assonantally close to the [illegible] the prophets prophesied, but not close enough to be the reason 'dream' is singled out here for critique.[488] Also, it is doubtful that dreams are being utterly rejected as a legitimate means of divine communication for they have been an acceptable form of receiving the divine word in other biblical traditions (e.g. Gen.20:3,6; 28:10-17; 37:5-10; Num.12:6; Judg.7:13-15; 1 Kgs.3:5-15). The pejorative sense of dream in Jer.23 must be for other reasons. The legitimacy, or illegitimacy, is not so much in the form of divine revelation, for that would appear to be merely the conduit through which the deeper, underlying issues of the heart of [illegible] flow.

This is perhaps how v.26 should be understood. It is a difficult verse to translate because of a double interrogative at the beginning of the first sentence (e.g. [illegible] and [illegible]). It opens with [illegible], translated as 'until when/how long'? BHS suggests perhaps reading [illegible] instead of MT's [illegible] and taking it with the rest of v.25 as a three-fold evaluation as in 7:4 and 22:29, thus nullifying the difficult translation problem and disposing of the question 'until when/how long'? at the beginning of v.26. The effect would be another stating of 'I had a dream' in v.25 for a total of three times.

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[486] There are some minor variations between MT and LXX. The Greek text is immanentist, emphasizing the nearness of God. The Hebrew text shows Yahweh as a distant God thereby allowing Yahweh to see everything because of his transcendence. Our interpretation is from MT.

[487] Although not the primary point of vv.23-24, prophets who flippantly speak words they presume to be of Yahweh are reminded here that there can be limited accessibility into the divine council.

Yet it makes sense to stay with MT.[489] Yahweh wants to know how long the ✍☠✞ is going to continue.[490] Yahweh could be saying, 'Would not you really like to represent me accurately'? But what proceeds forth instead out of their heart of ✍☠✞ is scheming and dream relating that has the same effect as the idolatry of Baal practice (v.27). In effect, the dreams of the prophets, which more than likely offer no moral challenge according to vv.14&22, yield the same results as experienced by previous Baal worshipping generations, which is in essence forgetting Yahweh's name (v.27). His name is associated with his high moral character and the goodness of his nature (Ex.33:18-19; 34:5-7). The prophets' lack of moral content in their proclamation and dream relating fails on all accounts to demand from the people the sort of moral response that meets the expectations inherent in the name Yahweh. Whatever these dreams are, they are as much the kind of ✍☠✞ as idolatry is, similar to the idolatry of 22:9 which can be equated with neglect of the needy (22:3).

Operating as a correlate to 'dream' (☺✡☹☼) in v.28 is 'my word' (✟✍⚐✋), both of which are mentioned twice. The 'word' of Yahweh keeps continuity in the passage since the description of Jeremiah being overwhelmed by the 'holy words' of Yahweh in v.9 is what initiated the message against prophets. The dreams of the prophets compared with

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488 Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 471.

489 ✞✟✞ still poses difficulties. Brockington, influenced by Duhm, proposes a redivision of ⚐☹⚐ ✞✟✞ into ⚐☹ ⚐✞✟✞ giving a translation like 'How long will it *remain* in the heart of the prophets to prophesy lies ...?'. L.H. Brockington, *The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament. The Readings Adopted by the Translators of the New English Bible* (Oxford and Cambridge, 1973), 207. McKane doubts this. He does not propose a breakdown of the Hebrew consonantal text different from MT, but does suggest that the meaning of the verse is that these prophets have no status in communicating the word of Yahweh, but rather, they operate completely in a subjective manner (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 589). Rudolph considers, then rejects, that the ✞ of ✞✟✞ is matched by another interrogative ✞ at the beginning of v.27 (☺✟⚐✞☼✞), 'Are they *planning* to make my people forget my name ...' (Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 154-155). BHS informs that some versions omit the ✞ in ✞✟✞, thus leaving out the interrogative and having 'how long *is there* in the heart of the prophets ...' There is also the suggestion that it should be read ✟☹✞✞ and translated as 'how long is my name in the heart of the prophets'? This is to be compared with the ✡⚐✍☠⚐ ✟☹✞ ✟✂ of Ex.23:21 and could mean that these prophets see themselves as Yahweh's messengers who are to lead the people, even in a manner similar as to how the Israelites were once led into the land of promise. It is possible if this were the case, that the dreams of these prophets are lofty and idealistic self-understandings of their supposed prophetic role. Even though grammatical difficulties remain, the sense of the text is a willful intent on the part of the prophets to deceive.

490 Weiser thinks it is the prophets complaining about how long they have had to wait to receive their dream. A. Weiser, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Das Alte Testament Deutsch 20/21) (Göttingen, 1969), 207. McKane thinks this 'improbable' (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 589).

the words of Yahweh are like straw compared to grain (v.28). Seemingly, the dreams themselves lack for potency, for Yahweh says the prophets are welcome to speak them, and the rhetoric is perhaps designed to belittle the prophets. The superior method of divine communication is to have stood in the council of Yahweh, presumably as one like Moses had, and speak because one is sent by Yahweh in proper prophetic tradition. The challenge is, besides the basic warning to not ascribe the dreams to Yahweh, to get prophets to speak the real words of Yahweh in a true or faithful manner, hence the term ☪😐❝ in v.28. What the prophets are saying has nothing to do with what Yahweh is saying any more than straw has commonality with grain. One easily vanishes away while the other offers substantive value. It may be further rhetorical invitation for the prophet of 🗡💀✝ to seek to become a prophet of ☪😐❝.[491] The two metaphors of fire and hammer in v.29 to describe Yahweh's word convey that the word of Yahweh has the power to change that with which it comes in contact. Jeremiah introduced these oracles against prophets by depicting himself as one who is broken by the words of Yahweh (v.9). As a fire will alter any substance it comes in contact with, and a hammer shatters the rock it strikes, so also the true words of Yahweh would move the people at the moral and religious level. Once again, a theme of turning the people back from evil surfaces as in vv.14&22.

Verses 30-32 follows all that has been said with an introductory ☝✂☹ followed by a three - fold 👆👂👂✝ and a thrice repeated conclusive and climactic statement that Yahweh is 'against the prophets'. The beginning of the climax of the prophets passage is appropriate particularly in v.30 because the offense of the prophets is spelled out in terms of 'stealing the words' of Yahweh which stays consistent with the main thought of the passage about Jeremiah's overwhelmed condition on account of Yahweh's 'holy words' back in v.9. The wording in v.30 that the stealing of Yahweh's words are from 'each other' has given occasion for commentators like Jones to interpret the meaning as

[491] The kind of interpretation by Jones which calls for a waiting period to discern the true from the false, likening the straw and grain in Jer.23:28 to the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt.13:14-30), is to be rejected in this context, (*Jeremiah*, 313). Instead one should understand the rhetorical force of Jer.23:28 as challenging prophets to speak Yahweh's word in truth because dream methodology is nothing, and indeed 🗡💀✝ by comparison.

borrowing oracles in the fashion of a prophetic trade for exacting payment.[492] There is some evidence for this in v.27 where the prophets have related their dreams to 'each other', the wording being similar in the Hebrew. In this way the 'council of the Lord' (vv.18&22) has been rejected for the council of each other (vv.27&30). But because vv.30&31 are so parallel in their first strophes, meaning is best derived by interpreting them together. Stealing Yahweh's words in v.30 is equivalent to taking one's tongue and declaring what Yahweh says in v.31.[493] Rather than understanding 'stealing' here as some sort of plagiarism or borrowing in a prophetic trade, it is best understood in the larger context of the passage that the prophets say what they will and apply it to Yahweh.[494] The main concern therefore, and the flow of thought in this message concerning prophets, is that these prophets are mis-representing Yahweh by putting words in his mouth. This is the voice of Yahweh's frustration in the indictment, and the cause for Jeremiah's trembling (v.9). Yahweh is being usurped by the speech patterns of the prophets who rather easily ascribe to Yahweh words which come from themselves (v.26).[495] This particular oracle ends at v.32 with a final confirmation that these prophets are inauthentic because Yahweh did not send or command them, and, if they were true prophets speaking Yahweh's words, the result would be profitable for the people. The challenge to be a true prophet who stands in Yahweh's council, speaks Yahweh's words, and turns the people away from evil, ultimately suggests that this is what is in the people's best interest as opposed to a false message of ☺✡☹✞ (v.17). These tellers of ✍☠✞ dreams (v.32) have not merely prophesied such dreams, but may have told them over and over again since ✍✌☞ in the qal means 'count', but in the piel is the regular form for 'tell'. In fact, it is the third time in the passage that ✍✌☞ appears in the piel stem (vv.27,28), which can mean to 'recount', and thus it is likely that the meaning here

[492] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 314. Jones refers to Mic.3:5 as an example of a prophetic business enterprise where prophets practiced a corrupt trade of proclaiming messages for personal benefit only.

[493] MT does not say that the prophets declare what Yahweh says. The tetragrammaton is left out and the Hebrew has only ☺❝. However, both Syriac and Vulgate include the divine name and the context in the Hebrew text suggests understanding that what the prophets do is proclaim their inspiration from Yahweh.

[494] One possible resonance for this passage is that the verb ⚐⚐⚐ in v.30 is a piel and occurs otherwise in the OT as a piel only in 2 Sam.15:6, where Absalom 'steals away' the hearts of the people. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, what the prophets do here to Yahweh is similar to what Absalom did to David. Their ✍☠✞, mentioned twice in v.32, leads the people astray as Absalom did, and is reckless (vv.12&32) as Absalom was.

[495] Quite possibly for the purpose of personal gain.

in v.32 is that the ✍☠✞ dreams are told over and over again. It is a purposeful 'leading astray' - from ✞👅☪ in the hifil, which is to 'cause to error' used in the same way as ✞👅☪ in v.13 where the prophets of Samaria led Israel into Baal worship. ✞👅☪ can take on the sense of intoxication (Isa.19:13-14; Job 12:25), interesting in light of Jeremiah's own sense of intoxication because of the prophets (v.9). Further description in v.32 of the prophets as ☪✡❄✡✌ gives credence to a portrait of intoxication because the term, from the root ❄✡✌, a root used only four times in the entire OT, yields a meaning of lightness, frivolity, or recklessness, characteristics of a drunken person. In this case, ☪✡❄✡✌ as a feminine noun is a hapex legomenon. Otherwise, the root ❄✡✌ refers to a description of prophets only in Zeph.3:4. As a masculine noun, it is used to describe the companions of Abimelech (Judg.9:4),[496] and again as a verb it describes the action of Reuben in being like uncontrolled, boiled over water by his sexual promiscuity (Gen.49:4). The point to be made is that these prophets take Yahweh and his words lightly - they treat him as less than holy by their ✍☠✞. There is no substance or moral fiber to these prophets. The result to the people is that 'they will not profit', ☹👅✝ used twice in the hifil in regular Hebrew idiom with the use of negation (✡☹✝👅✡✝ ❝☹ ☹✝👅✡✞✡). The construction emphasizes the lack of benefit the people will receive from these prophets. The oracle from vv.25-32 is not so much a critique against dreams as a viable method of divine communication, but rather is an attempt to get prophets to move away from the idolatry of self-interest and amorality, and prophesy the morally challenging words of Yahweh which is in the best interest of the people.

<u>Appendix concerning ❝👍😑 (a surprising word of abandonment [vv.33-40])</u>

The final oracle in Jer.23 (vv.33-40) is an appendix to the preceding collection of oracles against the prophets. It is different in form and function from what precedes, and is surprising in content. It revolves around a word-play with ❝👍😑, a term which appears eight times in these verses and can be used in a double way as a homonym[497] to mean

[496] These men are worse than drunkards; they are actually murderers (Judg.9:5).

[497] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 215. In fact, Brueggemann points out that scholarship has been unable to produce any other option of meaning besides the more than likely double meaning of this obscure term ❝👍😑, 215.

either ‘burden’ or ‘oracle’. The people, prophet, and priest, those to whom have been addressed throughout the earlier indictment, are depicted as seeking the ❝👌😐 of Yahweh. A possible pun could be read at v.33 in this way: people, prophet, and priest inquire, ‘What is the *oracle* (❝👌😐) of Yahweh’? The response back in Hebrew is ❝👌😐 ✞😐 ❍❝. The ❍❝ serves as the direct object marker and ✞😐 serves an an interrogative, yielding the translation ‘what burden?’. However, if ❝👌😐 ✞😐 ❍❝ in v.33 were read as ❝👌😐✞ ☺❍❝ the translation would be understood as ‘you are the burden’ because the ☺ added to ❍❝ makes a second plural pronoun and the ✞ serves as the definite article of ❝👌😐. Both the Septuagint and the Vulgate understand the text to be read this way. In any case, Yahweh’s response is abandonment. Now that the true word of Yahweh is supposedly being sought for, Yahweh’s response is no response. It is too late for that. The inquiry has lacked for something genuine and Yahweh wants no part of it. In fact, any further attempts to bring the word of Yahweh will result in punishment (v.34).[498] The point seems to be along the lines of forcefully stating that false prophecy has gone on long enough.[499] But in v.35 there is a continued seeking of the prophetic word.

In v.36 any would be oracle of Yahweh is lost amongst confusion and all that is left is disunity and a disharmonious individualism concerning the word of Yahweh. The reason cited is a continuation of the main theme of the main text against prophets: ‘You have perverted the words ...’ The statement is not only connected to the previous message, but is even climactic concerning it. The identification of Yahweh in v.36 as not just Yahweh, but the extended ‘the living God, the Lord of hosts, our God’ brings emphasis to what is being said and who it is that is being offended. What is being said concerns how Yahweh’s words are being handled. Earlier, his ‘holy words’ (v.9) have been unheeded (v.18), unannounced (v.22), unspoken (v.28), stolen (v.30), and now ‘perverted/overturned’ (💻✌✞) (v.36). The terminology of ‘perversion’ in v.36 might connect back to the ‘adultery’ of v.10 and further illumine the kind of violation that false

[498] The use of ✋💀✌ here to conclude the section against prophets may be linked to a similar use of the term to conclude the previous section against Judean kings (23:2).
[499] Similar resonance of a possible death of prophecy is found in Zech.13:1-6.

speech patterns and mis-representation of Yahweh entails. The only 'sending' that Yahweh does with these types is to shut them up (v.38), as opposed to a true kind of 'sending' found in v.21 (the word ☼☹✞ being used in both verses). The final announcement of judgment in vv.39-40 is extreme and includes not just prophet, priest, and people, but the 'city' as well, thus uniting the message against prophets (23:9-40) with the message against Judean kings (22:1-23:8), which was so city oriented.

CHAPTER 8: MESSAGE AT THE TEMPLE (CHS.7&26)

Our early analyses investigated 👎✋✦ and other terms as key concepts in the book of Jeremiah followed by a focus on passages which involved polemics towards key leadership positions in ancient Judean society: the kings in ch.22 and the prophets in ch.23. Jer.24 was discussed in chapter two as the description of a community which was or would be properly engaged in 👎✋✦ of Yahweh. Scholars understand ch.25 to be a climactic statement at the end of the first half of the book of Jeremiah.[500] It proclaims both the captivity of Judah and the eventual Babylonian demise. Chs. 24 and 25 could realistically serve together as conclusion to the first half of the Jeremiah corpus,[501] in that

[500] For example, Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 229.
[501] As opposed to Brueggemann who states that 'ch.25 stands by itself' (Ibid, 229).

despite the eventual fall of Jerusalem and the world-wide upheaval to come regarding Babylonian defeat, Yahweh will nevertheless have a people who 'know' him as a remnant community. Ch.30 begins 'The Book of Consolation' genre in Jeremiah, thus leaving chs.26-29 as a natural grouping within the Jeremiah literature.

Structure of the temple sermon (Jer.7)

Before looking more carefully into the events of chs.26-29 we choose to investigate here the temple sermon as recorded in Jer.7; for ch.7 and ch.26 are intricately related as 'proclamation and response'.[502] The parallels indicate the importance of the temple sermon, ch.7 being more of a temple sermon and ch.26 a story.[503] Brueggemann has noted its importance by stating that the temple sermon is 'perhaps the clearest and most formidable statement we have on the basic themes of the Jeremiah tradition'.[504] He suggests the possibility of the prose sermon being a Deuteronomic redaction or the reflection of theologians in the exilic period. Whatever the origin of authorship of the temple sermon might be, Brueggemann has not over-stated its decisiveness 'for discerning the social context, tensions, and possibilities that belong to this theological tradition'.[505]

Scholars that have made an attempt at structuring the temple sermon in ch.7, have done so with some degree of variation.[506] Carroll and Thompson for instance have divided the

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[502] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 233. For Jones, the temple sermon in 7:1-15 is Baruch's account, whereas ch.26 belongs to the later tradition (Jones, *Jeremiah*, 340). This goes against the grain of most earlier twentieth century scholarship (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 681). Thompson understands the relationship between the two accounts as being a reduction to the essentials in ch.26 (Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 274). McKane notes that the older, widely-expressed view, is that ch.7 is utterance and ch.26 is consequence (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 681). This basically supports Brueggemann's 'proclamation and response' approach as we have framed it here. Holladay views the ch.26 narrative as assuming the availability of the 7:3-12 text, which is being repeated in ch.26 in summarizing fashion (Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 240). He understands the ch.7 account to offer a fuller version of the sermon in parenetic prose, while the ch.26 account is narrative which offers the fullest account of a trial to be found in the OT (Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 101). Holladay views the framing of the temple sermon in 26:1 with 'In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim' to be a purposeful placement of a death threat at the beginning of Jeremiah's career (Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 110). However, the Jeremiah tradition has not seen fit to place the narrative itself at the beginning of the book.

[503] Carroll notes this in his commentary (*Jeremiah*, 207), although the difference in genre is rather self-evident.

[504] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 77.

[505] Ibid, 77.

[506] Brueggemann organizes Jer.7:1-15 into three sections: a chance to change (vv.1-7), the time for change is now past (vv.8-11), and the devastating conclusion (vv.12-15) (Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*,

verses slightly different, but have both organized the sermon around a legal action on the part of Jeremiah. Carroll distinguishes two separate admonishments at the outset (vv.2-4 and vv.5-7) and Thompson categorizes all of vv.1-7 as Yahweh's word and law being proclaimed. Both identify invectives and announcements of judgment in the latter portion of the sermon (vv.9-15).[507] An interpretive approach which understands Jeremiah as taking a legal action here in ch.7 in the form of a covenant lawsuit via typical prophetic speech pattern and Deuteronomistic language, might support the understanding that in ch.26 the response of priests and prophets is to counter with their own legal action against Jeremiah (e.g. ☪✡☹ ☜✌✞☹ in 26:11,16).[508] The fact that the responsive legal action in ch.26 is in the form of an impromptu trial (26:10-11) could suggest that immediate reflexive responses to prophetic challenge with an equal or greater accusation are inappropriate ways of dealing with such issues. In approaching Jer.7:9-15 as a combination of declarations of guilt, threat, warning, invective, and judgment verdict as Thompson and Carroll basically do, it is suggested here that vv.1-8 take on their own structure in the first half of the temple sermon. In a manner to be differentiated from standard structural analyses of the passage, there is a pattern of three statements being made, which are then expanded to a fuller meaning. The first statement, found in v.3, declares that the ways and doings of Judah are to be amended. However, in vv.5-6 there is an expanded description of the precise action Judah is to take in order to accurately amend their ways, namely, a genuine practice of righteousness which regards the oppressed and an avoidance of idolatrous practices. A second statement, which identifies 'this place', also in v.3, and which more than likely means the temple dwellings, is

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79-80). Holladay's simplest analysis is to break down vv.3-12 into four sections: vv.3-4, 5-8, 9-11, and 12; and vv.13-15 are a later appendix (Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 238). We break off our discussion of the temple sermon at v.15 because, besides the commentators just mentioned, Bright, Carroll, Jones, McKane, and Thompson all do the same before taking on an analysis of the cult of the queen of heaven in the material that follows.

[507] Holladay understands vv.13-15 as an appendix to the sermon added sometime after the scroll burning incident of Jer.36 (*Jeremiah*, 248). Perhaps the historicizing tendencies of Holladay cause him to miss the structured lawsuit of Jeremiah with its powerful conclusion of a judgment verdict resulting in loss of both temple and land.

[508] This also might give an understanding of Hananiah's response in ch.28, who in similar fashion responds to Jeremiah's wooden yokes with the countering action of breaking them. We see therefore, that in both chs.26 and 28 Jeremiah's opponents conduct themselves in a similar fashion which is being judged in the Jeremiah tradition as an inappropriate way of responding to divine challenge. Such an understanding

expanded in v.7 to include the land of promise. A third statement, which occurs in v.4, warns of not trusting in deceptive words. There is an expanded description in vv.8ff. that such words have no use. It would be valid also to determine that vv.5-7 expand v.3, while vv.8ff. expand v.4.

What makes the temple Yahweh's temple?

The temple sermon here in Jer.7 offers no historical referencing as to when, or on what occasion the sermon should be dated. The word of Yahweh simply comes to Jeremiah with instructions to proclaim his word in the gate of Yahweh's house (vv.1-2).[509] The biographical account of this sermon in ch.26 dates the event to the months following Jehoiakim's accession to the throne. It is a common hypothesis that during festival pilgrimages to the temple (in this case, possibly the Festival of Weeks[510] in 608 B.C.E.), servants of the institution would greet pilgrims at the temple gates to ask them to examine their moral lives prior to participating in worship.[511] Jeremiah may have assumed this unofficial role to issue his own moral challenge.[512] He exhorts them to amend the moral life[513] and pleads for them to abandon superficial[514] forms of religious faith that had been adopted by the people, in place of moral integrity. To state it further, McKane, influenced by Reventlow, discusses understanding the context here to be an

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of chs.26 and 28 make for a more logical connection as to why chs.26-29 are grouped together in the book of Jeremiah. We will take this up more fully in our upcoming discussion of Jer.28.

[509] LXX omits v.1 and v.2a in MT and starts with 'Hear the word of Yahweh ...' It also omits the latter part of v.2 which in MT states 'who enter these gates to worship Yahweh'. In sum vv.1-2 in LXX read with the shorter version, 'Hear the word of the Lord all you of Judah'. Carroll sees MT as a secondary edition (Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 206). McKane determines that LXX preserves the original, but declares it is better to treat MT as a different, longer text rather than trying to reconstruct an original Hebrew text on the foundation of LXX (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 159). We follow McKane's suggestion, but are content to work primarily with the MT tradition of Jeremiah - not only here, but throughout the book of Jeremiah.

[510] For Jones, this would be one of the three annual pilgrimage feasts (*Jeremiah*, 146).

[511] Craigie, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 120. Cf. Ps.15:1-5; 24:3-4; 65:4.

[512] If this indeed was the case, then either those responsible for such a task had lapsed in their duties, or such servants were themselves responsible for the false words Jeremiah warned against.

[513] The ordinary covenant demands with which the people were familiar (Jones, *Jeremiah*, 148).

[514] The general body of temple worshippers are receiving a number of challenges here, one of which is a discernment issue of the words they hear and/or recite (7:4,8). Cf.6:14 and 8:11 where the prophets and priests are addressed as such, "They have healed the brokenness of my people *superficially* (☩☹☠☤), saying 'peace, peace', but there is no peace". It demonstrates that the illness of Israel is taken lightly by prophet and priest, or as a trivial thing. The imagery is of providing inferior medical treatment to a very serious problem, as in the chapter three discussion of the heart (☙☹) patient. This is due to the ☠☩ of the priest and prophet (6:13 and 8:10).

'Entry Torah'[515] where an intending worshipper was reminded at the gate[516] of the temple that certain spiritual and moral conditions were to be met if one was to be fit to participate in temple worship.[517] But McKane rightly goes beyond this interpretation, stating that Jeremiah is presenting a 'deeper questioning'[518] which probes the issue as to whether or not Yahweh's presence is even to be found in the temple when the worshipper has not practiced the proper definition of righteousness. This, I think, raises another issue in the temple sermon concerning when Yahweh's temple is really Yahweh's temple. That is, only when proper morality and responsiveness to Yahweh are practiced, is there any reality to the physical building known as the temple actually being Yahweh's house. Or, to nuance the matter more carefully, the issue is whether the temple can be realized by Judah as that which intrinsically it is. Jones, like McKane, captures the intensity of what it is Jeremiah is doing. For him, Jeremiah's so-called 'Entry Torah' does not follow the conventional pattern of a liturgist, but instead provides a barrier between God and the people which amounted to nothing short of 'a life and death challenge'.[519]

Yahweh dwelling in the temple as divine response

The actual temple sermon begins at 7:3. It starts with an imperative command for Judah to 'make good' (✡🏱✥☜✥✞) their ways and their doings. Immediately following this

515 McKane, *Jeremiah*, 159.
516 Von Rad interpreted the 'gates of righteousness' in Ps.118:19-20 as the temple gates made righteous by the worshipper who had conducted himself/herself properly in society before coming to the temple to worship (Von Rad, *OT Theology* [volume 1], 378). He, like Reventlow, as well as McKane, understood Jer.7 to be an 'Entry Torah'.
517 Thompson understands the term ☪✡☼☪✞✞☹ (v.2) as a metaphor of great significance. It portrays for him a vassal-like approach towards a suzerain wherein the physical act of bowing down grants allegiance to someone of a very high status. It assumed willing submission on the part of the approaching party who gladly accepted the covenant demands and stipulations that were integral to the relationship. In the context of Jer.7 the term would have meant a high degree of ethical demand and responsibility were assumed to be laid upon every approaching 'worshipper' at the temple gates (Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 275).
518 McKane, *Jeremiah*, 159.
519 Jones, *Jeremiah*, 146. Ch.26, as we shall see, may be supporting this observation when it records that the response of priests and prophets was to challenge Jeremiah to the death (26:11). The larger unit of chs.26-29 ultimately moves toward a final death challenge which Jeremiah issues to Hananiah (28:16), Ahab and Zedekiah (29:21), and again to Shemaiah and his descendants (29:32).

initial charge of the prophet is the assurance that Yahweh will respond[520] in a favorable manner to their response, either to the effect of allowing them to dwell, or dwelling with them in 'this place'.[521] Part of the interpretation of the temple sermon presented here revolves around how ☺✂☪❝ ✞✋✂✞❝✡ in v.3 is to be understood. The pointing of the phrase will yield either one of two possible translations: 1) 'I will let you dwell', or 2) 'I will dwell with you'. In the first translation Yahweh is making an allowance for something to happen, but in the second translation there is the dynamic of Yahweh's presence. MT, LXX, Syriac, and Targums vocalize the verb 'dwell' here as a piel, and they do so again for the same verb in v.7. However, Aquila and the Vulgate translate both verbs as qals and change in v.3 what the other texts and manuscripts consider to be a direct object marker to the preposition 'with'. Holladay demonstrates further support for this according to the Syro-Hexapla and nine Hebrew manuscripts.[522] He contends that 'dwell' in v.3 should be understood as a qal and read as 'so that I might dwell with you', but that 'dwell' in v.7 should be read as a piel and be understood to mean 'then I shall let you dwell'.[523] In this way therefore, there is a deliberate shift from v.3 'with you' to 'you' as the direct object in v.7.[524] Jones, like Holladay, supports this revocalization so that the assurance Yahweh gives after the initial command in v.3 is the assurance that upon proper response 'I will dwell with you in this place'.[525] However, Jones may approach things in an opposite fashion when he states that the conditions for this to happen 'are moral, there is no substitute, not even the covenanted presence of the LORD

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[520] Such divine response is contextualized by the divine initiative understood to have already occurred in that Yahweh has called Israel/Judah into being in the first place. The interaction between Yahweh and his people only takes place because Yahweh has made such a dynamic possible.

[521] Holladay understands the phrase ✞❄✞ ☺✡☠😐➪ to hold the passage together because of its use in 7:3,6,7,12,14, and on further at vv.20,32, and 8:3. He believes Jer.7 was inserted at this point because of verbal associations with 6:16ff; which offers a series of related prose units united by ☺✡☠😐 (Holladay, *The Architecture of Jeremiah 1-20*, 102-105). Isbell and Jackson would not agree with Holladay that ☺✡☠😐 furnishes *the* glue of the various units in the passage, although they were willing to recognize it along with other key words as providing important links to the structure of this portion of Jeremiah. For instance, they noted 💻✍✋ ('way') in 7:3,5, and 23, and especially the root ✞✡✡ or ✞✡✞- there is uncertainty as to which is the actual root - ('worship') in 7:2 and 8:2. Isbell and Jackson structure Jer.7:1-8:2 by this term in a section by section downward spiral. They see the passage beginning with temple worship as an acceptable mode of worship, but then it swiftly winds down in a negative progression of improper worship culminating in creature worship in 8:2 as the basest possible kind of worship (Charles D. Isbell and Michael Jackson, *Rhetorical Criticism and Jeremiah vii 1-viii 3* [VT, Vol.XXX] 21-26).

[522] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 236.

[523] Ibid, 237.

[524] Ibid, 237.

in his House'.[526] That is, there is no real presence of the Lord in his house without the proper moral prerequisite. The direction of interpretation of the temple sermon here is that there is no presence of Yahweh in the temple when his people are not practicing proper moral and ethical behavior according to normal covenant standards; or perhaps, to formulate it differently, Yahweh's presence is presence in judgment. That is, Yahweh's presence becomes terrible to Israel (e.g. Amos 5:18-20), such that Jerusalem will become like Shiloh. The overall thrust of the passage is on Judah's safety in Yahweh's presence, which is precisely their error. Yahweh's genuine presence, in the sense that he can be properly approached and appropriated, is only a reality when there is proper attitude and conduct. But beyond this, and certainly of greater importance in the temple sermon, is the implied dynamics of divine responsiveness. The larger issue beyond the pointing of ☺✂☪❝ ☩℗✂✞❝✡ is therefore, that Yahweh responds positively to the genuine positive actions of his people (7:3-7). Yet this holds true for the opposite; Yahweh will also take judgment actions against a wicked people (7:12-15). Both possible actions on the part of Yahweh are evidenced in the lesson at the potter's house (18:7-10).[527] Jeremiah is in effect dropping the gauntlet before what appears to be Judean 'worshippers' (7:2) who have disengaged themselves from any genuine reflection of what the reality of Yahweh and his temple really might mean. The high moral charge in the message and the warnings of deception spell it out carefully.

<u>Human response which initiates divine response</u>

Verse four begins the process of interrogating the Judeans for the specifics of their errant ways. They should not trust (✡☜☡) in words of the lie (✍☠✞✞ ✞✍☡✋). ✡☜☡ has just previously been used in Jeremiah to speak of another item of false security that Judah was trusting in - fortified cities (5:17). Natural defense and fortification would appear to be an adequate, and even normal means of providing protection. In 7:4 there are words uttered which also would appear to provide a sense of security and protection.

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[525] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 147.
[526] Ibid, 150.
[527] Discussed in chapter four of the thesis.

But these words, 'the temple of Yahweh'[528] repeated three times over,[529] were according to Jeremiah, words of deception.[530] What does Jeremiah mean? Beyond the second occurrence of ✌☠✞✞ ✦✌🏳✋ in v.8 there is a sequence of six infinitive absolute verbs in the ethical challenge of v.9 which challenges the audacity of his audience for trusting in words of theological truth while not practicing appropriate corresponding action. The words concerning the veracity of Yahweh's temple have become a meaningless recitation of a formula, and in fact might be typical of triple expressions in the incantations of Babylonian magical texts[531] which have infiltrated Yahwism and have misappropriated the genuinely powerful thrust of the kind of three-fold statement such as is found in Isa.6:3. If this were true, the three-fold formula, which was perhaps recited when approaching the temple gates, not only became a false security system, but even an idolatrous practice. To recite truth carries little weight when truth is not practiced.

Contrary to popular opinion, it was simply not true that the presence of the temple in Jerusalem made the city and the people inviolable. It was true that it was the temple of Yahweh, but it became ✌☠✞ when Judahites asserted their own inviolability after breaking the covenant, and committed the evils referred to in vv.5-6,9. Covenant in the Mosaic tradition appears by the 'if'- 'then' formula in vv.5&7 respectively.

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528 The Hebrew text has the word ✞☺✞ following the triple recitation of 'the temple of Yahweh'. The plural term could refer to the complex of buildings associated with the temple rather than just the temple by itself.

529 The third 'temple of Yahweh' is not found in LXX. There is no sure way of knowing the original, but a triad here is likely for a number of reasons. First of all, the text of Jeremiah uses such a triad in 22:29. Also, some commentators (Holladay, McKane) suggest here a possible mimicking of the trisagion in Isa.6:3. In our analysis of Jer.23:9 we argued for 'holy words' as key to what makes one a true prophet in that context. The words uttered in Jer.7:4 are not words of holiness, but are instead words of deception. There may be some sense of parody between Isaiah's prophetic call in Isa.6:3 and the prophets alluded to in Jer.7:4. Specifically, Isaiah hears the three-fold 'holy' and then is touched on the lips, which he has recognized are in desperate need of purification, for him and his people. Contrarily, Jeremiah's prophetic opponents utter a three-fold statement which the text of Jeremiah is deeming to be false. The words they speak are an antithesis to Isaiah's prophetic calling. In sum, the judgment from both Isaiah and Jeremiah determine that Jeremiah's prophetic opponents are operating in falsehood. Also, Jeremiah would have been more consistent to use the term ☪✦🏳 in 7:4 instead of the word ☹✂✦✞ as used in Isa.6, for he uses ☪✦🏳 on most other occasions. Certainly ☹✂✦✞ was the term people were using, so although it may be fanciful, it is nonetheless possible that there is some reflection of the trisagion in Isaiah.

530 ✌☠✞✞ ✦✌🏳✋ appears only here and in v.8 in Jeremiah, and for that matter, the entirety of the OT, certainly making the specific terminology a striking statement; although the concept of false words is common enough.

531 Johannes Herrmann, *Zu Jer 22:29; 7:4*, ZAW 62 (1949-1950), 321-322.

Brueggemann notes how this feature indicates the conditionality of Judah's well-being and distances the text from the unconditional promises in the Davidic tradition (2 Sam.7:14-16).[532] The commands in v.3 are re-emphasized in v.5 by a double use of the infinitive absolute and a challenge to do justice. Such language might imply that Judah found it too easy to claim proper response to God without really doing so, as for instance by the recital of the v.4 formula. The charge to do ☜✌✝😐 in v.5[533] is extended by a further description of what it is to do such 'justice' in 7:6. The concern is, not surprisingly, and in keeping within tradition of Torah and covenant, for crimes against the alien, orphan, widow, and innocent; as well as a warning against the self-inflicted evil (☺✂☹ 👎✍☹) of idolatry.[534] The hope of Judah 'dwelling in this place', now in v.7 as it was in v.3, is further qualified to include not only Jerusalem and temple, but also the land promised to the fathers forever. The passage may be moving away from Davidic promises by the 'if'- 'then' formula of vv.5&7,[535] and may have some resonance with the national promise related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but it is probably best understood as a rhetorical way of initiating response, rather than being a comparison of covenants.

Verse eight might serve as an ending to the first part of the sermon, or as an opening to the next segment of the sermon. It repeats the warning mentioned at the beginning of v.4, 'you are trusting in the words of the lie'. But unlike v.4, this time trusting in ✍☠✝✝ ✟✍⌦✋ are expanded to be ☹✟👎✡✝ ✟☪☹⌦☹ (literally 'without benefit'). The expression could be understood to intimate wearing something out, perhaps like a garment which is no longer of use. The words of deception, having been identified in v.4 as the repetitious formula 'The temple of Yahweh', have been used to such an extent that they have lost their meaning. They have become worn out. To appear at the temple gates and offer this liturgical statement has become valueless to the would

[532] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 79. There is a wider tendency to see the David/Zion traditions as responsible for the people's attitude; especially John Bright, *Covenant and Promise* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1976).
[533] This provides possible resonance to the response of the priests and prophets in 26:11 who practice a false justice by their declaration of ☪✡😐 ☜✌✝😐 concerning Jeremiah.
[534] Brueggemann says that this is emphasized by inverted Hebrew word order, although he does not clarify how he determines this (*Exile and Homecoming*, 79).
[535] Ibid, 79.

be worshipper because there is no corresponding lifestyle reality to match what it is that makes the temple really the temple of Yahweh.

The questioning, perhaps in the form of judgment verdict (Carroll, Thompson), begins in v.9 with an interrogative ✞. The catalogue of infinitive absolutes concerning decalogue sins[536] is striking and emotional diction which captures the audacity of the Judahites. To 'burn incense to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known' is covenant violation which portrays Judah as forsaking Yahweh for that which has contributed nothing to her self-identity and well-being. The privilege which Israel has enjoyed as Yahweh's chosen as stated in Am.3:2a is characterized by 👃✋✥ and should be associated with 💻☹✞ (3:3) between the two parties. It is of some interest that the same two words, 👃✋✥ and 💻☹✞, are used in Jer.7:9 to indicate that there may be a relationship between 'walking' and 'knowing'. This kind of walking is indicative of following after and sharing a sense of intimacy. Such 'knowing' was to be reserved only for Yahweh. The interrogative of v.9 continues in v.10. The worshipper cannot violate the decalogue and commit associated sins and then come to Yahweh's house to worship in his name. They are not to claim deliverance[537] and then commit such deeds. LXX changes 'we are delivered - in order that you may do all these abominations' to 'we have abstained from doing all these abominable deeds'. The sense has been changed dramatically to a complete denial of wrong doing and assertion of innocence. Either way, the demand is for Judah to give Yahweh's temple its real quality based on living a proper ethical life outside the temple.[538] Because Yahweh's name is associated with the temple, those entering it should make it worthy of his name by their proper behavior and

[536] Reading canonically, the sins are a transgression of the decalogue. Cf. Hos.4:2, the only other place in the prophets with a similar listing of a portion of the Ten Commandments (Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 79). There is connection in the Hosea passage that such violation of the Decalogue is paramount to no knowledge of God (4:1).

[537] ☹🖫🔑 here more than likely signifies deliverance in war (e.g. the Babylonian threat; cf.Ex.18:4; Josh.9:26, 22:31; Judg.6:9, 8:34, 9:17). The reflexive sense of the niphal verb stem could indicate that the Judahites view their approach to the temple as in some way bringing about their own deliverance.

[538] Cf. the demand Mic.6:8 places on moral categories that have little to do with what takes place at the temple precincts (Mic.6:6-7).

obedience.[539] Certainly a purpose of the temple is to reflect the characteristics associated with Yahweh's name.[540]

Like v.9, v.11 starts with an interrogative ✞. The line of questioning this time concerns Judah's ability/inability to discern. The particular concern of discernment is expressed in 'eyesight' (👌✞👁), and the ability to see what Judah has turned the temple into.[541] Yahweh can see that which is apparently obvious,[542] Judah seemingly cannot. The sermon shall advance this in v.12 with a challenge from Yahweh for Judah to go 'see' (the very thing they are failing to do) what became of Shiloh in an earlier day. Will they at least be able to learn from history and the fate of Shiloh as an object lesson?[543] The present temple is being turned into a headquarters of thugs (v.11).[544] This was an appropriate picture, for robbers and bandits used to hide themselves in secluded areas after securing their plunder and performing their misdeeds.[545] It is typical of the deceptive 🐍☹ (17:9) which has its own unprobed, dark, secretive ability to hide. Once again, Yahweh is the one who searches and sees (11:20, 17:10), 'Behold, I, even I, have *seen* it ... (7:11)'.

As already mentioned, Yahweh then instructs his people to go to Shiloh and '*see* what I did to it, because of the wickedness of my people Israel' (7:12). When Yahweh asks the

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[539] The verb ✋😐👁 in v.10 may connote submission in the sense of a vassal appearing before his overlord. It would be unthinkable that a rebel or disobedient vassal should go through a ritualistic form which portrays genuine submission when in fact there is a lack of allegiance (Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 280-281).

[540] For instance, the term ✞✋💀📦 used rarely in Genesis, appears strategically in Israel's story when the divine name is initially given to Moses (Ex.3:5). The term will appear more than fifty times in Leviticus concerning the sort of people the Israelites are to be. If the temple is to accurately depict the one whose name it bears, the worshipper must demonstrate it by holy conduct.

[541] There is the reminder in v.11, as in v.10, that the temple is called by Yahweh's name.

[542] Jones understands the Hebrew of 'even I, behold I have seen it' as 'brief and cryptic' (*Jeremiah*, 149). It seems however that emphasis is what is in mind here - what Yahweh can clearly see, which is certainly of an offensive nature, Judah is incapable of seeing.

[543] McKane comments, 'Historical precedent is not on their side' (*Jeremiah*, 163).

[544] Holladay goes into detail to describe this as strong language which suggests something beyond mere robbery, but indeed, Judah is behaving like brigands who are even intent on violence to achieve their purpose (*Jeremiah*, 246). The word 💣✳✞✍✌ is found, besides Jer.7:11, only in Ps.17:4; Isa.35:9; Ezek.7:22,18:10, and Dan.11:14 in the OT. The most similar usage to Jer.7:11 is Ezek.7:22 where it is used in the plural to describe those who violate the temple. Its association in Isa.35:9 with a lion and a beast captures the predatorial, violent, and aggressive nature of 💣✳✞✍✌.

[545] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 281.

question, 'Has this house, which is called by my name,[546] become a den of robbers *in your sight*'?, it is likely that he is reproving them for not being able to see it. He can see it,[547] but the people cannot. For this reason he instructs with the historical lesson of the earlier fate of the dwelling of the Lord at Shiloh. Because Yahweh *can see*, and the people, due to ראה (vv.4,8) *cannot see*, he determines that he no longer desires to *see* his people, 'And I will cast you out of my *sight*[548]... (7:15)'! One of the main themes of the temple sermon is, therefore, that falsehood can easily be disguised as truth and can deceive those who practice falsehood. This is related to the general nature of falsehood prevalent in the human heart[549] and which, while not always being detected at the human level, is always detected, and challenged, at the divine level. A statement of fact has become a falsehood because of an inward human condition. But Judah has not only failed to 'see', they have also failed to 'hear' (שמע). Verse 13 uses the metaphor, 'rising up early and speaking' to portray Yahweh as one who might daily and diligently load up his pack animals to pursue a task.[550] Yahweh has clearly called, but Judah has clearly failed to 'hear' or 'respond'.[551] Therefore, the final judgment verdict is given (vv.14-15). Judah's trust (בטח) in the temple (v.14) is similar to their trust (בטח) in the 'deceptive words' (vv.4,8). The lack of proper moral response to Yahweh results for Judah in a similar fate as what the northern kingdom experienced - exile (v.15).

The temple sermon in Jer.26

We now turn our attention to the temple sermon repeated in Jeremiah in its abbreviated form and extended narrative, specifically, Jer.26. Jones rejects Carroll's view that the ch.26 incident is constructed story, which basically typifies much of Carroll's approach

[546] According to the context, either the name of the house should be changed or the people should change their ways. It is also number three of four references in the sermon to Yahweh's name being associated with his house (vv.10,11,12,14).

[547] Hebrew text is emphatic in v.11 that Yahweh can see it ראיתי גם אנכי.

[548] Although the Hebrew reads literally 'from my face' so that the word play works only in English. It works as an emphatic not as such in the Hebrew, but made possible by translation.

[549] Holladay notes how Qimchi, Calvin, Rudolph, and Bright all understand the temple sermon to mean, 'I see what is in your heart', *Jeremiah*, 247.

[550] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 210.

[551] The Hebrew verb ענה can mean to 'answer', but also to 'sing' in a responsive sense. It is conceivable that the metaphorical language of Yahweh 'rising early and speaking' could mean a sensitive, tender, and indeed, even romantic approach that Judah has failed to respond to.

to the entire book of Jeremiah.[552] He contends rather, that the events described are a version of plain history told in such a way as to make certain points.[553] However, how the story now stands in the Jeremiah tradition is the more pressing issue, and it is McKane who offers a lengthy discussion of the form and nature of the story.[554] He finds cohesiveness in the story, especially in relation to ch.7, in understanding ch.26 as a legal model revolving around the phrase ☪✡☹ ☚✌✞☹ (26:11,16).[555] According to McKane, it is legal protocol which places Jeremiah on trial for a capital charge, not historical precedent which drives the story. McKane identifies three charges cited in the trial: blasphemy, treason, and heresy. Holladay gives the following appropriate structure to the trial: pretrial accusation (vv.8-9), the trial proper (vv.10-16) including a prosecution speech (v.11), a defense speech (vv.12-15), and a verdict of exoneration (v.16).[556]

The shorter version of the sermon in ch.26 has some significant differences from the ch.7 version. First, and rather striking, is the divine imperative to 'not diminish a word' (v.2).[557] Thompson notes that the very phrase ✍⌦✋ ☟✍⚐☪ ☹❝ is a vivid one which sometimes refers to clipping off a beard (Jer.48:37; Isa.15:2).[558] The point is that Jeremiah should not trim his message for fear of consequences. Holladay states that the formula is generally found in ancient Near Eastern legal and wisdom texts.[559] Thus it can be somewhat established that McKane's legal model is a legitimate approach to the interpretation of ch.26. But what follows in v.3, and which is stated in different terms in 7:3,5-7, is a clear call to human repentance which will result in divine repentance formulated in the classic ⌦✡✞/☺☼☤ vocabulary of 18:8. It is imperative that Jeremiah speak even the harshest words, unedited and straightforward, because such words may be that which causes Judah to turn from evil and 'walk in Torah' (v.4). The portrait of

[552] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 341.
[553] Ibid, 341.
[554] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 665-683.
[555] Ibid, 676. As has been previously pointed out, the temple sermon in Jer.7 has legal terminology which revolves around the concept of the Sinai covenant.
[556] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 102.
[557] See Deut.4:2 for a striking parallel.
[558] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 524.
[559] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 104.

walking in the law here, as well as in 9:12; 32:23; 44:10,23, speaks of a comprehensive way of life that is fully characterized by obedience. Whereas 'seeing' was one key to discerning the word of Yahweh in the ch.7 sermon, 'hearing' (שׁמע) is key here in the ch.26 account (vv.3,4,5). In v.3 Judah is to listen particularly to Jeremiah, in v.4 Jeremiah is to equate listening to him with listening authentically to Yahweh himself - especially since the call of Jeremiah has stated that Yahweh's words are in Jeremiah's mouth (1:9; cf. also Deut.18:18), and in v.5 prophetic voices in general can give content to the genuine word of Yahweh. In both ch.7 and ch.26 the principles of conditionality, repentance, and divine response are of primary concern. Basically, Judah's destiny is in one real sense in Judah's hands, perhaps being symbolized by the referent to Jeremiah being in the hands of the people of Judah (v.14).[560]

The ch.26 account of the temple sermon takes the incident in new directions by narrating the public response to Jeremiah's words (vv.7-24). The message has gone forth in a comprehensive manner as Jeremiah was commanded. In v.7, the audience consists of priests, prophets, and all the people.[561] They 'hear' (שׁמע) Jeremiah's words, but it will be especially the priests and prophets who in actuality fail to do any real 'hearing' of Jeremiah's words, already established to be the word of Yahweh (vv.4-5), and which should be marked by שׁוב (v.3) on their part. Upon completion of the sermon (v.8), the response sought for in v.3 is radically contradicted; Jeremiah is 'seized' (תפשׂ), which can mean to arrest (Jer.37:13; 1 Kgs.13:4,18:40) thus furthering the notion of a legal action. In fact, a capital charge is brought, 'you must die'.[562] They suppose that by their actions they are defending temple and city (v.9).[563] It is stated in the latter portion of 26:9 'And all the people gathered about (קהל) Jeremiah in the house of the Lord'. The

[560] Holladay understands the narrative to be held together by the term 'hand'. Jeremiah states that he is in the 'hands' of his accusers (v.14), and the narrative concludes with the intervention of the 'hand' of Ahikam to keep Jeremiah from the 'hands' of the people (v.24) (*Jeremiah*, 102).
[561] According to Jones, 'this is the combination which seems to have generated the most hatred of Jeremiah and the greatest threat to his person and mission' (*Jeremiah*, 342). This is the same combination addressed in 23:33 ff.
[562] Emphasized and abbreviated by the infinitive absolute construction תּמוּת מוֹת.
[563] The term חרב in v.9 is a declaration of war threat. Its verb meaning is to be 'under attack'. The noun vocalization means 'sword'.

verb ☹✝☠ can mean to assemble together for conflict as in 2 Sam.20:14.[564] The immediate context of v.8, "the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him saying, 'you must die'!", gives every indication of a serious moment in the life of the prophet and the notion of conflict expressed in the term ☹✝☠ in 26:9. This conflict transcends Jeremiah and his audience and develops into the city-wide crisis between priests, prophets, and people opposed to Jeremiah in the first instance (v.8), and then a change of heart on the part of 'the people' (v.16) after hearing more from Jeremiah (vv.12-15). The text captures quite poignantly the stir and conflict prophecy can produce in an audience.

A new party, the 'princes (✟✍☝) of Judah', are introduced into the debate (v.11). It is the priests and prophets particularly (e.g. those most closely associated with the temple) who take an offensive initiative against Jeremiah before the people and the recently arrived princes. Their pronouncement of a ☪✡😐 ☜✌✝😐 against Jeremiah for his allegedly speaking against Jerusalem and temple is a misrepresentation in that they fail to relay the full account of Jeremiah's message, a message which gave opportunity for repentance leading to avoidance of national disaster.[565] Jeremiah's defense before the princes and the people is that he is sent by Yahweh (v.12), and it is clear from his perspective that he has been faithful in speaking all of Yahweh's words as he had been commanded (v.2). He does not deny that he has prophesied such woe against city and temple, but he is quick to point out that the fullness of the message involves an opportunity for Judah to change her ways which will result in Yahweh relinquishing punishment (v.13). True 👎😐✝ on the part of Judah concerning the words of the Lord is only when there has been an appropriate moral response (v.13). Jeremiah's surrender to those whom he is addressing (v.14) is a challenge of discernment - what they do with him is what they will do with Yahweh's word. He is emphatic about being sent

[564] McKane notes three interpretations of the gathering of the people: curious onlookers, a threatening mob closing in (because where the Leningrad manuscript has ☹❝, some Hebrew manuscripts have ☹👎, which may suggest more of a threatening aspect - this has been the interpretation more generally adopted), and the legal model of the convening of an impromptu court.

[565] Brueggemann notes that such a distortion is similar to Amaziah distorting the words of Amos in another passage of conflict (Am.7:10-17) (Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 234). McKane

(✞☝☼☹✞ ☪☺❝☜), and also that putting him to death would indict all in a serious way ('only know for certain', ✡☟✋☪ ☟✋✞ 💻❝) (v.15).

The princes and the people now give a response (v.16) after having listened to the charge of the priests and prophets (v.11) and the defense of Jeremiah (vv.12-15). In speaking to the priests and prophets they issue a verdict of ☪✡😐 ☚✌✞😐 ☝✞❝. Jeremiah's defense and warning has convinced them that he has spoken in the name of Yahweh. Jeremiah is not a solitary religious authority here, but rather stands at the center of a deep public debate and dispute.[566]

A new and surprising voice enters into this debate in v.17, the 'elders (☝☠❄) of the land'. They demonstrate that they take prophecy in the community seriously by reminding the gathering of people of the words of Micah in the days of king Hezekiah, words that prophesied judgment on Jerusalem (v.18).[567] The quotation of Mic.3:12 and the implications of such words cited here suggests that the elders entertained the possibility of a thorough devastation of Jerusalem, including the area of the temple mount. Micah is a canonically earlier writing prophet than Jeremiah who prophesied judgment on Jerusalem, and as such it is striking that of all his words, only the words of 3:12 are quoted. The elders pose a question, 'Did Hezekiah and all of Judah put Micah to death for his prophecy'? (v.19).[568] The answer is not only a 'no', but is extended to show the kind of response that is appropriate and effective in bringing a positive divine response. Hezekiah 'feared' (❝✍✞)[569] and 'entreated' (☹☼✞)[570] Yahweh, and Yahweh's response

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describes the priests and prophets as 'a faceless coalition, lacking the individuality and liveliness of credible opponents' (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 679).

[566] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 239.

[567] This citing of past traditions by the elders of the land may be what helps motivate Jeremiah when he also refers to past traditions in his debate with Hananiah (28:8). For a discussion of the practice of intertextuality in general, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 245-247, 458-460. On the notion that Micah is a rural prophet who speaks out against the urban center and who would have the support of the 'elders of the land' as village leaders, see Hans Walter Wolff, 'Micah the Moreshite - The Prophet and His Background,' in *Israelite Wisdom*, ed. John G. Gammie (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 77-84.

[568] Once again, the text of Jeremiah uses an infinitive absolute construction to bring emphasis and clarity to what is said after an initial interrogative (e.g. ✡✞☪😐✞ ☪😐✞✞).

[569] The 'fear of the Lord' is thus evidenced here by a kind of response that turns toward, rather than away from Yahweh. It is typically portrayed in the OT by a proper moral and ethical response (e.g. Job 28:28).

was to ‘change his mind’ (☺☼☤)[571] about the planned ‘calamity’ (✞☜✍). The elders counsel that any ✞☜✍ they experience will be self-inflicted.

Another example of a prophet like Micah, yet in the more contemporary situation, was Uriah, the son of Shemaiah[572] (v.20). For he too prophesied words similar to Jeremiah.[573] Jehoiakim is a foil to Hezekiah (keeping in mind that the context of the temple sermon is during his reign, v.1) in that he and his men[574] sought to put Uriah the prophet to death, and were indeed successful in doing so (vv.20-21). In fact, Jehoiakim is willing to take extreme measures, the pursuit of Uriah to Egypt, in order to carry out his desire to silence the prophet. Hezekiah took measures to entreat Yahweh in his day, Jehoiakim relentlessly pursues and attempts to destroy the prophetic word through the killing of Uriah in his day. Uriah is captured in Egypt, led back to Jehoiakim, killed by the sword, and disrespectfully buried (v.23).[575] At this point, the narrator[576] informs the reader that Jeremiah is given protection from the hand of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, so that he is not given into the hands of the people to be put to death (v.24). Thus there are those in Judah who are yet willing to regard the words of Jeremiah.

To summarize ch.26, it was Yahweh’s desire in sending Jeremiah to the temple in the first place that the people would *listen* (☜☺✞) and *turn* (☪☼✞) in order that Yahweh might *turn* (☺☼☤) (v.3). The concern for ☜☺✞ is reinforced three more times in Yahweh’s summons to Jeremiah as preparation to speak (vv.4-5). Jeremiah’s audience ‘heard’ (☜☺✞) him speak (v.7), but what they ‘heard’ (☜☺✞) (v.11) made them think he

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[570] ☹☼✝ can mean to ‘pacify’, so that it might be read here as ‘stroking the face of Yahweh’ (McKane, *Jeremiah*, 664). Certainly such a rendering of ☹☼✝ here connotes a deliberate effort to please Yawheh and seek his favor. LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate have ‘they’ doing the entreating of Yahweh, and not merely king Hezekiah. Therefore, it is both king and people who have shown pious fear in response to Micah’s warning according to these manuscripts.

[571] That which has been offered in vv.3&13, namely Yahweh’s turning from a judgment course of action, is shown to be a trustworthy reality because it has historical validity.

[572] There may be significance in the name of Uriah’s father in that ☜☺✞ has been prevalent in the larger passage of Jer.26.

[573] LXX omits prophesy against ‘the city’ in v.20.

[574] LXX does not have ‘and all his mighty men and all his officials’ like MT (v.21). Neither does it have ‘and he feared and he fled’. This, and the previous footnote are examples of the shorter Greek text.

[575] He is treated as a commoner in that the text reads literally, ‘into the graves of the sons of the people’.

was worthy of death. Jeremiah responds that what they have 'heard' (👂😐✝) (v.12), they should 'hear/obey' (👂😐✝) (v.13) that Yahweh might 'turn/repent' (☺✡👂) (v.13). There would be no occasion for Yahweh to ☺✡👂 in the present context because of Jehoiakim's and other leaders' failure to 👂😐✝, unlike the day when Hezekiah responded with ❝✍✙ (v.19) at the word of Yahweh through Micah, thereby giving Yahweh the opportunity to ☺✡👂 (v.19). The notion of ☺✡👂 is the express desire of Yahweh in the chapter (vv.3,13,19). True knowledge of Yahweh, actualized in the peoples' 👂😐✝ and 🤝✡✝ through the proclamation of the prophet, would bring about this ultimate result.

Summary

A combined look at Jeremiah's temple sermon in chs.7&26 reveals a legal action, indeed a very challenge of what it is to live life with Yahweh, on the part of Jeremiah, quite possibly in the context of an 'Entry Torah', which is countered by a legal action on the part of priests and prophets in the form of a ☪✡😐 ☜✌✝☺. But the greater concerns of the pericopes probe the issues of divine responsiveness and divine presence/accessibility only being a reality when there is appropriate human response and behavior. The dynamics are such that Yahweh can and will act according to the actions of the people of Judah. He can genuinely be accessible and give the Jerusalem temple the reality of what it is to be - the place where he dwells, or he can be removed, disassociated, and even allow the temple's demise and destruction. Those who would approach Yahweh's house should not do so without genuine reflection upon their individual and communal lives, and how the morality of their lives contribute to an understanding of what it is that makes the Jerusalem temple the house of Yahweh. Truth is not to be found merely in spoken words, but in appropriate corresponding action. Jeremiah's bold appearance at the temple gates as recorded in chs.7&26, whether 'Entry Torah' or not, is basically a rhetorical way of initiating such response.

[576] It is difficult to tell where the speech of the elders comes to an end, and where the narrator picks up the story once again. Although either way it does not seem to impact the interpretation of the passage much.

CHAPTER 9: MESSAGES CONCERNING THE YOKE OF BABYLON (CHS.27-29)

Introducing the cycle of Jer.27-29

The sign of the yoke in Jer.27-28 goes beyond the previously discussed temple sermon of ch.26 by foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem (as in 21:4-10) and even world-wide submission to Babylon. Chapter 29 is a part of the cycle of chs.27-28, the linking motif between the three chapters being the prophets and their relationship to Babylon. The three chapter collection shares common themes and a historical setting during the reign of Zedekiah.[577] Certain distinctive features set them apart from the rest of the book of Jeremiah, perhaps suggesting a possible period of independent transmission. There are

[577] There is a textual problem concerning the name of the king in 27:1, although the evidence will point to Zedekiah as the appropriate king. This will be discussed shortly, during our main exposition of 27:1. Thompson informs us that 'In the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign (594/3 B.C.), vassal states in the western parts of Nebuchadrezzar's empire began to explore the possibility of a rebellion, probably encouraged by disturbances to the east of Babylon in the previous year' (*Jeremiah*, 531). It is likely that the international gathering of prophets and kingly messengers in ch.27 is to meet at a central location to discuss the possibility and rationale of taking opportunity against Babylon.

some stylistic peculiarities such as the spelling of names and the frequent attachment of the title 'the prophet' to Jeremiah.[578] In ch.27 there is still hope for the nations, with specific concern for Judah, to respond to the word of Yahweh through Jeremiah by joining alongside him in the symbolism of the yoke. In ch.28, Hananiah's inappropriate response to Jeremiah's wearing of the yoke is in some sense representative of the final and total rejection of the prophetic word through Jeremiah by the nation as a whole, thus signaling no hope for not only Judah in the immediate future, but also for the nations, and of course, Hananiah himself.[579] Jeremiah's confident letter concerning a lengthy exile in ch.29 is the next step beyond the final and total rejection of Hananiah, Judah, and the nations. The distinctive thrust of the text as a whole in these three chapters is to bring forth an exemplary story of opposition against the word of submission by Jeremiah, and Yahweh's judgment on that opposition, and from a canonical perspective, to distinguish the true from the false as set forth in the book of Jeremiah. The inevitable result is a lengthy exile in which Jeremiah gives specific advice as to how it is to be approached (ch.29).

Jer.27 in LXX and MT

Jer.27 presents exceptional difficulties in text criticism.[580] For this reason we set out the whole text of Jer.27 according to the LXX version and the MT version, and then comment after doing so. Omissions are shown where the LXX lacks text that is in MT. What follows first is an English translation of the LXX of Jer.27, which corresponds to ch.34 in LXX.[581]

LXX

v.1 (omitted)

v.2 Thus says the Lord "prepare for yourself chords and yoke-pegs and put them on your neck;

[578] Seven out of eleven occurrences in these chapters. Hananiah is also given the title 'the prophet' six out of eight times in ch.28. The reason for this practice is because the subject matter of chs.27-29 is so concerned with prophetic conflict and prophetic falsehood.

[579] Hananiah may serve in the narrative as an example of a larger prevailing attitude.

[580] Holladay states, 'The present literary condition of the chapter is not good, and one can only guess at what carelessness of recording or transmission has left the material in its present state' (*Jeremiah*, 117).

[581] I am mostly indebted to the work of McKane, who offers extensive commentary and analysis of the Greek text of Jer.27 (McKane, *Jeremiah 2*, 685-694).

v.3 and you shall send them off to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre and the king of Sidon, by the hand of their ambassadors coming to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah;
v.4 and you shall give them the following charge to their masters; thus the Lord God of Israel has said, thus you shall say to your masters:
v.5 'I have made the earth, by my great power and my outstretched arm, and I can give it to whomever I please.
v.6 So now I have given all the earth into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to serve him; even the animals of the field I have given to him to serve him.
v.7 (omitted)
v.8 And the nation or kingdom which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, with sword and famine I shall visit says the Lord, until they are consumed by his hand.
v.9 As for you, do not listen to your false prophets or your diviners or your dreamers or your soothsayers or your sorcerers who say "You will not serve the king of Babylon."
v.10 For it is lies they are prophesying to you, so as to remove you far from your soil.
v.11 But the nation which will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him I shall leave on their soil, and they shall till it and shall dwell on it.'"
v.12 And to Zedekiah king of Judah I have spoken with similar words, as follows, 'Bring your necks in
v.13 (omitted)
v.14 and serve the king of Babylon for they are prophesying unjust things to you.
v.15 For I did not send them, says the Lord, and they are prophesying in my name unjust things, so as to destroy you and you perish, you and the prophets prophesying to you, prophesying lies to you wrongly.'
v.16 To you and to all this people and to the priests I have spoken as follows: thus the Lord has said, "Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, 'the vessels of the house of the Lord are going to be brought back from Babylon', for it is unjust things they are prophesying to you, I did not send them.
v.17 (omitted)
v.18 If they were prophets, and if the word of the Lord were with them, then they would be interceding with me"
v.19 For thus the Lord has said concerning/about[582] the rest of the vessels
v.20 which the king of Babylon did not take when he exiled Jeconiah from Jerusalem
v.21 (omitted)
v.22 'To Babylon they shall be taken,' says the Lord.

We next lay out the lengthier MT in English translation and italicize those portions which are either lacking in LXX, or are different in some way.

[582] The **kai;** is problematic here.

MT

v.1 *In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying,*
v.2 Thus says the Lord *to me* "prepare for yourself chords and yoke-pegs and put them on your neck;
v.3 and you shall send them off to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre and the king of Sidon, by the hand of ambassadors coming to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah;
v.4 and you shall give them the following charge to their masters; thus the Lord *of hosts, the* God of Israel has said, thus you shall say to your masters:
v.5 'I have made the earth - *man and beast which are on the face of the earth,* by my great power and my outstretched arm, and I can give it to whomever I please.
v.6 So now I am the one who has given all *these lands* into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon *my servant*; even the animals of the field I have given to him to serve him.
v.7 *And all the nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son until the time comes for his land in turn, and many nations and great kings shall make a servant of him.*
v.8 And the nation or kingdom which will not serve him, *Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,* and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, with sword, and famine, *and pestilence* I shall visit *that nation* says the Lord, until *I have finished them* by his hand.
v.9 As for you, do not listen to your prophets or your diviners or your *dreams* or your soothsayers or your sorcerers who say *to you as follows,* "You will not serve the king of Babylon."
v.10 For it is a lie they are prophesying to you, so as to remove you far from your soil, *and I will drive you out and you will perish.*
v.11 But the nation which will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him I shall leave on their soil, *says the Lord,* and they shall till it and shall dwell on it.'"
v.12 And to Zedekiah king of Judah I have spoken with similar words, as follows, 'Bring your necks *under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him and his people and live.*
v.13 *Why should you die, you and your people, by sword, famine and pestilence, as the Lord spoke concerning the nation which will not serve the king of Babylon?*
v.14 *Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, you will not serve* the king of Babylon for they are prophesying a lie to you.
v.15 For I did not send them, says the Lord, and they are prophesying in my name falsely, so as to *chase you off* and you perish, you and the prophets prophesying to you.'
v.16 And to the priests and to all this people I have spoken as follows: thus the Lord has said, "Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, 'the vessels of the house of the Lord are going to be brought back from Babylon,

quite soon now', for it is a lie they are prophesying to you.
v.17 *Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city be a ruin?*
v.18 If they were prophets, and if the word of the Lord were with them, then they would be interceding with *the Lord of hosts that the vessels which are left in the house of the Lord, and in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem, might not go to Babylon.*
v.19 For thus the Lord *of hosts* has said concerning *the pillars and the sea and the stands and* the rest of the vessels *which remain in this city*
v.20 which *Nebuchadnezzar,* the king of Babylon did not take when he exiled Jeconiah *son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah* from Jerusalem *to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem -*
v.21 *for thus the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, has said concerning the vessels left in the house of the Lord and the house of the king of Judah and Jerusalem -*
v.22 'To Babylon they shall be taken, *and there they shall be until the day of my attending to them',* says the Lord. *'Then I shall bring them up and return them to this place.'"*

In general, the shorter LXX reads more harshly concerning the fate of Judah, and the absence of certain sentences and words allows for a shorter reading without eliminating any of the critique against the prophets, thereby giving such critique more emphasis in the passage. This concern may be a good lead into the Hananiah incident of ch.28. The omission of the rhetorical questions; 'Why should you die?' (v.13) and 'Why should this city be a ruin?' (v.17), remove a possible sense of Yahwistic sympathy that fits with the ending point of the passage in MT (that there shall be a restoration of the temple vessels). What is most obvious in comparing the two versions is the mentioning of eventual Babylonian demise in the MT (v.7),which is not to be found in the LXX. Also, the ending point of MT just mentioned concerning the positive outlook for the exiled temple articles (vv.21-22) almost completely lacks in LXX, which ends abruptly with a declaration of exile of the temple vessels which are yet in Jerusalem.

As just stated, the longer MT version has the forecasting of the destruction of Babylon which the LXX does not envision. What is common in the MT is that both v.7 and vv.20-22, which predicts the eventual return of the temple vessels, are prophecies which bring hope in the midst of a chapter which pronounces doom. Emanuel Tov understands the additional material to be vaticinium ex eventu, insertions made at the time of the

Persian period.[583] He views the expansion of the text in a later period as making the MT inferior to the LXX. For Tov, the MT has Jeremiah's hopeful message intruding upon the text, misplaced and out of context. He quotes Jeremiah in 27:18, 'If they are really prophets and the word of the Lord is with them, let them intercede with the Lord of Hosts not to let the vessels ... go to Babylon!'.[584] He next states that Jeremiah 'makes a confusing and anticlimactic statement ...' (He cites 27:22 about the promise of restoration of the temple vessels).[585] But Tov misses the rhetorical thrust of MT here, as well as a flow of thought from ch.27-29, which is really the task at hand. It is hoped that it will be demonstrated here that the larger Jeremiah tradition, which of course involves MT, is concerned about a portrayal of typical prophetic hope of response to the word of Yahweh (the concern of ch.27). Chapter 27 leaves open the possibility for appropriate response from the nations, and particularly Judah, but in ch.28 that hope is vanishing, expressed in the opposition of Hananiah, and by ch.29 a long exile is without doubt.

The commentators are in basic agreement that Jer.27 is comprised of three sections in prose. There is little need for further debate on this, for this appears axiomatic. The first section is a warning to foreign ambassadors to deliver a message to their kings of submission to Babylon (vv.1-11). Section two is an appeal along the same lines to Zedekiah, the Jerusalem king (vv.12-15). The last section is a similar message to priests and the people of Judah which includes concern for the fate of the vessels of Yahweh's house (vv.16-22). The three sections are also linked by Jeremiah's plea to not listen to the false prophets (vv.9,14,16) because they prophesy 🗡☠✝ (vv.10,14,16).

The considerable differences between MT and LXX concerning Jer.27 show up immediately in v.1. The heading in MT is in the reign of Jehoiakim rather than in the reign of Zedekiah, who is clearly the Judean king in the chapter (vv.3,12; 28:1). Syriac, Arabic, and a few other manuscripts support Zedekiah as king in the heading, whereas

[583] For a review of Tov's textual analysis of Jer.27 see E. Tov, 'The Book of Jeremiah: A Work in Progress' in *Bible Review* (Volume XVI, Number 3) (Washington D.C: Biblical Archaeological Society, June 2000), 32-38,45.
[584] Ibid, 38.
[585] Ibid, 38.

LXX lacks the entire verse. It is most likely that the heading of 27:1 in MT was copied erroneously from 26:1.[586] This would be no small error, in that the line of reasoning taken in this interpretation of ch.27 is that the overall message is both directly and indirectly intended for Zedekiah in a sort of last chance effort by Jeremiah. The direct message is in vv.12-15, the indirect message (vv.2-11 - addressed seemingly to foreign envoys) is a lead in to vv.12 ff. Jeremiah is instructed to wear a half-filled yoke[587] (v.2) for the purpose of offering a willing submissive response to Babylon, a sign action which invites another party voluntarily to place upon themselves the unoccupied spot of the burden that is commonly worn by animals. Refusal to bend the neck to accommodate the yoke is picturesque of the typical biblical warning against being 'stiff-necked'.[588] The sign is an appeal for submission to Babylon which allows the hearer opportunity to respond and maintain some sense of continuity (v.11) in the midst of the coming discontinuity. But as oracles against foreign nations might be used in the Hebrew prophets without ever being heard by such foreign nations, designed instead for Israel/Judah, so here also the sign action to the nations might be a rhetorical way of addressing Zedekiah.[589]

The message to the envoys immediately establishes the sovereign rule of Yahweh as creator and the one who orders the nations in Exodus-like language (vv.5-8). By way of speculation, the inclusion of 'beasts' (✞☺✞☜) as that which Yahweh rules may indicate Yahweh's supremacy above all living creatures or may speak more specifically of domesticated animals that live with and work for human families. The symbolism of the yoke would most certainly have great effect among a people who live and work with such animals. This seems even more likely because whereas ✞☺✞☜ is used in v.5 in

[586] Tov, 'A Work in Progress', 45; and Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 115.
[587] Verse 3 in MT has the yokes in the plural ('send them') which Jones proposes can be taken seriously by allowing for some type of representation, such as a drawing or a model, to be sent back to the foreign kings (Jones, *Jeremiah*, 350). Bright's view, which he states is 'in common with virtually all commentators' of his day is that it is unlikely that Jeremiah did anything other then wear one yoke, and that the plural suffix 'them' attached to 'send' in v.3 of MT is a carry over from v.2 (Bright, *Jeremiah*, 199).
[588] Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52* (WBC) (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1995), 51.
[589] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 245. Calvin had also stated that Zedekiah is the 'central actor' in the chapter. John Calvin, *Jeremiah* (Vol.3, Calvin's Commentaries) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), 349.

referencing one aspect of the animal kingdom - probably domesticated animals, a different term - ✞✋✍✞ ☪✦☼, is used in v.6 to refer to another aspect of the animal kingdom - probably undomesticated animals such as bears and lions as well as living wildlife that roam and scavenge after warfare.[590] If Yahweh's rule is established down to the detail of the animal kingdom, then certainly the kings that are being addressed in the message have no chance of escaping what Yahweh dictates. Brueggemann puts it in terms consistent with our interpretation of the book of Jeremiah in general and knowledge of Yahweh in Jeremiah in particular. He states, 'The prophet insists that the nations live in a world of moral accountability'.[591] The actions of the nations matter to Yahweh, and he will govern accordingly to accomplish what he determines to be right. And what is right in the immediate future is that all nations subjugate themselves to the yoke of Babylonian rule.

Verse 7 continues the theme of servitude to Nebuchadnezzar but then, in MT, predicts an ultimate nemesis for Babylon and an ultimate end of Babylonian hegemony. This prediction, because of its absence in LXX, has been seen in the modern history of interpretation as an addition by the later exilic community which was able to discern the erosion of Babylonian power, thereby weakening the force of Jeremiah's message as preserved in MT. This is most notably the propensity of Carroll's commentary. For Jones, '... it is probable that Jeremiah envisaged an end to the hegemony of Babylon ... whoever added v.7 was therefore completing a sequence of thought which was true to the total perspective of Jeremiah's prophecy ...'.[592] Brueggemann, who states Carroll's opposition to the addition of v.7 by MT, states appropriately that "Such a procedure domesticates texts and tames them to 'reality'. Such a view does not allow for the authority or courage of the critical vision of the text".[593] Verse 8 is one such bold statement by Jeremiah that verbally expresses the imagery of the yokes Jeremiah was

[590] Attacks by wild animals are among the dangers of warfare and its aftermath (Deut.7:22; Ezek.39:4), and it may be in this sense that the ✞✋✍✞ ☪✦☼ serve Nebuchadnezzar, that is, by completing the work of his army. For a discussion of the concept of Nebuchadnezzar as the servant of Yahweh, see Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 531.
[591] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 244.
[592] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 350.
[593] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 243-244.

wearing. The picture of the prophet standing there delivering his message with oxen yokes around his neck is vivid and clear. The nations are to willfully do the same, submit to Babylon immediately or face sword, famine, and pestilence - terms indicating the devastation of warfare lost. Verses 9-10 warn the foreign kings not to listen to those who resist Babylon (categorized by a whole host of terms - e.g. prophets, diviners, soothsayers, etc.) who all speak one thing in common - נבא, the same thing that Judah's prophets speak to Zedekiah (v.14). נבא is the common thread here, and again in the message to the priests and people in v.16. To listen to the נבא is to face inevitable exile (v.10), but to place the neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him is to remain and work in one's own land (v.11).

Verse 12 introduces the next section of the chapter (vv.12-15) with a similar address to Zedekiah as was just made to the foreign envoys. The language used in these verses is close to the language used in vv.1-11, with similar warnings concerning נבא prophets. The repetition hammers home the message. The main difference between the two sections is that Jeremiah's message to Zedekiah states that the Judean prophets have not been sent by Yahweh, a warning appearing in other key texts (14:14-15; 23:21). This warning was not mentioned in the message to foreign kings, but of course the application would be less pertinent here than in the message to the Judean king in vv.1-11. Jeremiah approaches his king primarily in the same way and with the same words that he has asked the foreign envoys to approach their respective kings. There is great rhetorical force in Jeremiah's question, 'Why will you die'? (v.13)[594] that raises the stakes even more, so that Zedekiah's gamble in ignoring the warnings of resistance to Babylon is a suicidal venture.[595]

Priests and people are addressed in the third part of the chapter (vv.16-22) with similar warnings as vv.12-15; namely, not to listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy נבא (v.16). Only this time the נבא takes on specific definition, which is proclaiming

[594] Of course, lacking in LXX.

[595] Brueggemann highlights the urgent and problematic nature of the prophetic discernment Zedekiah was involved in. Such discernment, he says, is always done 'in the middle of things' (*Exile and Homecoming*, 247).

that the temple vessels will shortly be brought back[596] from Babylon (v.16). The prediction of a short exile is falsehood. Yet hope for the fate of Jerusalem still exists in that v.17 in MT, which poses a similar rhetorical question as v.13 (e.g. 'why should this city become a ruin?'), states that serving the king of Babylon will result in life. The possibility that the Lord might yet relent, at least as regards the temple vessels that are still in Jerusalem, is implicit in the challenge which follows in vv.18-22. Jeremiah proclaims that if the prophets really are prophets they would concern themselves with the present state of the temple and the vessels that yet remain by approaching Yahweh to halt further Babylonian incursions, and that if they submit, Nebuchadnezzar will not destroy or deport anymore. Chapter 27 has therefore called out and challenged prophets, and has developed, through an ironic tone (v.18), towards a place of instructing what it is a prophet should do in order to be a prophet of truth. They are to respond immediately so that no further damage is done to the temple and its possessions. If a prophet does this, they are a prophet indeed (v.18a). But the rhetorical nature of vv.19-22 has Yahweh stating emphatically that the fate of the remaining temple vessels will be that of the vessels that have already gone into exile, so that what is offered is a challenge to the prophets because of their inability to respond appropriately in a similar manner that Joshua offered a rhetorical challenge at Shechem (Josh.24:19-20). In other words, the prophets will not be able to bring themselves to do what it is Yahweh is calling for through Jeremiah. Stating they are not up to the task is a way of still seeking the proper response from them. The final vision of the chapter in MT of a future day of restoration of the temple vessels (vv.21-22) serves to show that Yahweh's word will prevail. Such a prediction completely negates the word of the prophets who have been postulating a short exile and an imminent return of the temple treasures from Babylonian captivity. Carroll, in his commentary, has consistently attempted to defend the prophets Jeremiah criticizes, and regarding this passage he states, 'So the prophets of v.16 were right after all but were wrong about the timing!'[597] It is a critical move he makes, for discernment about the timing has everything to do with discerning the activity of Yahweh. Brueggemann, in

[596] The Hebrew has the prophets saying that the vessels of the house of the Lord will be brought back 'quite soon now', while the Greek does not.
[597] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 537.

contradicting Carroll, assesses the passage more properly. He states, 'The other prophets want to collapse the two events of exile and return. The distance between the two, upon which this text insists, makes two experiences qualitatively and decisively different'.[598]

Outline of Jer.28

Chapters 27&28 are linked together by the theme of the yoke. Chapter 28 is a continuation of the unfolding story, beginning with the divine word that came to Jeremiah instructing him to perform his prophetic yoke sign (27:1-2), and culminating in the death of Hananiah (28:17) who may be viewed as a specific example of a prophetic opponent to Jeremiah. Both chapters take place in the same year, the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah (27:1; 28:1),[599] thus closely connecting their thought and theology. In fact, ch.28 presupposes the sign of the yoke (27:2-11) and the oracle concerning the temple vessels (27:16-22)

> I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I am going to bring back to this place all the vessels of the Lord's house (28:2-3).

Also, the audience of priests and people which concluded ch.27(vv.16-22) is a link to priests and people again at the temple precincts in 28:1.

The conflict between Jeremiah and Hananiah in ch.28 breaks naturally into four sections (following the historical framing in v.1), with the two prophets alternating in initiating action or speech: Hananiah (vv.2-4), Jeremiah (vv.5-9), Hananiah again (vv.10-11), and the last word, a point of no insignificance, goes to Jeremiah (vv.12-16), with v.17 being a concluding announcement by a narrator of the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the death of Hananiah.

Exposition of Jer.28

We now look more closely at the text of Jer.28. The initial announcement of Hananiah (vv.2-4) is a confident assertion, in direct contradiction of Jeremiah's authoritative claims

[598] Brueggemann, *Exile and Homecoming*, 251.
[599] Having already established that the MT's rendering of 27:1 in the reign of Jehoiakim is an inaccuracy.

in ch.27, which states that the power of Babylon is broken by Yahweh, and that the fate of the previous discussed temple vessels will result in a positive outcome within two years; namely, their return from exile. Hananiah's bold prediction is not only a challenge to Nebuchadnezzar, but also to Zedekiah in that he shows support for Jeconiah eventually returning with the exiles. His final statement in this first speech of ch.28 is a prediction that Yahweh will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. His use of שׁבר in the imperfect tense in v.4 is probably not a contradiction with his use of שׁבר in the perfect tense when he begins this speech in v.2,[600] especially when one considers the rhetorical nature of the speech. But what is a clear contradiction is that Hananiah's speaking as if Yahweh's breaking the Babylonian yoke was already a completed action (28:2), is a direct attack upon Jeremiah's perfect tense verbs in 27:5-6 concerning Yahweh's actions with Babylon toward the nations.

The prophet Jeremiah then addresses the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people in the temple precincts (v.5).[601] His words of affirmation in v.6 may, as one option, serve to ridicule through sarcasm in a manner similar to Micaiah ben Imlah's response to king Ahab (1 Kgs.22:15). This approach establishes more of a surety in Jeremiah's thinking. That is, he is not being moved from his position in any way, but instead uses irony as rhetoric. This is the interpretive mode of Jones, who rightly states according to such an interpretation, that Jeremiah is 'very sure of himself'.[602] This provides for a consistency that connects Jer.27-28 together in a way similar to what we shall see in the next section is Brevard Childs' point of view. That is, the word of Yahweh has been fixed in Jeremiah's mind, and Hananiah is a clear example of resistance and judgment for such resistance.

Or it might be that Jeremiah is speaking as a patriot who wants to express that he too desires a hopeful outcome for Judah and the temple vessels. In other words, he sincerely

[600] At least no commentator makes mention of the different tenses of שׁבר in v.2 and v.4.
[601] MT gives Hananiah and Jeremiah the title 'prophet' throughout, whereas the LXX consistently omits. It may be that the later Hebrew tradition wanted to emphasize the degree of difficulty between discerning the authenticity of the two prophetic voices.
[602] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 355.

wishes that he could believe what Hananiah has just said. The grammatical pattern Jeremiah uses, 'Amen' followed by a jussive verb with Yahweh as subject, most closely resembles 1 Kgs.1:36 where Benaiah's support of Solomon was sincere.[603] Jeremiah would like to be in Hananiah's camp, and he most certainly would like to be sided with the people of Judah, but he can in no way bring himself there. Verse 7 might be understood as Jeremiah saying, 'Hananiah, it would be nice if you were right, but ...!'. What he does do is establish his following words as a very public proclamation (v.7) and then refers to the Hebrew prophetic tradition which pre-dates both himself and Hananiah (v.8). What Jeremiah would like to believe, and what Hananiah has just said, are placed humbly within an important history of the prophetic word in Israel. That is to say, that Jeremiah provides a rhetorical simplification of what is a more complex picture in Israel's national history concerning prophecy. According to him, the norm of prophecy has been to warn of international warfare and its effects (v.8). The prophet who predicts peace must have fulfillment eventually in order to be verified (v.9). Prophesying peace is more rare and perhaps more risky, and therefore is not to be validated until after the fact, which is of course not very helpful in the present situation. Then and only then can a prophet of peace be regarded as one whom Yahweh has 'truly sent' (v.9). The rhetorical effect of Jeremiah's words is, basically, that Hananiah is not a genuine prophet of Yahweh.

Hananiah responds demonstratively to Jeremiah's words by physically taking and breaking the yoke that Jeremiah was wearing (v.10). Since Jeremiah had been wearing the yoke in ch.27, it is possible that Jeremiah was going about day by day for a period of time wearing the yoke as a public sign[604] of what he was calling Judah to do - submit to Babylon. The presence of Jeremiah going about with his lopsided burden of a half-filled yoke incurred a reaction from Hananiah, who demonstrated his own version of the prophetic word by breaking the yoke (v.10). Hananiah then speaks with the same authoritative predictive words as he had done in vv.2-4 (v.11); again, the text

[603] Keown, Scalise, Smothers, *Jeremiah*, 54-55.
[604] In this sense, Jeremiah may resemble Ezekiel, who is known for his numerous sign actions (e.g. Ezek.4-5); and especially Isaiah, whose public demonstration of nakedness was a clear call to the nation to pay attention to a coming captivity (Isa.20).

emphasizing the very public nature of the prophetic showdown ('in the presence of all the people'). Jeremiah responds by leaving the scene (v.11). The moment has captured the essence of conflicting points of view regarding what is the word of Yahweh. The issues of truth and falsehood which are at the heart of the event are not merely theoretical, but are to be worked out in actual human living, at a critical moment in time. Decisions and judgments are to be made, and Jeremiah's leaving the scene suggests, as one option, that he may be open to the possibility that Hananiah is speaking a fresh word from Yahweh, which according to the so-called existential approach of Zimmerli and Von Rad, which we shall fully discuss in the next section, leaves room for Yahweh's plan to change. In Thompson's view, the encounter with Hananiah has Jeremiah 'taken aback',[605] so that he is not merely rethinking his position, but is indeed humiliated and at a loss for words. Similarly, Bright states that Jeremiah 'seemed to feel that at the moment he had no word from Yahweh to say'[606] and 'Jeremiah said nothing, but meekly went away'.[607]

Or it might suggest something else - that Jeremiah is giving up on Hananiah. We are more inclined to support the interpretation of McKane on Jeremiah's walking away in v.11 than we are Thompson or Bright. He sees Jeremiah, not as meek and speechless, but as a 'model of composure',[608] who carries forth a 'dignified retreat'.[609] Holladay views Jeremiah's walking away as an act of 'prudence'[610] and 'out of the conviction that he had already said and done all he could'.[611] What becomes crucial in the narrative however, is that in walking away, Jeremiah receives a word from Yahweh stating that his plan has indeed not changed, and that Hananiah's inappropriate action will result in a stricter, more sure judgment. Jeremiah is on the flip side of things in that instead of initiating the action, he has to respond to what is uttered as bold prophetic speech. Ultimately, however, Jeremiah has not met his match in Hananiah, but in walking away is performing the sort of action that suggests there is no longer any more trying or dealing with his

[605] Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 540.
[606] Bright, *Jeremiah*, 203.
[607] Ibid, 203.
[608] McKane, *Jeremiah*, 720.
[609] Ibid, 720.
[610] Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 129.
[611] Ibid, 129.

audience, in this case, Hananiah, the priests, and those gathered at the temple. It is suggested therefore in this interpretation of ch.28 that Jeremiah has not been humiliated (e.g.'tale between his legs'),[612] nor is he necessarily seeking an existential word (to be seen in Zimmerli and Von Rad), but the Hananiah encounter has served as the 'last straw' for Judah. What Hananiah has done in his stubborn rebellion is typical of the nation which has rejected the word of Yahweh through Jeremiah to submit themselves to the yoke of Babylon. Jeremiah is doing what in NT terminology is called 'shaking the dust off his feet' (Matt.10:14; Acts 13:51). Hence the narrative since ch.27 is moving further and further away from the hope of Jeremiah's audience actually submitting themselves to Babylon as Jeremiah has urged.

The final word of the encounter goes to Jeremiah (vv.12-16), and it is framed by the terminology that 'the word of Yahweh has come' to him (v.12). This is the first time in ch.28 that this vocabulary is used, which from a canonical perspective, gives authenticity to Jeremiah as the one true prophet out of the two. The change from 'yokes of wood' to 'yokes of iron' (v.13) serves to reinforce that Jeremiah's message is not only the right one, but that Babylonian domination is all the more established. Any further resistance to Babylon will be met with the sure word of Yahweh that Nebuchadnezzar is not to be easily dismissed. There is a clear movement in the narrative away from the invitation to the nations to willingly submit to wooden yokes (27:2-8), towards a more sure and definitive pronouncement of judgment via the imagery of iron yokes. But it is primarily the fact that Yahweh himself is placing the yoke upon the neck of the nations (28:14 - which is essentially identical to 27:6, so that the word of Yahweh has not changed), rather than a voluntary seeking of the nations to do so (27:8,11,12) themselves, which connects ch.27 and ch.28 together in a theological sense. This is what gives Jeremiah the boldness to take new and unprecedented steps in his letter to the exiles, calling for a long exile, in ch.29. The final direct address in the confrontation between the two prophets in ch.28 comes in v.15, where Jeremiah utters a conclusive statement - conclusive, at least in the sense that Jeremiah does not speak to Hananiah when he addresses him in v.15 the words that Yahweh told him to say in v.13. Jeremiah simply forms his own conclusion

[612] Childs, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*, 136.

that the word of Yahweh about Hananiah making yokes of iron is enough to determine that Hananiah is not at all sent by Yahweh and is indeed a prophet of ✍☠✞. Hananiah is to 'listen', the same terminology used again and again in ch.27 (vv.9,14,16,17) which warned against 'listening' to the prophets. Hananiah is the one who is to 'listen' for he has not been 'sent' (☼☹✞), but rather, he has been a prophet of ✍☠✞ (v.15). Nearly all the commentators emphasize a play on the word ☼☹✞, which in v.15 is what Hananiah is not, but in v.16 is what Yahweh is about to do with him in a pejorative sense - 'send him away' (piel participle) to death, a judgment given to false prophets. For Hananiah has counseled ✞✍☞ ('apostasy, defection, turning away, rebellion', etc.), an action which is worthy of death according to Deut.13:6 (Eng.v.5), from an important passage concerned with false prophecy in Israel. The larger unit of Jer.27-29, which we are investigating, actually concludes with another prophet, Shemaiah, who lives in the exile, receiving a similar verdict for similar prophetic activity, counseling ✞✍☞ (29:32). Jer.28:17 is a final statement in the chapter by the narrator informing the reader of the eventual death of Hananiah, which occurred as Jeremiah had said, thus vindicating Jeremiah as the true prophet in the encounter.[613]

Interpretations by Buber, Von Rad, Zimmerli, and Childs

The Jer.28 confrontation we have been discussing is significant for this thesis in that it is the fullest narrative of conflict between persons claiming to speak for Yahweh in the book of Jeremiah. This particular confrontation reaches the zenith of intensity when Hananiah breaks Jeremiah's yoke bars publicly, and Jeremiah leaves the scene (vv.10-11). Important contributions of interpretation concerning this incident have been made in the not so distant past by Buber, Von Rad, Zimmerli, and Childs. For Buber, Jeremiah's walking away is because he is intent on listening to Yahweh's word, and he is considering the possibility that Yahweh's word has changed according to Hananiah's action. He states

> He went in order to listen for God's word. Why did he go? Obviously,

[613] Bright, from a historical perspective, makes the point that the death of Hananiah would not have been recorded in the canon had Hananiah actually not died within the time frame Jeremiah predicted (*Jeremiah*, 203).

> because in spite of everything there were still things he did not know. Hananiah had spoken like a man who 'knows it all.' Jeremiah had heard him speak like a man who 'knows it all,' but there were still things Jeremiah himself did not know. God had, indeed, spoken to him only an hour before. But this was another hour. History is a dynamic process, and history means that one hour is never like the one that has gone before.[614]

Sensitivity in listening to Yahweh then, according to Buber, is the key. He goes on to say, 'Hananiah was no liar. He told what truth he knew ... he never understood what it meant to go one's way and listen'.[615] We find Buber's interpretation lacking. The importance of listening to Yahweh is not under dispute (as demonstrated by our earlier analysis of 23:18). However, if there is one thing that the text wants to say Hananiah is, it is that he is indeed a 'liar' (שקר in v.15), a message that Jeremiah has consistently proclaimed about others throughout the larger narrative (27:10,15,16). And this is not because Hananiah has poor listening skills, is a know it all, or any such thing related to that; but it is because Hananiah demonstrates the stubborn resistance with which many in Judah had failed to receive Jeremiah's message of submission to Babylon. The encounter of ch.28 stands out as a clear example of obstinancy to Jeremiah as prophet, and a clear example of judgment for failing to respond appropriately to Yahweh's invitation willingly to wear the yoke he was asking to be worn. The story revolves then, not so much around failure to listen for a fresh word, as it does failure to respond to the word already given. Disobedience, and judgment for such disobedience is surely the better interpretive approach.

The approach of Buber is not very different from the approaches of Von Rad and Zimmerli. For instance, Von Rad states

> It (falsity) could only be seen by the person who had true insight into Jahweh's intentions for the time, and who, on the basis of this, was obliged to deny that the other had illumination.[616]

Or consider also this quote from Zimmerli

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[614] Martin Buber, *On the Bible* (New York, New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 166-167.
[615] Ibid, 167-168.

> He (Jeremiah) has no 'objective' criterion by which to judge. He must wait until the effectual word comes to him once more from Yahweh ... With everything hanging in the balance, all that can happen is for Yahweh himself to send his word once more to his prophet.[617]

Once again, such approaches determine that the ability to listen to Yahweh in the present moment is the crucial issue.[618] It also suggests that Jeremiah only acts after a fresh word comes to him - albeit a word which was basically the same as the earlier word. Yet Jeremiah does not speak the words to Hananiah in v.15 that Yahweh had instructed him to speak in v.12 after the separation of the disputing prophets. He instead attacks Hananiah directly with a pronouncement of judgment for not having been sent by Yahweh. It is unlikely that when Jeremiah walked away, he was vacillating concerning what the word of Yahweh was as some have supposed (Buber, Zimmerli, Von Rad). He is, rather, all the more determined to pronounce Hananiah as a false prophet worthy of a death sentence for his [illegible] (vv.15-17). His walking away from Hananiah is more a refusal to deal with him then it is a failure to know how to respond in the public arena.

More recently, the approaches of Von Rad and Zimmerli in particular have been termed 'existential' by Brevard Childs.[619] Childs would summarize the thought of Zimmerli and Von Rad as prophetic veracity being established only by the ability of a prophet to speak a fresh word from God, meaning that the true prophet speaks what is presently the word of Yahweh. This means therefore, that when Jeremiah was challenged by Hananiah in Jer.28, he did not immediately challenge back until he had had opportunity to discover if there had been a fresh word from Yahweh, a word which perhaps had been given to Hananiah. This existential approach, so-called, means that Jeremiah was not to abstract the message that he had been proclaiming, namely, judgment by Babylon, into an unchanging propositional principle. Jeremiah could not refute the claims of Hananiah by

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616 Von Rad, *OT Theology* (volume 2), 210.
617 Zimmerli, *OT Theology in Outline*, 106-107.
618 This is the view expressed in the more recent WBC series (Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, *Jeremiah*, 56-57).
619 For discussion on this, see Childs, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*, 135-136, although his comments are rather brief and undeveloped.

drawing from the past (although he does do this with some reservation, 28:7-9). Because Yahweh can change his mind (clearly an important part of the lesson that we have already seen at the potter's house, 18:7-10), a prophet must be prepared for a fresh word from Yahweh. The freedom of God demands a process of continual search for present truth then, and this is how Childs summarizes Von Rad and Zimmerli's approach to the Jeremiah - Hananiah encounter. This leaves Jeremiah somewhat confused, and for this reason he walks away from Hananiah.

Childs attempts a different approach from this so-called existential understanding by way of his canonical shaping methodology. For him, the word of Jeremiah to Hananiah at the end of ch.28 is in conformity with the word of Jeremiah to the nations in ch.27, thus showing that the editor was concerned with making the Jeremiah-Hananiah confrontation a concrete example of the one message against false prophets. Childs' literary analysis elevates the later canonical shaping and editorial activity as being the key to interpretation. The message of Jeremiah to the false prophet in ch.28 is the same as his message to the large audience of ch.27. To quote Childs

> The major point to be made is that the present canonical form of the book of Jeremiah has rendered an interpretation of true and false prophecy and thereby provided a new criterion by means of its collected scriptures for determining the two.[620]

To quote Childs again

> In sum, although historical Israel suffered confusion and uncertainty in the crisis of distinguishing true from false prophecy, the canonical process of constructing Israel's tradition shaped Jeremiah's oracles with a view to overcoming the confusion and setting up a scriptural norm for distinguishing the true from the false prophet.[621]

In accordance with Childs, the Jeremiah-Hananiah conflict (ch.28) must be interpreted in the light of its association with ch.27,[622] which assumes the chapters have been edited together by the same author/s in a similar time period and for a similar purpose. For it is

[620] Ibid, 140.
[621] Ibid, 141-142.
[622] Ibid, 135-142.

Jeremiah's picturesque yoke bonds and message of the temple vessels exiled to Babylon in ch.27 which are so obviously contradicted by Hananiah in ch.28. Childs observes editorial shaping in ch.28 so as to conform to the previous chapter. His literary analysis reveals that in the three oracles of Jeremiah in ch.27: to the nations (vv.1-11), to Zedekiah (vv.12-15), and to priests and people (vv.16-22), four main points are consistently observed: 'serve Nebudchadnezzar', 'do not listen (שמע) to your prophets', 'they prophesy a lie (נבא שקר)', and 'you will be removed from the land'. Childs shows that in Jeremiah's oracle of 28:12-16 similar vocabulary is used as in ch.27, with the important exception of 'do not listen (שמע) to your prophets'. The variation in the pattern respecting the missing element is related to the fact that Jeremiah is no longer speaking to messengers of kings (27:3-4), but is now speaking directly to one of the false prophets against whom he is contending, and therefore he need not say 'do not listen to your prophets', for Hananiah was one of these false prophets.

The assumption is that there is literary continuity between ch.27 and ch.28, and as far as the redactor is concerned, Jeremiah delivered the same message in both chapters. Therefore, to quote Childs, 'Jeremiah's confrontation with Hananiah functions to provide a concrete illustration of the one message against false prophets'.[623] This approach differs from the more conventional interpretations of Buber, Zimmerli, and Von Rad[624] which show Jeremiah at a moment of great uncertainty in his confrontation with Hananiah and in need of a fresh existential word from Yahweh. Conversely, Childs' treatment is a canonical construal of chapters 27&28 as being purposely set up to determine that God has the freedom to change his mind, but with one criterion for determining, namely, that God has in the past spoken of judgment (28:8-9), and that if his plan has changed, he will demonstrate it in history. Specifically according to the text, what should be watched for is the condition and whereabouts of the temple vessels (27:18,21,22; 28:3,6). Childs says

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[623] Ibid, 138.

[624] It may suggest that the text as it stands is not interested in the question, 'How might one have known at the time whether to believe Jeremiah or Hananiah?'. It is doubtful that Jer.28 has this same sort of concern as is found in, say, Jer.22-23.

> The contrast is not an existential one between a past, horizontal tradition about God and a present, vertical word from God. Rather, the truth of prophecy is determined by God's confirmation in action.[625]

Furthering the discussion on Jer.28

We have put forth the Hananiah incident as a prime example of resistance against Jeremiah and the word of Yahweh, and the judgment that such resistance brings. Childs focus on comparing chs.27-28 through canonical shaping has made a useful contribution and keeps the reader contexualizing the Jeremiah-Hananiah incident within a larger framework. One other observation of linkage between ch.27 and ch.28 could be made that Childs does not make. It is, according to the interpretation followed here, key to recognizing the flow of thought from chs.27-29. After the Hananiah incident, Yahweh proclaims that he is now forcefully putting the yoke (now of iron, 28:14) on the nations. He is essentially denying Hananiah's symbolic action in a tone that is more harsh than the previous offer for the nations to voluntarily place the yoke upon their own necks (27:8,11,12). Yahweh, in some sense, issues forth his own responsive action that may remove the cooperative opportunity of the nations. The primary point though, is that the yoke under discussion is not to be readily broken. The Hananiah incident is therefore pivotal to Yahweh responding with a sure, definitive word of harsh servitude that no longer envisions the nations willingly participating in his geo-political plan. Hananiah is therefore, a prime example of prophetic resistance to the word of Yahweh, and of the larger prevailing attitude that Jeremiah had to contend with.

Exposition of Jer.29

Chapter 29 is a very long prose passage which consists of correspondence between Jews yet in Jerusalem and exiled Jews in Babylon. The continuity of the chapter becomes progressively confused in that following the clear introduction of Jeremiah's initial letter (vv.1-14), there is a shift at v.15 in which the verses that follow (vv.16-19) do not relate well to the preceding material, and it is difficult to determine if what follows from v.24 is a separate letter or an independent transmission that has been grafted in. LXX is smoother here in that vv.16-20 are lacking, thus causing a bridge to form between v.15

and v.21 that is a bit more workable. The more confused structure in MT appears to be caused by either disturbing the order of the verses within the chapter, or some sort of joining letters together. There may be a number of letters - one from Jeremiah to the exiles (vv.1-15, 21-23), one from Shemaiah in Babylon to Zephaniah in Jerusalem (vv.25-28), the rebuke from Jeremiah in response to Shemaiah (v.24), and a second letter from Jeremiah to the exiles (vv.31-32).[626] The chapter may also be constructed on the obvious basis of two primary happenings: (1) Jeremiah's letters of advice to Jewish exiles, (2) Jeremiah's denunciation of prophets living in exile, namely; Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah. The historical situation is parallel to that described in chs.27-28. There was a period of unrest throughout the Babylonian empire, which encouraged Jewish prophets both in Jerusalem and Babylon to announce an imminent end of Jewish captivity.

The letter of advice from Jeremiah at the beginning of the chapter, starting in v.4, is a bold proclamation for the exiles to plan for a long stay in Babylon. Chapters 27-29 as a whole have been an invitation to join Jeremiah in the wearing of the yokes in which the move to iron yokes in ch.28 serves to underscore Yahweh's resolve of Babylonian dominion despite Hananiah's attempts to propose something different. The movement of these chapters is such that Yahweh is 'tightening the grips' so to speak. Hananiah exemplifies opposition and the judgment that opposition brings. Chapter 29 is then about the surety of exile.

The language of vv.5-6 which initiates Jeremiah's decree of a lengthy exile echoes Jeremiah's prophetic call in 1:10 ('build and plant'), signifying the veracity and two-fold nature of his call, and has the Genesis theme of a command to multiply (✡בנה). It also encourages the same kind of potential work of Yahweh, who created a nation while the family of Jacob was captive in Egypt. That is, Ex.1 demonstrates the Hebrews as a

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[625] Childs, *OT Theology in a Canonical Context*, 139.

[626] This schema follows that of Thompson (Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 544). Others assume that the original letter goes from v.1 through v.23, thus giving a two-part structure to the chapter - vv.1-23 and vv.24-32 (Holladay, *Jeremiah*, 137). For a full discussion of literary coherence in Jer.29 see McKane, *Jeremiah*, 735-744.

people who ‘multiplied’ (Ex.1:7,12,20) in the face of bondage, which of course led to the greatest events of Israel’s national history and identity as pertains to the working of Yahweh. A somewhat startling command is issued by Jeremiah in v.7 concerning the exiles’ attitude toward and relationship with their new overlords. They are to seek and pray for the ☺✡☹✞ of Babylon (v.7). The ☺✡☹✞ of the exiles is linked to the ☺✡☹✞ of Babylon. The message that Jeremiah had been proclaiming, submission to Babylon, will now be carried out in Babylon itself, and the actions of such things as domesticity, devotion, hard work, and prayer will contribute to ☺✡☹✞ for the exiles. Thus while it may be a startling command, it is nonetheless a positive announcement of the end of warfare. That is, life will go on normally for the Jewish exiles, but it will take place in a strange land, and it is there that Yahweh will carry out his purposes.

Even though the exiles can live on with a sense of normalcy, there is yet the threat of deception by Jewish prophets living in Babylon (v.9) who prophesy ✍☠✞ and have not been ‘sent’ by Yahweh (v.9); again, key terminology which identifies false prophecy. The case of Hananiah can now serve as the one example of the sort of prophet to whom no attention should be given; and it is up to the exiles to not allow themselves to be deceived (v.8). They must take responsibility for the kind of falsehood which counsels against Jeremiah’s advice for preparing for a long duration of exile, and the fact of Hananiah’s death as just recorded in 28:17 serves as a strong reminder to the exiles and the so-called prophets of the exile.

Verses 10-14 provide noteworthy consolation of just how the exiled community will be Yahweh’s focal point with good intentions. The seventy years (v.10) counteracts the false notion of the prophets just mentioned whose falsehood is a prediction of a short exile.[627] The exiles must not allow themselves to be talked out of the reality of a lengthy

[627] Carroll mistakenly supposes that the message of vv.10-14 looks ‘Suspiciously like the message of the prophets in the cycle who are declared to be prophesying falsehood. It only differs from what they say in having a longer time sequence - seventy years instead of two years’ (*Jeremiah*, 557). However, the difference between two years (28:3 per Hananiah) and seventy years is considerably significant, especially in light of the fact that seventy years would mean after the lifetime of anyone then alive. Thus what the existing exiles are to do is establish and prolong the future life of the Jewish community even though they themselves are without hope as regards a return from the exile.

exile. Instead, the 'plans' of Yahweh (v.11), and certainly this refers to long-range plans, have a three-fold promise, 'peace', a 'future', and a 'hope', which resemble in some fashion the initial call to Abraham (Gen.12:1-3). In a similar sense then, it is a starting over for the remnant people of Yahweh whose responsibility it will be to call upon Yahweh in earnest and sincere prayerful seeking and searching with all the heart (vv.12-13). Thus the relationship in exile and beyond is to be maintained not only by domesticity and faithful labor (vv.5-6), but also by devoted prayer (vv.7, 12-13). Any loss of confidence in the national relationship with Yahweh because of the geo-political and military events during the Babylonian crisis, can be resolved by such an effort, resulting in eventual restoration from exile (v.14).

The strange turn at v.15 in MT makes it difficult to determine if v.15 is still addressing the exile community, or if it has switched its focus to the Jerusalem community. Because of the existence of vv.16-20 in MT, which of course lacks in LXX, it would seem that the MT tradition is addressing the Jerusalem community (especially the rotten figs metaphor - v.17 and 24:2), and is speaking harsh words against it because of its perpetuating false prophets (v.15). The only other occurrences in the OT of ☺✡☠ in the hifil ('raise up') with 'prophet(s)' as the object are Deut.18:15,18 which regard Yahweh's promise to raise up a Moses-like prophet. The claim of such prophets now existing in Babylon (v.15) is a strong one. It would also suggest a rejection of the documented words of Jeremiah which have just counseled how to live properly during a lengthy exile. The LXX absence of vv.16-20 leaves out the rebuke to the Jerusalem community and maintains the continuity of address to the exile community by connecting v.15 to v.21. What remains intact either way, is the continual warning against prophets who prophesy the deception of imminent deliverance.

The remainder of Jer.29 (vv.21-32) is particular about specific naming of false prophets living in the exile community. First mentioned are Ahab and Zedekiah, who also prophesy 🤘☠✝ in the name of Yahweh (v.21), connoting that they are prophets of a short exile. Their deliverance into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and public execution (v.21) is a few steps removed from the description of Hananiah's death in 28:17, in that their fate

is a remarkably bold and startling prediction by Jeremiah. The two terms 'curse' and 'roast', ✞☹☹☠ and ✞☹☠ respectively (v.22), besides being obviously abhorrent, work a double pun on Ahab's family name, 'Koliyah' (✞✟☹✡☠). These two prophets are the antithesis to an Abraham-like blessing (Gen.12:1-3) because the exile community shall use them as a curse formula (v.22). In another sense, the exiles who are faithful in the patient manner to which Yahweh has called them (vv.5-7, 11-14) will not suffer the unenviable fate of the likes of Ahab and Zedekiah. The progression since Hananiah's death in ch.28, whose death it was argued served as an example of the fate of the Jerusalem community, has moved to an even more severe prediction of death to prophets in the exile, who perhaps also serve as a terrifying example of the kind of fate that might be met by any exiled Jew entertaining the thought of rebellion against Babylon.[628]

The primary charge brought against Ahab and Zedekiah is a moral one. The citing of three erroneous ways in v.23, 'foolishness', 'adultery', and of course ✍☠✞, may contrast with the three-fold pattern of blessing to be experienced by a faithful exilic community: 'peace', 'future', and 'hope' (v.11). Again, contrast and comparisons with an Abraham-like paradigm may work to enlighten the passage. The faithful Jews of the remnant community in Babylon can experience Abraham-like interaction with Yahweh, but the false prophets in Babylon shall meet a horrifying end. However, the most obvious cross-reference within the book of Jeremiah itself is ch.23, where prophets are identified for their falsehood for committing deeds similar to that of Ahab and Zedekiah (23:10,14). The moral nature of the charge in v.23 is well stated by Jones, who comments

> Jeremiah himself linked the immorality of these prophets with their prophetic lies. In this he was insisting on a total integrity which is the *sine qua non* of prophecy ... His sensitivity is to the moral and spiritual order. To be true to spiritual truth at one level, but insensitive to moral purity at another, is for a prophet schizoid. The man who compromises with the one is apt to compromise with the other.[629]

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[628] Thompson observes that the prophets Ahab and Zedekiah must have been involved in some sort of political offense, such as encouragement for the people to revolt, for Nebuchadnezzar to inflict such punishment against them (*Jeremiah*, 549). Perhaps Jeremiah makes the bold predictions he makes and charges these prophets with ✍☠✞, amongst other things, to keep them from being regarded as heroes or martyrs in the exile community.

[629] Jones, *Jeremiah*, 368.

Jeremiah links adultery, which more than likely takes in 'acting foolishly' (✞☹➢☤), with words of ✍☠✞. But certainly acting foolishly on the part of these prophets should be associated with a larger prevailing attitude whereas they refuse to take Jeremiah and his warnings, both moral and geo-political, seriously. Their ability to commit adultery is already an obstinancy and rejection of Yahweh's word. It virtually eliminates them from being serious candidates as possessors of the word of Yahweh. Carroll makes the point that Jeremiah could not have had knowledge of such matters while so far away back in Jerusalem, without some sort of gossip taking place[630] - a rationalization which replaces the world of the text. It seems likely instead, that the adulterous activity of the exile prophets was of such a public nature, that it was common knowledge to the exiled Jews in a similar manner to the promiscuous activities of the sons of Eli (1 Sam.2:22-23). The final statement of v.23, " 'I am he who knows and am a witness,' declares Yahweh", is in MT, but not in LXX. The addition of this statement in MT as opposed to LXX might suggest a different interpretation from the one just mentioned. 'I am he who knows and am a witness' might suggest a legal analogy along the lines of Deut.19:15 which warns against a solitary charge being brought against an Israelite. That is, perhaps it was not common knowledge among the exiles that Ahab and Zedekiah have been involved in adultery, and therefore no witnesses brought a charge against them. But nonetheless, Yahweh outranks all, and what may have been done in secret, he himself is a witness to, and he therefore brings down the gavel in judgment.

A third prophet, Shemaiah, is also denounced in the chapter by the correspondence of Jeremiah (vv.24-28). Shemaiah had written letters from the exile to the Jews in Jerusalem, including the priest Zephaniah and other priests (v.25). The indictment in v.25 that Shemaiah had done this 'in his own name' has resonance with the rebuke against other prophets for 'having not been sent by Yahweh' (27:15; 28:15; 29:9); for in both cases, Yahweh is not their ultimate source. Shemaiah was attempting to place Zephaniah in authority over Jehoiada as priest, apparently to get Zephaniah to take action against Jeremiah back in Jerusalem, notably, imprisonment (v.26). His having called

[630] Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 560.

Jeremiah a 'madman' (🗣⚐✞😐 ✞✦❝) and asking to have him rebuked (v.26) connotes either that Jeremiah's actions were definitive and notable, or that a message of a lengthy exile was considered that absurd by those living in the exile. The latter interpretation is probably more correct in that Shemaiah quotes Jeremiah's letter about establishing life in Babylon (v.28).[631] Zephaniah's reading the letter to Jeremiah might imply that he is, in a sense, 'telling on' Shemaiah, and is in fact supportive of Jeremiah's position (v.29).

The last portion of the chapter, vv.29-32, which is of course the final section of the ch.27-29 cycle, has similarities with the end of ch.28. For instance, 'the word of Yahweh comes' to Jeremiah concerning Shemaiah (29:30) as it had concerning Hananiah (28:12). Both Hananiah and Shemaiah are condemned to death (28:16; 29:32) for 'counseling rebellion against Yahweh' (28:16; 29:32). And both prophets are guilty of not being 'sent' and causing the people to 'trust in 🗡☠✞' (28:15; 29:31), which, it can be assumed, is rejecting imminent and thorough Babylonian domination. Punishment will come to Shemaiah, not just in his own punishment - most likely by death, but to the degree that his progeny are also included (29:32), something which was not in view for Hananiah. This is made public knowledge to all the exiles. Overall, the tone of chs.27-29, which revolves around the yoke of Babylonian domination, and an invitation to accept that yoke, moves to a clear example of opposition and judgment, witnessed in the Hananiah incident, and ultimately to 'good' for the exiles (29:32) over a long period, and the removal of false prophets who have rejected Yahweh's purpose in his temporarily using the yoke of Babylon.

[631] As a point of technicality, Jeremiah's letter cited in 29:5 certainly inferred a 'long' exile as Shemaiah said (v.28), but Jeremiah never used the term 'long'. Shemaiah is not exactly quoting Jeremiah's letter.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS AND WIDER REFLECTIONS

Conclusions

The complex Jeremiah tradition has produced numerous themes for theological thought and historical reflection. It has been put forth in this thesis that knowledge of Yahweh sits in prime position as a crucial issue in the book of Jeremiah (especially 22:15-16, but also 31:31-34; 24:7; 9:22-23 [Eng.9:23-24], amongst other passages). Along with knowledge of the divine, knowledge of the human self and proper modes of thinking are also of significant concern. A theological approach, indeed, a moral theology in reading and interpreting the Jeremiah corpus is therefore a mandate. We have defined moral theology as the expected and appropriate human response to the nature and character of Israel's God as revealed in the larger rubrics of an OT and Biblical theology. The importance of such a reading, of which both synagogue and church have always given acclaim, is to be underscored especially in the light of contemporary approaches in hermeneutics and various social scientific studies which might be likely to marginalize the witness of Israel's canonized prophets and writers. Also, our initial survey of OT theologies and other OT literature since the mid-nineteenth century to the present time has demonstrated that a thorough investigation of the moral theology in Jeremiah (especially Jer.22:15-16) with regards to the knowledge of God, has not had sufficient treatment and analysis. It is our desire to seek the wisdom of the ancients, or at least those in the Jeremiah tradition, and to arrive at a biblical theology which has 'knowledge' in the moral sense of the word, as its aim. We have focused here, primarily upon Jeremiah chapters twenty-one through twenty-nine, and the term  , for investigation of what is meant by knowledge of Yahweh in the text of Jeremiah. It is concluded that knowledge about Yahweh certainly has a cognitive element, but is not to be set apart and distinguished from a knowing of Yahweh which is direct and substantive through appropriate obedient response. Intellectual recognition of Yahweh and his acts are only a part of the equation. Knowledge of Yahweh is transformative and originates from the privilege of divine choosing (Israel could look to Abraham as an archetype example). It is to be received with grateful responsiveness. All real knowledge of Yahweh is

connected to appropriate ways of living and a certain kind of moral conduct which is consistent with Yahweh's character. Israel was not to claim privileged status if they were going to ignore such character, which was always associated with the historic covenantal and relational demands.

Our investigation demonstrated that other classic Hebrew prophets, particularly Hosea and Ezekiel, also had epistemological concerns similar to Jeremiah. The book of Hosea is especially a struggle for Yahweh's intimacy with Israel demonstrated in ידע and associated moral terminology which contains a vision of a relationship rehabilitated and re-created based on the legality of covenant renewed by means of righteousness and justice. There is strong concern in Hosea, as well as in Jeremiah, for a mutual legal and ethical relationship. Israel's failure to 'know' Yahweh in Hosea was cause for legal action by Yahweh because it meant a lack of faithfulness, kindness, and a whole host of moral failings that effected everything and was cause for judgment. The call therefore, to repent in Hosea was indeed a painful one, but would lead to a knowledge of Yahweh which was to be demonstrated in a practical manner. As in Jeremiah, so also in Hosea, Israel could not claim privileged status without proper responsiveness.

Ezekiel, a prophet of the same historic setting as Jeremiah (at least in regards to date), had a repeated emphasis on Yahweh's recognition formula 'you shall know that (כרת ידע) I am Yahweh', so that knowledge of Yahweh is the intended goal of all of Yahweh's activity. Such knowledge consists of intellectual knowledge of Yahweh's deeds - especially the exodus from Egypt event where in the book of Exodus there is also numerous usage of the recognition formula. The book of Exodus and the story it tells is foundational to Israel's national history and identity, and all of Yahweh's activity in the great event might be seen as an amplification of the fundamental point that Yahweh is indeed the God of Israel. But true recognition of this fact has ultimate value and meaning in Israel's obedient responsiveness to Yahweh as her God.

There is a particular concern, in the book of Jeremiah, for the Davidic house (as seen in Jer.21:1-23:8) to live in an appropriate relational way which could benefit all in Judean

society, especially with a practice of justice and righteousness, with a particular concern for the marginalized and lowly. The dynamics of kingly response and the fate of society are crucial in these messages to the Davidic kings. The king had the task of maintaining community-wide social well-being with a special view towards the marginal and defenseless, who, if properly taken care of, more than likely represented the entire society being well cared for. The totality of the kingly sermons focus on a departure from idolatrous, oppressive, covenant-breaking ways so that there might be a return to the practice of justice and righteousness. Jer.22:13-19, with its rhetorical thrust of challenge and persuasion, was highlighted as providing a quasi-definitional nature of what it means to know Yahweh. Such a pericope puts forth as primary an awareness and commitment to the ethical texture and relational content of Yahweh's moral and social order (which is of course supported by other Jeremiah passages as well). Such a challenge demonstrates that the Davidic promise is still intact in the book of Jeremiah, but with strong invective to those descendants of David who had the responsibility of engaging in a knowledge of Yahweh which would provide a societal benefit. The transcendence of God can be seen in part when these things happen, and do indeed point to a greater reality. This is the witness not only of other Hebrew prophets, but of the wisdom teachers as well, including those of the Ancient Near Eastern world, where kings had a family-like responsibility to their society, and were not to be treated above society, both in life and death. In sum, the treatment of human beings is in direct correlation to knowledge of Yahweh, and the vision of Jeremiah is for just such a Davidic ruler to govern.

The Davidic house was not alone in receiving warning and challenge to demonstrate a genuine knowledge of Yahweh. Priests, and especially prophets, also are warned in the text of Jeremiah for improper and errant ways of providing leadership to the community. The tendency to mis-represent Yahweh in words spoken and the danger of improper speech patterns is of considerable concern. The task of the prophet who genuinely had the mind of Yahweh was to speak such words which moved the hearer toward an appropriate responsive action - namely  . Jer.23 in particular has this kind of concern. In fact, this address to the prophets is edited in a manner in the book of Jeremiah so as to be connected with the prior address to the kings (thus chs.21-23 are

devoted to these key persons in Judean society). Prophets (with priests often times linked to the prophets) may indeed be worse than the kings for their שקר. The moral content of 'knowing' Yahweh as expressed in Jer.22:15-16 is therefore paralleled by the moral account of prophecy in terms of an integrity and repentance which is in opposition to the kind of falsehood signified by the common Jeremianic term שקר, especially as it relates to the nature of prophecy in ancient Israel. Putting words in Yahweh's mouth instead of speaking his holy words represent a violation of the grossest kind, as does any faulty manner of living and false representation. The prophets' use of words and the שקר associated with it are ultimately for self-seeking purposes, so that the prophets Jeremiah contended with say what they will and apply it to Yahweh. In sum, the pretense of the prophets to speak Yahweh's words actually serves other causes, causes related to their own self-seeking ways, rather than the causes of Yahweh. Proper response and manner of living gives content to the veracity of a prophet's words, and the words must be connected with a deep sense of moral obligation in order to truly represent Yahweh.

The personal ethics and the message of the prophet, at least in an effort to exhort to repentance is primary, over and above people response, because the hearer of Yahweh's words has a responsibility as does the would-be speaker of Yahweh's words. And the text of Jeremiah does not lack in noting the basic stubbornness of the hearer. True prophecy, and a true representation of Yahweh, may at times speak the unexpected, or contradict the status quo as in Jeremiah's counter-liturgy of ch.14 where penitential expression and sorrowful language by the nation was not being matched by a corresponding reality expressed in proper human living. For Jeremiah, as for the larger biblical witness as a whole, actions must accompany words. The ability to be 'sincere-sounding' when approaching Yahweh, and actually being genuinely 'sincere', are to be distinguished from one another, as in the drought incident of Jer.14:1-15:9. Yahweh demands something far beyond the external gatherings of praise and prayer.
It is not uncommon for an Israelite prophet to employ rhetorical methodology, as in the drought incident of ch.14ff., while placing חסד as primary moral vocabulary and demanding allegiance to Yahweh's covenant, character, etcetera, and also formulating divine response as intricately related to human response where Yahweh is intimately

involved in the people's pursuit of שׁוּב, and their reaction in general (i.e. Jer.18:1-12). שׁוּב is itself used in the text of Jeremiah in rhetorical ways for the purpose of initiating change and response. It is certainly a significant and key term of moral and religious transformation integral to Jeremiah's presentation of knowledge of Yahweh which calls one to disassociate from all manner of idolatry and false living. It is closely connected to truth, justice, and righteousness - which, like the message to the prophets (ch.23) has parallels to the moral vision of knowing Yahweh in Jer.22:15-16. The tendency for the human heart to move towards deception (17:9) increases the challenge of living in a true knowledge of Yahweh. The text of Jeremiah defines the central core of human existence as ill, often revealed in human words spoken, and thus resonating with the falsehood of the prophets as in chapter 23. The heart must be emptied of falsehood and deception and be replaced with faithfulness. Ultimately, even with such a pessimistic portrayal of the human condition, or at the very least, the state of ancient Judah, the book of Jeremiah suggests that appropriate human response can still be a reality, and that Yahweh himself will respond positively to this reality.

As a case in point, the 'Temple Sermon' located in both chapters seven and twenty-six, demonstrates that the reality of Yahweh's presence is related to a genuine knowing of him which is characterized by proper obedience. The sermon encapsulates much of the moral language and demand found in the book of Jeremiah. Only when proper morality and responsiveness to Yahweh are practiced could there be any reality to the physical Jerusalem temple actually being Yahweh's house. In sum, there is no real presence of Yahweh in the temple without the proper moral prerequisite. Otherwise, the reality of his presence is presence in judgment for opposition to his word. Texts in Jeremiah, such as the 'Temple Sermon', provide a challenge for what it is to live life with Yahweh while articulating how divine response and its dynamics are related to human response. As was seen in the lesson at the potter's house in ch.18, there is in the temple sermon a similar emphasis on these dynamics of divine responsiveness. That is, Yahweh still responds to his covenant people, whether for good or for bad. In this case, he can genuinely be accessible and give the Jerusalem temple the reality of what it is to be - the place where Yahweh dwells and his character is made known to the nations. Or, contrarily, Yahweh

can remove himself, be disassociated, and even allow the temple's demise and destruction, which of course was the ultimate result and fate for the state of Judah during the lifetime of the prophet Jeremiah. The trusting in and recitation of words of theological truth, without a corresponding proper practice and action carried little weight for the people Jeremiah addressed.

Jer.26 (the second account of the temple sermon, but more in story form), and the continuing story told in chs.27-29, drive home the reality of disobedience to Yahweh and its consequences, actualized in Babylonian aggression and domination. Opposition to Yahweh's word of submission comes to the forefront here in public controversy over the prophetic word through the sign of the yoke that involves both Jeremiah and his rival Hananiah. Jeremiah's walking away from this public debate (ch.28) serves as a final gesture that there was nothing else to be done. The failure and defeat of Judah was ultimately, in essence, the failure for Judah to respond to a knowledge of Yahweh which was presented by the prophet Jeremiah in a manner consistent with the norms of the Hebrew tradition.

Wider Reflections

Certainly the theme of knowledge of the Lord could be more widely pursued from a canonical perspective for both Jew and Christian. What we intend to do in these final paragraphs of our thesis is suggest some areas of wider canonical reflection for further exploration on the theme we have been discussing in Jeremiah. Our investigation of the knowledge of the Lord in the book of Jeremiah has demonstrated that the concept is much more broad than merely cognitive and intellectual knowledge that might revert to a system of facts about God. Knowledge of the Lord in our study can and should include such things, but must also move into the realm of morality and human responsiveness. In fact, knowledge itself in the larger canon of both Hebrew and Christian bibles does have an intriguing moral element of both good and bad that appears in the earliest canonical portrayal of the Genesis narrative, that is, the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' in the garden of Eden.

The meaning of this tree, which has of course attracted much scholarly attention, might be a natural starting point[632] for wider reflection on the nature of the knowledge of the Lord in both Jewish and Christian canons because it becomes the focal point of the Gen.3 narrative and partaking from the tree (which by definition contains 'knowledge', Heb.) becomes the downfall of humankind - God's created image. Both the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' and the 'tree of life' are set within the garden, which in the ancient mind, such a garden would be considered a sanctuary for God (e.g. God walking in the garden, Gen.3:8).[633] Only the 'tree of knowledge' plays any role in the temptation and fall. It is not until the conclusion of the narrative do we hear again of the 'tree of life' (3:22-24).[634] As concerns this 'tree of knowledge of good and evil', it is not axiomatic as to its meaning.[635] Does it mean some sort of moral discernment in obeying or disobeying, or a maturing knowledge such as sexual experience brings? Von Rad moves in the direction of interpreting the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' as a place where humans gain omniscience. He states,

> For the phrase about the knowledge of good and evil the Western reader must first of all learn from Old Testament usage that the pair of terms (good and evil) is not at all used only in the moral sense, not even especially in the moral sense. In the great majority of cases it means - in keeping with the much more concrete parlance of Oriental - simply 'everything' or, when used with a negative, 'nothing'... knowledge of good and evil means, therefore,

[632] According to E.A. Speiser, "The focal point of the narrative is the tree of knowledge. It is the tree 'in the middle of the garden'". E.A. Speiser, *Genesis* (The Anchor Bible) (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), 26. Speiser also views Gen.3 as the stage having been set for the main concern of the narrative since the description of creation - that is, humankind's temptation in the garden which of course revolves around the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*Genesis*, 25). According to Speiser, 'the author can hit his full stride' (*Genesis*, 25).

[633] Gunkel considered that a gathering of trees with their mysterious rustling branches would have been viewed as a powerful life force as well as a sanctuary for God by both the Hebrews and their Gentile neighbors. Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (English translation by Mark E. Biddle from Gunkel's third German edition, 1910) (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), 7.

[634] Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: a commentary* (English translation by John H. Marks from von Rad's German edition, 1956) (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1963), 76.

[635] John Skinner calls it 'the most difficult question which the narrative presents'. John Skinner, *Genesis* (International Critical Commentary) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1910), 95. Gunkel notes the grammatical structure of Gen.2:9b is ackward (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 8). Speiser states, "there is thus much in favor of the critical conjecture that the original text had only 'and in the midst of the garden the tree of knowledge'" (Speiser, *Genesis*, 20). He notes that nothing is said about the tree of life in Gen.2:17, and therefore that it was not part of the original text of 2:9 (Speiser, *Genesis*, 20).

> omniscience in the widest sense of the word.[636]

Von Rad is helpful, although Wenham, who disagrees with Von Rad's view, moves things in a different direction by understanding the tree of knowledge to be linked to wisdom or knowledge that is taboo for mortals. He claims,

> The wisdom literature also makes it plain that there is a wisdom that is God's sole preserve, which man should not aspire to attain (e.g. Job 15: 7-9, Prov.30:1-4),[637] since a full understanding of God, the universe, and man's place in it is ultimately beyond human comprehension . To pursue it without reference to revelation is to assert human autonomy, and to neglect the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of knowledge (Prov.1:7).[638]

Wenham may not differ that much from Von Rad because both see the reaching for the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge as representing humankind's grasp for a knowledge or wisdom that does not belong to their sphere of existence. Gunkel similarly understands such knowledge to 'render one like God'.[639] For Westermann it is 'Knowledge in its comprehensive sense. And humanity is created with a strong desire to know, and to enhance its existence through knowledge'.[640] In fact, the prohibition to not partake of this tree which imparts a certain kind of knowledge is so strong, that it resembles the very commands of the decalogue (e.g. the use of ❝☹ in Gen.2:17). Also, there is a motive clause with an infinitive absolute construction in 2:17 which warns of death upon partaking from the tree. Although there was no immediate death to Adam

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[636] Von Rad, *Genesis*, 6. Von Rad gives examples of how the phrase 'good and evil' is used in the OT. For instance, 'To speak neither good nor evil' in Gen.31:24,29 and 2 Sam.13:22 means to say nothing; 'To do neither good nor evil' in Zeph.1:12 means to do nothing; and 'To know neither good nor evil' in Deut.1:39 and 2 Sam.19:35ff. means to understand nothing (*Genesis*, 86). "'Good and evil' is therefore a formal way of saying what we mean by our colorless 'everything'" (*Genesis*, 86). In like fashion, Wellhausen notes 'the phrase is only a comprehensive one for things generally'. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (English translation by Black from Wellhausen's German edition, 1878) (New York, New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 302.

[637] The concept of knowledge/wisdom that is in some sense bad, might also be seen in Qoheleth (Eccles.1:16-18), although certainly taking on larger issues in its own context; and in the NT, Jas.3:13-18, which clearly refers to two types of wisdom: one bad and one good.

[638] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Word Biblical Commentary) (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), 63. Wenham also gives a brief survey of the various interpretive options that have been discussed concerning the meaning of the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' (*Genesis 1-15*, 63).

[639] Gunkel, *Genesis*, 8.

[640] Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (English translation by David E. Green from Westermann's Dutch edition, 1986) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 23.

and Eve, 'the point of the whole narrative is apparently man's ultimate punishment rather than instantaneous death'.[641] Human pursuit of such wisdom and knowledge is a familiar motif in other ancient sources, such as the Gilgamesh Epic,[642] and has a close parallel with the mythological language of the king of Tyre who is expelled from Eden for pride and a so-called wisdom (Ezek.28). Thus it seems that the first warning against human disobedience as recorded in the Eden story is to avoid an improper kind of knowledge which violates acceptable human modes of living life. Fascination with such knowledge is not acceptable to God. Adam and Eve were to get on living a life with God that had been mandated by God. Our reflections on our study of Jeremiah demonstrate the kind of moral pursuit (at least from the perspective of one canonical prophet) which represents knowledge of God in the truest sense. The forbidden tree was not the tree of a variety of other possible human vices and pitfalls, but strategically, was a tree that represented a human quest for a knowledge that was not of God, a theme in the early part of Genesis which might find its climax in the human building of the tower of Babel (11:4). We are mostly in agreement with the view of Wellhausen who understood the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' to be representative then, of a manipulative knowledge that was contrary to God's intention for humankind. We quote Wellhausen

> The knowledge which is here forbidden is ... general knowledge, or getting the eyes opened, as it is afterwards called. This is what transcends, in the writer's view, the limits of our nature; prying out the secret of things, the secret of the world, and overlooking, as it were, God's hand to see how He goes to work in His living activity, so as, perhaps, to learn His secret and imitate Him. For knowledge is to the ancient world also power, and no mere metaphysic. This knowing in the highest sense is the attribute of God alone, who stands in the creative centre of things and penetrates and surveys the whole; it is sealed to man, who has to labour and weary himself at little things. And yet the forbidden good has the most powerful attraction for him; he burns to possess it, and instead of resigning himself in trust and reverence he seeks to steal the jewel which is jealously guarded from him, and so to become like God - to his own sorrow.[643]

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641 Speiser, *Genesis*, 17.
642 Pritchard, *Ancient Near East*, 40-75.
643 Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 302.

Our thesis stated that Jeremiah provides one perspective of the kind of knowledge which is an alternative to human indulgence into all that the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' might represent, especially forbidden knowledge.

The 'tree of life' in the Garden of Eden may be a bit more problematic than the 'tree of knowledge of good and evil' as concerns its significance. Apparently, man was allowed to eat from the 'tree of life'.[644] It would appear to represent humankind's quest for immortality and is a larger biblical theme (Prov.3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4; Ezek.47:12; Rev.22:2)[645] unlike the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil', which appears nowhere else in the OT.[646] Von Rad states, 'The myths of many peoples tell about the existence of a tree of life whose fruits (with continued eating) grant immortality'.[647] Two such examples are once again, the Gilgamesh Epic,[648] and also the tale of Adapa.[649] The two trees singled out in the Garden of Eden, the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' and the 'tree of life', seem to represent two areas which human beings tend to seek out, not only in Hebrew culture, but in other cultures as well. These two areas are knowledge which is left for God and does not belong to the human sphere, and immortality.

One last note on this early biblical narrative which is paramount for the presentation of what is authentic and what is inauthentic knowledge for humankind. This concerns the nature of the serpent, which of course might represent a number of things, but with little doubt represents a crafty and shrewd kind of wisdom that is actually ascribed to the serpent in the story (Gen.3:1). Skinner states

> The ascription of supernatural characters to the serpent presents little difficulty even to the modern mind. The marvellous agility of the snake, in spite of the absence of visible motor organs, its stealthy movements, its rapid death - dealing stroke, and its mysterious power of fascinating other animals and even men, sufficiently account for the superstitious

644 Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 67.
645 So also the 'well of life' whose waters render immortal (Prov.10:11, 13:14, 14:27, 16:22; Ps.36:10).
646 Von Rad, *Genesis*, 76.
647 Ibid, 76.
648 Pritchard, *Ancient Near East*, 40-75.
649 Ibid, 76-80.

regard of which it has been the object amongst all peoples.[650]

The serpent will use the secret knowledge that he possesses, knowledge of the supernatural and the divine, and with the power of speech will use his knowledge in a deceptive way so as to seduce and entice humankind away from allegiance to the creator. In sum, the very early biblical motif of 'tree of knowledge', 'tree of life', and a crafty serpent, all in the context of first temptation for humankind to stray away from their creator, elevates the overall biblical theme of knowledge which is good and knowledge which is bad to a priority position. Certainly, knowledge of the Lord as we have seen it in the Jeremiah tradition makes a contribution to this same wider biblical theme of knowledge of God which is obviously important to the overall Jewish and Christian biblical canons.

We give some final suggestions as to exploration of the theme of knowledge of God from the standpoint of the Christian canon. Of course, the key term for knowledge in the NT is the greek **gnw`si~**, which has a wide range of semantic meaning. John's use of the term, and most notably, his theme of knowledge of God, was briefly alluded to in our thesis, and is no doubt critical for his presentation and defense of the Christian gospel (e.g. I Jn.2:3). Paul's use of the theme is also rather extensive, but special consideration might be given to Rom.1:18-22 where human knowledge and wisdom in defiance of God is challenged at the beginning of what is Paul's most systematic theology in the NT; or, especially, Phil.3:10, where there is a knowledge of the Lord associated with his resurrection and his suffering. It is this last verse which might be, at least from a NT perspective, the zenith statement of what constitutes a knowledge of the Lord.

[650] Skinner, *Genesis*, 72.

APPENDIX: the distribution of the verb נתן and the noun מתן in the book of Jeremiah

		the verb נתן	
verse	**verb stem**	**verb form**	**thesis page number**
1:5	Qal	Perfect	42
1:6	Qal	Perfect	
2:8	Qal	Perfect	30, 44, 53
2:19	Qal	Imperative	
2:23	Qal	Imperative	42
3:13	Qal	Imperative	42, 97
4:22	Qal	Perfect	30, 53
4:22	Qal	Perfect	44, 54

5:1	Qal	Imperative	75
5:4	Qal	Perfect	44, 55, 56
5:5	Qal	Perfect	44, 55
5:15	Qal	Imperfect	
6:15	Qal	Perfect	
6:18	Qal	Imperative	
6:27	Qal	Imperfect	
7:9	Qal	Perfect	42, 177
8:7	Qal	Perfect	44
8:7	Qal	Perfect	55
8:12	Qal	Perfect	
9:3	Qal	Perfect	30, 44, 54
9:6	Qal	Infinitive	30, 44, 89
9:16	Qal	Perfect	42
9:24	Qal	Infinitive	30, 42, 43, 50, 51, 52, 127, 214
10:23	Qal	Perfect	
10:25	Qal	Perfect	30
11:18	Qal	Imperfect	
11:18	Hifil	Perfect	42
11:19	Qal	Perfect	
12:3	Qal	Perfect	
13:12	Qal	Infinitive	
13:12	Qal	Imperfect	
14:18	Qal	Perfect	42, 113
14:20	Qal	Perfect	
15:14	Qal	Perfect	42
15:15	Qal	Perfect	
15:15	Qal	Imperative	
16:13	Qal	Perfect	42
16:21	Qal	Perfect	43, 52
16:21	Hifil	Imperfect	42
16:21	Hifil	Participle	42

the verb

verse	**verb stem**	**verb form**	**thesis page number**
17:4	Qal	Perfect	42
17:9	Qal	Imperfect	81
17:16	Qal	Perfect	
18:23	Qal	Perfect	
19:4	Qal	Perfect	42
22:28	Qal	Perfect	42
24:7	Qal	Infinitive	30, 42, 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 214
26:15	Qal	Infinitive	183
26:15	Qal	Imperfect	
28:9	Nifil	Imperfect	42
29:11	Qal	Perfect	
29:23	Qal	Participle	

31:19	Nifil	Infinitive	42
31:34	Qal	Imperative	30, 42, 45, 49, 50, 52, 214
31:34	Qal	Imperfect	
32:8	Qal	Imperfect	
33:3	Qal	Perfect	
36:19	Qal	Imperfect	
38:24	Qal	Imperfect	
40:14	Qal	Infinitive	
40:14	Qal	Imperfect	
40:15	Qal	Imperfect	
41:4	Qal	Perfect	
42:19	Qal	Infinitive	
42:19	Qal	Imperfect	
42:22	Qal	Infinitive	
42:22	Qal	Imperfect	
44:3	Qal	Perfect	42
44:15	Qal	Participle	
44:28	Qal	Perfect	
44:29	Qal	Imperfect	
48:17	Qal	Participle	
48:30	Qal	Perfect	
50:24	Qal	Perfect	

the noun

verse	**thesis page number**
10:14	
22:16	1, 12, 30, 34, 42, 56, 119, 127, 132, 145, 146, 214
51:17	

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