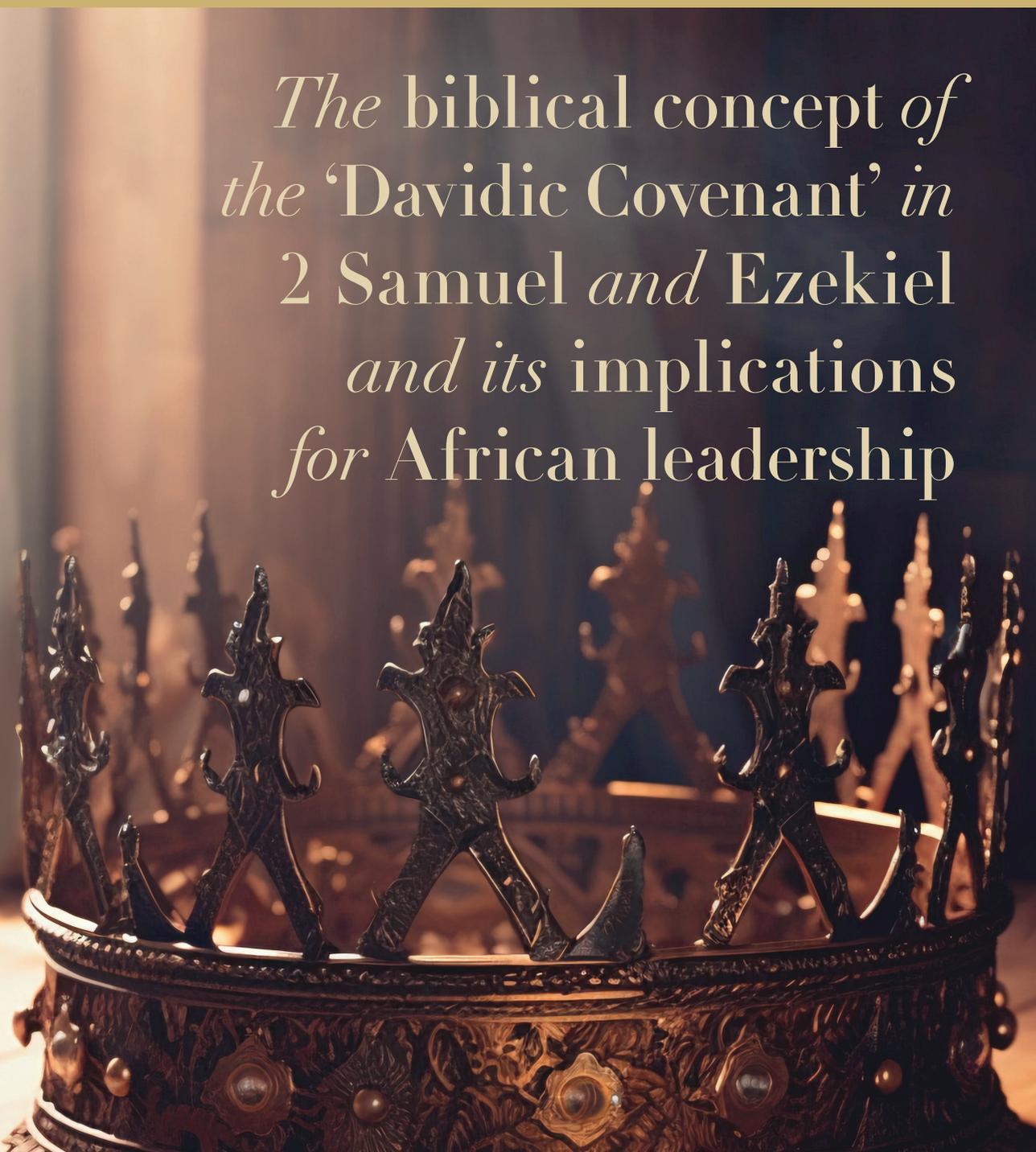


*The biblical concept of  
the 'Davidic Covenant' in  
2 Samuel and Ezekiel  
and its implications  
for African leadership*



VICTOR LONU BUDHA

HTS Religion & Society Series  
Volume 16

*The biblical concept of  
the ‘Davidic Covenant’ in  
2 Samuel and Ezekiel  
and its implications  
for African leadership*



Published by AVARSITY Books, an imprint of AOSIS Scholarly Books, a division of AOSIS.

### **AOSIS Publishing**

15 Oxford Street, Durbanville, 7550, Cape Town, South Africa  
Postnet Suite 110, Private Bag X19, Durbanville, 7551, Cape Town, South Africa  
Tel: +27 21 975 2602  
Website: <https://www.aosis.co.za>  
Email: [books@aosis.co.za](mailto:books@aosis.co.za)

Copyright © Victor Lonu Budha. Licensee: AOSIS (Pty) Ltd

The moral right of the author has been asserted.

Cover image: This cover design was created by Natascha Olivier/Coco Design with the use of a photograph by Freepik.com {42082827}, obtained from Freepik.com, titled 'Medieval crown of royalty still life', available from [https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/medieval-crown-royalty-still-life\\_42082827.htm#query=crown%20for%20a%20king&position=14&from\\_view=search&track=ais](https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/medieval-crown-royalty-still-life_42082827.htm#query=crown%20for%20a%20king&position=14&from_view=search&track=ais), copyright-free under the Freepik licensing terms.

Published in 2023  
Impression: 1

ISBN: 978-1-991269-02-7 (print)  
ISBN: 978-1-991270-02-3 (epub)  
ISBN: 978-1-991271-02-0 (pdf) 

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2023.BK470>

How to cite this work: Budha, VL 2023, *The biblical concept of the 'Davidic Covenant' in 2 Samuel and Ezekiel and its implications for African leadership*, in HTS Religion & Society Series, vol. 16, AVARSITY Books, Cape Town.

Series: HTS Religion & Society Series  
Series ISSN: 2617-5819  
Series Editor: Professor Andries G van Aarde

Printed and bound in South Africa.

Listed in OAPEN (<http://www.oapen.org>), DOAB (<http://www.doabooks.org/>) and indexed by Google Books. Some rights reserved.

This is an open-access publication. Except where otherwise noted, this work is distributed under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). A copy of this is available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>. Enquiries outside the terms of the Creative Commons license should be sent to the AOSIS Rights Department at the above address or to [publishing@aosis.co.za](mailto:publishing@aosis.co.za).



The publisher accepts no responsibility for any statement made or opinion expressed in this publication. Consequently, the publishers and copyright holders will not be liable for any loss or damage sustained by any reader as a result of their action upon any statement or opinion in this work. Links by third-party websites are provided by AOSIS in good faith and for information only. AOSIS disclaims any responsibility for the materials contained in any third-party website referenced in this work.

Every effort has been made to protect the interest of copyright holders. Should any infringement have occurred inadvertently, the publisher apologises and undertakes to amend the omission in the event of a reprint.

HTS Religion & Society Series  
Volume 16

*The biblical concept of  
the 'Davidic Covenant' in  
2 Samuel and Ezekiel  
and its implications  
for African leadership*

Victor Lonu Budha



## Theological and Religious Studies editorial board at AOSIS

### Chief Commissioning Editor: Scholarly Books

**Andries G van Aarde**, MA, DD, PhD, D Litt, South Africa

### Board members

**Chen Yuehua**, Professor of the School of Philosophy, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

**Christian Danz**, Professor of the Institute for Systematic Theology and Religious Studies, Evangelical Theological Faculty, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria.

**Corneliu C Simut**, Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology, Faculty of Theology, Department of Theology, Music and Social-Humanistic Sciences, Emanuel University of Oradea, Romania; Supervisor of doctorates in Theology, Interdisciplinary Doctoral School, Aurel Vlaicu State University of Arad, Romania; Associate Research Fellow in Dogmatic Theology, Faculty of Theology, Department of Dogmatics and Christian Ethics, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

**David D Grafton**, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations, Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Hartford International University for Religion and Peace, United States of America.

**David Sim**, Professor of New Testament Studies, Department Biblical and Early Christian Studies, Australian Catholic University, Australia.

**Evangelia G Dafni**, Professor of School of Pastoral and Social Theology, Department of Pastoral and Social Theology and Department of the Bible and Patristic Literature, Faculty of Theology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

**Fundiswa A Kobo**, Professor of Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, University of South Africa, South Africa.

**Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole**, Professor of Hebrew and Bible Translation, Department of Hebrew, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Free State, South Africa.

**Jeanne Hoeft**, Dean of Students and Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care, Saint Paul School of Theology, United States of America.

**Lisanne D'Andrea-Winslow**, Professor of Department of Biology and Biochemistry and Department of Biblical and Theological Studies, University of Northwestern-St Paul, Minnesota, United States of America.

**Llewellyn Howes**, Professor of Department of Greek and Latin Studies, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

**Marcel Sarot**, Emeritus Professor of Fundamental Theology, Tilburg School of Catholic Theology: Religion and Practice, Tilburg University, the Netherlands.

**Nancy Howell**, Professor of Department of Philosophy of Religion, Faculty of Theology and Religion, Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, United States of America.

**Piotr Roszak**, Professor of Department of Christian Philosophy, Faculty of Theology, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland.

**Sigríður Guðmarsdóttir**, Professor of Department of Theology and Religion, School of Humanities, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland; Centre for Mission and Global Studies, Faculty of Theology, Diakonia and Leadership Studies, VID Specialized University, Norway.

**Wang Xiaochao**, Dean of the Institute of Christianity and Cross-Cultural Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China.

**Warren Carter**, LaDonna Kramer Meinders Professor of New Testament, Phillips Theological Seminary, Oklahoma, United States of America.

**William RG Loader**, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Murdoch University, Western Australia.

### Peer-review declaration

The publisher (AOSIS) endorses the South African 'National Scholarly Book Publishers Forum Best Practice for Peer-Review of Scholarly Books'. The book proposal form was evaluated by our Theological and Religious Studies editorial board. The manuscript underwent an evaluation to compare the level of originality with other published works and was subjected to rigorous two-step peer-review before publication by two technical expert reviewers, who did not include the author and were independent of the author, with the identities of the reviewers not revealed to the editor(s) or author(s). The reviewers were independent of the publisher, editor(s) and author(s). The publisher shared feedback on the similarity report and the reviewers' inputs with the manuscript's editor(s) or author(s) to improve the manuscript. Where the reviewers recommended revision and improvements, the editor(s) or author(s) responded adequately to such recommendations. The reviewers commented positively on the scholarly merits of the manuscript and recommended that the book be published.

## Research justification

This book considers the influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34 and 37, shedding light on our understanding of the significance of the Davidic ruler in Ezekiel. The texts of Ezekiel 34 and 37 have attracted many scholars, yet not all aspects of Ezekiel 34 and 37 have been explored. This book aims to focus on the concept 'Davidic Covenant' from the perspective of intertextuality and the influence of 2 Samuel 7:1-16 on Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28. Applying this focus represents original research. The text of Ezekiel shows that YHWH is the one who will take the leadership of YHWH's people after the dismissal of the bad leaders. The text adds that a human ruler, David, will lead under the direction of YHWH in the restored nation. The book demonstrates a link between the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 and the promised ruler David in the text of Ezekiel. Scholars have offered insights into the Davidic Covenant and the future hope for Israel but have not considered the detailed influence of 2 Samuel on Ezekiel 34 and 37. Therefore, reading the text of Ezekiel concerning the original form of the Davidic Covenant may reveal further indications of the literary and contextual influence of 2 Samuel 7, which help to provide a better understanding of the function of the promised ruler in Ezekiel 34 and 37. To achieve this goal, I used intertextuality as method. This book is written by a scholar for scholarly peers in the field of Old Testament Studies and theologians who focus on the concept leadership.

I with this declare that the material in this book represents more than 50% substantial reworking of my dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Theology and Biblical Study obtained at the Africa International University (Nairobi, Kenya), and no text in this book has been plagiarised. Chapters 1, 3 and 4 represent a reworking of, respectively, two published articles by the author: Budha, VL 2020, 'The Davidic Covenant in Ezekiel 34:23-31: Influence of 2 Samuel 7:1-16', *European Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics Studies* 4(3), 140-164 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejll.v4i3.226>); and Budha, VL 2021, 'The Davidic Covenant in Ezekiel 37:15-28 and 2 Samuel 7:11-16: An Intertextual Reading', *European Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics Studies* 4(4), 21-45 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejll.v4i4.234>). These articles were published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) License, according to which permission is granted for reworking and republishing.

**Victor Lonu Budha**, Research Associate, Department of New Testament and Related Literature, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa; and Department of Biblical Studies, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST), Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya.

This publication was made possible by the generous University of Pretoria's HTS Book Publication Seed Fund under series editorship of Professor Andries G van Aarde and as a University of Pretoria research associate of Professor Ernst van Eck.



# Contents

Biographical note	ix
Abbreviations, acronyms and tables appearing in the text and notes	xi
List of abbreviations and acronyms	xi
List of tables	xiii
Dedication	xv
Acknowledgement	xvii
<b>Chapter 1: Paucity, approach and methods</b>	<b>1</b>
Conclusion	13
<b>Chapter 2: The Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11-16</b>	<b>15</b>
Covenant in the Old Testament	15
The Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11-16	17
Establishment of a house for David	26
Significance of the Davidic Covenant	34
Findings	37
Conclusion	39
<b>Chapter 3: Influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34</b>	<b>41</b>
Ezekiel 34	41
Authorship and date	41
Milieu	43
The place and significance of Chapter 34 in the book of Ezekiel	44
Structure of Ezekiel 34:1-31	45
The shepherds of Israel in Ezekiel 34	46
YHWH's promises and judgement	47
David in the vision of the covenant of peace	61
Affinities	61
Samuel 7:1-16 and Ezekiel 34	66
Literary influence	66
Theological influence	69
Conceptual influence	71
Conclusion	75

<b>Chapter 4: Influence of 2 Samuel 7:11-16 on Ezekiel 37:15-28</b>	<b>77</b>
The place and significance of the section in the book of Ezekiel	77
Structure of Ezekiel 37:15-28	80
Ezekiel 37:15-23 - unity and salvation of the Jewish people	80
Ezekiel 37:24-28 - salvation of the Jewish people	85
The Davidic King	85
Obeying YHWH's laws	86
Returning to the land and Davidic Prince	88
Obedience and land	89
Covenant of peace	90
Knowledge of YHWH	92
Influence of 2 Samuel 7	93
Literary influence	93
Theological influence	98
Conceptual influence	98
Findings: Recommendations for further study	102
<b>Chapter 5: Implications for African leadership</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>127</b>

# Biographical note

## **Victor Lonu Budha<sup>a,b</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>Department of New Testament and Related Literature,  
Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria,  
Pretoria, South Africa

<sup>b</sup>Department of Biblical Studies,  
Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST),  
Africa International University,  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Email: lonubudha@gmail.com  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9617-4512>

Victor Lonu Budha has been following a scholarly career since 2001, after completing his theological studies at Institut Supérieur Théologique de Bunia (ISTB) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Upon completing his Honours (Hons) degree, he lectured part-time at the same institution. He taught part-time at Institut Supérieur Pan Africain de Santé Communautaire (ISPASC) and Institut Supérieur Théologique (ISThA). Budha was an assistant teaching fellow at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST), currently known as Africa International University (AIU), at the completion of his Master's degree (MDIV) in Biblical Studies, where he also lectured. Budha lectured part-time at Pan African Christian University (PACU) in Nairobi. As a visiting lecturer, he taught at Uganda Christian University and Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de Bangui (FATEB – Bangui Evangelical School of Theology) in the Central African Republic (CAR). Budha was affiliated as a research associate at the University of Pretoria (UP) (South Africa) and an adjunct lecturer with the Africa International University and International Leadership University, Nairobi, Kenya, at the time of this publication. He was also a visiting lecturer at Université Anglicane du Congo (UAC) in Bunia.



# Abbreviations, acronyms and tables appearing in the text and notes

## List of abbreviations and acronyms

AA	<i>Africa Affairs</i>
AB	Anchor Bible
ADRY	<i>African Disability Rights Yearbook</i>
AJET	<i>African Journal of Evangelical Theology</i>
AnBib	<i>Analecta Biblica</i>
ANE	ancient Near East
AP	<i>Africa Portal</i>
BETL	<i>Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BRL	Baker Reference Library
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BTCB	Theological Commentary on the Bible
CJR	<i>Canada's Journal on Refugees</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CSM	<i>Christian Science Monitor</i>
CTSJ	<i>Chafer Theological Seminary Journal</i>
DCH	<i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i>
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
DH	Deuteronomistic History
Dtr	The Deuteronomist
FB	<i>Forschung zur Bibel</i>
GO	Gog Oracles
GPT	Growing Points in Theology
HAR	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HB	Hebrew Bible
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monograph
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
IBC	<i>Interpretation: A Bible commentary for teaching and preaching</i>

ICC	international critical commentary
IDPs	internally displaced persons
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBPL	<i>Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JGRChJ	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
JTSA	<i>Journal for Theology for Southern Africa</i>
JRHR	<i>Journal for Religion and Human Relations</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series</i>
LCBI	<i>Literary Current in Biblical Interpretation</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	<i>New American Commentary</i>
NBBC	<i>New Beacon Bible Commentary</i>
NBBC	<i>The New Beacon Bible Commentary</i>
NCBC	<i>New Century Bible Commentary</i>
NIBC	<i>New International Biblical Commentary</i>
NICOT	<i>New International Commentary on the Old Testament</i>
NIDB	<i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>
NIDOTTE	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
NIV	New International Version
NIVAC	<i>New International Version Application Commentary</i>
NT	New Testament
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCDE	<i>Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economique</i>
OPRP	<i>Olive Press Research Paper</i>
OT	Old Testament
OTM	<i>Old Testament Message</i>
OTS	Old Testament Studies
OtSt	<i>Oudtestamentische studiën</i>
PJT	<i>Pharos Journal of Theology</i>
PTM	Princeton Theological Monograph
RHR	<i>Radical History Review</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>

SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and its Literature
SBLStBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBJT	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology Symposium
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
TMSJ	<i>The Master's Seminary Journal</i>
TOTC	<i>Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries</i>
TWOT	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
VE	<i>Verbum et Ecclesia</i>
VI	<i>Voix et Image</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

### List of tables

Table 3.1:	Hebrew–English translation of 2 Samuel 7:7–8 and Ezekiel 34:23.	67
Table 4.1:	Hebrew–English translation of 2 Samuel 7:4 and Ezekiel 37:15.	93
Table 4.2:	Hebrew–English translation of 2 Samuel 7:5 and Ezekiel 37:24.	94
Table 4.3:	2 Samuel 7:6 and Ezekiel 37:21.	95
Table 4.4:	Hebrew–English translation of 2 Samuel 7:8 and Ezekiel 37:19.	96
Table 4.5:	2 Samuel 7:10 and Ezekiel 37:23.	96
Table 4.6:	Hebrew–English translation of 2 Samuel 7:13 and Ezekiel 37:25.	97



# Dedication

I dedicate this work to YHWH, the maker of covenant, and to all those who are experiencing oppression. I also dedicate this book to my dear wife, Carine, and our children.



# Acknowledgement

My gratitude goes firstly to God for enabling me to engage in a programme of PhD studies and come to completion. It is because of his grace that I endured challenges and discouragement. It was not easy when my first supervisor, Dr John F Evans, discovered that two different people had published the initial topic on which I was working.

Secondly, I present my gratitude to Africa International University for accommodating me during my studies and largely contributing to my financial assistance. I am indebted to Dr Jamie Viands, with whom I have worked to complete this task. His remarks, suggestions, direction, encouragement and prayers were of great help.

My appreciation goes to More than a Mile Deep (MMD) for the financial support and the opportunity given to me to serve the Lord while carrying on my studies. I also acknowledge the spiritual and financial assistance of relatives and friends. My parents, Elekana and Ana, together with my siblings Caroline, Safari and Nguna, deserve my gratitude. I also recognise the support of my in-laws during this journey.

My special appreciation goes to my dear wife, Carine, and our children Dorcas, Esther, Ann, Shangwe, David, Israel and Daniel, who were a source of great encouragement in my journey. There were many times that they experienced the burden of my absence.



# Paucity, approach and methods

The Davidic Covenant<sup>1</sup> is an important theme in the Old Testament (OT). Apart from the text of 2 Samuel 7:1–16, where it appears for the first time, many other biblical books, including Ezekiel, refer to the Davidic Covenant in one way or another. When leaders in Judah failed, their people experienced hard times, as found in the text of Ezekiel 34. A close reading of this text indicates that while the Judeans were in exile, the poor leadership that they experienced left them on their own and exposed them to various challenges. They lacked protection and care. Because of the failure of the Jewish leaders, YHWH discredited them and resolved to reform the leadership that was in place. The promise of restoration in Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28 is based on the covenant that God made with David in 2 Samuel 7:1–16.

The way in which God addressed the issue of bad leaders in Judah was a clear indication that he was concerned with the leadership that was offered to his people. While scholars have largely discussed the issue, including the function of the promised ruler, the literary influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on the text of Ezekiel 34 and 37 has not been developed

---

1. I will use 'Davidic Covenant' in my writing as a proper noun and I will keep the form of the 'Davidic covenant' when it appears in quotations.

**How to cite:** Budha, VL 2023, 'Paucity, approach and methods', in *The biblical concept of 'Davidic Covenant' in 2 Samuel and Ezekiel and its implications for African leadership*, HTS Religion & Society Series, vol. 16, AVARSITY Books, Cape Town, pp. 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2023.BK470.01>

in depth. It may be that such an intertextual study, in addition to contributing to our understanding of Ezekiel's use of prior Scripture, will shed further light on the function of godly leadership as expressed through the Davidic Covenant. The motivation to undertake this study is twofold. The first motivation is that the texts of Ezekiel 34 and 37 have attracted many scholars who have looked at them from different angles; they have conducted considerable exegetical studies. Some of them have looked at its theological aspects with a focus on the shepherd metaphor (Biwul 2013) and its sociopolitical implications in the community (Obinwa 2012). The works scholars have done so far have not explored all the aspects of Ezekiel 34 and 37. The text of Ezekiel displays that YHWH is the one who will take the leadership of his people after the dismissal of the bad leaders. The text adds that a human ruler will lead under the direction of YHWH in the restored nation.

The second motivation comes from the mention of the name of David in the texts of Ezekiel. It is possible that the figure of David would recall the good memories of his reign and give hope to the people. No one among the exiles indeed lived during the kingship of David, but they could have learned about David through the collective memory of their history and through prior Scripture. As Martin Noth (1958, p. 298) observes, 'fundamentally, Israel now lived on the traditions of the past. The backward glance to its previous history and traditions filled its whole life.' Thus, the memory of history was the right source concerning the past events the nation went through. Referring to David in the text of Ezekiel would certainly remind the people about the covenant God made with King David. As the promised ruler refers to King David, with whom God made the covenant as found in 2 Samuel 7, I am motivated to find out the link between the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 and the promised ruler David in the text of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 34 and 37:15–28 describe how the leaders mistreated the people and present the consequences of this poor leadership and the promise of restoration that God provides for his people. But the point of interest in this research is only secondarily on the failure of the Jewish leaders and the restoration of the Jewish people. The primary research question is whether the text of 2 Samuel 7 influenced the text of Ezekiel in Chapters 34 and 37. This question is, firstly, based on the appearance of the name of David in Ezekiel. Hence, when the reader of the text of Ezekiel comes across the name of David as the future leader, they inevitably connect to the promise that YHWH made to King David. Secondly, in the latter text, there are noticeable literary features in connection to 2 Samuel 7. Besides the literary features, we also find some theological and conceptual features. Considering the connections between the texts of 2 Samuel 7 and Ezekiel 34 and 37, it is right to address the aspect of influence.

Therefore, this research seeks to find out the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7:1-16 on Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28 and how Ezekiel's reliance on the Davidic Covenant helps to understand the function of the promised ruler. Thus, the thesis of this research states that considering the influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34 and 37 sheds light on our understanding of the significance of the Davidic ruler in Ezekiel.

This scholarly book comprises five chapters. The first chapter presents the motivation for the research and the research questions and states the thesis of the work. The chapter also indicates the contribution of the research to biblical scholarship and describes the method used. Chapter 2 focuses on the study of the text of 2 Samuel 7:1-16, emphasising what is shared with the text of Ezekiel – mainly the continuity of the reign of the house of David. Chapter 3 looks at the text of Ezekiel 34 with specific consideration of the positive aspect of the promise, incorporating possible areas of influence from the context and the text of 2 Samuel 7. With the same approach, Chapter 4 looks at the text of Ezekiel 37:15-28, and the fifth chapter discusses the implications of the study for African leadership.

In this section, the intention is to position this study in previous OT scholarship. It seeks to identify areas of discussion relating to the figure of David and the future hope in the prophecy of Ezekiel. The focus of my survey is to see how scholars have understood the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34 and 37 concerning the Davidic Covenant and how it helps to understand the function of the promised ruler. The literature to be considered incorporates books, commentaries, essays and articles on the influence of the text of 2 Samuel, if any, on the text of Ezekiel, the figure of David, the theme of the Davidic Covenant and the future hope.

In Ezekiel scholarship, the figure of David has been understood in different ways. While some scholars do not say what the figure of David symbolises, many have seen him as a messianic agent. Walther Zimmerli is aware of the difficulty of specifying what the figure of David means. However, he explains more about David and recognises that the name of David for the future leader is a captivating element because of the place that David occupied in the history of Israel. The name of David appearing in the texts of Ezekiel is striking, not only because David is a great figure of the past but also because of the covenant that YHWH made with him. If it were not for the covenant, the name of David could not appear in the texts of Ezekiel (Zimmerli 1983, p. 218).

Being a figure of history, the name of David has forever become an indelible reminder of his reign in the lives of the people of Judah. From what Zimmerli says, the name of David is to be considered a synonym for

unity in the nation of Israel. Thus, even though David was no longer in existence and would never come back to rule over Israel, he remained an icon of cohesion in the minds of the people of Israel. Additionally, Zimmerli indicates that the mention of the name of David in the text of Ezekiel is linked to a previous well-known prophecy.

Referring to David as the promised ruler in the text of Ezekiel, Daniel Block (1997b) takes the view that:

[T]he shepherd will be *David*. Although this ruler is explicitly identified as David only twice outside this book,<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel identifies the divinely installed king as David based on a long-standing prophetic tradition. (p. 297)

Block clarifies that the figure of David in Ezekiel 37:24 symbolises the unity of the people of God (1997b, p. 415). He also indicates that the promise of the new ruler is in relation to the Davidic Covenant, as found in 2 Samuel 7:8, which provides the basis for the prophetic hopes. Block makes an important theological consideration, emphasising that the link to the Davidic Covenant in Ezekiel serves to display YHWH's faithfulness to fulfil his promise to David (1997a, p. 81).

Leslie Allen believes that the future ruler implies the re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy. In the description that Allen (1990, p. 163) gives, he states that 'the restoration of the Davidic monarchy would have new safeguards in the realisation of a subordinate vassal status ("my servant") and the constitutional nature of the ruler as "head of state among them", rather than as despotic overlord'. When speaking about 'safeguards', the important suggestion that he makes is that the new 'David' will rule entirely under the authority of YHWH. Allen describes the dependence of the coming leader on YHWH and underscores the quality of the reign of the promised ruler.

Like Allen, Paul M Joyce (2009, p. 198) has in view the Davidic lineage but not the returning King David. According to Joyce, David appears in the text of Ezekiel for literary reasons in that different themes are developed in the passage (p. 198). For example, Ezekiel 34 develops the themes of bad shepherds, the relation between the strong and the weak sheep, the restoration of the Jewish people and the incoming king in the person of David.

Steven Tuell shares the same view as Joyce. In his study, he considers the figure of David as a 're-established king' (Tuell 2009, p. 240). Making this point, he connects the use of the figure to the literary feature in the book of Ezekiel, giving the impression that it is not important to focus on the promised ruler. According to Cooper (1994), even though there

---

2. Block misses Hosea 3:5, where the promised ruler is also identified as David. It is unclear why Block does not refer to the mentioned verse.

is the element of David's descendant in the figure of David, the figure of David refers more to a period than to a person. He (Cooper 1994) remarks that:

[...] the coming shepherd will be known as 'my servant David' [...] He was the one from the line of David who was a fulfillment of the promise made in the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:16. He will establish an everlasting throne of David. The use of 'my servant David' represents the hope of future resurrection of the Golden Age of Israel. (p. 302)

Cooper (1994) sees two aspects in the future ruler, David. According to him, the mention of David refers to a descendant of David who will guide the people of God. At the same time, he has in view a Golden Age for Israel.

Duguid sees not only a person but also a system of leadership in the figure of David. He (Duguid 1994) observes that the:

[G]overnance will be accomplished not so much through a change in the nature of the *office* but through a change like the *occupant*. Future Israel is to be led by a shepherd, as was supposedly the case in the past. (p. 47)

Recognising the coming of a 'David', the promised leader, Duguid designates that the future ruler will be different from those addressed in the text of Ezekiel; he will be a true shepherd.

About David as the promised ruler, Obinwa emphasises the critical place of David in the history of Israel and declares that Ezekiel has only followed what has been common. Besides David being an important figure in the history of Israel, Obinwa (2012, pp. 354–355) connects his mention in the Ezekiel to the narrative of Nathan in 2 Samuel 7:1–18.

Besides the Davidic tradition, Biwul suggests that the mention of David serves as the prototype of the future ruler in a restored Israel. The significance of recalling the Davidic dynasty is that it gives insight into the desired leadership for the coming restored Israel (Biwul 2013, pp. 220–221).

While some of the mentioned scholars tie the figure of David to a long-standing tradition – the Davidic Covenant – they did not consider in detail the textual interrelationship existing between the texts of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 and Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28.

The overall impression is that the appearance of David in the text of Ezekiel is an indication of hope. In relation to the text of 2 Samuel 7, the theme of Davidic hope appears to be dominant in Ezekiel 34 and 37. According to Evans (2006, p. 12), the future Davidic hope for Israel as the chosen people of YHWH and the idealisation of the Davidic Covenant and his dynasty are obvious in the OT prophecies.

While scholars have not considered in depth the influence of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 on the text of Ezekiel 34 and 37, 'it is significant in

that it provides a clue to how, in general, the promise in Ezekiel 34 [and 37] depends on the Davidic Covenant' (Budha 2020, p. 8). I refer to this *new* facet thus: 'There are important indications that we need to consider as we try to understand the background of the Davidic Covenant' (Budha 2020, p. 8). This understanding is based on the insight of Professor Walther Zimmerli (1907–1983), known for his exegetical and theological commentary *Ezechiel* in the series *Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament*. As I put it: 'Zimmerli links the Davidic Covenant to the scope of the history of the people of God, mainly to their election (Zimmerli 1983, p. 218)' (Budha 2020, p. 8). He (Zimmerli 1979b) states:

The election of David is for the faith of Judean Israel indissolubly linked with belief in the election of Israel. The Deuteronomistic History sees in Yahweh's fidelity to the house of David (and to Jerusalem) the particular proof of Yahweh's close relationship with his people. On this soil, there has subsequently arisen the expectation of a coming member of the house of David and his associated promise to Israel will be completely fulfilled. (p. 218)

From this perspective, it is proper to expect that the theme of the Davidic Covenant would appear in other texts, specifically in the text of Ezekiel.

Scholars have connected Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28 to 2 Samuel 7:1–16 in one way or another. For example, Obinwa (2012, p. 355) states that David is 'the king, the royal permanence of whose house was foretold by YHWH through Prophet Nathan (cf. 2 Sm 7:1–18)'. In reference to the mention of David in the text of Ezekiel he adds: 'Hence, Ezekiel followed a long-standing tradition in his oracle about David' (Obinwa 2012, p. 355). Biwul (2013, p. 221) has the same opinion as he considers David in Ezekiel 34 as 'a recall of the Davidic dynasty'. According to Brad E Kelle (2013, p. 287), the reference to David in Ezekiel is a representation of the Davidic dynasty. One must remember that the Davidic dynasty is an important component of the covenant YHWH made with David. Duguid (1999, p. 396) attributes the promise of David as the future ruler for the Jewish people to 'the fulfillment of the covenant with David'.

In his comment, Blenkinsopp indirectly connects the promise of David in Ezekiel to the Davidic Covenant. He (Blenkinsopp 1990) observes that:

[A]fter more than four centuries, the Davidic dynasty was extinguished, with the exile first of Jehoiachin and then of his uncle Mattaniah (Zedekiah). However, the hope of its eventual restoration was kept alive in the homeland and during the diaspora, and attempts were made to restore it. (p. 160)

He suggests that the efforts of the Jewish people to restore the Davidic dynasty came from the knowledge of the covenant that YHWH made with his servant. In addition, from a messianic perspective, John W Wevers connects the promise of the future ruler, David, to the Davidic Covenant. He states, 'the Messiah must be of the royal house, since Yahweh had

promised David that his throne would be established for ever,<sup>3</sup> 2 Samuel 7:16' (Wevers 1982, p. 184). Reflecting on Ezekiel 34:23 and 37:22-26, Cooper (1994, p. 302) sees the promise of David as the future ruler as 'a fulfillment of the promise made in the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:16'.

From the few aforementioned examples, there is a clear indication that appointing David as the future ruler of the people of YHWH intrinsically derives from the Davidic Covenant. Therefore, there is reason to believe that the text of 2 Samuel 7:1-16, where the Davidic Covenant appears for the first time, might have a certain influence on the texts of Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28. The point that is missing in the Ezekielian scholarship is a detailed study of the possible influence. It is worth doing an intertextual study, as it helps to determine the connections between these texts and the possible influence of the former text on the latter. This approach helps to understand the biblical texts of study from a literary point of view and can shed light on Ezekiel's understanding of the crucial role of David in God's plans.

Zimmerli (1971, pp. 86-150) recognises that the theme of a future hope for Israel was central in the ministry of prophets. The need for such a future hope derives from the condition the deportees found themselves in Babylon. Frank Ritchel Ames describes the social effects of the exile, effects that may have been the reality of the Judean exiles. He observes (Kelle, Ames & Wright 2012):

The loss for the person in exile, of course, is not simply material. Access to personnel and institutions may be blocked. Exile separates family members, friends and neighbors, and community members. Separation fractures social networks and community infrastructures. Exile disrupts a community's complex support, the benefits of which may not be recognized until they are no longer available to be displaced. The loss of vital resources translates into unmet human needs. (p. 175)

In the face of this reality, it emerges that the Davidic Covenant serves to raise the exiles' hopes. My claim is that the theme of future hope in the text of Ezekiel relates to that of the Davidic Covenant in the text of 2 Samuel. In the promise of hope that God gives to Israel, there can be misunderstandings. One may think that God has compassion for his people, which is true, but God has in view his own glory and honour beyond the restoration of Israel. To clarify this aspect, Zimmerli (1971, p. 88) mentions the 'Day of Yahweh'<sup>4</sup> as an important feature for the future hope and affirms that it constitutes

---

3. The form 'for ever' will appear as it is in any quotation and biblical verses to respect the authors' choice. I will use 'forever' in my own sentences.

4. The 'Day of Yahweh' is not the concern in this study. I mention it to underscore the fact that God does everything for the sake of his glory.

'a hope for Israel that does not ignore Yahweh, but is directed wholly toward him and sees in his coming to the foundation for a bright future'. The idea here is that YHWH himself is the purpose of the future of Israel.

According to Baruch J Schwartz, considering the reality of exile, the centrality of YHWH and the destruction that took place in Israel, the message of hope as presented by Ezekiel seems to be complex and confusing. Schwartz remarks (in Odell 2000) that:

Ezekiel's repeated assurances of YHWH's resolve to return the exiles of Judah and Israel to their land, there to dwell securely and to prosper evermore, a scion of David reigning over them all and YHWH's rebuilt sanctuary in their midst, are puzzling in many aspects. (p. 43)

It is not that Schwartz overlooks the message of hope in the prophecy of Ezekiel. However, the complexity of the message resides in the shift from a message of judgement to that of restoration without any explanation or warning from the author. The abrupt shift and lack of transition in the text of Ezekiel is striking and, in a way, remarkable (Odell 2000, p. 43).

Despite the lack of transition in the structure of the prophet's communication, Schwartz also emphasises that the message of hope occupies an important place in the prophecy of Ezekiel. The abrupt appearance of the proclamation of the glorious future is a literary feature which, in my opinion, does not affect the content of the message. However, Schwartz's comment pushes us to reassess Ezekiel 34 as a transitional oracle between the judgement section and the oracles of restoration. Ezekiel 34 is in the last section of the book (chs. 33–48), where we have the restoration programme that YHWH has for his people.

The section begins in Chapter 33 with the watchman's individual responsibility and ends with the kind of relationship God intends to have with his people. The reader of the book of Ezekiel finds in Chapter 34 the starting point for the restoration programme. The text of Ezekiel 34 clearly displays that restoration cannot occur without a radical change in leadership. Sticking to the theocentric aspect of the book of Ezekiel, the text establishes that such a reformation needs God's intervention. Joyce (2009) correctly apprehends the future hope as inclusive:

Chapters 34–37 paint a vivid picture of hope for the future. The exiles will return to the land (34:13; 36:24; 37:12), cities will be rebuilt (36:10, 33), nature itself will be renewed (34:25–29; 36:8–9, 29–30). Judah and Israel will be united again (37:15–22), there will be a restored Davidic monarchy (34:23–24; 37:22, 24–25), and YHWH will set his sanctuary in the midst of his people for evermore (37:26–27). (p. 195)

Joyce summarises here what the programme of restoration of Israel will include. The future hope that YHWH gives his people depicts Israel's future as splendid. Israel will have an impressive future that will consider all aspects of her life.

Looking at the two aspects of the message of Ezekiel – judgement and restoration – Werner Lemke (Lemke 1984, p. 166) finds in the message of future hope preached to the exiles a means of welfare and encouragement to the people of God. Lemke shows that the message of hope also describes the plan that YHWH has for his people for complete restoration (political, religious, social and psychological). This promise of hope is not limited only to Chapters 34 and 37 of the book of Ezekiel but constitutes an important aspect of the prophecy regarding restoration. In the same perspective, reflecting on the oracle against Gog in Ezekiel 39, Block (1987) highlights the future hope of Israel in these terms:

The oracle foresees Israel as prosperous and secure in her land for a considerable period of time. In fact, in contrast to the immediacy of the prophetic utterance, the Gog episode is set in the latter days (xxviii 8, 16), when Yahweh's people will enjoy all the blessings attendant on the revival of the nation and her relationship with her deity (xxxviii 8, 11). (pp. 269–270)

While it is true, on the one hand, that God promised a glowing future to his people, it is also true, on the other hand, that the people of God should not take the hope as a reward of YHWH to them. The hope promised to Israel is a divine initiative; it is not the result of what Israel did to deserve it. Yet, in the book of Ezekiel, the future hope is the portion of Israel and not for other nations. Even though the good future will be the portion of Israel as the nation of God, it is all about YHWH and his glory (Darr 1987, p. 272).

Andrew Mein (2001, pp. 216–263) believes that the future hope for Israel, as depicted in the book of Ezekiel, has a 'millenarian' dimension in which land is the central feature of this hope.<sup>5</sup> If this is true, it means that Israel was waiting for a radical change in her exilic situation when Ezekiel delivered his message of hope. From the view of millenarianism, the expectation is to 'await the destruction of the existing social, political, and economic order, which will herald the arrival of a new world' (Villa-Flores 2007, p. 243). The assumption is that the exiles in Babylon longed to see the end of the exile to recover their freedom.

As shown previously, scholars have somewhat different views about the Davidic figure in the text of Ezekiel. They consider David as a messianic agent, a synonym for the unity of Israel or a representative of a leadership system. The figure of David concerns the re-establishment of the lost Davidic monarchy, his dynasty or a period. Every scholar considers briefly who this 'David' will be and what he will do according to the texts, but none delve deeply into the possible influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel.

---

5. To understand 'millenarian', Mein (2001, p. 219) gives the definition provided by Yonina Talmon, who defines this term as 'religious movements that expect imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly collective salvation' (Talmon 1996, p. 159).

While scholars have offered insight into the Davidic Covenant and the future hope for Israel, their works up to this point have not paid attention to the detailed influence of 2 Samuel on Ezekiel 34 and 37. Therefore, reading the text of Ezekiel in relation to the original form of the Davidic Covenant may reveal further indications of the literary and contextual influence of 2 Samuel 7 and the help it provides in understanding the function of the promised ruler in Ezekiel 34 and 37.

This research focuses on the texts of Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28 and 2 Samuel 7:1–16, specifically on the promised leader in relation to the Davidic Covenant. The principal point of consideration regarding the promised ruler is the literary role that the promise plays in the corpus of the texts of study. To fulfil this goal, I propose to employ an intertextual approach to studying these texts.

The concept of ‘intertextuality’ was first ‘systematically developed by Julia Kristeva in 1967’ (Aichele & Phillips 1995, p. 8).<sup>6</sup> Kristeva gives credit to Mikhail Bakhtin, who introduced the notion of the interrelationship of texts into literary theory (eds. Haynes & McKenzie 1999, p. 166). In the literary theory where intertextuality fits, Bakhtin points to three areas which should be taken into consideration: (1) the existing utterances of a text, (2) the internal dialogism within the new text and (3) the responses of the audience. The term ‘intertextuality’ encompasses the idea of the ability to form connections between texts. Intertextuality uses common concepts and terminology like ‘point of connection’, ‘influence’, ‘borrowing’, ‘reference’, ‘allusion’, ‘echo’ and ‘citation’ (Leene 2014, p. 4).

Intertextuality is one of the text-centred approaches used in literary criticism, with a focus on establishing relationships between a text under study and other texts.<sup>7</sup> Intertextuality is an approach that (eds. Evans, Talmon & Sanders 1997):

[...] enables us to understand a text as a complex network both within itself and then without in relation to other texts which are not only pretexts to it but intertexts to many others. (p. 200)

Intertextuality claims that no independent text exists: ‘No text is an island’ (ed. Fewell 1992, p. 45). Each text that exists relates to other texts. In his attempt to define intertextuality, Boyarin (1990) says that, extensively:

---

6. Kristeva first introduced the concept of intertextuality to French audiences in 1967, then 1968, 1969 and 1974 (see eds. Tannen, Hamilton & Schiffrin 2015, p. 43). Graham Allan does not give a specific date; he mentions ‘late 1960s’ (see Allen 2011, p. 2).

7. The historical development of intertextuality needs to be fully discussed in this work, as some scholars have already done important work on the subject. Among them are: Alfaro (1996) (historical development), Yoon (2013) (historical development), and more recently, McKay (2013) (historical development); Evans has extensively developed it in his work (2006) (usage); and, more recently, De Jong has developed it as well (2015) (usage).

No texts, including the classic single-authored works of Shakespeare or Dostoevsky, for example, are organic, self-contained unities, created out of the spontaneous, freely willed act of self-identical subject. What this means is that every text is constrained by the literary system of which it is a part and that every text is ultimately dialogical in that it cannot but record the traces of its contentions and doubling of earlier discourses. (p. 14)

Intertextual study leads the reader to look beyond the text they are studying. Going beyond the text helps the reader to understand it as they establish relationships between the text under study and other texts. Referring to Kristeva and others, Timothy K Beal (cited in ed. Fewell 1992) summarises that:

The basic force of intertextuality is to problematize, even spoil, textual boundaries – those lines of demarcation which allow a reader to talk about the meaning, subject, or origin of writing. Such borders, intertextuality asserts, are never solid or stable. Texts are always spilling over into others. (pp. 22-23)

Considering intertextuality as a covering term to indicate all the possible relations and interdependence that can occur between texts confirms the statement that ‘no text is an island’, as suggested by Miscall (cited in ed. Fewell 1992, pp. 44, 45).

Even though ‘no text is an island’, the main task of intertextuality should not be to spoil the boundaries of a text. Going outside the boundaries seeks to establish connections between texts. Therefore, when applying intertextuality, the fact of expanding the boundaries of a text highlights the necessity of carefulness, considering the aspect of dialogue between texts (Voldeng 1982, p. 523). Approaching texts in this way means that the reader is interested in finding relations between those texts and, at some point, finding out how one text might have influenced another. In this approach, the reader closely looks at the relationships between the texts, applying the principle that ‘text B should be understood in the light of a broad interplay with text A, encompassing aspects of A beyond those explicitly echoed’ (Hays 1989, p. 20).

In this study, we are concerned with the literary influence of 2 Samuel 7 on the texts of Ezekiel 34 and 37. It means that the focus will not be limited to mentioning or listing similar words used in those texts to determine their relationship. The task consists of establishing the relationship in terms of influence, leading to implications from both texts. This is in line with the use of intertextuality in the OT where (Leene 2014):

In the literature on prophetic intertextuality, major emphasis is placed on the authority that the new text borrows from the old by citing from it, but equally as important is the service the new text renders to the old: to show how it is applicable to the present life. (p. 314)

Intertextuality as an approach does not have clearly established steps to follow. In its philosophy of interpretation, its main role is to transform the

traditional premises upon which a given text has been studied and conceptualised (Hatina 1999, p. 32). The philosophy behind intertextuality is that texts are products of 'various cultural discourses' (Voelz 1995, p. 150). The implication is that there is not a text that can be studied without referring to another text, although this does not mean that all biblical texts have literary connections among them; therefore, the student has to be cautious as they choose texts for intertextual studies.

Using an intertextual approach, this study aims to explore how the context and the text of 2 Samuel 7 might have influenced the text of Ezekiel 34 and 37 concerning the promised ruler. It also seeks to understand, from the text of 2 Samuel 7, the function of the promised leader – insofar as it sheds light on that ruler in Ezekiel. The choice of approach in this research is informed by the fact that, firstly, in biblical studies, paying attention to connections and relationships that a given biblical text has with other texts is unavoidable. As observed by Miller (2011):

[/]n the past thirty years, biblical studies have witnessed a rapidly growing interest in the study of intertextuality, with a focus on the connections and relationships that exist between biblical texts. (p. 283)

Secondly, intertextuality is an appropriate approach that helps to understand a text, as it relates the text under study to other texts. It is a useful tool to read the story of the Bible as a unit, as the Bible concerns the salvation story. Establishing interrelationships between biblical texts will help to understand the salvation story's development and fulfilment. Thirdly, the exilic context of the text of Ezekiel and the promise that God made to David in 2 Samuel 7 provide grounds for an intertextual approach. The texts of Ezekiel 34 and 37 address the failure of the leaders of the people of Judah and the promise that YHWH makes to his people. The fact that those texts have some common aspects, mainly with the Davidic Covenant, directed the choice of intertextuality as the approach for this study.

Miller points out two basic approaches to intertextuality in biblical studies: synchronic and diachronic approaches. He (Miller 2011) explains that the 'purely synchronic approach' is 'indebted to postmodern thought' and:

[f]ocuses solely on the reader and the connections she draws between two or more texts. A text has meaning only when it is read in conjunction with other texts, and it is irrelevant whether these texts were intentionally alluded to by the original author or even available to the author. (p. 284)

The synchronic approach is advocated by Evans and De Jong, as well as by Leene, who uses both synchronic and diachronic approaches. The focus of the 'diachronic approach', on the other hand, resides in 'identifying the specific connections that the author wants the reader to perceive, as well

as determining which texts predate the others and, consequently, have influenced the others' (Miller 2011, p. 284). This approach helps to identify the repetition that occurs in a latter text from a former one or 'from a discourse distant in time' (Tannen 2007, p. 102).

## ■ Conclusion

For this book's purpose, I will use the diachronic approach as explained by Miller and will not be utilising the term as it is more commonly employed to refer to diachronic critical approaches such as source and form criticism. Rather, I am exploring how Ezekiel, the author, used prior texts. The connections between these texts will consider lexical features, grammatical structure, echo and allusion. The dynamic of reading one text in conjunction with another enriches the reader's understanding. As they read through the texts, they ask questions to find out why, for example, the author of the text of Ezekiel made reference to David, whose reign took place many years before the ministry of Ezekiel. The reader's questions lead to a deeper understanding, creating a dialogue between the texts (Tannen 2007, p. 102). This focus does not undermine the possibility that one source might have altered another source (Evans et al. 1997, p. 57). In the case of the text of Ezekiel, it means that the author might not have used every word as it is in the text of 2 Samuel 7. In the exegetical process, attention will be paid to historical, grammatical, lexical and textual criticism. The text of 2 Samuel 7:1-16, which contains the 'original' Davidic Covenant, will help shed light on the significance of the covenant and the role it could play in the promise.

This chapter's objective included discussing general issues relating to this research, such as the object of the study, the motivation to undertake the research, the research question and thesis, and the plan of the study. The section about the previous study helped to show what has, so far, been done by scholars and the gap that needs to be filled, leading to the contribution of this research to Ezekielian scholarship. The section on the description of the research in this study was followed by determining the specific approach to be used in this research. The next chapter will focus on studying the theme of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11-16.



# The Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11-16

## ■ Covenant in the Old Testament

In this chapter, I will discuss the Davidic Covenant in the text of 2 Samuel 7:11-16. Considering that covenant is an important theme in the OT, I will briefly discuss the idea of covenant in the OT. The discussion of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11-16 will consider the elements of the covenant, the significance of the Davidic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant in the prophets for the context of this research.

In the OT, the theme of covenant is very important. For the Jewish people, the covenant with YHWH appears as a key factor in their relationships, as throughout the OT we find YHWH making covenants with individuals and with his people. The covenant tradition formed the heart of the religion of the prophets and the psalmists of the OT, and the covenant tradition also became a crucial premise for wisdom (ed. Clements 1965, p. 18). Hence, Clements underlines the importance of the covenant tradition. The history of the Jewish people is based on the divine covenant. The multiple covenants that YHWH made with his people indicate the relationship that YHWH wanted to have with the Judeans, and it is thus appropriate to describe YHWH as God of covenant. In addition, the covenant theme is not limited to describing YHWH's relationship with his people. Beyond being central in the history of the Jewish people, the theme of covenant also

**How to cite:** Budha, VL 2023, 'The Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11-16', in *The biblical concept of 'Davidic Covenant' in 2 Samuel and Ezekiel and its implications for African leadership*, HTS Religion & Society Series, vol. 16, AVARSITY Books, Cape Town, pp. 15-39. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2023.BK470.02>

appears as a main component when it comes to the unity of the biblical stories (Gentry & Wellum 2018, p. 171).<sup>8</sup>

Studies disclose that there are two main types of covenants in the OT: the obligatory and the promissory covenants (Weinfeld 1970, p. 184). The obligatory and the promissory covenants found in the OT follow the patterns of treaties in the ancient Near East (ANE), where there are parity<sup>9</sup> and vassal<sup>10</sup> treaties. McCarthy (1981, p. 4) has the same view, indicating that 'the evidence brought out in our initial comparison of treaty and OT shows that Israel did use the treaty structure to express its covenant with Yahwe'. An example of the similarity between treaty and covenant in the OT comes from Joshua 24. The treaty structure consists of the preamble, the historical prologue, the stipulations, the document clause, the God list and the curses and blessings (McCarthy 1972, p. 38). When this plan can vary in the different treaties, the covenant in Joshua 24 precisely follows the legal plan (Baltzer 1971, p. 27).

The obligatory covenant refers to the covenant made by YHWH to his people, which will be fulfilled if the people carefully observe what YHWH requested of them; it is a conditional covenant. It means that the Israelites were at the centre for the realisation of the covenant. An example of this

---

8. Friedman is quoted from Friedman (1987, p. 215).

9. Parity treaties refer to agreements between two rulers of different nations who are equal with the purpose of establishing peace Weeks (2004, p. 73). Weidner (1970, p. 112) is quoted as giving the following example:

[*The treaty of*] Ramses, [*beloved*] of Amon, the great king, king of the [*land of Egypt, the hero*] with Hatusilis, [*the great king*], the king of the land of Hatti, his brother, for the granting of [*great*] peace and great [*brotherhood ...*] between them fore[*ver*].

Behold now, I have granted [*beautiful*] brotherhood [*and*] beautiful peace between us forever to grant the beautiful peace and the beautiful brotherhood [*according to the purpose for*] the land of Egypt with the land of Hatti forever. Thus behold the purpose of the great king, king of the land of Egypt, [*and*] the great king of the land of Hatti. From eternity the god, [*by a treaty for*] eternity, did not grant the making of war between them.

10. The vassal treaties were an imposed condition which did not equally engage the two parties. In the vassal treaties, the suzerain made sure that he put his vassal in complete submission. As an illustration, the text of a vassal treaty between Suppiluliumas (Šuppiluliuma I) and Shattiwaza (Šattiwaza) of Mittani reads:

[*Thus speaks*] Shattiwaza, son of Tushratta, ki[*ng of the land of*] Mitanni: 'Before [Sh]uttarna, son of Artatama [*king of the Hurri land*] changed [...] of the land of Mitanni, Artatama, the king, his father, acted wrongly. The pal[*ace of the k*]ings, together with its prosperity, he consumed to give to the land of Ashur and the land of Alse.'

If t[*hou, Shatt*]waza and the people of the [*Hurri*] land do n[*ot keep the*]se words of this treaty, then may these gods of the oath destroy the Shattiwaza and the people of [*Hurri*] along with y[*our*] land, your wives and [*your sons*] and everything of yours.

If I Shattiwaza on of the king, and the people of Hurri do not keep the words of this treaty and the oath; I Shattiwaza, along with other wives and we, people of Hurri, along with our wives, sons and land - as a pine tree when it is cut down has no shoots, like this pine tree, shall I, Shattiwaza, together with the other wives I take, and we, the people of Hurri, along with our lands, wives, and sons, like the pine tree, have no offspring. (Weeks, *Admonition and Curse*, pp. 70-71)

covenant is in Exodus 19:5–6, stipulating that Israel will be a special people for God on the condition that they obey YHWH's commandments. This type of covenant includes the Mosaic or Sinaitic covenant, where stress is on the responsibility of Israel (Salanga et al. 2003, p. 73). The obligatory covenant follows the pattern of the suzerain-vassal treaties in the ANE (Weinfeld 1970, p. 184).

While the obligatory covenant is conditional, the promissory covenant is unconditional. Compared to the royal grants in the ANE, the promissory covenants in the OT are 'gifts bestowed upon individuals who distinguished themselves in loyalty, serving their masters' with a focus on honour and interpersonal relationships (Gentry & Wellum 2018, p. 166). The Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants belong to this category, as they were God's initiative (Gn 22:16, 18; 26:5; 2 Sm 7:8–18; 1 Ki 3:6; 9:4; 11:4, 6; 14:8; 15:3) (Gentry & Wellum 2018, p. 166). The unilateral aspect of the covenant YHWH made with people is the pattern in the Bible. Block (2021) rightly observes that:

[...] in scriptures, all covenants involving God are fundamentally monergistic suzerain-vassal pacts: God the divine suzerain initiates the covenant; God chooses the covenant partner; God declares the terms; God determines the consequences for the subjects, depending on their responses to him and his revealed will (blessing for fidelity, curses for rebellion). (p. 2)

Among the different covenants that God made with the Jewish people, the impression is that YHWH's covenant with David plays an important role in the history of the people of YHWH, because it inaugurates a divinely designed model of kingship for the nation, implementing the kingship of Yahweh among his people at a deeper and higher level. In addition to addressing concerns and problems of the developing nation of Israel, the Davidic Covenant carries forward in specific ways the intentions and purposes of God expressed in the Israelite covenant and, even further back, in the covenant with Abraham (Gentry & Wellum 2018, p. 443). The Davidic Covenant seems to be a continuity of the Abrahamic Covenant because, without it, it would be impossible to have a Davidic Covenant.

## ■ The Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11–16

A better understanding of the promissory covenant is to examine the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11–16. Even though the word 'covenant' does not appear in the text, the divine promises to David encompass the idea of covenant. As the task in this research is to find out how the text of 2 Samuel 7:11–16 might have influenced the text of Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28 in relation to the Davidic Covenant, the focus of the study in the following section will be an exegetical study of 2 Samuel 7:11–16, with emphasis on the aspects of the covenant found in the text of Ezekiel.

As I have discussed the different types of covenants, it is necessary to state to which category the Davidic Covenant belongs. Reading the covenant that YHWH made with David in 2 Samuel 7, it appears first that the covenant is unconditional and unilateral. At the same time, when it comes to David's descendants, we see a certain level of conditionality. In support of this view, the Davidic Covenant is connected to the Abrahamic and Sinai Covenants. Dumbrell (1984, p. 127) indicates that 'the Davidic Covenant is a slight modification of the Sinai Covenant, and is, as we shall see, presented as being within the process of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic Covenant'. Looking at the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Gn 15:18-21), there is a conditional aspect given to Abraham. In Genesis 17:9-15, Abraham must obey the covenant sign: circumcision. Circumcision was not a condition, *per se*, for fulfilling the covenant but a sign of the covenant that Abraham had to observe. In the Sinai Covenant, the aspect of conditionality clearly appears. The people of Israel will be special to YHWH if they obey him and keep his covenant (cf. Ex 19:5). Keeping the covenant of YHWH is the guarantee of Israel's belonging to YHWH. In other words, it seems that the people of Israel could cease to be a particular possession of YHWH if they fail to keep the covenant. But, because God already chose Israel as his people, the understanding is that Israel could lose YHWH's blessings if they disobey the Sinai Covenant, which is an obligatory covenant. The special treatment that the people will get depends on their commitment to obeying God.

In the Davidic Covenant, YHWH does not give any condition to David for the fulfilment of the covenant; it is an unconditional covenant. The aspect of conditionality appears, as already mentioned, when it comes to the offspring of David. The conditionality in the Sinai Covenant assumes that if the people do not keep the covenant, they will stop being the possession of God. In the Davidic Covenant, the covenant will not end, but those who disobey will be punished (2 Sm 7:14-16; cf. Ps 89:30-37). The modification concerning the Abrahamic Covenant resides in the fact that YHWH does not give any physical sign that is directly connected to the covenant. God will unconditionally establish a dynasty for David. While the text containing the Davidic Covenant will be discussed later in this chapter, it is important to look at the background and the context in which the covenant was made. Gentry and Wellum (2018) explain the two dimensions:

The covenant clearly demarcates both divine and human obligations. The divine obligations or promises are divided by the literary structure into promises to be fulfilled during David's lifetime and promises to be fulfilled after David's death. The former are listed in Verses 8-11a: (1) a great name, (2) a firm place for Israel as the people of God and, (3) rest for David from his enemies. The latter are listed in Verses 11b-13 and 16. Here what Yahweh promises David is a lasting dynasty, kingdom, and throne. The promises are given initially in Verses 11b-13

and are repeated in Verse 16. At the centre of this A-B-A chiastic structure is the covenant between Yahweh and David, defined as a father-son relationship. This stresses the need for obedience to Yahweh on the part of the king. Traditionally, theologians have viewed the Davidic Covenant as unconditional. It is true that the content of the covenant consists in the mighty promises made by Yahweh. Nonetheless, as Verses 14-15 show, faithfulness is expected of the king, and these Verses foreshadow the possibility of disloyalty on the part of the king, which will require discipline by Yahweh. In effect, Verses 14-15 are saying that the covenant will be fulfilled not only by a faithful father alone (i.e. Yahweh keeping his promises), but also by a faithful son (i.e. the obedience of the king to Yahweh's Torah). The chiastic literary structure actually portrays in a visual manner the nature of the covenant: faithfulness and obedience in the father-son relationship is crucial, but it is supported on both sides by the faithfulness and sure promises of Yahweh to David of descendants, kingdom, and throne (the order is the same before and after the chiastic centre). (p. 448)

In other words, Dumbrell (1984) describes the two aspects as 'general' and 'particular', where:

[...] in general terms the line would not fail. Yet in particular terms, benefits might be withdrawn from individuals. In physical terms, the virtual failure of the Davidic line occurred in 587 BC, but in the spiritual terms we cannot but read 2 Samuel 7:13 finally in terms of New Testament Christology. (p. 150)

I claim for this study that the text of 2 Samuel 7 in its final form, as we now have it, was in place prior to the text of Ezekiel.<sup>11</sup> Gordon McConville (1993, p. 68) puts the books of 1 and 2 Samuel in the Deuteronomistic History (DH) category, indicating '[that] there is pre-exilic material in DH is widely agreed'). McConville comes from the point of view that Deuteronomy has influenced several books of the OT, specifically Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings (McConville 1993, p. 10). Evans (2000), among other scholars, is of the same view as she remarks that:

[/]t is now very widely accepted that those who were responsible for the final compilation of Samuel and Kings had a close awareness of the content and purposes of Deuteronomy. (p. 2)

From this perspective, scholars position the promises in 2 Samuel 7, which certainly applied to David while he was still on the throne, as part of the DH.

Even though the books of Samuel belong to the DH, scholars are not unanimous about whether the text in these books is completely or partially Deuteronomistic (Laato 1997, pp. 244-245). To this claim, it is not fully established whether 1 and 2 Samuel are pre-exilic, exilic or postexilic.

---

11. My focus in this research is on the final form of the text of 2 Samuel 7, which was in place before the texts of Ezekiel 34 and 37. The reason for considering the background and the context resides in the fact that I am interested in one-direction influence from 2 Samuel 7:11-16 to Ezekiel 34:23-31; 37:15-28, establishing that Ezekiel would have known and had access to 2 Samuel 7:11-16. This is a 'diachronic' approach to intertextuality, as defined by Miller.

While the scholarly discussion on the books of Samuel and Deuteronomy is important, the concern in this study is to study 2 Samuel 7 in its final form, emphasising the Davidic Covenant.

In addition, despite the biblical and theological role of the narrative in 2 Samuel 7, scholars have not come to a consensus on its dating – as well as that of the books of Samuel. One of the difficulties is the setting of the text of 2 Samuel 7, which seems to be a crucial element in dating the text. While the events in the books of Samuel can be easily dated, scholars have struggled to date the text in the books of Samuel.<sup>12</sup> The difficulty of dating the books of Samuel comes from the literary culture in which they were written. The observation is that (ed. Walton 2009):

The events described in 1 and 2 Samuel took place in the eleventh and early tenth centuries BC [...] In seeking to discover what 1 and 2 Samuel should be ‘read as’, we must bear in mind the broader Ancient Near Eastern literary culture in which the texts were first written. Difficulty in putting a date on texts that refuse to date themselves is self-evident, and 1 and 2 Samuel have been assigned dates across a wide spectrum – from early, close to the tenth-century events they describe, to late, in the exilic period. (p. 269)

Mark W Hamilton (2018) shares Long’s point of view, and he asserts that:

First and Second Samuel weave together stories and poems from several sources (not all now identifiable) in order to create a picture of Israel’s life during the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE, a time of transition from a village-based society organized by clans and tribes to a more urban one with a central government. (p. 139)

The wide spectrum supports the conviction that many people contributed to writing the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, making it difficult to date them. Bergen (1996, p. 22) thinks those people ‘may have lived at different periods in Israel’s history, perhaps stretching from the eleventh century BC down to the sixth century BC’.

The books of Samuel are concerned with three main figures: (1) Samuel, (2) Saul and (3) David. Considering the duration of the lifetimes of these three people, it is clear that someone who was contemporary to Samuel, Saul and David did not author the books of Samuel (Douglas et al. 1990, p. 335). Without giving a specific date, scholars think that the fact that ‘the author’s use of the phrase “unto this day”’ (1 Sm 27:6) suggests a ‘further chronological distance between the final author and the sources used to write the books of Samuel’ (Douglas et al. 1990, p. 335). The position of these scholars expresses a certain level of cautiousness to avoid any speculation about the dating of the books of Samuel. Merrill also

---

12. Considering the scope of this research, it is not possible to discuss at length the problem of the date of the books of Samuel. However, I will indicate whether the books of Samuel originate before the book of Ezekiel.

has the same position; he declares (Walvoord, Zuck & Dallas Theological Seminary 1983):

The date of the composition of the books cannot be determined with any degree of precision. There is no hint that the author(s) knew anything about the fall of Samaria in 722 BC, and yet he (or one of the authors) clearly lived in the post-Solomonic era, after the division of the kingdom between Israel and Judah (931 BC). This is indicated by the reference to Ziklag, a Philistine city which, the narrator wrote, 'has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day' (1 Sm 27:6, NASB), and by references to Israel and Judah (11:8; 17:52; 18:16; 2 Sm 5:5; 11:11; 12:8; 19:42-43; 24:1, 9). (p. 431)

Merrill points to two important elements that may help in establishing the possible date of the books of Samuel. Because the events in the books of Samuel cover the 11th and 10th centuries BC, it makes sense that the authors do not refer to the fall of Samaria that happened in the eighth century BC. If the authors lived in the post-Solomonic period, the clue is pointing out that the books of Samuel were not written before or in the 10th century BC. The statement in 1 Samuel 27:6 indicates that the book of Samuel 'was not written until after the division of the kingdom of Israel following the death of Solomon in 931 BC' (eds. Gaebelien, Douglas & Polcyn 1976, p. 554).

It is generally admitted, as already indicated, that the authors of the books of Samuel used existing sources to come up with the final form of the books. What clearly comes out is that the books were not written in their final form at the time of the events. In his attempt to establish the date of the books of Samuel, Donald Guthrie (ed. 1973) mentions that:

There can be no doubt that early and reliable sources were available to the author, but he himself cannot have lived (or, at least, written) before the death of Solomon, since the divided monarchy is alluded to in 1 Sa 27:6, in terms which suggest that more than one king had succeeded Solomon. The earliest possible date for the whole work would thus be the end of the 10th century BC. The quality of the Hebrew and the absence of Aramaisms point to the early date of sources, rather than to the early date of the completed work; it is generally agreed that the author provided a minimum of editorial addition and comment. (p. 284)

William MacDonald and Arthur L Farstad (1995) also share the view that the books of Samuel date from the end of the 10th century BC and that:

[T]he date of the books of Samuel is impossible to pinpoint. The early part may date from about 1000 BC. The fact that no reference is made to the captivity of Israel (722 BC) certainly demands a date before that event. (p. 295)

The 10th century BC fits well for the end of the events described in the books of Samuel and not for completing the text of the books of Samuel.

Bergen (1996, p. 23) believes that there are accounts in the books of Samuel that were recorded in the 11th century BC, as well as some late additions from the eighth century BC, and that the final canonical form of

the books of Samuel was completed before the last events that occurred in 2 Kings. He refers to only some accounts and does not indicate that the whole work was ready by the earliest date of the 10th century BC. Bergen (1996, p. 23) concludes that the books of Samuel are a product of the exilic period, having the record of the events of the political and religious history of Israel and useful theological content of the exilic Israelite community.<sup>13</sup>

Concerning the date of the composition of Nathan's oracle in 2 Samuel 7, some scholars believe it to be a late insertion during the exilic period or even later (McCarter 1984, p. 210). Henry P Smith (1977, p. 297–298) is among those scholars who support the exilic period; while Smith viewed the oracle as a product of exile, 'the majority favored a late pre-exilic date' (McCarter 1984).<sup>14</sup> Their argument is based on the fact that (McCarter 1984):

[...] the chapter 'scarcely can have been written before Josiah' [...] they found it impossible to date it long *after* Josiah. Its evocation of the divine promise to David they understood as an appeal to the long duration of the Judean dynasty as a source of confidence in the troubled day of Josiah's reign. (p. 210)

I submit that the final form of the books of Samuel is prior to the exilic era. I base this claim on the fact that the books of Samuel describe events which took place before the exile, that is to say, up to the 10th century BC. Hence, there is a possibility that the books could have been written by the end of the 10th century or a few centuries prior to the exile. The fact that the books of Samuel are the work of multiple people does not support the idea that it took a long period to write them, implying that 1 and 2 Samuel were complete before the exile. In addition, the books of Samuel are not a product of the exilic era because they do not mention anything concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jewish people. The point I am making is that if the authors of the books of Samuel were aware of those events, they could definitely have mentioned them. In summary, the information in the books concerns the events before the exile, supporting that the books of Samuel are a pre-exilic work.

A post-exilic period also does not fit for the date of 1 and 2 Samuel, given that nothing is said about the exile that the Judeans faced. If, in any case, nothing was to be said about the exiles and their experiences in a foreign nation, the author could not have failed to mention the temple and its destruction, as it was a central element in the covenant that YHWH made with David. The account of the books is limited to events during the time of Samuel, Saul and David.

---

13. Bergen matches his conclusion to that of DM Howard Jnr quoting: 'It appears reasonable enough to assume the composition of [1, 2 Samuel's] major portion in the days of David and Solomon themselves and postulate final compilation and editing some time near or during the Exile'. (Cf. Howard 1993.)

14. Among the scholars favouring this position, McCarter mentions Budde, Nowack and Kennedy.

From the preceding discussion, in my opinion, the books of Samuel, as we have them now, were mainly written centuries prior to the exile, even if there may have been a small quantity of editorial updating. With the view that the books of Samuel are pre-exilic, it is inevitable that 2 Samuel 7 existed and was widely known prior to the writing of Ezekiel. If this were not the case, we could not have – as I will demonstrate later – elements of the text of 2 Samuel 7 in the texts of Ezekiel 34 and 37.

The mention of David in the book of Ezekiel suggests that the author of Ezekiel was aware of an existing account of the Davidic Covenant. Otherwise, he could not mention the name of David as a promised ruler. Citing David as the future ruler indicates that the author had information from an existing source about the Davidic dynasty. In summary, I take the view that the text of Samuel originated prior to that of Ezekiel.

The books of Samuel (1 and 2 Samuel) being one book, 2 Samuel begins the second half of the book. It starts with the report on the death of Saul and his son Jonathan (2 Sm 1:1-27). Saul and his sons died while fighting with the Philistines (cf. 1 Sm 31 and 2 Sm 1). The accounts of the death of Saul and his sons in the two chapters are different. In summary (Arnold 1989):

The circumstances of Saul's death have remained enigmatic for many years because of divergent accounts in 1 Samuel 31 and 2 Samuel 1. In the former chapter the wounded Saul apparently committed suicide after his armor-bearer refused to apply the coup de grâce. In 2 Samuel 1, however, the Amalekite was not so hesitant to 'help' Saul and admits as much in his report to David. (p. 289)

Despite the divergence between the two accounts, Saul's death was tragic. David did not celebrate the killing and the death of Saul. The reaction of David upon hearing how Saul encountered his death is a clear indication that he did not rejoice at the fact that his 'enemy', Saul, was killed. The New International Version (NIV) biblical text reads (2 Sm 1):

Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. David said to the young man who brought him the report, 'Where are you from?' 'I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite', he answered. David asked him, 'Why weren't you afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?' Then David called one of his men and said, 'Go, strike him down!' So he struck him down, and he died. For David had said to him, 'Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, "I killed the LORD's anointed."' (vv. 11-16)

In 2 Samuel 2, we find the beginning of David's reign and the hostilities between Judah and Israel. The reign of David, his family and the early challenges that he faced as king are described in Chapters 3-6. One of the characteristics of David appears, once again, in 2 Samuel 3:29-35

and 4:8-12. David is presented as someone who does not rejoice at the deaths of his opponents or enemies. The reaction of David to the killing of Abner (2 Sm 3:29-35) and Ish-bosheth (2 Sm 4:8-12) serves as proof. Because YHWH chose David to reign over Israel, he started experiencing God's favour, as he was growing 'stronger and stronger' while the house of Saul was becoming 'weaker and weaker' (2 Sm 3:1). As a result, his opponent Abner recognised the kingship of David (2 Sm 3):

'May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the Lord promised him on oath and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba'. Ish-bosheth did not dare to say another word to Abner, because he was afraid of him. Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, 'Whose land is it? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you'. 'Good', said David. 'I will make an agreement with you. But I demand one thing of you: Do not come into my presence unless you bring Michal daughter of Saul when you come to see me'. (vv. 9-12)

And so, David became 'more and more powerful' (2 Sm 5:10).

One of the challenges that David met appears in 2 Samuel 6. He was confronted with the reality of the lack of an appropriate place to keep the ark. It seems that this dilemma prompted David's desire to build a house for YHWH (2 Sm 6:9-11, 17). As expressed in 2 Samuel 7:1-2, was David guilty? The reading of the text suggests that David was reproaching himself; he was concerned that there was not a house worthy to accommodate the ark of YHWH, which was the symbol of the presence of YHWH among his people. The decision to build a house for YHWH seems to catalyse the covenant. When David succeeded in bringing the ark into the city of David, even though in a tent, it was for him a way to honour YHWH (Jumper 2013, p. 218).

Some elements in 2 Samuel 1-6 lead to the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7. The coming of David on the throne and his victory, including his opponent deciding to become one of his allies, are part of the antecedents to the unilateral covenant that YHWH will make with David. However, we do not see an immediate reason in the text for YHWH's choice to make a covenant with his servant David. We know that in 1 Samuel 13:14, David is described as a man after the heart of God. As God's man, David will be YHWH's choice of king over his people.

In addition, with the end of the reign of Saul, now that David has control over Judah and Israel as a king, YHWH's covenant with him in 2 Samuel 7 is justified. Even though YHWH will deny David's request to build him a house, he will make a strong covenant with him. With the change from Saul to David, and the ark being in the city of David after his victory over the Philistines, the covenant with David fits in the general pattern of the timing of covenants in the OT. As observed by William D Barrick (1999):

The covenants appear to have been promulgated at times of crisis or change when God's people were upon the threshold of the unknown. The Abrahamic Covenant was established following Abram's departure from Ur. The Mosaic Covenant came on the heels of Israel's departure from Egypt. Immediately following the forty years of wilderness wandering and just prior to Israel's entry into Canaan the Priestly and the Deuteronomic covenants were promulgated. The ending of the ark's 'exile' among the Philistines appears to have been the catalyst for the Davidic Covenant. (p. 215)

Once the crisis is past, David dwells at peace in his house and experiences rest from his enemies. An important thing to note is that YHWH gave David victory over his enemies; otherwise, he could not experience rest. A close reading of Verse 1 seems to suggest that if YHWH did not give rest to David from all his enemies around him, he could not think about building a house for him. Now that he has peace, he can think about what he should do for YHWH.

With the mention of the 'house of cedar' in which David lives and the tent in which the ark dwells in Verse 2, David indirectly makes his intention known to Nathan. David's words give Nathan an indication of what David envisions, as Youngblood (in eds. Gaebelien et al. 1976) puts it:

David decides that the time has finally come for him to do what any self-respecting king worthy of the name should do: build a house for his God. The contrast between his own house and that of the Lord is stark: The human king [...] is 'living' [...] in a sumptuous 'palace [...]' while the "ark of God" - the symbolic throne of the divine King [...] - "remains" [...] in a mere tent. Constructed of the finest materials and with the best available workmanship [...] David's palace overwhelms in size and splendor the relatively simple 'tent' [...] To David's credit he recognizes that the imbalance needs to be rectified. (p. 884)

Arnold shares the same ideas; he states that 'David's complaint in 7:2 contrasts the "house" he lives in [NIV 'palace'] with the tent where the ark of God resides. In David's thinking, the time seems right to build a permanent structure to house God's ark' (Arnold 2003, p. 473). The text does not explain why David chose to build the royal palace and later think about God's house. The assumption<sup>15</sup> is that David thought to build a house for God because he was a pious king (McKenzie 2000, p. 150). David contrasts his palace where he lives and the tent where the ark of God stays, which is an expression of 'a pious anxiety' (McCarter 1984, p. 196). Another view is that thinking about a house for God after he has settled portrays a bit of selfishness. Now that David experiences peace, he can consider other aspects of his function as king, such as building a house for YHWH (Murray 1998, p. 164). Without any discussion, Nathan encourages David, a fact that suggests he agrees with the plan presented to him. He even

---

15. Because of the interest of this research, the issue of why David decided to start building his palace before YHWH's house can constitute a separate study where it can be discussed in depth.

supports the plan as the idea of YHWH, stating that ‘the Lord is with you’, a statement that Arnold qualifies as ‘an important theme of the extended narrative’ (Murray 1998, p. 164). The response of Nathan to David in Verse 3 underscores the idea that Nathan was convinced that the plan that David had was in accordance with the will of God.

Nonetheless, in Verse 4, we find an unexpected answer from YHWH that can portray Nathan as a false prophet. Nevertheless, his mistake resides in the fact that he did not seek YHWH before responding to David. He could have avoided contradicting himself if, in the first place, he had presented David’s desire to God. YHWH did not allow David to think further about the plan, as it was reversed the same night. Thus, 2 Samuel 7:4-7 is an important section, in which we see YHWH refusing to allow David to build him a house and showing him the reason why. YHWH was not offended by the fact that David built a palace for himself in the first place and not a dwelling place for the ark. Bergen (1996) explains why David did not need to build a house for YHWH:

Throughout the events following Israel’s departure from Sinai, the Lord had never expressed displeasure with having a tent for his earthly domicile, nor did he ever order any of the Israelite ‘staff’ [...] to build him ‘a house of cedar’. Even in the absence of an impressive building that people could see, the Lord’s presence among them was discernible, especially as he acted through the leaders ‘whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel’. (pp. 338-339)

The important thing was not the presence of an impressive house for YHWH but, most vitally, the presence of YHWH among his people. In addition, YHWH did not ask for an impressive house; this was David’s plan.

In Verse 8, YHWH asks Nathan to remind David of the place from which he came. Why was this important here? As pointed out in the text, the main reason that YHWH appointed David was to rule over his people – not to build him a house. Reminding David of his background and the mission that YHWH gave him serves as an introduction to the covenant, starting from Verse 9. It means that anything that YHWH will do for David is not because David intended to build him a house but because of his relationship with David (‘my servant David’) and the mission given to him (‘rule over my people Israel’).

## ■ Establishment of a house for David

‘House’ appears to be an important component in the covenant. The word **בַּיִת** [house] is used for both Saul and David in 2 Samuel 3:1a: **‘וַתְּהִי הַמִּלְחָמָה אַרְבָּעָה בֵּין בַּיִת שָׁאוּל וּבֵין בַּיִת דָּוִד** [the war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time].<sup>16</sup> With the death of Saul, we see a transfer of kingship from **בַּיִת שָׁאוּל** to **בַּיִת דָּוִד**. The covenant of establishing a

---

16. Unless otherwise indicated, I will use the NIV version of the English translation (Biblica 2011).

house for David is called the Davidic Covenant. What ‘a house’ signifies is detailed in Verses 12–16. The promise to establish a house is the declaration of YHWH to David through Nathan. The essential element in the formula ‘יהוה לך יהגיד’ [the Lord declares to you] is about the subject, YHWH, who performs the action. The promise starts with a strong surety, indicating that it is not Nathan who gives the promises. Rather, Nathan is presented as the mouthpiece of YHWH. Nathan is designated as ‘the prophet’, and not much has been said about him (Anderson 1989, p. 116). Despite Nathan’s role in the life of David, what we describe as ‘the narrative of Nathan’ does not originate from Nathan but from YHWH. It is not Nathan who objected to the project that David had to build the temple, nor did he promise a dynasty for David (Gwilym 1990, p. 22). Hence, in this research, Nathan’s communication to David is to be considered as YHWH’s declaration.

The emphasis that Nathan speaks from YHWH clearly appears in his communication: ‘יהוה לך יהגיד לך יהוה כי יבית יעשה לך יהוה:’ [The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you]. It is correct to consider the Hebrew verbs used concerning ‘house’. The root of the verb in Verse 5 is בנה [build], while in Verse 11 we find עשה [make]. The statement is that David will not build a house for YHWH. Instead, YHWH will make a house for David. In 2 Samuel 7, we read:

לך ואמרתי אל-עבדי אל-דוד כה אמר יהוה האמה תבנה לי בית לשבתי:

Go and tell my servant David, “This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? (v. 5)

David did not detail to Nathan the complete idea that he had. He observed that he was living in a magnificent house and the ark of God was residing in a tent (v. 3). With this observation, the intention of David, which received the support of Nathan, was to build a house for YHWH, representing God’s presence. Verse 7 indicates that God is not interested in David building him a glorious house; otherwise, he could have ordered David, or other Israelite rulers, to do so. Again, while David is contained in his house, YHWH cannot fit in any house. There are two main reasons why God disapproves of David’s plan to build a house for YHWH: ‘The Lord was not to be limited by a building, and the Lord had not yet asked for such a house to be built’ (Evans 2000, p. 168).

While what Evans declares is theologically true, the text does not mention why YHWH does not approve of David’s plan. There is no further explanation after the rhetorical question (2 Sm 7):

Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’. (vv. 7)

The narrator might find it unimportant to state in 2 Samuel 7 why YHWH denies David’s request to build a house for him. However, the reason YHWH

denies David the privilege of building him a house appears in 1 Chronicles 22:8 and 28:3, where David is portrayed as a warrior whose hand has shed much blood. The assumption is that the person building a house for YHWH will be someone of peace. The indication is that David's main task was not to build a house for the name of YHWH but to focus on the security of the nation and his own safety. Evidently, David seems to have succeeded in the task assigned to him. Only 'after the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him' (2 Sm 7:1) does David come up with the next step: build a house for YHWH. While David's idea might be sincere, his plan is reversed by the project that YHWH has for him. Instead of David building a house for YHWH, YHWH will make one for David. God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 is unequivocal:

וְהָגִיד לְךָ יְהוָה כִּי־בֵיתִי עֲשֶׂה־לְךָ יְהוָה:

The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you. (v. 11c)

To differentiate between YHWH and David, the Hebrew verb עָשָׂה [to make] is used for the plan that YHWH has for David and בָּנָה [to build] for what David intended to do. While the two verbs are likely used here for stylistic variation, the use of עָשָׂה offers a possible clue to understanding the action of God. In relation to the promise to David, the fact that God controls his life is clearly displayed in the text. The narrative gives the background of David's life – how God brought him to power and what God will do after him. The double use of יְהוָה in the statement emphasises God's plan for David. It is YHWH who makes the declaration and who will also fulfil the promise. The emphasis on YHWH underscores his commitment and the reliability of the promise that he has made. What YHWH has in store for his servant David is more than a simple physical house. In 2 Samuel 7:11, 'house' (McCarter 1984):

Refers not to a physical structure – David already has a palace (vv. 1-2) – but a family. To be sure, David already has a family too – a large one (3:2-5; 5:13-16) – but the son through whom David's kingship will be passed to his descendants is not yet born. The same 'house' here, then, is *dynasty*. (p. 205)

The idea that 'house' refers to a dynasty is supported by the indications given in the text, prompting the translation of 'establishing a house'. Two concepts related to 'house' need to be considered here: offspring and kingdom or throne.

The covenant with David is not about establishing a physical house for him; rather, it is about raising up offspring for him (v. 12b). The house that YHWH will build for David's offspring does not guarantee the perpetuity of its occupants. The promised house 'will be a house for the dead!' (Eslinger 1994, p. 43). With this phrase, Eslinger suggests that despite the continuity

of the dynasty, no one will reign forever, including David, indicating the idea of succession. Two phrases are used to designate the descendant of David. The Hebrew words in the text are זרעך [your seed] and אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֶּעֵיךָ [what came from your body], pointing to a ‘physical descendant’ (McCarter 1984, p. 205). There has been debate regarding whether זרעך applies to one descendant – the immediate one – or is used collectively. In his study, Hamilton (1997) thinks that:

[...] in many cases, ‘seed’ refers to an immediate descendant (Gn 4:25; 15:3; 19:32, 34; 21:13; 38:8–9; 1 Sm 1:11; 2:20; 2 Sm 7:12). Here, the reference is to an individual child. When the reference is to a distant offspring or a large group of descendants, *zera*<sup>7</sup> is a collective, ‘they’ (Gn 9:9; 12:7; 13:16; 15:5, 13, 18; 16:10; 17:7–10, 12; 21:12; 22:17–18). (p. 1152)

Anderson (1989) supports the same idea and declares that:

One might expect a dynastic oracle to have a collective or general character. In the present form of 2 Samuel 7:12–15, the reference is primarily to Solomon, and only by implication to the dynasty as a whole (cf. 1 Ki 5:5 [Masoretic Text 19]; 8:19). (p. 122)

According to Kaiser (1980, pp. 252–253):

[...], commencing with Genesis 3:15, the word “seed” is regularly used as a collective noun in the singular (never plural). A careful reading of 2 Samuel 7:12–16 suggests that זרעך applies both to the immediate descendant – Solomon – as well as to the Davidic dynasty. (pp. 252–253)

This understanding is informed by what the descendant will do: build the temple and reign over Israel (Renaud 1994, p. 7). Considering the history of Israel, the individual aspect of זרעך applies to Solomon, who, as the immediate descendant of David, built the temple. The collective use of זרעך concerns the dynasty of David, pointing to the succession on the throne.

The use of the word מֵעָה [the inner organs of the lower abdomen, which includes the intestines, reproductive organs and stomach] indicates that the descendant will stem from David and not be adopted, directing that David will have his own biological descendant (Rogers 1997, p. 1012) to accomplish the tasks of building the temple and that of kingship. The promise that the offspring of David will build a house for YHWH and that YHWH will establish an everlasting throne constitutes two significant components of what we know as the Davidic Covenant. These two elements of the covenant deserve careful consideration.

The promise that the descendant of David will be the one who will build a house for YHWH indicates that YHWH did not choose David to achieve the project of building a temple but approved of the idea set up by David. The house that the offspring of David will build will be for the name of YHWH (2 Sm 7:13). The expression לְשֵׁמִי [for my name] attracts attention

to the person for whom the house will be built and not the house itself or the person who will build it. The phrase *לְשֵׁמִי* also occurs in Genesis 32:30; Judges 13:18; 1 Kings 5:19; 8:18, 19; 9:7; 1 Chronicles 22:8, 10; 28:3; 2 Chronicles 6:8, 9; 7:20; and Malachi 1:11, 2, where it is connected to YHWH and his messengers. The expression *לְשֵׁמִי* is used in 1 Kings 5:19, 8:18-19 and 9:7; 1 Chronicles 22:8-10 and 28:3; and 2 Chronicles 6:8, 9 and 7:20 in relation to the temple, suggesting the idea of worship. There is a contrary view where the house that will be built for the name of YHWH is not necessarily the temple but a dynasty for the name of YHWH (George 2002, p. 26). Taking into account the desire that David had and the context wherein the phrase *לְשֵׁמִי* is used, the house that the descendant of David will build for the name of YHWH refers to the temple. The preposition *לְ* specifies that the house will be built for the interest of YHWH, suggesting here the importance of the temple as 'a place where Israel can meet with God but not a place to which God can be restricted' (Evans 2000, p. 171) (see 1 Ki 8:27; 2 Chr 2:6; Ps 68:33; 139:7; 148:4; Is 66:1; Jr 23:24) and making the future temple the appropriate place to worship YHWH. These two concepts, as developed here, are summarised in the following original words of Renaud (1994):

*La seconde étape (vv. 11b-16) envisage l'avenir de la «maison de David». Elle se place dans le prolongement de la promesse directe à David lui-même (v. 9b). Selon les représentations de l'époque, le nom est le gage de la continuité de l'être et se prolonge dans la descendance (2 Sm 14, 16; 18; Is 66, 22). La perpétuation de la royauté dans le temps, grâce à la promesse accordée à la descendance davidique, constitue une des faces de cette renommée universelle que YHWH promet à son serviteur au verset 9b. Cette remarque confirme bien que le développement sur l'avenir du peuple (vv. 11b-16) comporte la promesse de la royauté à la descendance (ou au «descendant») de David à perpétuité (vv. 12 et 13), l'annonce de la construction du Temple par cette «descendance» (v. 13a), l'instauration d'une relation de père à fils entre YHWH et cette descendance avec les conséquences qui en découlent (v. 14), l'engagement divin de fidélité à jamais (v. 15) et, en conclusion, la reprise du thème de la stabilité perpétuelle de la royauté et de la maison de David (v. 16).*

[The second step (vv. 11b-16) considers the future of the 'house of David'. It stands in the extension of the direct promise to David himself (v. 9b). According to the ancient representations, the name is the guarantee of the continuity of the human being and is prolonged in the descendants (2 Sm 14: 16; 18:18; Is 66:22). The perpetuation of the kingship through time, thanks to the promise given to the Davidic descendant, constitutes one of the facets of that universal renown YHWH promises his servant in Verse 9b. This remark confirms well that the development of the future of the people (vv. 11b-16) encompasses the promise of royalty to the descendants (or to the 'descendant') of David in perpetuity (vv. 12 and 13), the announcement of building the Temple by that 'descendant' (v. 13a), the establishment of a relation of father to son between YHWH and that descendant with the resulting consequences (v. 14), the divine commitment of faithfulness forever (v. 15), and, in conclusion, the resumption of the theme of the perpetual stability of kingship and the house of David (v. 16).] (pp. 8-9 [author's own translation])

While the descendant of David will build a house for YHWH,<sup>17</sup> YHWH will establish the throne of David's descendant forever. What YHWH promises to do is the most important aspect of the covenant. The Hebrew verb used to describe YHWH's action is from the root כּוּן [establish] - וְהִכְיִנְתִּי [and I will establish] - accompanied with עַד-עוֹלָם [forever]. This verb is used in Verses 12, 13 and 16 in three different roots: *Hiphil* (v. 12), *Polel* (v. 13) and *Niphal* (v. 16). Used in *Hiphil* (active voice), the root כּוּן means to 'prepare, determine, establish, appoint, create, accomplish, make firm, consider' (ed. Clines 1993, p. 374). Considering the context of the text, 'to establish' renders well the meaning of וְהִכְיִנְתִּי. The *Hiphil* in Verse 12 is causative (Waltke & O'Connor 1990a, para. 27.3a, b), with *I* (YHWH) as the subject and *his* (David's offspring) and *kingdom* as the objects. In the promise, YHWH is the one who will cause the kingdom of David's descendants to be established. As YHWH is the one who will establish the kingdom, it means that the established kingdom will also be durable.

In Verse 13, כּוּן appears in *Polel* - וְכִנְנִתִּי [I will establish]. The meaning of the root כּוּן in *Polel* is 'prepare, establish, appoint, fashion, grant permanence to, take aim, direct' (Waltke & O'Connor 1990a, para. 27.3a-b). *Polel* - *Poel* for the germinate verb - is a minor stem in the Hebrew verb system (vowel change) and has a similar meaning to the *Piel* (Williams 2007, para. 155). *Polel* is like *Piel* in that they both carry the meaning 'to cause a state'. The *state* caused here is that of establishing the kingdom. Even though the exact function of *Polel* is not established here, its use in Verse 13 is significant as it is linked to Verse 12, which Koch (1995, p. 90) refers to as the general function of the stem by denoting 'an action that accompanies the purpose stated by the *Hiphil*'. The use of *Polel* and *Hiphil* here might be for a stylistic verb variation. Regarding the section under study, the purpose stated by the *Hiphil* in 2 Samuel 7:12 is the permanence of the throne that institutes the kingship (Koch 1995, p. 100). The repetition of the root כּוּן serves for constancy and confirmation of what YHWH will do.

Clines points out that when the verb כּוּן appears in *Niphal*, it means 'be firm, be secure, be ready, be lasting, be established, stand firm' (ed. Clines 1993, p. 372). Martens (1997, p. 615) also gives it the following meanings: 'stand firm, stand fast, be stable, secure, durable, be ready'. When related to kingdom and throne, it implies permanency (Köhler et al. 2001, p. 464), which is the case in 2 Samuel 7. The *Niphal* conveys here a passive sense in which YHWH will act upon the throne of David's offspring to achieve its permanence. The different stems for כּוּן express the same idea and are used in the text for stylistic variation.

---

17. Due to the unilateral aspect of the covenant, I will focus on what YHWH promises to do rather than on what David's progeny will do.

The understanding of the root כּוֹן from the three stems shows that the range of meaning goes beyond the fact of establishing the throne. It describes the firmness, security, durability and longevity of the throne of David after him. The assumption is that nothing will stand against David's throne.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, the extent of what כּוֹן communicates is emphasised by עַד־עוֹלָם. The reign of the house of David in Israel will have no limit. The fact that YHWH establishes the throne of David in such a strong way is an indication of his faithfulness and commitment to making the covenant with David. This is not about David but about YHWH himself; YHWH is the one who will indefinitely establish the throne of David (but not David himself). As a grant from YHWH, the 'kingship made to David's heir will remain in effect in perpetuity. That is, the grant has no term' (McCarter 1984, p. 206).

Explaining the combination of עוֹלָם with lexemes like עַד and הַיּוֹם, Preuss (1999) observes that:

[Ó]/ām functions to express the highest possible intensification ('perpetual holding', 'unending joy', etc.); in such combinations with 'ó/ām, these lexemes are themselves intensified. (p. 532)

Referring to the Hebrew verb stems used in YHWH's promise, as discussed previously, and the phrase עַד־עוֹלָם, the promise encompasses the certainty of its realisation and its durability. The phrase עַד־עוֹלָם does not give room to speculate about the period of time that the throne of David's dynasty will endure. However, this is an indefectible promise that 'will endure any casualties that might threaten it' (Davis 1999, p. 77). The aspect of the perpetuity of the promise of a Davidic dynasty is defined by the fact that עַד־עוֹלָם appears in the covenant that YHWH made with David. In relation to the divine covenant, Anthony Tomasino (1997) clarifies that עוֹלָם:

[...] is frequently used in connection with the idea of covenant between God and humanity. God's unconditional promises to his people are often described as perpetual or eternal [...] (Gn 17:7, 13, 19; cf. Jdg 2:1; 2 Sm 7:24; 1 Chr 16:15; Ps 105:10) [...] Frequently, God's covenant with David is presented as a perpetual covenant (2 Sm 7:13, 16, 25, 29; 22:51; 23:5; 1 Ki 2:33,45; 9:5; 2 Chr 13:5; Ps 18:50[51]; 89:4[5], 28[29], 36[37], 37[38]; [...]). The throne of his line will be established to perpetuity because of David's early piety and desire to build the temple (2 Sm 7), regardless of his later failures. (p. 349)

---

18. In 2 Samuel 7, the stress is on the permanence of God's commitments to David. This differs from other texts like Psalm 89, which wrestles with this reality in light of the exile. It seems that individual kings can forfeit the promises through disobedience and are subject to punishment (cf. 2 Sm 7:14), so there are gaps historically where there is no Davidic king. When such a situation occurs, the favour of God will not leave David's house (cf. 2 Sm 7:15). In the same way, the texts of Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28 are based on the very idea that missing a Davidic king at a certain point in time does not overturn God's long-term ultimate promise to David. There will be Davidic kings on the throne again in the future.

The phrase עַד-עוֹלָם gives the promise its characteristic of perpetuity. Not only will the covenant be perpetual, but the significance of the covenant for Israel will be lasting. The significance of the promise relies on its purposes. As William M Schniedewind (1999, p. 28) summarised, YHWH's promise to David 'legitimizes David (the usurper) over Saul, sanctions the dynastic succession, and justifies the monarchy itself as a divine institution'.

Additionally, the idea of perpetuity is strengthened by the idea of stability and endurance. The Hebrew verb used in the text is from the root אָמַן. While used in *Niphal*, it has a diverse range of meanings, including to be trustworthy, faithful, reliable, declared reliable and entrusted (ed. Clines 1993, pp. 314–315). Among the different meanings suggested in 2 Samuel 7:16, this verb means 'be firm, lasting, established' (ed. Clines 1993, p. 315). It becomes clear that the Davidic dynasty and throne that will last forever will, at the same time, be stable. Used here in reference to the Davidic dynasty, אָמַן points to YHWH's grant: 'The durability of a house is not a natural thing, but is guaranteed by a promise of God. Such promises of God also have durability and permanency' (Jepsen 1979, p. 296). Once again, considering the use of *Niphal*, the reader focuses on YHWH as the initiator and the protector of the action; David remains the beneficiary.

From this perspective, the text establishes the nature of the relationship between YHWH and the offspring of David. In Verse 14, we see the father-son relationship. This kind of relationship implies dependency and obedience. The provision of punishment in case the descendant of David does wrong suggests their imperfection. It indicates that the offspring of David, like David himself, will not be perfect as expected (Evans 2000, p. 169). The means of punishment are also described. YHWH will use men to bring about punishment against the house of David when it is appropriate. Regarding the history of Israel, the Babylonian exile under Nebuchadnezzar is certainly one of the human instruments used by YHWH when the descendants of David disobeyed.

The fact that the disobedience of the sons of David will definitely attract chastisement stands as proof that YHWH remains in control and that the kingship of David depends upon him. Despite its endurance and stability, as long as YHWH is in control, the Davidic dynasty is 'a dynasty under discipline' (Evans 2000, p. 169). This affirms that even though Israel has a well-established kingship system, YHWH remains the supreme king. As Wright (2006) notes while referring to the kingship of David:

[...] the reign of David is not to be seen as in any way replacing or usurping the reign of YHWH, but rather as an embodiment of it. David as human king of Israel will carry out the purpose of YHWH, their covenant great King. Thus the primary focus of the covenant with the house of David, as recorded in 2 Samuel 7, is on the role of David and his successors in earthing that rule of YHWH in Israel through these new royal arrangements. (p. 344)

However, because of his faithfulness, the discipline that YHWH will inflict will not nullify the promise or depreciate the perpetuity and the durability of the covenant. The text makes it clear that YHWH's grant to David is based on his **אֱמוּנָה**. In the context of 2 Samuel 7:15, this Hebrew term should be understood in its basic meaning of loyalty, faithfulness and kindness (Baer & Gordon 1997, p. 211). One of the purposes of the promise is the legitimisation of David. God calling him 'a man after my own heart'<sup>19</sup> is at the basis of the grant of kingship, which 'will remain in effect regardless of the behavior of David's sons' (McCarter 1984, pp. 207-208).

Psalms 89 focuses on the Davidic Covenant (Grisanti 1999, p. 206) and is considered to be the reinterpretation of the Nathan narrative in 2 Samuel 7 (Floyd 1992, p. 452). In Psalm 89, the reader comes across the covenant that YHWH made with David and the fact that David's descendants, at some point, became unfaithful and were rejected by YHWH (Ps 89, pp. 38-52). Grisanti (1999) describes the reading in Psalm 89 as a frustration:

The psalmist's frustration demonstrates at least two truths. First of all, at this point in Israel's history, the ideal of a just king who would bring the nation lasting peace and prosperity was still an unfulfilled ideal. Secondly, the inability of Davidic rulers to live and rule in accordance with God's demands causes the readers to look forward for a Davidic figure who would one day perfectly satisfy those divine expectations. (p. 245)

Psalm 89 presents the reality of the covenant as it develops historically. It reminds us of the punishment of the unfaithful ruler in the Davidic dynasty. The fulfilment of the covenant seems more complex because there are long stretches - during exile and sometime after - where there is no Davidic king. Looking at it from a literary perspective helps to understand **עוֹלָם** as a long period and not as an endless period, or at least that there can be gaps without a king.

## ■ Significance of the Davidic Covenant

The Davidic Covenant has theological, literary and historical significance for Israel and the text of the Hebrew Bible (HB). Considering the importance that the Davidic Covenant has, it is obvious that the history of Israel as a nation and a people would be incomplete without it. The significance

---

19. The identification of David as 'a man after God's heart' does not appear in the texts of this research; thus, it will not be discussed here. However, there are two main views on scholarship. According to McCarter, it is not about a particular affection God has for David or because of any special quality in David. This phrase emphasises the free divine selection of the heir to the throne. Another view points out that God chose David because his heart was in step with the heart of God (Putney 2015, p. 20). Morally, David did not exhibit an upright life. His life was characterised by moral issues such as murder and adultery. Based on that aspect, David could not qualify as 'a man after God's heart'. Being identified so is therefore based on God's free election.

of YHWH's unilateral covenant with David constitutes an essential aspect of this study because of its inclusiveness. The significance of the Davidic Covenant can be summarised as threefold: (1) it inaugurates the divine model of kingship for Israel; (2) it implements the kingship of God in the midst of his people; and (3) it carries the intentions and the purposes of God in the previous covenants (Gentry & Wellum 2018, p. 443).

YHWH's covenant with David serves as one of the bases of 'the theological high points of the OT Scriptures' (Grisanti 1999, p. 233). The main component of the covenant resides in the perpetuity of the Davidic dynasty, which encompasses 'a high degree of theological dignity' (Preuss 1996, p. 25). Furthermore, the promise made to David being central to the books of Samuel is seen as pivotal for the evangelical faith. Commenting on 2 Samuel 7, Walter Brueggemann (1990) makes the claim that this chapter:

[...] occupies the dramatic and theological center of the entire Samuel corpus. Indeed, this is one of the most crucial texts in the Old Testament for evangelical faith [...] In this chapter, we encounter the bold articulation of a new theological claim surpassing anything yet known in Israel. (p. 253)

Brueggemann (1990, p. 259) adds that this oracle is considered 'the most crucial theological statement in the Old Testament'. The boldness of the Davidic Covenant resides in the fact that it brings a new dimension to the theological discussion in Israel, focusing on David and his descendants. Regarding this change as found in 2 Samuel 7, Brueggemann (1990), once again, observes that:

Chapter 7 is of peculiar interest because it indicates how the requirements and prospects of David change the subject of the theological conversation in Israel. The old discussion spoke with considerable anxiety about Yahweh's presence and how to secure it. The ark is a response to the question of presence. Now, however, the issue is not God's presence in the community but solidarity with this man and this man's family. The socio-historical character of Israel's faith is powerfully evident here. (p. 256)

Nevertheless, the focus on David and his family does not remove YHWH from the scene. The text clearly underlines that YHWH is in control as the initiator and the executor of the covenant: making the promise to David and his descendants is not to be taken as YHWH giving them freedom or independence.

The theological significance of the Davidic Covenant is connected to its literary significance. The theological-literary aspect of the covenant is well distributed in the OT literature. The appearance of the covenant with David in other biblical texts stands as proof of its importance. The fact that the covenant appears in the rest of the OT is supportive of biblical unity. Levenson attributes the significance of the Davidic Covenant to the attention that it receives in the HB compared to other covenants that God made with Abraham (Gn 15; 17:1-15), with the Levites (Jr 33:11-22) and with

Phinehas (Nm 25:1-25), because it appears in two sources: 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89 (Levenson 1979, pp. 205-206).

Together with 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89, there is another version of the Davidic Covenant in 1 Chronicles 17. Reference to David in the prophets is further evidence of the relevance of YHWH's covenant with him. Links to the Davidic Covenant appear in the Major Prophets as well as in the Minor Prophets. Paul R House (1998) provides a helpful summary of the Davidic Covenant in the prophetic books:

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve all look to the Davidic dynasty for an ideal king to solve the nation's sin problem [...] Isaiah 9:2-7 and Isaiah 11:1-9 mention ideal Davidic rulers in texts that look forward to ideal times. Jeremiah 23:1-8 links Israel's deliverance in the last days to one of David's relatives who will provide righteous leadership for the chosen people. Jeremiah calls the Davidic ruler a shepherd, the very term Ezekiel uses to describe the coming king (Ezk 34:1-31). Micah looks to Bethlehem to provide a shepherd who will bring peace to Israel, indeed, to the end of the earth, the list of texts could be extended. (p. 242)

From the literary point of view and in the interest of this study, the text of Ezekiel 34:1-34, together with Ezekiel 37:15-28, will remain our focus of consideration in the following chapters.

The Davidic Covenant also encompasses a literary-historical significance. For example, in Hosea 3:5, the text points to a probable restoration of the two divided kingdoms after they have experienced punishment (Matthews 2005, p. 86). The basis of the restoration recalls the promise that God made with David. In regard to the literary and historical influence of the covenant in Isaiah, Ronald E Clements (in eds. Nicholson, Mayes & Salters 2003) rightfully observes that:

[W]hat is of most significance is the fact that the status of the Davidic dynasty in the life and international standing of Israel formed a foundation platform for the beginning of Isaiah's prophesying. (p. 41)

Finally, taking into account the literary significance of the promise, the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7, also known as the dynastic oracle, 'is rightly regarded as an "ideological summit," not only in the "Deuteronomistic History" but also in the Old Testament as a whole' (Gordon 1986, p. 235). The importance of the covenant is summarised in the following quotation (ed. Pate 2004):

At the peak of David's reign, and climaxing the restoration of Israel after the disaster of Judges, Yahweh makes an everlasting covenant with David (2 Sm 7), promising that a future heir of David's will reign forever. This Davidic Covenant (promise of kingship) will combine with the Abrahamic Covenant (promise of blessing on all the nations) to drive the biblical story throughout the rest of the Old Testament and into the New Testament toward Christ, who brings the ultimate monarchy and the ultimate restoration. (p. 62)

The significance of the Davidic Covenant, as established in this section, is indicative of its influence on the text of the OT. Therefore, reference to the covenant out of the text of 2 Samuel 7 should attract the attention of biblical scholars. Many studies have been conducted on the Davidic Covenant, and many characteristics have been considered. In the next two chapters, the study will focus on exploring the theological, literary and historical influences of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34 and 37.

## ■ Findings

The place and the role of the Nathan narrative in the corpus of the text of Samuel, as well as in the rest of the OT, is unquestionable. The narrative offers an indispensable perspective, establishing the David tradition in postexilic Judaism (Watty 2016, p. 13). Looking at the Davidic Covenant in the prophets helps lay the contextual ground for studying the theme in Ezekiel 34 and 37. I will briefly consider a few passages in the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah to achieve this purpose. The overview is that (Booth 2013):

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel each point forward to a new covenant yet to be instigated. In each of these three books this new covenant is specifically tied in [*sic*] to the promise of an ‘everlasting’ covenant with David, and in one instance, is also linked to the unconditional Patriarchal Promise. (p. 10)

While the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel do not develop the theme of covenant in detail, it appears that their messages are based in one way or another on the covenants that God made with individuals or with his people, Israel. Meanwhile, there are indications of the Davidic Covenant. In the case of Isaiah, the word ‘covenant’ (in Hebrew) occurs twelve times, but only Isaiah 55:3 (‘Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David’) makes a direct reference to David (eds. Nicholson et al. 2003, pp. 42–43). The mention of בְּרִית עוֹלָם [everlasting covenant] draws the attention of the reader to the covenant that YHWH made with David, which David qualifies as בְּרִית עוֹלָם in 2 Samuel 23:5.

In Jeremiah 31:31–34, we read about a new covenant that YHWH will make with Israel, which will be different from the one he initially made and which was broken. In Jeremiah 33:14–26, we find reference to the Davidic dynasty and also to YHWH’s everlasting covenant with David (Jr 33:15, 17). In this reference, ‘the Davidic Covenant is dramatically and powerfully reaffirmed’ (Booth 2013, p. 10).

The prophecy of the restoration of Israel in Hosea 3 is linked to the Davidic Covenant. There are two things that Israel will experience: (1) they will return and (2) they will seek YHWH and David their king (Hs 3:5). The mention of

David here, once again, recalls the Davidic Covenant indicated by the phrase 'David, their king' (ed. Elwell 1989):

*David, their king*, implies that the northern kingdom, led by kings who are not descendants of David, will cease to exist and that all Israelites will be ruled by someone from the house of David. (p. 607)

The prophecy also suggests YHWH's faithfulness to the covenant he made with David, the main feature of the covenant being the Davidic dynasty and the restoration of the people of God; no thing or event could dissuade YHWH from fulfilling his covenant. Carew (in ed. Adeyemo 2006, p. 1017) writes, 'the exile will not end God's covenant with his people. He will be faithful to the covenant he made with David and will restore his people'.

In Micah 5:1-4, the text is suggestive of David, even though he is not clearly mentioned. The prophecy is about the restoration of the Jewish people. A close reading of the text and its understanding brings into the reader's mind the Davidic Covenant as found in 2 Samuel 7. In the text, Bethlehem is associated with David (1 Sm 17:12) and establishes 'a connection between the messianic King and David' (ed. Gaebelien 1985, p. 427). Clearly (ed. Elwell 1989):

[...] the connection with David is explicit in the passage when Micah refers to the ancient pedigree of the coming ruler. That pedigree is Davidic and the roots of the fulfillment predicted in Verse 2 may be found in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sm 7). (p. 656)

Referring to Micah 5:2-4 as 'the positive message of hope', Gary V Smith (2001) states that:

[...] the 'mention of a new king from the line of David reminds the people about their tradition of the messianic promise of the eternal reign of David's son (2 Sm 7:4-17; Ps 2; 89; 132)'. (p. 524)

Indicators are suggesting that Micah 5:1-4 describes the surge of a new day. Those indicators are (1) reference to Bethlehem, (2) the use of verb 'shepherd', (3) the greatness 'to the end of the earth' and (4) his 'brothers' (eds. Andersen & Freedman 2000, pp. 470-471). Anderson (1989) summarises the use of the Davidic Covenant in the prophets:

2 Samuel and the Prophetic books (particularly Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) have in common certain Davidic themes and messianic motifs (cf. e.g. Is 4:2; 9:2-7; 11:1-5, 10; 16:5; Jr 17:25; 23:5-6; 30:9; Ezk 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos 3:5; Mi 5:1-4). However, in the absence of direct citations it is difficult to say whether or not the prophets were familiar with the actual materials now contained in 2 Samuel. On the other hand, there is little doubt that the prophets knew of, and attached great importance to, the Davidic traditions including the divine promise (or covenant) to the house of David (see for instance, Is 55:3-4; Ezk 34:23-24). (p. xxxviii)

The preceding discussion and the quotation show that the three prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, were familiar with the Davidic Covenant. It also appears that the Davidic Covenant was an important component of their messages. Hence, the use of the Davidic Covenant in the prophets' text establishes the context for the study of its use in Ezekiel 34 and 37 in relation to 2 Samuel 7. My argument aims to demonstrate that Ezekiel knew 2 Samuel 7 from memory.

## ■ Conclusion

This chapter has helped understand the concept of covenant in the ANE and ancient Israel. The understanding of the type of treaties in the ANE shed light on the obligatory and promissory types of covenant in the OT. As this study is on a specific text – 2 Samuel 7 – the discussion focused on comprehending the background, the literary and the historical contexts of the Davidic Covenant, and the structure of 2 Samuel 7. The different elements of the covenant, as given by YHWH to David, were also discussed in this chapter. While David wanted to build a house for YHWH, YHWH promised to make a house for David and give his descendants the throne of Israel. The Davidic Covenant has considerable theological, literary and historical significance. This significance surfaces as the Davidic Covenant appears in the prophets. In a specific way, the covenant in 2 Samuel 7 might have influenced many other texts in the OT, including Ezekiel 34 and 37. In the next chapter, I will focus on the relationship between the texts of 2 Samuel 7 and Ezekiel 34.



# Influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34

## ■ Ezekiel 34

This chapter looks at the text of Ezekiel 34 with specific consideration of the positive trait of the promise (Ezk 34:23–31), incorporating possible areas of influence from the text of 2 Samuel 7. The promise comes after YHWH has rebuked the leaders of Israel and is the climax of the oracle in Ezekiel 34. Besides being the climax of the oracle, the promise is reinforced by mentioning David as the future ruler of the Jewish people. The appearance of David in the text of Ezekiel has literary, theological and historical importance. In this chapter, the interest is on the literary aspect, specifically to connect David's promise as the coming ruler to the Davidic Covenant, as found in 2 Samuel 7. The study will extend to consider the theological and conceptual influences of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34.

## ■ Authorship and date

Scholars have not found a specific date concerning when the book of Ezekiel was written. The authorship attributed to a redaction process recognises some parts of the book as the work of Ezekiel. However, the events described in the book with the exact dates give an idea. These dates are from the calling of Ezekiel to his last vision (Cooper 1994, p. 24). When it

**How to cite:** Budha, VL 2023, 'Influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34', in *The biblical concept of 'Davidic Covenant' in 2 Samuel and Ezekiel and its implications for African leadership*, HTS Religion & Society Series, vol. 16, AVARSITY Books, Cape Town, pp. 41–75. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2023.BK470.03>

comes to establishing the dates in the book of Ezekiel, Moshe Greenberg (1997) observes that:

[...] contemporary and other ancient records, biblical and extrabiblical, tend to corroborate the testimony of the dates that its contents fall between 593 and 571 BCE. Events of those years are reflected in the prophecies, no event after 571 is reflected in them, and any that precedes 593 is clearly past. (p. 12)

Cooper has the same opinion and observes that the book of Ezekiel 'chronicles the flow of events with exact dates from his call in July 593 BC to his final vision in April of 571 BC'. (Cooper 1994, p. 24). Zimmerli (1979a) adds:

According to Parker-Dubberstein the capture of Jerusalem is accordingly to be dated March 16, 597 BC. The call of the prophet (1:1ff), according to the same reckoning, took place on July 31, 593, and the date of the latest oracle (29:17) on April 26, 571. (p. 11)

Zimmerli (1979a) makes an important observation about the specific dates, with precision, found in the book of Ezekiel; he explains that (Zimmerli 1979a):

By his dating of a considerable number of prophetic oracles, the book of Ezekiel stands closest perhaps to the prophetic books of Haggai and Zechariah. Whilst pre-exilic prophecy shows an increasing precision of dating, this is no longer to be found after the time of Haggai and Zechariah (so in Malachi and Joel) [...] So, from the dates that are given in the book of Ezekiel itself, we can accept as appropriate a position in the period between Jeremiah on the one hand and Haggai-Zechariah on the other. (p. 9)

Some critics have observed that there are phrases that are typically Ezekielian but which do not convince many critics about Ezekiel as the author of the book that bears his name. However, they do recognise that there (Taylor 1969):

[...] is strong evidence for the unity and coherence of the book in its final stage, and it suggests the editor of the finished work, if he was not Ezekiel himself, identified himself closely with Ezekiel's outlook and beliefs. (pp. 18-19)

After a review of different points of view, Joyce (2009) recognises that Ezekiel influenced the writing of the book that bears his name and the sixth century BC as its date; he states:

We can, then, with a measure of confidence speak of the sixth-century witness of the book of Ezekiel, and also regard that witness as profoundly influenced, both in content and in style, by Ezekiel himself. (p. 16)

Ezekiel remains the key person in the book. His role is described in the book: he receives the message from YHWH and transmits it to the people. Block portrays Ezekiel as 'a man totally possessed by the Spirit of Yahweh' (Block 1997a, p. 11), to the point that it is not possible to distinguish between the prophet and his message - 'the medium is the message'

(Block 1997a, p. 11). The prophetic message of Ezekiel underscores his full submission and commitment to YHWH.

Regarding Ezekiel 34, scholars have struggled to date the prophecy. This, for example, is the case with Jenson (2009, p. 263), observing that 'dating is a problem. The prophet explicitly presumes the completion of Israel's exile'. In the same line (Henry 1985):

The prophecy of this chapter is not dated, nor any of those that follow it, till chap. xl It is most probable that it was delivered after the completing of Jerusalem's destruction, when it would be very reasonable to enquire into the causes of it. (p. 948)

Without suggesting a date, Cooke (1970, p. xxv) recognises Ezekiel as the author of Chapters 34–37, viewing the section as 'undated prophecies'. In addition, John F Gates (1987, p. 336) is specific when he attributes the dates of 585–573 BC to Chapters 33–48. However, considering the direction of the current work, the pursuit of the author and date is not pertinent, as the focus is on the book's final form. I am more interested in the message of the book than its prophetic author and date, having an idea that the text of 2 Samuel 7 is prior to that of Ezekiel 34.

## ■ Milieu

The primary audience of Ezekiel was the Jewish community in the Babylonian exile. With the exile, the Jewish people experienced many changes in their daily life. Their social, political and religious life had changed and they had to face many other challenges. One of the outcomes of the exile is that it added to the trauma of the Judeans, who had suffered greatly. Mein (2001) observes:

The early sixth century BCE was a time of almost unparalleled crisis for the Jewish people, as successive Babylonian invasions left Judah devastated and Jerusalem in ruins [...] With the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 the state of Judah ceased to exist as an independent political entity, and a new and an important phase in Jewish history began. (pp. 1, 53)

Jill Middlemas shares the same understanding, describing the sixth century as a breaking point in Judah's historical, social and religious life (2007, p. 26).<sup>20</sup>

The point made by Mein and Middlemas is that Babylon ruined Judah. The devastation of Judah did not affect only their political and religious lives but also their psychological lives, which needed healing. Although Judah ceased to exist as an independent entity, the Jewish people were

---

20. The fact that the Babylonian exile was a crisis for the Jewish people is supported by other scholars such as Anthonioz (2010) and Smith (1989). Rainer Albertz (2003) qualifies the Babylonian exile as political, psychological and religious tribulations.

not exterminated, and Judah, as a country, did not cease to exist.<sup>21</sup> Still, the deportation to Babylon was a disappointing event; the exile was, according to Soggin (1999):

[...] one of the great fundamental breaks in the long history of the people, one of the worst catastrophes: not only was it the end of political independence, but the dynasty which divine oracles had once said would last forever had collapsed, and with it the underlying ideology of the people of Judah. (p. 267)

Considering the reality of the exile and its impact, John Evans further qualifies the situation of Judah as 'twin traumas of forced deportation and surviving - hardly living - in exile' (Evans 2006, p. 230). The culmination of the effect of the deportation of the Jewish community to Babylon is the theological aspect of the 'twin traumas' that the people suffered from. According to Joyce (2009):

Though the physical events of destruction and exile were certainly devastating, the real nub of disaster lies in its psychological and emotional impact, the traumatic depths of which Smith-Christopher (2002) vividly presents. And it is especially the theological dimension of this trauma that is crucial for understanding the book of Ezekiel. For within just a few years, Judah was robbed of all the main elements in her theological system: land, chosen people status, city, temple and monarchy, the events of defeat and exile at the hands of the Babylonians and the theological questions that they posed are the essential key to understanding Ezekiel and his tradition [...] The issues addressed by the book fit with the period and appear to reflect the situation of national loss associated with it. (pp. 3-4)

The theocentric focus of the book of Ezekiel serves to support this claim. The reading of Ezekiel 34 points to the restoration of Judah, including the promised everlasting throne of David. This chapter encompasses, mainly from Verses 10-31, a message of hope to the exiles. The climax of the oracle comes with the promise of a future ruler in the person of David and a complete restoration that the people of God will experience.

## ■ The place and significance of Chapter 34 in the book of Ezekiel

Ezekiel 34 is a critical section in the book of Ezekiel. It is found in the section that addresses the restoration of Israel and its future hope (Ezk 34:1-48:35). From Chapter 1 to Chapter 24, the text speaks of the judgement of Israel by YHWH. This judgement is based on the disobedience of the Judeans while in their homeland. Ezekiel 25:1-32:32, on the other hand, presents the divine

---

21. From the status of the crisis that Judah experienced in the sixth century, indications are that Judah no longer existed as a country. The time was appropriate to raise questions about the perpetuity of God's promise to his people - the Promised Land. Because of the Babylonian occupation, religious and political affairs were not run as they should be.

judgement on the nations. Block (1997b, p. viii) classifies Ezekiel 34 in the category of 'Positive Messages of Hope for Israel: The Gospel according to Ezekiel (34:1-48:35)'.

Contrary to the verdict against Judah, the nations' judgement came because of the mistreatment they inflicted on the house of Judah. In abusing Judah, those nations opposed YHWH. While the messages against the foreign nations are 'negative messages of hope', those to Judah or Israel are 'positive messages of hope' (Block 1997b, pp. vii, viii). The understanding is that the messages of judgement to the foreign nations could have been welcomed among the exilic community. The exiles could feel vindicated as their enemies were judged. The judgement of foreign nations is to be seen as the preliminary stage of the Jewish people's restoration.

The message in Ezekiel 34 serves as a turning point in the book of Ezekiel. This text plays a transitional role from judgement to restoration. A complete restoration and de-traumatisation of the exiles seem to start with judgement. The judgement that concerned Judah and the foreign nations is narrowed to the shepherds of Israel.

While the text of Ezekiel 34 serves as a turning point, that of Chapter 33, which is in the same group, functions as a transition between the oracles of judgement and those of salvation. In his description of this chapter, Lawrence Boadt (1990) states that:

Chapter 33 serves then not only as a transition from oracles of judgment to salvation by means of the recommissioning of the prophet as watchman, the ending of his dumbness in fulfillment of 3:27 and the coming of the news of the fall as predicted in 24:26-27, but it is on a far vaster scale the crucial first step in the implementation of the divine plan for restoration, namely, the call to the people to acknowledge that the exile is deserved and just, and must be accepted, just as proposed by Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel 20. (p. 8)

This chapter (Ezk 33) is highly theological as it underscores the responsibility of the watchman and the individual and that of the prophet Ezekiel. Beyond all, the chapter stresses the righteousness and the justice of YHWH and suggests YHWH's action in the following chapters of the book. In this view, Block (1997b, pp. 234-235) mentions that in reading the book of Ezekiel, the reader should consider Chapter 33 'as the beginning of the positive messages of hope that make up Chapters 34-48'.

## ■ Structure of Ezekiel 34:1-31

This section begins with the specific order that the prophet receives from YHWH (Ezk 34:1-2a). The order is followed by the divine message that establishes the failure of the shepherds (Ezk 34:2b-4) - indictment Part 1. The consequence of the leaders' failure is also instrumental in the study, as witnessed in the trauma of the exiles (Ezk 34:5-6). The indictment

of the shepherds is found in the last part of this section (Ezk 34:8) – indictment Part 2, Verses 9–10, is a pronouncement of judgement on the shepherds. The promise of restoration constitutes the main part of the chapter (Ezk 34:11–31). More detailed, the structure of Ezekiel 34:1–31 appears like this:

1. Ezekiel 34:1–6: YHWH’s word to Ezekiel and to the shepherds of Israel:
  - a. Ezekiel 34:1–2a: Order of YHWH to the prophet
  - b. Ezekiel 34:2b: Evil actions of the leaders of Israel
  - c. Ezekiel 34:3–4: Failure of the leaders
  - d. Ezekiel 34:5–6: Impact of leaders’ actions on the people
2. Ezekiel 34:7–10: Judgement pronounced and response to the verdict
3. Ezekiel 34:11–16: Promise of restoration
4. Ezekiel 34:17–22: Judgement between the people:
  - a. Ezekiel 34:23–24: One shepherd and servant, Prince David
  - b. Ezekiel 34:25: Covenant of peace
  - c. Ezekiel 34:26–31: Future hope and unity.

Considering the interest of this study, I will focus on the section from Verses 23–31.

## ■ The shepherds of Israel in Ezekiel 34

The prophet’s message in Ezekiel 34 is mainly addressed to the רועי יִשְׂרָאֵל [the shepherds of Israel]. The text does not specify the identity of those shepherds; therefore, the term is used metaphorically here to denote them as leaders. There is no specific category of leaders for whom this metaphor was used: it appears that ‘like the other Ancient Near Eastern peoples, the Israelites employed the shepherd metaphor for their leaders (the judges and the kings)’ (Obinwa 2012, p. 244). The leaders of Israel were not only the judges and the kings but also the elders. The elders were ‘a prominent group carrying out leadership roles at various sub-tribal, tribal, territorial, and settlement levels’ (Reviv 1989, p. 8). While in exile, the Jewish people did not have a ruling king in Babylon. As a deportee, King Jehoiachin, who was among the exiles, did not have his dignity and power as a king but was under the control of the Babylonian authorities. In the absence of a king, the elders were probably the direct leaders of the exiles (Purvis & Meyers 1999, p. 158).

As mentioned, the text of Ezekiel does not refer to a ruling king during the Babylonian exile. The kings mentioned in the book of Ezekiel are from Babylon (Ezk 17:12; 19:9; 21:24; 21:26; 24:2; 26:7; 29:18, 19; 30:10, 22, 24, 25; 32:11), Tyre (Ezk 28:12) and Egypt (Ezk 29:2, 3; 30:21; 31:22; 32:2). Because the text of Ezekiel 34 refers to the exiles in Babylon, the leaders who are summoned, in addition to the former leaders who might have caused the

exile, are undoubtedly those who are with the deportees in Babylon. For Block (1997b, p. 282), the prophecy concerns the former leaders constituted with the whole ruling class. Duguid (1994, p. 39) shares the same point of view; he mentions Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin. According to Zimmerli (1979b):

Here too, the question of whether Ezekiel is thinking specifically of the leaders of the people in exile or in Judah–Jerusalem or, even further back, of those of the northern kingdom of Israel should not be posed. Here too, in marked distance from what is merely contemporary, the oracle is directed to the history of Israel as a whole. (p. 214)

Although scholars do not specify the identity of the bad shepherds – which is complicated – the bad shepherds are both the former Jewish leaders and those who are with the exiles in Babylon.

## ■ YHWH's promises and judgement

Although the detailed treatment for this research begins in Verse 23, it is right, for a better understanding, to consider the content of Verses 11–22. There is continuity between Ezekiel 34:1–10 and 34:11–22. The conjunction **כִּי** introduces the continuity in Ezekiel 34:11. The particle **כִּי** [for or indeed] emphasises the clause that it introduces (Waltke & O'Connor 1990, para. 39.3.1d), as the clause introduced by **כִּי** explains what will happen next. Grammatically, it 'serves as a transitional function, linking the citation formula with the preceding and explaining how Yahweh intends to rescue [...] the sheep' (Block 1997b, p. 288).

The emphatic aspect of the clause is not **כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה** [Thus says the Lord] but the content of what YHWH is going to do. In Ezekiel 34:10, the bad shepherds will be accountable to YHWH, meaning they will pay for the mistreatment they inflicted on the sheep and will no longer have access to care for the flock. They will also lose any benefit of the products of the flock as they will cease to be shepherds, and YHWH will have rescued the sheep. YHWH himself will become the shepherd of his people; hence, there will be no reason to continue with the bad shepherds who exploited the flock.

The search for and pasture of the sheep dominate Ezekiel 34:11–16. YHWH's intervention is described in subsequent verses. Verse 13 brings a change in style and text while making direct references to the exiles and their land. Tuell (2009, p. 239) asserts that the mention of 'the settlements in the land' serves 'to remind the reader of the point of his allegory: God will bring the exiles home and repopulate desolated Judah'. We have here a clear reference to the restoration of the Judeans from exile (Joyce 2009, p. 197). Up to Verse 15, the text presents the care that YHWH will give his people.

Verse 16 summarises YHWH's role in the care of his people. The verse reads: 'אֶת־הָאֲבֵדֹת אֶבְקֹשׁ וְאֶת־הַנִּגְדָּחִים אֶשִׁיב וְלִנְשָׁבֶרֶת אֶחַבֵּשׁ וְאֶת־הַחֹלְלֵי אֶחַזֵּק וְאֶת־הַשְּׁמֵנִה וְאֶת־הַחֲזָקָה: אֶשְׁמִיד אֶרְעֵנָה בְּמִשְׁפָּט: [I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice]. The role of YHWH confirms the failure of the shepherds in the same task. YHWH will do what the shepherds refused to do. Block (1997b) argues:

By inverting the sequence Ezekiel emphasizes that with Israel's restoration the tragedies of the past will be reversed, by recasting negative statements as positive affirmations, he deliberately portrays Yahweh as a good shepherd, the antithesis of the earlier evil shepherds. (p. 291)

The noted antithesis illustrates the differences between YHWH and the leaders of Israel. YHWH is the Shepherd *par excellence*, while the shepherds of Israel are portrayed as mercenaries *par excellence*.

The actions of YHWH are illustrated progressively throughout the verses. On the one hand, YHWH cares for the sheep, while on the other hand he destroys – אֶשְׁמִיד – the robust and the strong. The extermination of the robust and the strong is ambiguous, because it is unclear if the two adjectives refer to the leaders or the people. The opinions of scholars differ in identifying whom the adjectives qualify. According to Block (1997b, p. 292), they refer to 'the bullies within the population'. Greenberg (1997, p. 701) asserts that the adjectives refer to leaders: 'The destruction of the oppressors goes well beyond the dismissal of the shepherds announced in vs. 10 or the rescue of the flock from bullies in v. 22'. Joyce (2009, p. 197) maintains that the destruction will be part of 'the cruel and exploitative leaders'. Although Greenberg indicates that YHWH will destroy the cruel leaders, he evokes doubt on the authenticity of the reading, thus leading to the divergence in interpretation (1997, p. 701). The two readings show אֶשְׁמִיד [from שמד] and אשמיר [from שמר]. According to Zimmerli, the MT of the OT and the Targum support the first reading, which refers to the 'fat and strong' (Zimmerli 1979b, p. 208). The second reading suggests YHWH will keep the strong animals that were initially destroyed by the incompetent shepherds (Ezk 34:3). The latter reading is preferred in several medieval manuscripts of the Hebrew OT, as well as in the Septuagint (LXX) (eds. Alt et al. 1997, p. 960). The translation in the LXX reads 'φυλάξω from φυλάσσω' [to guard, to keep], meaning that YHWH will keep or guard.

The context of Ezekiel 34 provides room for the two readings. In view of what the weak animals went through in Ezekiel 34:4 and the summary of the promise of salvation in Ezekiel 34:16, YHWH does not plan to harm the shepherds of Israel. The primary reason for this argument rests on the idea that YHWH's rescue of his people does not mean the destruction of the strong among them. Instead of destruction, it is time to protect [שמיר] those who suffered initially. Zimmerli (1979b, p. 217) supports this proposal: if

reference is made to the leaders, the plausible reading is then *שמיד*, suggesting the destruction of the failed leaders. However, the focus in Ezekiel 34:11-31 is not on the cruel leaders but on the people. YHWH also declares what he will do to the bad leaders. The appropriate reading here is *שמיד*, as it modifies ‘the strong’. Nevertheless, the figurative use of *שמיד* does not refer to the physical extermination of the leaders by YHWH. Instead, it refers to justice exercised by YHWH to benefit the people.<sup>22</sup>

The judgement in Ezekiel 34:10 demonstrates judgement for both leaders and people. The verse suggests that the suffering of the exiles was caused by their leaders as well as by some members of the community. The latter group were accomplices of their leaders; they contributed to the suffering of their fellows. Verse 17 declares the upcoming judgement; Verses 18-19 show some individuals as troublemakers in the community. Although a literal description of the people’s actions is not provided in the text, the figurative language shows their actions were unwarranted and toxic. This led to their suffering because of their selfish actions.

Verse 17 points to the destruction resting on the exiles. Further, the text shows that the influence of poor leadership had an impact on the exiles, to the point that some of them behaved like their leaders by oppressing their compatriots, a punishable act. Those who mistreated their fellow deportees were summoned to judgement in the same way their leaders were. YHWH exercises various forms of justice in his promise of restoration. The two forms that appear here include the weakening of the arrogant individuals in an effort to end their cruelty to others and the restoration. The latter is exemplified through the absence of discrimination, the removal of ineffective leaders and the insertion of divine leadership. YHWH places emphasis on justice and good leadership for his people. The leaders’ inability to exercise justice and good leadership negated the treatment and regard of their subjects, subsequently leading to their removal by YHWH. The text thus underscores the central theme of justice in leadership.

Concerning the judgement between the members of the community, the exiles should blame themselves and not their leaders. The understanding is that there is individual responsibility leading to judgement. It is possible that the leaders created room for internal strife in order to fulfil their evil desires. Once divided, the people were weak and unable to stand in opposition to their leaders. Consequently, leaders took advantage of the people. Although YHWH was concerned with restoring his people, he did not overlook their negative behaviour.

---

22. The way in which YHWH will deal with the wicked among the exiles appears from Verse 17. The text does not indicate that YHWH will kill them. Instead, it shows that YHWH will judge and vindicate the weak.

Ezekiel 34:20 is instrumental in understanding God's divine judgement of the strong people. While the declaration formula that introduces the people's judgement is the same one used for the leaders, the content of the judgement is quite different. The statement's focus rests on YHWH's actions towards the weak and not on his actions towards the cruel. Ezekiel 34:21 explains the repression of weak members by strong members of the community. The verb בָּרַח used in the figure connotes the negative idea of pushing away (Weber 1980, p. 207). This verb expresses a 'linear motion, i.e. the movement of an object or person from one point to another, often with the involvement of sudden physical force. The context is normally negative' (Klingbeil 1997, p. 1012). It communicates that those who were strong violently isolated the weak to benefit from the plausible advantages offered to the members of the community. It suggests the idea of the rich exploiting the poor to the point of dispossessing them, indicated in Isaiah 5:8 as a common practice in Israel.<sup>23</sup> The text does not give details about the actions of the oppressors. From their oppressive actions, it is possible that community members suffered physically, economically and psychologically.

As already mentioned, the text of Ezekiel 34:22 centres on YHWH rescuing the weak rather than on the punishment of the strong. The process of rescuing the weak is based on the punishment of the strong (in the same way, while Ezekiel 34 focuses on the restoration of the people, YHWH first removes the bad leaders). The verse is about 'the proclamation of deliverance of those who have hitherto been oppressed' (Zimmerli 1979b, p. 218). The focus on the rescue of the weak justifies the lack of a clear description of the actions against the oppressors. The salvation that God promises to the weak is the most important thing and expresses God's justice and his intention to protect the weak.

There is a progression in YHWH's plan to rescue his people. The removal of the leaders and the judgement of the strong among the people were just part of the salvation process; it was not yet the final stage of the restoration. In the restoration plan, Israel needed a leader to experience safety, a leader who would be able to take care of them and give them complete restoration.

The climax of the oracles is 'one shepherd' in Israel. According to Block (1997b, p. 296), the mention of 'one shepherd' brings a break between human and divine leadership. While the idea of divine leadership appears in the oracle, it does not mean that YHWH has nothing to do with a human

---

23. Nowadays, it can be associated with land-grabbing in African societies, where poor people lose their property and rights to the advantage of the rich. Sometimes, when it comes to food and other resource distribution, strong and privileged people do their best to possess what should go to the weak. Such behaviour is the basis of endless conflicts, sometimes with irrevokable consequences.

leader or does not need one of that kind anymore. This is explained by the fact that the removal of depraved leaders leads to the appointment or establishment of a new one by YHWH in the person of David, described as YHWH's servant and prince.

The text does not explicitly explain why God decided to appoint a descendant of David as king rather than someone else. This raises the following question: did God not find suitable leaders for replacement among the exiles or the remnant in Jerusalem? Were they all corrupt or underqualified for leadership? Did he try to shield his people from poor leadership by not appointing one of them? Despite the theocentric aspect of the book of Ezekiel, the text does not suggest that YHWH intends to assume for himself the leadership of his people alone. It clearly shows that another human leader in the person of David will replace failed human leaders. The difference between David and the bad leaders resides in the aspect that David is described as a servant and prince of YHWH. The reason for a Davidic king is based on God's prior promises to David and does not have anything to do with the character of other individuals in the community.

Verse 23 declares that YHWH will provide for one shepherd to his people. While the indictment concerns 'shepherds' of Israel, the plan of restoration suggests one shepherd will take care of the people. The precision of one shepherd – רֹעֵה אֶחָד – for Israel implies the unification of the northern and the southern kingdoms under one leader to suppress the division that ruined Israel. Block (1997b) asserts that under the promise of one leader:

Yahweh seeks a reversal of the division of Israel into northern and southern kingdoms that occurred after the death of Solomon (1 Ki 11-12), as well as an end to the inconsistency of standards by which the last kings of Israel, from Josiah onward, had ruled. (p. 297)

The expression also implies unity among the Jewish people, who, because of bad leadership, were divided among themselves, the strong mistreating the weak (Ezk 34:17-19). Under the direction of YHWH, the רֹעֵה אֶחָד will be able to restore order among the people. As we read Ezekiel 34:23, the understanding is that there will not be a vacuum of leadership once YHWH removes the bad leaders.

The promised ruler is identified as David,<sup>24</sup> a servant of YHWH and a prince. Jeremiah 23:5 speaks about YHWH acting for the sake of David – וְהָקַמְתִּי לְדָוִד צֶמַח צְדִיק [I will raise up for David a Righteous Branch]. A quick reminder about David is that he was the second king of Israel during whose reign the country was united, and that David was declared a man after

---

24. The figure of David was discussed in Chapter 1. The concern here is not to find out to which personality David refers but what his name recalls in the history of Israel.

God's heart (cf. 1 Sm 13:14). The promise that YHWH will raise a Righteous Branch for David gives a clue that someone will lead the people of God as David did. The action of YHWH includes the complete restoration plan of his people who, after the suffering of the exile, will experience unity and peace. It means that the leader that YHWH will raise will revive the Davidic leadership and will be of Davidic descent.

Nevertheless, there has been debate about the person of David in scholarship. Biblical scholars have developed two versions that characterise David: (1) the traditional version which characterises David as a pious shepherd – a man after God's heart – and (2) the critical version presenting David as a cunning usurper (Bosworth 2006, pp. 67–68). In reference to the moral lifestyle of David (murder, adultery), the question is whether Davidic leadership can be really taken as a prototype for good leadership.

In the biblical accounts referring to the kings of Judah in the Davidic dynasty, David appears as the 'yardstick' for all later rulers.<sup>25</sup> David remained a great figure because he was elected by God. It is right that from his moral behaviour he did not deserve the identification of 'a man after God's heart'. The reason for identifying David as 'a man after God's heart' resides in the free election of YHWH, which became a basis for the continuity of the Davidic dynasty as 'the exemplum of covenant fidelity' (Joseph 2015, p. 23). Apart from his immoral behaviour, David pleased YHWH in that he did not participate in or condone worshipping idols, a fact that can be considered as a strength in his relationship with God. There is no doubt that (Obinwa 2012):

King David is a very significant figure in the history of Israel. Not only that he is a great ancestor of the royal house in Israel, he is also the most significant symbol of unity for the house of Israel because Israel was a united nation throughout his regime. (pp. 354–355)

The assumption that one has is that if David were still alive, YHWH would bring him back to lead his people. However (Obinwa 2012):

[...] although it appears that YHWH has revoked his covenant by allowing the Davidic house to collapse in 586 BC, Ezekiel hereby announces that the ancient promise has not been forgotten. YHWH will still place his *servant David* over his people. (p. 355)

---

25. Among the 19 kings after Solomon, Abijam was not faithful as his ancestor David (1 Ki 15:3), and for the sake of David, the dynasty continued (1 Ki 15:4); Asa pleased God as his ancestor David did (1 Ki 15:11); Amaziah pleased God but not fully as David, his ancestor (2 Ki 14:3); Ahaz did not please God as David did (2 Ki 16:2); Hezekiah pleased God as David did (2 Ki 18:3); and Josiah, like David, pleased God (2 Ki 22:2). Among those kings, none of them is directly compared with David because of their wrong deeds. Jehoahaz (2 Ki 23:31) and Jehoiakim (2 Ki 23:37) are compared to their ancestors who did evil (idolatry which was not associated with David).

The promise is based on the covenant that YHWH made with David concerning an everlasting Davidic dynasty. In addition, because of the theocentric nature of the book of Ezekiel, the emphasis is not on David or his dynasty but on YHWH, who will appoint a leader when the time comes, and this in relation to the covenant he made with David.

The coming leader is identified as the servant of YHWH. What becomes clear in the text of Ezekiel is that the promised leader will not be an independent leader; he will lead under the direction of YHWH (Ezk 34:24), expressed with *וְעַבְדִּי דָוִד* [and my servant David], a phrase that appears twice in the book of Ezekiel (34:24 and 37:24) while *וְדָוִד עַבְדִּי* [and David my servant] is used only once in Ezekiel 37:25. The construction 'my servant David' also appears in 1 Samuel 25:10; 2 Samuel 2:13, 17, 31; 10:2, 4; 12:18; 18:7, 9; 1 Kings 11:32. In Ezekiel 34:24, the word *עַבְדִּי* plays an emphatic role. The emphasis is on the position that David occupies as the servant of YHWH more than on the person of David. This construction, *דָּוִד עַבְדִּי* [David my servant], occurs as well as in 2 Samuel 3:18; 1 Kings 11:13, 34, 38; 2 Kings 19:34; 20:6; Psalm 89:21; Isaiah 37:35; and Jeremiah 33:21, 22, 26.

The designation of David as a servant of YHWH gives a clue to the function of the promised leader, whose function is to serve. It is critical here to understand what 'servant of YHWH' means. Scholars have mainly seen the idea of relationship in the word 'servant'. To Callender (1998, p. 73), it is about the relationships between a king and his subjects and his officers, the people of Israel and God, and it is used as a title for some individuals who had a close relationship with God. To mention just a few, this is the case with Abraham, Isaac and Israel (Ex 32:13); Moses (Ex 14:31; Nm 12:7; Jos 1:12; Neh 9:14; 10:29); Joshua (Jdg 2:8); Job (Job 1:8; 2:3); Jacob (Jr 30:10); Eliakim (Is 22:20); and the three figures Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Dn 3:26). Benjamin G Wright III (1998) explains that 'in its basic biblical meaning someone is called an:

[...] *ebed* who is in a subservient relationship to another. This relationship does not have to be one of ownership, but can apply to a king and his subjects, a god and those who serve him/her, a social superior and inferior.' (pp. 85-86)

Carpenter (1997) adds that:

To be a servant of Yahweh was an honor, raising the status of the person involved. It did not mean degradation but exaltation in Yahweh's service. To be a servant of God had no negative connotations for the servant, after all things were considered, even though his task might have been one of delivering word or parable of judgment. (p. 307)

From this citation, the understanding is that a servant of YHWH was not a slave. While being a servant of YHWH was an honour, as suggested by Carpenter, this honour was not a means to do what the servant wanted but to achieve the will of YHWH. The Hebrew construction *עַבְדִּי* [my servant] is

a possessive genitive (Williams 2007, para. 39) or a genitive of inalienable possession, focusing on the relationship (Waltke & O'Connor 1990, para. 5). The designation of David as a servant of YHWH underscores that David belonged to YHWH. Therefore, as a possession of YHWH, his concern should be to do what the will of YHWH was.

In relation to the promised leader, the suggestion is that he will be the agent of YHWH and will have a strong relationship with YHWH; he will do what YHWH has planned to do for his people (cf. Ezk 34:11-16); he will depend upon YHWH. The agenda of the human leader will not be different from that of YHWH; as a submissive servant, he will not even think about another plan, as YHWH will tell him what to do and how to do it. The role of the promised leader will consist of serving the people of God. As a faithful servant, his concern will be the people, not himself, as it was with the cruel leaders. He will make a difference in his leadership in that he will depend on YHWH, leading under the direction of his Master, because he 'is someone who belongs entirely to his master and is committed to obedience, but who, within that, is nevertheless entrusted with great freedom in the fulfilment of his office' (Zimmerli 1979a, p. 219). The relationship with YHWH will bring success and blessing.

The promised leader is also designated as a prince. Ezekiel does not use the term מֶלֶךְ [king] for the leaders of Israel and instead prefers נָשִׂיא [prince]. Scholars such as Duguid (1994, pp. 10-51), Levenson (1976, pp. 57-69) and Tuell (1992, pp. 103-112) are not unanimous about the title נָשִׂיא (Speiser 1963, p. 111), particularly in reference to Ezekiel 1-39 and 40-48. Duguid (1994, p. 14) asserts that the OT נָשִׂיא refers to the premonarchic figure who acted on behalf of his people. Duguid (1994) summarises the views of scholars regarding the usage of נָשִׂיא in three points: (1) the term expresses the vassal state of the Judean kings in contrast to the great kings of Babylon and Egypt; (2) it designates apolitical sacral Jewish leaders; and (3) it comes from the influence of postexilic realities (he does not agree with the third alternative, however). He states (Duguid 1994):

Certainly, the term *nāsī'* when used to describe the kings of Judah of the immediate past was an accurate representation of their status in the world. Zedekiah was a vassal king under the king of Babylon, dependent upon him for his throne, a statute that is suitably underlined by the term *nāsī'*. (pp. 31-32)

Elsewhere, Ezekiel is eager to emphasise the fate that befalls such a ruler when he rebels against his overlord. The idea of the future ruler as a dependent of Yahweh would also not have been foreign to Ezekiel. It is surely contained in his description of the future ruler as Yahweh's 'servant' (Ezk 34:23f.; 37:24f.) (Duguid 1994, p. 32).

I agree with Duguid (1994), who does not see נָשִׂיא as indicative of a diminished ruler. Instead, he sees נָשִׂיא as a leader who works under the

supervision of another powerful leader. Unlike the kings of Judah who were subjected to those of Babylon and Egypt, the future *נָשִׂיא* will be a dependent of YHWH. Levenson (1976, p. 67) indicates that the designation of *נָשִׂיא* does not mean a low estimation of human kingship. The term *נָשִׂיא*, associated with David, depicts the kind of future leader who will be dependent on YHWH. Block adds that (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010):

In this arrangement, YHWH is the divine patron of the people; David is his representative and deputy. As David himself had acknowledged in 2 Samuel 7:23–27, YHWH’s granting his house eternal title to the kingship was not an isolated act, concerned only about the well-being of the king. That he appoints him within the context of his covenant relationship with the people is highlighted by the fact that this entire section (vv. 23–31) is framed by versions of the covenant formula (vv. 24, 30–31). This ruler’s role is not to win allegiance to himself but to serve the relationship between people and deity. (p. 236)

As a dependent of YHWH, the leader is expected to be obedient to YHWH and fair to his subjects. David becoming the deputy of YHWH means that YHWH is the king, which was always the case in the OT. There are many passages in the OT that assert the kingship of YHWH. The North American scholar Marc Zvi Brettler (1989, p. 31) recognises that ‘the substantive *מֶלֶךְ*, “king” is used of God forty-seven times in the Bible’. Some of the passages that Brettler mentions are Numbers 23:21; Deuteronomy 33:5; 1 Samuel 12:12; Isaiah 6:5; 19:4; 33:17, 22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; Jeremiah 8:19; 10:7, 10; 46:18; 48:15; 51:57; Micah 2:13; Zephaniah 1:5; 3:15; Zechariah 14:9, 16, 17; Malachi 1:14; Psalm 5:3; 10:16; 20:10; and 24:7 (Brettler 1989, p. 172). However, YHWH being king of Israel did not stop him from appointing a human king to rule his people. Appointing David as king does not mean that YHWH ceased to be in control of the nation. The appointed king will forever be accountable to YHWH.

In addition, the fact that the future leader will be *נָשִׂיא דָּוִד* [*nāsī’ David*] recalls the reign of David. The strength of this statement could serve to raise hope in the people despite their situation. Block (1997b) states:

Ezekiel’s announcement of the appointment of a new David for Israel was intended to instill new hope in the hearts of the exiles. Contrary to appearance, the demise of the Davidic house in 586 BCE did not reflect divine impotence or indifference to previous commitments. These events had not only fulfilled previous prophetic utterances; they also set the stage for a dramatic new act of YHWH when decadence of the old order would be removed. The prophet hereby challenges his people to look forward to a new day when YHWH’s Davidic servant would be reinstated in accordance with his eternal and irrevocable covenant. (p. 300)

Block illustrates YHWH’s control over the events in the history of his people. The destiny of Israel is in the hands of YHWH, who seeks their welfare. YHWH’s promises do not equate with a new David but with a new hope in relation to the exilic experience. It may seem that the promise is indicative

of a shift from human leadership to the divine. But, in reality, YHWH is not taking the leadership away from the human. If this were the case, he would not promise a ruler in the person of David. Designating David as the future leader proves that YHWH can entrust another person with leading his people.

As it is YHWH who has the control, the initiative to restore Israel comes from him; David serves as an important figure in the plan of restoration. Kenneth E Pomykala (1995) maintains that:

Ezekiel's vision of an ideal future for Israel [...] emphasis is on the Lord's relationship with his people and the presence of his sanctuary among them. To be sure, within this theocratic ideal the new David is given a role, but any specification of his activity is absent. (p. 29)

If there is no specification of the activity of the נָשִׂיא, it is because he is just a representative of YHWH; he is the symbol of the presence of YHWH in the midst of his people (ed. Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research 1995, p. 177). According to Obinwa (2012), that:

David will be 'prince in their midst' (נְשִׂיא בְּתוֹכֵם) and not 'prince over them' indicates that this shepherd-prince will not only feed the sheep (v. 23), but that he will also identify himself with the people. Therefore, despite his authority as the prince and the shepherd, he is going to act as *primus inter pares* rather than as a despot. (p. 358)

It means that the function of David as a prince will be to lead and to serve the people among whom he will be. What will differentiate him from others, his equals, resides in his function as prince.

Acting as YHWH's deputy and under his direction does not diminish David or make him a symbolic leader. In fact, he is the divine agent through whom YHWH will fulfil his plan for his people. Under the direction of YHWH, there is certainty that the future leader will succeed in the task given to him and will fulfil his function as expected by God.

The function of a king in ancient Israel resided in being a leader in war, being responsible for administration and maintaining relations with Yahweh as national God (ed. Hooke 1958, pp. 205–207). Besides his military and political role, the last aspect of the function of a king is indicative that he was in charge of religious affairs in that his relation with God would have an impact on the spiritual behaviour and life of the people. Considering this threefold function, De Vaux (1961) asserts:

The king is *ipso facto* a savior. It is a common idea among primitive peoples that the king embodies the good estate of his subjects: the country's prosperity depends on him, and he ensures the welfare of his people. (p. 110)

In addition (ed. Clements 1995):

It is made explicitly clear that society cannot function, or even continue to exist, without the rule of the king. The king's role in the protection of society

as warrior, the guarantor of justice as judge and the right ordering of worship as priest are the fundamental roles which cover all aspects of the well-being of society. (p. 130)

Focusing on the welfare of the people points to the function of the king in executing justice and righteousness. In 1 Kings 3:16–28, we have the judicial example of the function of the king. To seek a solution for their conflict, the two women go to King Solomon. Executing justice as the main function of the king appears in the prayer of Solomon when he says (1 Ki 3):

Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties.

Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours? (vv. 7–9)

The text of Deuteronomy 17 serves as a code of conduct for a king. As he is expected to practise justice, he should also be morally upright. It is stated that (Dt 17):

The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, 'You are not to go back that way again'. He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold. When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. (vv. 16–18)

It is established that 'judging his subjects was an important function of the king, and 'righteousness' in executing this responsibility was a *desideratum* often mentioned (Is 9:6 [Engl. 7]; Ps 72:1–2; Pr 29:14)' (Ramsey 1977, p. 48). To summarise, the function of the king is threefold: leadership in war, administration of justice and religious functions (ed. Hooke 1958, pp. 205–207). Hence, to achieve this task, the relationship between the king and God was crucial. The indicted leaders failed because they did not develop their relationship with YHWH. Now that God promises another ruler for his people, the expectation is that he will reverse what the previous leaders did not do and what they did wrong. However, for the promised ruler to succeed, he 'must be the faithful steward of the *true* king of Israel and, therefore, must be fully versed in Yahweh's expectations (the law)' (Richter 2008, p. 195).

The fact that YHWH entrusted some people to rule over the rest encompasses the idea of dependence and accountability to YHWH, a fact that was well-known. Dale Launderville (2003) explains that:

The traditional pattern for legitimating royal authority promoted a dynamic of accountability: the heavenly king appointed the earthly king to shepherd his people. The metaphor of the shepherd would have communicated clearly to an

agricultural people the responsibility that the king had towards the community. The sheep belonged to the divine ruler; the king was the earthly caretaker. If the king forgot the divine ownership of the sheep, he would most likely have fleeced them or used them for his own purposes. (p. 43)

This citation suggests one of the reasons why the former leaders failed and the secret for the success of the promised leader. As a caretaker, a leader should be more concerned about the interests of the people than his selfish interests. The former leaders failed because they did not recognise who was the owner of the people. Hence, because they forgot the divine ownership of the people, they misled and mistreated the people, a fact that contributed to their removal.

The promise of God starts with what he will do for his people and climaxes with the appointment of a human leader. There is no doubt concerning God's ability to accomplish what he has promised. However, the pertinent question that comes to mind is: Why a human leader? Does God need someone to help him to fulfil what he has promised? Is it impossible for the promises made by YHWH to be fulfilled without the involvement of a human leader? I suggest three aspects to consider in the attempt to answer these questions. Firstly, in reference to the oracle in the text of Ezekiel, the cruel leaders were human. The theory here is that what human leaders failed to do can be rectified by a human leader. In addition, it is through a human leader that God will fulfil his promise. As an example, in Genesis 12:2, God promises to bless nations through Abram. The fall that destroyed the relationship with God was through a human being (Gn 3), and, in the same way, salvation was through a human (Rm 5:12-21). Secondly, by appointing a human leader, YHWH shows that a person can do what some failed to do if he is under God's direction. The appointment also points out that failure is not always the portion of humans. This raises hope that it is possible to get good leadership from a human being. Thirdly, the appointment of a human leader is suggestive of God's faithfulness in working with him. It reminds us of the creation of humanity in the image of God and the mandate given to them to rule over the rest of the creation (cf. Gn 2:26-31). Above all, the promise of a future ruler is connected to the covenant that God made with King David, as found in 2 Samuel 7.

The statement וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם [And I will make a covenant of peace with them] is a direct announcement from YHWH. The assertion raises a number of questions: was YHWH in conflict with his people? Did enmity exist between YHWH and Israel? If antagonism did not exist between YHWH and his people, why did he promise a covenant of peace with them? Referring to the ANE and the older biblical motif of the covenant of peace, the function of this covenant was (Batto 1987):

[...] to signify a cessation of hostility toward humankind by the gods after the former revolted against the gods at creation. The gods ended their attempt by

binding themselves under oath to maintain peace and harmony with humankind and even with the whole of creation. This oath, which in the Bible often is called a covenant, was then guaranteed by some permanent visible sign, symbolic of the perpetual character of this new alliance of peace. (p. 187)

From this quotation, the understanding is that the covenant of peace was needed where there was a conflict and that a supreme being had to intervene to end the conflict. For the case of the exiles, the disobedience of the leaders of Judah – and the people at large – created a disharmony between them and YHWH. The way to re-establish harmony, as Batto indicates, was to have a covenant of peace. For a further understanding, a definition of *בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם* [covenant of peace] is necessary.<sup>26</sup>

The expression *בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם* occurs twice in the book of Ezekiel (Ezk 34:25 and 37:26).<sup>27</sup> This is a unilateral and unconditional covenant initiated by YHWH where ‘God alone grants the covenant and that covenant is essentially his grace’ (McCarthy 1972, p. 3). One should look for the role of Judah in the covenant. Instead of two active partners in the covenant, we have a unilateral commitment from YHWH. A similar covenant also appears in Ezekiel 16:60, where it reads *וְהִקְמוֹתִי לָךְ בְּרִית עוֹלָם* [And I will establish an everlasting covenant]. In his covenant with Jerusalem, the partner in covenant, the focus is on YHWH as the covenant initiator. The outcomes of the presence of YHWH in the covenant underline that ‘when Yahweh is the covenant partner, this well-being will extend over the whole sphere of life of the nation and will bring about peace there’ (Zimmerli 1979b, p. 220). This implies the sufficiency of YHWH for Israel’s welfare. The guarantee of the covenant resides in the fact that the Jewish people will live in ‘their own land’ (Ezk 34:26). It is worth mentioning that the two places where this phrase is used in Ezekiel are also the two places where David is mentioned. This is not a mere coincidence. Instead, it denotes that there is a strong link between the covenant of peace and a Davidic ruler. Thus, the Davidic ruler is the agent through whom the *בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם* will be fulfilled.

The promise of God to his people is *בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם*, which ‘is a promise of security and prosperity or of friendship and harmony’ (Greenberg 1997, p. 702), as observed in Ezekiel 34:26–30. In the Golden Age, Israel will experience prosperity, friendship and harmony with God because of the covenant of peace. This covenant focuses on the security of Israel. Block (1997b) points out that:

The description of the effects of Yahweh’s covenant of peace is intentionally repetitious. Security is purposely highlighted as the central issue by the key-word *lābetāh*, ‘in safety, securely’ (vv. 25c, 27c, 28c), an ambiguous expression that may denote both freedom from fear and casual smugness. (p. 305)

---

26. I limit the scope of this study to the verses under consideration and not to the whole OT.

27. This phrase appears also in Isaiah 54:10 – *וְבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי* [my covenant of peace].

The Hebrew word **בְּטָח** refers to the fact that YHWH will deliver his people and will make them stay secure (eds. Harris, Archer & Waltke 1980). The Jewish people will live in a restored, pacified and secured land. The impact of this covenant of peace will be known; it will be ‘an everlasting covenant’ which will enable people to experience blessing and stability (vv. 26–29).

One key benefit of the covenant results in the blessings of the Jewish people, who will experience blessing in the production of their restored land (Ezk 34:26–29). Thus, they will have their own land and will no longer be destitute, displaced or homesick. The restored land will be without any hostility, represented by the figure of the wild animal (eds. Cook & Patton 2004, p. 93). The blessing of the land in fruit production and the growth of its cities stands for the welfare of the land (eds. Cook & Platon 2004, p. 101).

The covenant of peace with Israel resides in God’s plan of restoration. In Ezekiel 34, unlike in Isaiah 54, there is no mention of God’s anger towards his people. On the one hand, the exile itself, with all its outcomes, was the expression of God’s anger, and on the other hand, YHWH’s promise of a covenant of peace represents the expression of his pure grace and love for his people. The welfare gained from the covenant will lead to further glorification of God and knowledge of two things: (1) **וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה** [They will know that I am YHWH, 34:27] and (2) **וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם אֲתֵם וְהָיָה עִמִּי** [Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them and that they, the Israelites, are my people, 34:30]. The phrase **וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה** occurs 72 times in Ezekiel (Evans 2006, p. 17) and once in Exodus (29:46). The number of occurrences of this phrase suggests that the knowledge of YHWH is a significant focus in the book of Ezekiel. The pinnacle of the restoration plan propels Israel to know YHWH and to realise his presence in their midst.

The Hebrew root for the word ‘know’ is **יָדַע**. In this text, it does not concern a general knowledge about God. Instead, its objective is the honour, the glory and the recognition of the Lord. This is a recognition formula which (Fretheim 1997):

[...] is usually preceded by a statement about what God has done or will do [...] often with a following echo [...] These actions, whether in judgment [...] or salvation [...], confirm the identity of God; God thereby demonstrates before Israel and the nations that God is God and what kind of God he is. This is for the purpose of recognition by those who observe or participate in the event. (pp. 409–414)

The covenant of peace that God will make with his people will facilitate a better perspective of history, God’s leadership, direction and grace among the people. The Jewish people will understand that the promised restoration will be the result of God’s grace and not their merit.

Essentially, the covenant of peace will give a new perspective and hope to the people, which will help the deportees to confront the realities of their exilic life with courage. The relationship that exists between them and God depends on the declaration **וְאַתֶּן צֹאן מִרְעִיתִי אֲדָם אַתֶּם אֲנִי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** [You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God] that appears in Verse 31. Ezekiel 34:25–30 displays the complete description of the covenant of peace; it is a reversal of the judgement oracles that appear in the first part of the book (Batto 1987, pp. 188–189).

The closing statement in Ezekiel 34:31 (cf. Ezk 37:27) is the signature of the oracle. It reveals the identity of the Jewish people. Despite the experience of the exile, they belong to God. Thus, YHWH's actions towards Israel find basis in the existing relationship with his people. Unlike the promise of hope for a brilliant future, the relationship is present. Because of that relationship, there is no doubt in trusting in the fulfilment of YHWH's promise. The Lord's declaration is affirmative, for 'the signatory formula guarantees the veracity of the divine word' (Block 1997b, p. 308). The signatory formula **נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה** [The Lord Yahweh declares] serves as an indicator to the healing and subsequent positive change of God's people.

## ■ David in the vision of the covenant of peace

The discussion in the preceding section leads us to consider how David fits into this larger vision of the covenant of peace. In the plan of restoration for the Judeans, as it appears in Ezekiel 34:25–30, David is the main human player. This is supported by the arrangement in the text. It is after the appointment of David as the future leader (Ezk 34:23–24) that the promise of the covenant of peace is mentioned. In addition, reading the text of Ezekiel 34 clearly indicates that peace for the people of YHWH was his utmost desire. After going through mistreatment from the bad leaders, what people needed was real peace. To affirm the divine intention and the durability of the state of peace, YHWH promises to make a covenant of peace with his people under the leadership of the promised ruler, David.

Considering that in the book of Ezekiel **בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם** is connected to David (cf. Ezk 34:25 and 37:26), this brings to mind the Davidic Covenant. The understanding is that peace is one of the crucial components in the fulfilment of the covenant. Hence, the implication is that the Davidic Covenant is inclusive, serving for the complete restoration of the Jewish people.

## ■ Affinities

Before focusing on 2 Samuel 7, I will survey the connections that the text of Ezekiel has with other texts in general, the prophetic books and the Pentateuch.

Then, I will focus on affinities with the historical books and especially the books of Samuel. Those affinities will help to understand that the book of Ezekiel has connections with other books, especially the book of 2 Samuel, and that 2 Samuel 7 might have an influence on the text of Ezekiel 34 when it comes to the Davidic Covenant.

The existence of affinities among biblical texts is a well-established fact in scholarship. While there are similarities that may suggest dependence, each text has its focus and always has its own message. Therefore, relations between biblical texts appeal to a thoughtful study when necessary. Rimon Kasher (2009) explains:

Modern biblical scholarship locates the biblical corpus between two poles – continuity vs. innovation. On the one hand, scholars seek the sources on which a particular biblical composition is based; on the other hand, they look for what is new in one work vis-à-vis earlier texts. In many cases the result is a sort of resonant harmony, the conclusion being that although the work in question was influenced by earlier writings, that influence generated new ideas and interpretations. (p. 556)

The approach in this research is to find areas where the text of 2 Samuel 7 might have influenced that of Ezekiel 34 and 37, having in view what Kasher calls 'resonant harmony'. The use of other biblical and extrabiblical texts in the book of Ezekiel is not a point of discussion. Scholars have established the presence of materials from other texts in the text of Ezekiel. Anja Klein (2010), referring to Wellhausen, affirms that:

[7]he book of Ezekiel's apparent knowledge of prophetic traditions has long attracted attention. It was Julius Wellhausen who came to the conclusion that the prophet of the book had to be seen as an epigone, who only reflected on the words of his venerable predecessors. (p. 572)

Nevertheless, the fact that the text of Ezekiel has elements from other sources does not entirely make it a compilation of what has been written somewhere else. Dependence does not imply lack of originality. Hence, by recognising that Ezekiel depends, at some point, on other earlier texts, the possibility that 2 Samuel 7 influenced its Chapters 34 and 37 is enhanced.

It is evident that the book of Ezekiel contains elements from other prophetic books. In relation to other prophetic books, it is not just a mere dependence. The presence of other elements serves to establish a relationship between Ezekiel and other prophetic books and also confirms how biblical books complete each other. Klein considers the prophecy in the book of Ezekiel as a high degree of continued prophecy because it refers to already existing prophetic texts – mainly the book of Jeremiah – fulfilling and concluding the OT prophecy (Klein 2010, pp. 581–582).

Block summarises the dependence of Ezekiel on other texts in three areas: (1) Israel's monarchy; (2) monarchy in the days of Ezekiel; and (3) the future of the monarchy (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010, p. 235). Regarding the portrayal of the future of the monarchy, referring to Ezekiel 34, Block indicates that even though Chapter 34 of the book of Ezekiel is a reduplication of Jeremiah 23:1-6, the description of 'the future ruler makes a heavy use of other antecedent texts and traditions' (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010, p. 235). The texts and traditions that Block refers to concern the connections in the themes developed, the structure, the style and the language. More specifically, the book of Ezekiel relies on the books of Jeremiah and Leviticus 26. He notes that (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010):

The linkages in the theme and structure, style and diction are too numerous and too specific to be accidental, and their distribution throughout Ezekiel 34 may support the unitary interpretation of the latter. Ezekiel seems to have had Jeremiah's oracle before him and presented his 'Shepherd Address' as an exposition of his contemporary's prophecy. But his adherence to Jeremiah is not slavish. Signs of adaptation and reinterpretation are evident in his downplaying the status of David while highlighting the role of Yahweh, and in his interpretation of elements from Leviticus 26. (p. 235)

In Leviticus 26:3-13, we have the promise of blessings, which also appears in the text of Ezekiel, serving as evidence of the dependence of the text of Ezekiel on previous texts. Another example suggesting the dependence of Ezekiel on Jeremiah is Ezekiel 16:59-63. There are links between Ezekiel 16:59-63 and Jeremiah 31:31-34. In the words of Bernard Renaud (1994), '*La péricope d'Ezekiel 16, 59-63 présente certaines affinités avec l'annonce jérémienne. En est-elle dépendante? La question mérite au moins d'être posée*' [The pericope of Ezekiel 16:59-63 presents certain affinities with the announcement in Jeremiah. Is it dependent? The question needs to be asked]. His research question gives a lead to explore the links between the text of Ezekiel and that of Jeremiah.

Ezekiel's dependence on the Pentateuch is also well-established. Looking at affinities between the book of Ezekiel and the Pentateuch, the focus will be Leviticus. Scholars generally agree that the priestly material, especially Leviticus, is the main influence for Ezekiel. As a starting point, Tiemeyer says that (eds. Boda & McConville 2012):

The book of Ezekiel is part of the longer tradition of ancient Israelite literature. It depends upon and also develops further motifs and ideas found in earlier material. In particular, there are similarities between the book of Ezekiel and the pentateuchal Priestly source (P), the texts of the Holiness School (HS) (Lv 17-26) and the book of Deuteronomy. The book of Ezekiel shares a common literary language with the pentateuchal P source and contains material that relates to priestly concerns. (p. 216)

The similarities between Ezekiel and the books mentioned in this quotation make the text of Ezekiel dependent. While there is agreement that dependence exists, the main question that we must ask is what determines the dependency of a text on another. The confirmation is that (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010):

[/]t has long been that Ezekiel and Leviticus 17–26 share a remarkable number of locutions – that is, not just individual words, but multiple words in combination and in syntactic relationship. (p. 2)

From many examples that Lyons gives, one of them is from Ezekiel 34:25–28, where Ezekiel uses the covenant language of Leviticus 26 and omits the covenant punishments (Lv 26:14–39) (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010, p. 2). Being a former member of the priestly class explains Ezekiel’s familiarity with the Priestly literature and its terminology (cf. Dt 1–4) (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010, p. 10).

Considering that the book of Ezekiel contains material from other sources does not exclude its originality. It is true that the presence of some Deuteronomistic elements in the book of Ezekiel is undeniable (Joyce 2009). Joyce (2009) refers to S Herman, who:

[...] noted the Deuteronomistic colouring of chs. 34–37 in particular, pointing, for example, to the recurrent formula, ‘You shall be my people, and I will be your God’ (36:28; 37:27; cf. 34:30–31) and also to the use of the word *lēb* (‘heart’) in 36:26. (p. 10)

There are also affinities between the book of Ezekiel and the historical books. In this section, I will pay attention to affinities between the book of Ezekiel and the books of Samuel (1 and 2 Sm), where there are direct as well as indirect connections. Those affinities will serve as support for the claim that Ezekiel was familiar with Samuel. Block points out that (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010):

The author of GO.<sup>28</sup> again described this scene using language influenced by other scriptural texts. For example, the threat ‘I will give Gog a place there’, *אתן לגוג מקום־שם* (39:11), sounds very much like a parody of deuteronomical land-allotment language (Jos 20:4; Jdg 20:36; 1 Sm 9:22, 27:5). (p. 74)

Most importantly, in connection with 1 Samuel 10:9, ‘the moral renewal of Israel promised in Ezekiel is so similar to this material that it is probable that Ezekiel 11 and 36 reflect Deuteronomistic influence’ (Joyce 2009, p. 39). Having a trace of 1 Samuel 10:9 in Ezekiel 11 and 36 suggests that Ezekiel was familiar with the text of Samuel.

Ezekiel 34:15 includes the idea that YHWH is king for his people. Joyce (2009, p. 197) mentions that ‘the notion that YHWH is the true king of Israel

---

28. GO is used for Gog oracles.

is found in, among other places, Judges 8:23, 1 Sam 8:7 and the Psalms of Divine Kingship'. The text of 1 Samuel 8:7 reads: 'And the Lord told him: 'Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king'. Cooper (1994, p. 80) indicates that there are similarities between the rejection of Ezekiel and the situation presented in 1 Samuel 8:4-7.

The idea of being 'far away from the presence of YHWH' that appears in 1 Samuel 26:20 - 'Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the Lord' - also occurs in Ezekiel 11:15 in the phrase, 'They are far away from the Lord'. William H Brownlee (1986) explains that:

The message of Ezekiel initially concerned only one part of the people's taunt: 'Get afar from Yahweh'. It is as if Yahweh's presence is to be found only in His special land, and particularly in Jerusalem. When David's enemies taunted him similarly, his response was: 'Let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of Yahweh' (1 Sm 26:20). (p. 164)

It seems that the theme of the presence of YHWH in Ezekiel may be, at some point, based on the text of Samuel. In Ezekiel 43:7, the temple is described as the place for the presence of YHWH, the place from which he will reign over his people, Israel. Before the temple, the presence of YHWH was expressed through the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant among the people was the confirmation of the throne of YHWH. The presence of YHWH in the temple in Ezekiel 43:7 echoes his presence as associated with the Ark of the Covenant in 2 Samuel 6:2 (Joyce 2009, p. 227). Allen (1990, p. 255) presents Ezekiel 44:6-16 as the end of the process of development about the material and the personnel of the temple and recognises that the process which started in Ezekiel 40:30-46 and 43:18-27 is in accord with 1 Samuel 2:35-36.

In Ezekiel 24, we have the account of the announcement of the upcoming death of the prophet Ezekiel's wife. YHWH forbids Ezekiel to mourn when his wife dies. The account in Ezekiel 24:15-24 is similar to 2 Samuel 12:13-23, where David stops fasting after the death of his son. Concerning the resemblance between the two texts in a succinct way, Daina Lipton (2006) clarifies:

The parallels with Ezekiel xxix are fairly obvious, but it is worth spelling them out. Both texts attribute death to God (II Sam. xii 15, Ez. xxiv 15), both use a noun or a verb derived from נגה ('afflicted' in II Sam. xii 15 and 'illness' in Ez. xxiv 15), and both refer to responses to death and specific mourning rituals attested elsewhere (though only weeping is mentioned both in II Sam. xii and Ez. xxiv). Taken in the context of other suggestions, I am making in this paper, these parallels suggest that Ezekiel xxix offers a terse account of the phenomenon described more comprehensively, perhaps because we are dealing with straightforward narrative, in II Samuel xii 13-23. (p. 196)

The parallels between Ezekiel 24:15–24 and 2 Samuel 12:13–23 show the familiarity of Ezekiel with the text of Samuel. To deepen the fact that Ezekiel was conversant with the text of Samuel, I will later focus on the relationship between the texts of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 and Ezekiel 34, the aim being to find out if the former text might have influenced the latter. However, it makes sense to look at a few differences between the two books.

## ■ Samuel 7:1–16 and Ezekiel 34

Concerning the Davidic Covenant, Ezekiel employs certain words, expressions, phrases and ideas found in 2 Samuel 7:1–16. In the preceding discussion, I established that Ezekiel relies, to some extent, on Leviticus. From that perspective, the reader could expect the presence of David in Ezekiel to have a background in Leviticus. Why, then, does Ezekiel rely on 2 Samuel 7:1–16 instead of Leviticus 26? The book of Leviticus does not deal with kings or kingship in Israel as the books of Samuel do. As Leviticus does not mention David, it is appropriate that Ezekiel does not use Leviticus for the presence of David in this text. Hence, the text of 2 Samuel 7 fits well for this study. Before focusing on specific connections, there is a need to look at some affinities between the texts of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 and Ezekiel 34. Here, I will consider the Hebrew words that appear both in 2 Samuel 7:1–16 and in Ezekiel 34.<sup>29</sup>

Block gives a hint about the presence of material from 2 Samuel 7 (eds. Tooman & Lyons 2010, p. 235) in Ezekiel 34, but does not give detail on how Ezekiel 34 may have depended on 2 Samuel 7. There are three important areas in which the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34 and 37 needs to be considered: (1) the literary influence, (2) the theological influence and (3) the conceptual influence.

### □ Literary influence

In 2 Samuel 7:4 and Ezekiel 34:1, it is the word of YHWH – דְּבַר־יְהוָה – that comes to Samuel and Ezekiel. The same verb בִּלְיָהּ הָיָא וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־נָתָן [וַיְהִי] is used in the two sentences, and both Nathan and Ezekiel are messengers of YHWH. It is important to note that these phrases – וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־לְאֹמֵר – are very common, and thus this is not to suggest that in this instance Ezekiel depends on Samuel, but this commonality establishes that the general context for both texts is similar.

In the two texts, the word עֲבָדִי is used to portray דָּוִד (2 Sm 7:5; Ezk 34:23, 24). The word יִשְׁרָאֵל appears in 2 Samuel 7:6, 7, 8, 11, 24, 26 and 27 to

---

29. I will not refer to common words but to those that are identical and connected in one way or another (form, meaning and serving the same function).

indicate the people of Israel, the leaders of Israel and the God of Israel, and in Ezekiel it is used to describe the shepherds of Israel, its mountains and its people (Ezk 34:2, 13, 14, 30). In both texts, the word עַמִּי is used for Israel as the people of YHWH (2 Sm 7:7; Ezk 34:30). Hence, the subject matter is the same in both texts.

The word בַּיִת, which is a critical element of consideration in the Davidic Covenant, occurs in the two texts (cf. 2 Sm 7:5, 7, 11, 13, 19, 27, 29; Ezk 34:30). In the text of Samuel, it is about the house that David wanted to build for YHWH – בַּיִת אֲרָזִים – and the house that YHWH will build for David – כִּי־בַיִת נַעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ יְהוָה. In the text of Ezekiel it refers to the people of Israel who are ‘YHWH’s people’ and also ‘the house of Israel’ – עַמִּי בַיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל. In the two texts, בַּיִת conveys different meanings. While the house that YHWH will build for David in the text of Samuel concerns dynasty and kingship, the house of Israel refers to the people of Israel.

The pronoun אֲנִי is used in 2 Samuel 7:8, 14 for YHWH. It is used in the same way for YHWH in Ezekiel 34:8, 11, 15, 20, 24, 27, 30 and 31. In the two texts, the pronoun is used for YHWH; it is YHWH who took David from shepherding the flock and who will be the father to David’s descendant. In the text of Ezekiel, the pronoun plays an emphatic role (cf. Ezk 34:11, 15, 20 – translated ‘I myself’). The emphasis is on YHWH, who will execute the action of searching for his sheep (v. 11), tending his sheep (v. 15) and judging among the sheep (v. 20). Interestingly, the beneficiaries of the actions of YHWH in Ezekiel 34, emphasised or not by אֲנִי, are the people and not an individual, as it is in 2 Samuel 7:8, 14. This underlines the focus of the text on the restoration plan that YHWH has for his people.

**TABLE 3.1:** Hebrew-English translation of 2 Samuel 7:7-8 and Ezekiel 34:23.

2 Samuel 7:7-8	Ezekiel 34:23
<p>בכל אשר הִתְסַלַּכְתִּי בְּכָל־בְּנוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנִּבְרָר דְּבַרְתִּי אֶת־אֶחָד שֹׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לְרֻעוֹת אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר לְמָה לֹא־בְנִיתֶם לִי בַיִת אֲרָזִים:</p>	<p>וְנִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעֵה אֶתְדוּ וְרֹעֵה אֶתְהֶן אֶת עַבְדִּי דָוִד הוּא יִרְעֶה אֹתָם וְהוּא יִהְיֶה לָהֶן לְרֹעֵה:</p>
<p>Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’</p>	<p>I will place over them one <b>shepherd</b>: my <b>servant David</b>, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.</p>
<p>נְעַתָּה כֹּה־תֹאמֶר לְעַבְדִּי דָוִד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲנִי לְקַחְתִּיךָ מִרִּיבָה מֵאֶחָר הַבְּצֹר לְהִיֹּת נָגִיד עַל־עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:</p>	
<p>Now then, tell my <b>servant David</b>, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the <b>pasture</b>, from <b>tending the flock</b>, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel.’</p>	

Source: English from the New International Version and Hebrew from the Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Codex) in Unicode.

In 2 Samuel 7:7, 8 and Ezekiel 34:23, we find words that relate to David's function before becoming king and his function in connection to the covenant that God made with him. The Qal infinitive construct לְרִעוּת from the root רעה [to shepherd] is used metaphorically for the activity of those YHWH chose to lead his people. Throughout Ezekiel 34, the root is used with the same meaning. In Ezekiel 34:23, the root occurs four times: רִעָה, וְרִעָה, יִרְעָה, and לְרִעָה. The first and the fourth (with prefix לְ) are in Qal participle masculine singular and describe David. The second and the third forms are respectively in Qal perfect (with *waw* consecutive) and imperfect, indicating the activity that David will do as a shepherd. Both in 2 Samuel 7:7 and Ezekiel 34:23, the root רעה is used metaphorically and refers to the activity of leaders (in 2 Samuel) and specifically of David (in Ezekiel). Contrary to the text of 2 Samuel, in the text of Ezekiel, the occurrences of the root רעה in just one verse emphasise the person of David and his function as ruler.

In connection to the function of leaders as shepherds, in 2 Samuel 7:8, the text reminds us about the setting from which David was brought to the throne. In his normal activity as shepherd – not metaphorically – YHWH took David מִן־הַבָּיִת [from the pasture]. The word בָּיִת [abode of shepherd, or flocks] (Brown, Driver & Briggs 2007) appears twice in Ezekiel 34:14 in the phrases שָׂמָם [their grazing or pasturing place] and בָּיִת טוֹב [good pasture]. In the two texts, the word is not connected to David or YHWH but to the place where the action of shepherding took place and will happen.

Another shared word is הַצֹּאן. In 2 Samuel 7:8, it is used literally, and in Ezekiel 34:2, 3, it has a metaphorical use, designating the people of Israel (in 2 Samuel 24:17, it applies metaphorically for the people of Israel as it does in Ezekiel). The discussion around the word 'shepherd' and words related to the activities of a shepherd in the two texts indicates that there is commonality between the text of 2 Samuel 7 and that of Ezekiel 34. It is not just about using the same words but also the literary context in which those words are used.

One of the components of the divine promise to David was to make his name great on the earth (2 Sm 7:9). The word בְּאֵרֶץ as part of the promise suggests God's blessing to his servant David. YHWH making someone's name great certainly is a blessing. The great name that David will acquire will be the same as that of the greatest men in the world. It is a divine blessing in the human world. The same word, בְּאֵרֶץ, in Ezekiel 34:29 indicates the blessing of YHWH to his people as he promises that they will never experience famine in the land. Hence, בְּאֵרֶץ serves for the location where the people of Israel will experience their blessings.

## □ Theological influence

The striking theological element in 2 Samuel 7 is its theocentric concentration. From Verses 1-16 of 2 Samuel 7, the narrative is in the first person. Twice the emphatic pronoun אָנִי (vv. 8 and 14) is used in 2 Samuel 7 in relation to what YHWH did and what he will do. In the narrative, Nathan speaks from YHWH to David. While David seems to be in the centre of the message, in reality, it is all about YHWH. In his explanation of the theology in the books of Samuel, BT Arnold (eds. Arnold & Williamson 2005) correctly indicates that:

[7]he books of Samuel address questions of the nature and purpose of Israel's monarchy, and they offer the reader explanations of Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh as king. By presenting the first human kings, these books serve a programmatic function of Israel's future perceptions of monarchs, as well as for individuals in God's kingdom. (p. 872)

Regarding the connection between the texts of Samuel and Ezekiel, as in 2 Samuel 7, in Ezekiel 34 the focus is also on YHWH. A remarkable feature in the two texts is the origin of the message that is delivered. In 2 Samuel 7:8, the task of Nathan is to communicate to David what YHWH says: וְעַתָּה כֹּה־תֹאמַר לְעַבְדִּי דָוִד [Now then, tell my servant David]. The same formulation appears in Ezekiel 34:24, where Ezekiel receives the message from YHWH: אָנִי יְהוָה דִּבַּרְתִּי [I, the Lord, have spoken]. The injunction given to Nathan and the signatory formulae in Ezekiel serve as a strong indication to affirm the theocentric aspect of the two chapters. In addition, in the text of 2 Samuel 7, the emphatic first-person pronoun אָנִי plays the same role. The same pronoun occurs in Ezekiel 34:11, 15, 20, 24, 27, 30 and 31. Once again, it is God who declares, promises and will make things happen.

Reading the text of Samuel, the climax of YHWH's message is what we know as the Davidic Covenant. The focal element in the covenant is the building of a house for YHWH by David's descendants and the perpetuity of David's throne in Israel. The covenant, with its two main components – David's offspring building the temple and the establishment of a permanent dynasty – is critical to the aforementioned programmatic plan (eds. Arnold & Williamson 2005, p. 874). While David is mentioned as the future ruler in the text of Ezekiel, the restoration that the Jewish people will experience will be the doing of YHWH and not David. This is a very strong theological link to the Davidic Covenant in the text of 2 Samuel 7, which places YHWH in the front line and not David.

Promising a future ruler referred to as David, the servant of YHWH, is in line with the Davidic Covenant that appears in 2 Samuel 7. Despite the fact that the name דָּוִד is used only twice in the book of Ezekiel (34:24; 37:24), the promise in Ezekiel 34:24 is a clear reflection of the covenant

that YHWH made with David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. The incoming leader portrays the faithfulness of YHWH, who made an everlasting covenant with David. As indicated by Block (2013, p. 38), 'YHWH will restore the dynasty of his servant David'. A reader of Ezekiel 34:24 can easily connect the promise to the Davidic Covenant - assuming that they are a good reader of the Bible. To refer to the coming ruler as David in the Ezekielian text is an indication of the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34. The dependence of Ezekiel 34 on 2 Samuel 7 is then theologically understandable, as 'there is no reason to believe that Ezekiel himself would have been immune to the influence of Deuteronomistic theology and style either in his native Jerusalem or in Babylonian exile' (Joyce 2009, p. 10).

Reflecting on David as the future ruler, a critical question comes to mind: if there were no influence from at least the concept of the Davidic Covenant, why would Ezekiel anticipate a future 'David'? Why would Ezekiel not foretell a future great king, or why should he not expect Saul, the first king of Israel, or a future Solomon or Hezekiah? This question is important, as David was not a unique king or the only important figure in the history of the Judeans. In light of the covenant, there are good reasons why David was referred to as the future ruler and not any other Judean king.

Firstly, it concerns the relationship between YHWH and David. God describes David as 'a man after his own heart' (1 Sm 13:14). Not one of the other Judean kings was identified in these specific terms. This declaration displays the relationship that David had with YHWH - a declaration that was fully realised after Saul was rejected as King of Israel, and David was chosen as king in his place (cf. 1 Sm 16). Secondly, David was anointed by Samuel to become king of Israel - as was Saul. Dumbrell (1984) comments that:

Both Saul and David are anointed by Samuel. In each case the act is private, not public, and performed by the prophet who has been directly commissioned for this service. The private nature of the act seems to indicate that it has something to say to both David and Saul, rather than to Israel as a whole. One therefore imagines that anointing has served to give an assurance of the election which has already been conferred. It does not therefore seem to establish a relationship between king and people, but to confirm a relationship, which already exists by election, between king and God. (p. 139)

Although Samuel also anointed Saul, he was no longer suitable to lead in a restored nation because God rejected him. The other kings who ruled over Judah did not come to power in the same way David did. Samuel anointed David under YHWH's direction. Those who came after him, including Solomon, were not thus anointed. They inherited the throne because of David. So, it was right for Ezekiel to anticipate a future 'David'.

## □ Conceptual influence

There are ideas or concepts from 2 Samuel 7 that occur in Ezekiel 34. While in 2 Samuel 7, the indication that YHWH made a covenant with David resides in what David's descendants will do and become, in Ezekiel 34 it is summarised in mentioning the future ruler, what he will do and what the people will experience. Under this section, I will look at the concepts of covenant, territory, rest and peace, leadership and possession.

The word *בְּרִית* does not appear in 2 Samuel 7. The promises made to David in this text are known as YHWH's covenant to his servant – the Davidic Covenant. Later in the book, David refers to the promise as an 'everlasting covenant' (2 Sm 23:5). The promise is also identified as 'covenant' in the OT (cf. 2 Chr 7:17-18; Ps 89:3-4, 28-29). While the term *בְּרִית* does not occur in 2 Samuel 7, it is obvious that the concept of covenant is present in the text. This concept also appears in the text of Ezekiel 34. The divine promise to the people placing David as the future ruler includes an important element where YHWH will make a covenant of peace with them (Ezk 34:25). The text then gives details of the outcome of such a covenant (Ezk 34:26-31). A close reading of the texts of 2 Samuel 7 and Ezekiel 34 shows that the promises that YHWH made are indeed a covenant and that the outcomes of the covenant are the same. In sum, because of YHWH's covenant with David, his people will experience blessings.

In 2 Samuel 7, the blessing of the covenant consists in YHWH giving a permanent place, freedom and peace to his people (2 Sm 7:10). The same blessings appear in Ezekiel 34:26-31 once YHWH makes the covenant of peace with his people. However, it is important to note that the focus of the covenant in 2 Samuel 7 is not on the people but on David. Verses 11-16 are the main promise. Verses 8-10 focus on what the Lord has done and will do for the people. The real promise is the promise about David and his house.

Ezekiel 34:25-29 encompasses the results of the covenant that YHWH made with David. The outcomes are the following: sustainability, because the people will have a place to live; stability – nationhood – no more oppression – rest. YHWH will give a place for his people. The Hebrew word *מְקוֹם* (v. 10) used here refers to the nation that YHWH will give to the Jewish people. It is a place that will be enough to contain them, a country in which they will be stable. Their stability in the country, which is expressed by the root *נָטַע* [to plant], suggests that the people will not be removed from the soil of the country that YHWH will give them; they will have their roots in their country; they will have a home. The stability that YHWH will give to his people will bring to an end to any kind of trouble. A complete absence of oppression from the enemies of YHWH's people will characterise their stability. The text confirms that the action of YHWH under the covenant

will be completely different from what he has done under other leaders. As a result, the people will experience rest.

The study of Ezekiel 34:25-29 reveals that there are connections with 2 Samuel 7:10-11 when it comes to territory. In their territory, the Judeans will experience a true peace. The metaphorical figure of ridding the land of savage beasts describes the situation: the people will have safety, with no one to harm them (Ezk 34:25). It is in their territory that YHWH (Ezk 34:26) will bless them. Ezekiel 34:28 expresses the same idea with 2 Samuel 7:11. The rest promised in the text of Samuel is rendered by the fact that the people will no longer be disturbed by the nations. It suggests that those who were the enemies of the Jewish people will not subjugate them anymore. They will be out of danger (cf. wild animals). As a result, the people will live in safety and will not be afraid. What appears in the text of Ezekiel is exactly what a nation experiences when it has no enemies; and where there are no enemies, there is rest and peace.

In summary, it is in their territory that the people will live securely (v. 25); they will receive their blessings: the rain will fall at the right time (v. 26); the trees will yield their fruits (v. 27); the land will yield its crop (v. 27); YHWH will break the bars of their yoke - no more oppression (v. 27); there will be safety in the land (v. 28).

The concept of rest appears in 2 Samuel 7:1, 11. It is after David obtained rest from all his enemies that he decided to build a house for YHWH. One can see a connection between אֹיְבָבָיו [his enemies] and וְחַיֵּית הַבְּרֵיָא [wild animals] in Ezekiel 34:28. These two words both belong to the category of destroyers. In the context of 2 Samuel 7:1, the rest that David experiences 'is security from his enemies and peace from war' (Anderson 1989, p. 116). This concept of security, rest and peace occurs as well in Ezekiel 34:25, 28. The security and the peace that the Jewish people will experience is described in Ezekiel 34:11-16 and constitutes a reflection of the promise in the Davidic Covenant. The text reads (Ezk 34):

For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd cares for his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of cloud and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and make them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.' (vv. 11-16)

In 2 Samuel 7, peace is a key theme both in terms of what God has already done for David (2 Sm 7:1) and what he will do for all the people (2 Sm 7:11). It also appears that 'peace' is the one qualifier for the covenant in Ezekiel 34:25; thus, it is arguably the most important concept tied to the whole covenant. The understanding of YHWH's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7 suggests that YHWH was concerned about peace and justice for his people. It is because of the covenant that the nation will experience true peace. It is because of the covenant that YHWH will free the nation of its enemies. When the text of Ezekiel states that YHWH will make 'a covenant of peace', it does not mean that YHWH was in conflict with his people. The 'covenant of peace' in Ezekiel 34:25, as well as in Isaiah 54:7-10, concerns the ending of divine wrath towards the people of God who were abandoned by YHWH (Block 1997b, p. 302). The understanding is that YHWH abandoned his people for some time and gave them over into the hands of bad leadership. By promising a 'covenant of peace', he would bring that period of suffering and mistreatment to an end and give his people complete peace. Block (1997b) indicates that:

[7]he description offers one of the fullest explications of the Hebrew notion of *šālôm*. The term obviously signifies much more than the absence of hostility or tension. It speaks of wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, humans at peace with their environment and with God. (p. 303)

The notion of a complete peace is developed in the rest of the section (Ezk 34:25-31). However, the covenant is called a 'covenant of peace' precisely because it recaptures what God promised to David in 2 Samuel 7. The text of Ezekiel explains what will happen to the people under the new leadership. This is also the case for the Sinai Covenant, but given the David connection, I argue that the 'covenant of peace' in Ezekiel 34:25 specifically recalls the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7.

The notion of peace also occurs in 2 Samuel 7:10. The people of Israel will no longer be disturbed – וְלֹא יִרְגָזוּ (2 Sm 7:10). The idea in the text of Ezekiel is almost the same as that in the text of Samuel. In Ezekiel 34:22, 28, they will not be plundered – וְלֹא־תִהְיֶינָה עוֹד לְבָזוּ. In Ezekiel 34:29, the Jewish people will not experience famine in the land – וְלֹא־יִהְיוּ עוֹד אֲסָפִי רָעֵב בְּאֶרֶץ. A closer look at the different verbs used with לֹא in the texts of Samuel and Ezekiel, as previously shown, supports the idea that the people of Israel will not experience that continuous – עוֹד – suffering they were exposed to.

Although in the text of Samuel, as well as in the text of Ezekiel, there is no Hebrew word for leadership, the notion of leadership is well identified and connected in the two texts. In the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:11-12, the aspect of leadership is expressed in appointment and succession. YHWH starts by reminding David that he has overseen appointing leaders for Israel (2 Sm 7:11) and promises to give a dynasty – succession – for

David (2 Sm 7:12). The effect of appointment and succession appearing in 2 Samuel 7 is seen in Ezekiel 34. The reading of this text indicates that it is YHWH who appointed shepherds over his people, Israel. As he appointed them, he also has the prerogative to dismiss them. A close reading suggests that the idea of succession in Ezekiel is presented by that of replacement. Another leader in the person of David (Ezk 34:23-24) will replace the failed leadership.

Considering the larger context of the two texts, in 2 Samuel 7, David is replacing Saul, while in Ezekiel 34, the future David replaces the bad shepherds. As David is replacing Saul, this is the main reason why the covenant is not with Saul but with David. In the same way, the future ruler is not from the corrupt leadership, but it is David, the servant of YHWH. The idea of leadership comes from YHWH's declaration in 2 Samuel 7:11, stating, *וְלִמְדָהֶיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי שְׂפָטִים עַל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל* [and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel]. The Hebrew verb for the English 'appointed' comes from the root *צָוָה* which, used in *Piel*, means to 'give charge over, appoint' (Brown, Driver & Briggs 2007, p. 845). The idea of appointing a leader is expressed in Ezekiel 34:23 as *וְהִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעֶה אֶחָד* [I will place over them one shepherd].

In 2 Samuel 7:14, YHWH declares that he will be a father to the offspring of David who will build him a house. There is a relationship of possession here in that the offspring belongs to YHWH. In the same way, in Ezekiel 34:30-31, YHWH declares that the Jewish people will come to know that YHWH is their God - the God who belongs to them - and the people are the possession of God - . YHWH, who identifies the people as his sheep and himself as their God, further stresses the idea of belonging and possession. It is even stronger, on an individual note, when David is identified as YHWH's servant both in 2 Samuel 7:5 and Ezekiel 34:23.

Although the words used in the text of Ezekiel are not the same as in the text of Samuel, it appears that the text of Ezekiel contains traces of the text of Samuel. This is possible, as Ezekiel was almost certainly familiar with the text of Samuel. Moreover, the concept of possession is connected to David. In 2 Samuel 7:14, it appears in YHWH's covenant with David, and in Ezekiel 34:30-31, it is also connected to David, the promised ruler. It is under the leadership of David that the Jewish people will experience the reality that they are the possession of YHWH.

It is important to indicate here that the restoration that the Jewish people will experience is none other than a fulfilment of the covenant between YHWH and David. There are marks of the covenant to David in 2 Samuel 7 and blessings for Israel with the future ruler, David. The covenant of peace (Ezk 34:25) that YHWH will make with his people is inevitably linked to the covenant with David. The description of what will happen in the land is a

complete *shalom*, which correctly labels the faithfulness of YHWH to David. It is not only about YHWH's faithfulness but also proof of the affinities between the texts of 2 Samuel 7 and Ezekiel 34. The covenant of peace in Ezekiel 34:25 is also here a renewal of the Sinai Covenant. We find the Sinai Covenant in Exodus 19-24, and it is mainly for the benefit of the people of Israel. Gentry and Wellum (2018) summarise its outcomes:

This covenant will show them how to be his true humanity. It will direct, guide, and lead them to have a right relationship with God and a right relationship with everyone else in the covenant community. It will also teach them how to have a right relation to all the creation, to be good stewards of the earth's resources. (p. 342)

While the Davidic Covenant was with David as an individual, the Sinai Covenant was with the whole people, not just a single person. The various connections of the text of Ezekiel 34 to that of 2 Samuel 7 ascertain that the covenant with David was in the mind of the author of the text of Ezekiel.

## ■ Conclusion

The influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34 cannot be established based on isolated single or individual elements. However, from the discussion in this chapter, the two texts have numerous affinities, including literary, theological and conceptual aspects. The text of Ezekiel emphasises that the promise of restoration will come to realisation under the leadership of the future ruler, David. The connections between Ezekiel 34 and 2 Samuel 7 are clear to the point that we might suggest that the text of 2 Samuel 7 had an influence on the text of Ezekiel 34.



# Influence of 2 Samuel 7:11-16 on Ezekiel 37:15-28

## ■ The place and significance of the section in the book of Ezekiel

In Chapter 3, I discussed in general terms a few issues regarding the book of Ezekiel. The focus then shifted to Ezekiel 34. After an exegetical study of Ezekiel 34:23-31, the rest of the chapter considered the influence of other biblical texts on the text of Ezekiel in general. Specific attention was given to the influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34:23-31. The Davidic Covenant, as found in 2 Samuel 7, served as the main point of influence. As in the previous chapter, the aim of this chapter is to establish the influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 37, particularly Verses 15-28. Because some important aspects concerning the book of Ezekiel – authorship and date, milieu and the influence of other biblical texts – have already been discussed in Chapter 3, this chapter will focus on the exegetical study of Ezekiel 37:15-28 and the influence of 2 Samuel 7. This chapter entails the following: the place and significance of the section, the structure of Ezekiel 37, exegesis, the influence of 2 Samuel 7 and a conclusion.

Chapters 35 and 36 of the book of Ezekiel assist in understanding Ezekiel 37. The two chapters mentioned concern the restoration of the Jewish people. They suggest that the restoration of the people is not complete without the restoration and the reform of the land. The process includes YHWH's punishment of the enemies of his people and the

**How to cite:** Budha, VL 2023, 'Influence of 2 Samuel 7:11-16 on Ezekiel 37:15-28', in *The biblical concept of 'Davidic Covenant' in 2 Samuel and Ezekiel and its implications for African leadership*, HTS Religion & Society Series, vol. 16, AVARSITY Books, Cape Town, pp. 77-104. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2023.BK470.04>

divine promise of salvation of the people. In Ezekiel 34 we see a radical transformation that the Judeans will experience, especially under the leadership of the promised ruler, David. In Ezekiel 35 and 36, we have the continuity of that transformation in two aspects: people and land. The use of a prophetic word formula in Ezekiel 35:1 – וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר – [The word of the Lord came to me] – indicates that with Ezekiel 35:1-36:15, another phase of transformation comes into focus. It is not only the people, and particularly their leadership, who need to be transformed but also their land. A twofold prophecy firstly announces the devastation of the land of the oppressors (Ezk 35:1-15). Secondly, it deals with the land itself, which is vindicated against those who have taken possession of it (Ezk 36:1-7) and prepared it – the land – to receive the returning Israel (Ezk 36:8-12). A short disputation oracle in Ezekiel 36:13-15 affirms that it will no longer be said of the land of Israel that it consumes its people (Renz 2002, p. 108).

In the restoration program, the issue of land, as it appears, should firstly be resolved before the returning of the exiles. Ezekiel 36:16-38 is a collection statement about what the house of Israel did, the punishment that YHWH inflicted upon them, and the divine promises. Renz (2002) portrays the section as having features of an anthology. He observes that (Renz 2002):

The material in 36:16-38 has that character of an anthology [...] In sum, the anthology in 36:16-38 combines the previous promises for a renewal of people and land, the last verse even taking up the sheep imagery from the beginning of the second half of the book. The anthology highlights Yahweh's concern for his reputation as the central motif of renewal and relates the transforming work of Yahweh's spirit to the responsibility of the people to change their ways and their attitude. (pp. 110, 113)

Considering the arrangement of the chapters in the book of Ezekiel, as we have it now, Ezekiel 36:16-38 prepares the reader to understand Chapter 37 in light of the previous section. The point in Chapter 37 remains that of transformation. It describes the action of the Spirit of YHWH in the process of transformation and the implications of the political restoration (Renz 2002, p. 113).

For the purpose of this section, the focus will be on the second part, with emphasis on the relation to the Davidic Covenant. As with Ezekiel 34, Ezekiel 37 is in the second part of the book of Ezekiel, which concerns the restoration of Israel. The relevance of this chapter resides in the fact that it continues with the theme of restoration, repeating what has already been said in Ezekiel Chapters 34 and 36 and adding new elements. Hence, it strengthens the theme of restoration in the section and emphasises the plan that YHWH has for his people. Zimmerli (1979b) states:

[*Ezekiel*] 37:15-28 recount[s] how Yahweh summons the prophet to a sign-action. This has its theme, briefly summarized, 'Repurification of the two parts of Israel'.

Subsequently the section ends in a much more broadly conceived promise of salvation to Israel in which the various themes of the proclamation of salvation in Chapters 34, 36f (shepherd, new covenant, purification of Israel, etc.) are taken up afresh. (p. 271)

The immediately preceding context to the following section is Ezekiel 37:1-14. In this pericope, the situation of the Judeans is presented as 'dry bones'. It depicts how desperate the people were. Reading this section signals the hardship of what the Jewish people went through in Babylon. To emphasise the situation of the exiles as presented in the form of 'dry bones', Biwul (2019, p. 5) observes that 'the emotive picture that the reader visualises of the intensity/degree of the dryness of the bones, is to the effect that they would not even attract a dog sniffing them'. The political and religious conditions of the exiles were extremely dry, to the point that their condition seemed both hopeless and irreparable (Biwul 2019, p. 5).

At the same time, this passage describes the restoration that the Jewish people will experience. It is remarkable that it is YHWH who will change the miserable condition of his people. Taylor (1969) explains the condition of the Judeans in the exile:

The bones represent the Israelites in exile. They have been there for more than ten years now, and what glimmerings of hope they had when first they arrived have now been altogether extinguished. Their hope was lost: as bones, they were dry. (p. 228)

Fortunately (Block 1997b):

Israel's only hope rests in her God, who is at the same time the Sovereign Lord of history and the source of life. The restoration of his people will be his climactic moment of self-revelation. (p. 383)

Obinwa (2012) summarises the message of restoration found in the vision of the dry bones:

The vision of the dry bones presents YHWH's promise to *open* (פִּתּוּחַ) the graves of his people and to bring (עֲלֶיהֶם) them out from the graves and lead them back to the land of Israel (37:12). Their graves are symbolic of their exilic bondage while the acts of *opening* the graves and *bringing* the people out of them are expressive of deliverance or breaking the bars of their yoke (cf. 34:27). So Ezekiel 37:1-14 simply states that YHWH will rescue his people from the land of their captivity and lead them back to their own land (cf. 34:13). (pp. 412-413)

Knowing that only YHWH is able to restore his people, we are prepared to understand the next section of Ezekiel 37. We see that YHWH has the capacity to fulfil what seemed impossible. If he brought the dry bones to life, he is able to put his people under a new leadership that will submit to him and bless them.

## ■ Structure of Ezekiel 37:15-28

Ezekiel 37:15-28, which is the second main part of Ezekiel 37, is divided into two parts. Verses 15-23 are about the sign-act of the two wooden sticks. The prophet was directed to take the two wooden sticks to communicate the message of YHWH in relation to the unity of his people. The structure of the section is as follows:

- A. Ezekiel 37:15: Introduction to the section
- B. Ezekiel 37:16-17: Sign-act of the two sticks
- C. Ezekiel 37:18-19: Explanation of the sign-act
- D. Ezekiel 37:20-23: Promise of restoration
- E. Ezekiel 37:24-28: The Davidic king and blessings.

## ■ Ezekiel 37:15-23 – unity and salvation of the Jewish people

The text of Ezekiel refers here to a crucial element in the programme of the restoration of the Jewish people: unity. The communication is expressed in the form of a sign-act. The importance of unity will appear later in the text. The confirmation that there is division among the Jewish people is established by the two sticks that the prophet is asked to use. In Verse 16, the text mentions Judah and Israel as two different nations, represented in the sign-act by the two sticks of wood. The allusion to Judah and Israel recalls the division that Israel went through after the death of Solomon. The sign-act directs the prophet to join the two pieces of wood together.

Scholars mainly see the northern and the southern kingdoms in the two sticks of wood used in the sign-act. Taylor (1969, p. 232) views the two sticks as the two kingdoms after the northern kingdom lost its identity. In reference to the division that Israel experienced, resulting in the northern and the southern kingdoms, the two sticks of wood represent Joseph (Ephraim) and Judah, with whom all the Israelites are associated (Ezk 37:16). Briefly, one may think that the sign-act is about the two kingdoms of Israel (the northern and the southern). Merrill F Unger (n.d., p. 54) takes this view when he points out that the symbolic action 'symbolizes the end God will make of that sad division which has harassed Jacob's posterity since the fateful schism of 922 BC'. Greenberg (1997, p. 754) has the same opinion, pointing out the aspect of rivalry.

Considering the unification proposed in Ezekiel 37:16, Judah and Joseph both refer to the Israelites, considering their origin – descendants of Jacob. It suggests that YHWH will not discriminate among his people as far as the process of restoration is concerned. His plan to reinstate his people includes all the Israelites, no matter where they are as a result of division. The sign-act concerns the unity of the restored nation under one

king (Cooper 1994, p. 326). It refers to the restoration of Israel's integrity, which includes ethnic, territorial and spiritual integrity (Block 1997b, p. 14), and it focuses on the reunification of the Israelites as a people, as well as the reunification of the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel.

While such a reunification should be desired, it seems that at the point reached by the two kingdoms, it is no longer possible. I agree with Zimmerli (1979b), who observes that:

There is no longer expected the 'reunification' of the two kingdoms, both of which have now disappeared, but rather the gracious divine protecting of the newly gathered people from a new schism. It is in this sense that emphasis is laid on 'one nation, one king'. (p. 276)

The point here is that while ethnically, all twelve tribes will never be joined together again, symbolically there will be one kingdom under God's leadership. Furthermore (Kelle 2013):

Ezekiel offers a broad vision of future restoration that includes all those survivors and refugees that have been scattered and disconnected through the traumas of destruction and deportation. (p. 302)

Kelle gives a balanced view and sees the big picture of the programme of restoration. In reference to the suggested unity in the text, Kelle (2013) sheds more light:

While the language of one kingdom here does not necessarily assume the existence of a previously unified state, it envisions a future that will not reflect the old political arrangements that led the people into rebellion and defilement and generated Yahweh's judgment of destruction and exile. (p. 302)

The understanding that we have is that the sign-act is beyond bringing together the twelve tribes; it concerns the restoration of the people as a whole and the capacity of YHWH to do what looks impossible. Block (1997b) indicates that:

If Yahweh is able to perform such an incredible feat, there is reason to hope that the other elements involved in their own (the Judean exiles') restoration – their survival, regathering and return to the land, the restoration of the Davidic monarchy, the renewal of the covenant, and Yahweh's reestablishment of his residence in their midst – could also be fulfilled. (p. 395)

It is certain that with the exile, the Jewish people were no longer together in their nation. While there was a remnant of the Judeans in Judah, there were thousands of them scattered among different nations. The important element in the promise is the word 'one'. The Hebrew word אֶחָד [one] is used eleven times in Ezekiel 37:15–28 (vv. 16 [twice], 17 [three times], 19 [twice], 22 [twice] and 24 [twice]) to describe the restoration of Israel. The various nouns that it modifies are 'stick' [עֵץ אֶחָד], 'nation' [לְגוֹי אֶחָד], 'king' [וּמֶלֶךְ אֶחָד] and 'shepherd' [אַחַד וְרוֹעֵ]. Its many appearances in Ezekiel 37 are indicative of the need for unity among the people. The promise that they will be one nation under one

king (Ezk 37:22) means that they will no longer suffer division. Such a promise would have raised their hope and stands here as one of the main characteristics of restoration. The relationship that Israel will have with YHWH (37:23b) is also an indication of Israel as a united nation. YHWH promises that 'there will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms' (Ezk 27:22). There are two important things that attract attention in the process of the divine restoration: one king and the emphasis on unity. As regards the focus of this study, the emphasis on unity is important when it comes to covenant. As already discussed, because we do not see the possibility of bringing the twelve tribes of Israel together again as one ethnic unit under one king, 'one king' indicates the process of healing of what Israel went through as the result of division (Taylor 1969, p. 233), which led to the Babylonian exile. The assumption is that such a promise could give hope to the exiles. This promise becomes clearer in Verse 24, where David is mentioned as the future ruler.

In addition to 'one king', the emphasis is put on unity. This unity is to be understood in light of the covenant as it prepares the reader to comprehend what will be said in Verse 24 in relation to David, recalling the covenant that YHWH made with him. Hence, unity stands for a crucial component of the covenant. The suggestion is that there cannot be an effective covenant without unity among the beneficiaries. The promise 'assures the exiles that full-fledged and unitary nationhood is included in Yahweh's plan for Israel' (Block 1997b, p. 414). YHWH's promise, at the end of Verse 23, ends with the covenant formula - וְהָיִינוּ לְעַם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים [They will be my people, and I will be their God].

Gentry and Wellum (2018) point out that the covenant formula occurs for the first time in Genesis 17:7b, 8b: 'to be God to you and your offspring after you [...] and I will be their God. ESV'. While in these verses the formula appears in its first half, the full formula occurs for the first instance in Exodus 6:7, which reads (Gentry & Wellum, 2018):

I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. (p. 307)

The idea of 'half' and 'full' covenant formulae comes from Rolf Rendtorff (1998), indicating that:

We encounter the formula in three versions (with variants): (1) 'I will be God for you'; (2) 'You shall be a people for me'; (3) where the two statements are combined in a *single* formula, though here the sequence of the two elements changes. (p. 13)

In a simple way, we have (Gentry & Wellum 2018, p. 307):

- Formula A: I will be your God.
- Formula B: You will be my people.
- Formula C: I will be your God, and you will be my people (= A + B).

In the text of Ezekiel, we have Formula C.

The usage of the formula in the prophetic books is critical. It serves to seal the relationship of belonging between God and his people and plays an important theological role. Specifically (Rendtorff 1998):

In the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel the covenant formula appears at salient points, and for the most part in salvation sayings, i.e. in the realm of expectation of the future [...] In the context of the prophetic books as a whole, the texts in which we encounter the covenant formula constitute no more than a limited part. But this part includes highly important theological statements, which are especially relevant to what talk about the 'covenant' means. (pp. 55-56)

In Jeremiah 32:38 the formula *וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים* [They will be my people, and I will be their God] occurs at the point where YHWH gives assurance of his people's return from exile to their country. In Jeremiah 31:33 the form *וְהָיוּ לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים* [I will be their God, and they will be my people] occurs at a critical point as YHWH is making a new covenant with his people. The formula at the end of Ezekiel 37:23 emphasises the ability of YHWH to possess his people (Martens 1994, p. 221), while the Judeans, being the people of God, are 'meant to have a single loyalty to Yahweh' (Martens 1994, p. 224).

The restoration that YHWH envisages for the Jewish people is social, political and spiritual. Without a spiritual relationship with YHWH, any restoration that the people would have would be incomplete. After the promise of YHWH to unite his people, in Ezekiel 37:23 we have the spiritual component of the restoration. The promise emphasises the spiritual salvation of the Jewish people.<sup>30</sup> The essential fact in that salvation is threefold: (1) the Jewish people will no longer defile themselves; (2) YHWH will save them; and (3) YHWH will cleanse them.

The Hebrew verb that describes the action of the people is preceded by a negative particle – *וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ*. The verb that follows *לֹא* comes from the root *טמא*, which in *Hithpael* means to 'defile oneself' (Brown 2003, p. 379). The text mentions three ways in which the people were defiling themselves: (1) worshipping idols, (2) using detested things and (3) committing offences. Hence, the people made themselves unclean by what they were doing. It is clear from the text – we do not have details in the text on the involvement of the people in those practices – that the people compromised their faith in YHWH. The use of *וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ* confirms that there were members of the Jewish community who were unfaithful to YHWH and engaged in worshipping idols.

---

30. Ezekiel 37:26 mentions the presence of YHWH's temple among his people. The understanding is that once the temple is reinstated, any function and rites related to it will be re-established. Before the exile, the temple in Jerusalem was crucial for the spiritual life of the Judeans and had all the needed people to perform different services. Thus, the spiritual salvation that the people will experience will entail putting in place the necessary functions and rites, including those who will work in the temple.

The salvation of the Jewish people will give them the ability to get rid of the defilement characterised by idolatry and other uncleanness. The emphasis on spiritual renewal underscores the truth of the Babylonian exile to be foremost the consequence of sin and not mainly a sociopolitical development. It is evident that from the involvement in worshipping idols, the relationship of the exiles with YHWH was corrupted. The starting point of restoration is spiritual and indicates that there cannot be a complete restoration without the people having a good relationship with YHWH. The Lord promises that he will save them – יהוֹשִׁיעַתִּי אִתָּם – and he will cleanse them – וְטָהַרְתִּי אוֹתָם. These two actions of YHWH deserve proper consideration.

The root *יָשַׁע* in *Hiphil* means to ‘help, deliver, come to one’s aid, bring victory’ (Hubbard 1997). In the context of Ezekiel 37:23, YHWH promises to help his people to not sin against him. He is the one who will come to their aid to overcome sin. YHWH is the one who will make his people free and give them victory over their sinful practices. The sin in which the people were living made them captive. Their help will come from YHWH, who will deliver them from their sin. This verb in Ezekiel 37:23 envisages the sin of the people of God as the enslaving power from which they need deliverance (Block 1997b, p. 414). The initiative of YHWH to save his people targets their ‘inner renewal’ (Zimmerli 1979b, p. 275). This is a clear indication that the people were not able, by themselves, to put an end to their wrongdoing.

YHWH’s action to save his people is strengthened by the *Piel* of טָהַר, which in this stem means ‘cleanse, purify, pro-cleanse oneself’ (Averbeck 1997). Specifically, this word refers to the purification of idolatry, implying forgiveness of sins (Ringgren 1986, p. 288). Ezekiel 36:33 mentions the involvement of the Jewish people in idolatry (cf. Lv 16:30; Jr 33:8; Ezk 24:19; 36:25; Ml 3:3). This verse clearly shows that the people will not experience transformation until YHWH cleanses them and is indicative that the practice of idolatry was taking place among the people. If such a practice did not exist, there could not be reason for cleansing. The *Piel* form of טָהַר is privative in that YHWH will cleanse his people from sins – YHWH will remove sins. The implication of YHWH’s action will certainly be that his people will not be condemned because the sin that was hindering them from experiencing YHWH’s intervention will have been removed. Hence, YHWH will pronounce his people clean (Köhler et al. 2001, p. 369). The main problem of the Jewish people resided in their disobedience to God. Because of their worshipping of idols, their relationship with their God was completely ruined. As a consequence, they became exiles in Babylon. Block (1997b) puts it this way:

The departure of Yahweh’s glory from the temple and the subsequent fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadrezzar reflected the rupture in the relationship in 586. But Ezekiel’s vision of a restored Israel must also include righting this wrong. After all, true Israel was first and foremost a spiritual entity united in covenant with their God. Arguing from effect to cause, the prophet begins by announcing the symptoms of the new spiritual reality: the nation will be rid of the defilement

[...] resulting from the people's idolatry and other disgusting practices from her acts of rebellion. (p. 414)

As previously indicated, it noticeably comes out that the starting point of the Jewish people's restoration was spiritual. It is on the spiritual ground that the other aspects of restoration will lie, making it complete.

## ■ Ezekiel 37:24-28 – salvation of the Jewish people

### ■ The Davidic King

As previously discussed, it is after the promise of salvation and cleansing that the promise of the future ruler is made.<sup>31</sup> The promise regarding the future leader in Ezekiel 37:24a is almost the same as in 34:23a. The reading in Ezekiel 37:24a is *וְעַבְדִּי דָוִד מֶלֶךְ עֲלֵיהֶם וְרוּעָה אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לְכֻלָּם* [My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd] and in 34:23a we have *וְהִקְמַתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם רֹעֶה אֶחָד וְרוּעָה אֶתְהוֹן אֶת עַבְדִּי דָוִד* [I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David]. In the two verses, he is described as the servant of YHWH and the 'one' shepherd. In a specific way, David, the servant of YHWH, will be the king over the people of YHWH. As he is a servant, there is an assumption that David will submit to his master, YHWH, as he serves the people. On the other hand, as king, he will have the people submitting to him.

Unlike Ezekiel 34:24, which uses *נָשִׂיא* for David as the future leader, the author uses *מֶלֶךְ* in Ezekiel 37:22, 24. Blenkinsopp (1990, p. 176) recognises that, generally, Ezekiel uses the term *מֶלֶךְ* for foreign and current or recent rulers. Just to mention a few examples, the word *מֶלֶךְ* occurs in Ezekiel 1:2 for King Jehoiachin; Ezekiel 17:12; 19:9; 21:24, 26; 24:2 for Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon; Ezekiel 28:12 for the King of Tyre; and Ezekiel 29:2, 3 for Pharaoh, King of Egypt. Among the current or recent leaders, it is Jehoiachin and Zedekiah who are designated both as *מֶלֶךְ* and *נָשִׂיא* (Ezk 1:2; 12:10, 12; 17:16; 19:1; 21:25) (Blenkinsopp 1990, p. 176). According to him, the reason that justifies the use of *מֶלֶךְ* is the emphasis put on the role of political office that fits for Israel, based on the ideology and the political theory found in Deuteronomy (see Dt 17:14–20) (Blenkinsopp 1990, p. 176). Block (1997b) shares the same view with Blenkinsopp, shedding more light:

If the reference to 'one king' symbolizes the nation's new unity, the present choice of *melek* highlights the restoration of Israel to full nationhood. To the prophet's audience, the use of *nāsī'*, would have signified less than complete restoration [...] By naming the *melek*, Yahweh not only affirms the eternity of his original promise to David (2 Sm 7:16) but also discredits all past rulers who have claimed the title 'King of Israel', particularly the Josephite/Ephraimite rulers of the northern kingdom. (p. 415)

---

31. The discussion about 'my servant David' and 'one shepherd' occurred in Chapter 3.

It is likely that Ezekiel uses the term מְלֶךְ to describe David because the realisation of the divine promises will take place under his leadership as the current leader.<sup>32</sup>

## ■ Obeying YHWH's laws

While the plan that YHWH has for his people clearly appears in the text, the people also have their role to play (Ezk 37:24b). Under the new ruler, the Jewish people will have to follow the laws of YHWH – וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי יֵלְכוּ וְחֻקֹּתַי יִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשׂוּ אוֹתָם [They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees]. Following and keeping the laws of YHWH requires the people of YHWH to live as YHWH intends for them, in complete obedience. With this promise, there is an indication that the previous leadership has completely come to an end. As pointed out by Greenberg (1997):

There is just a suggestion that as the past misleaders are held responsible for the apostasy of the people, so the future good shepherd will be credited with the people's obedience to God's law. (p. 757)

Under the new leadership, it is expected that וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי יֵלְכוּ [They will follow my laws] and וְחֻקֹּתַי יִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשׂוּ אוֹתָם [and be careful to keep my decrees]. There are three verbs describing what the Jewish people will do regarding the laws of YHWH. The roots of the three verbs are: (1) הלך [to walk], (2) שמר [to keep] and (3) עשה [to do, to make]. For a more literal rendering, the translation of וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי יֵלְכוּ וְחֻקֹּתַי יִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשׂוּ אוֹתָם is 'they will walk in my laws, and they will keep and they will do my ordinances'.

As the outcome of a new leadership, the focus is on the laws of YHWH in which the people 'will walk' – וּבְמִשְׁפָּטַי יֵלְכוּ. Appearing in its plural construct form here, the term מִשְׁפָּט designates 'which has been established' (Johnson 1998, p. 94), referring here to laws or judgements. In other words, that 'which has been established' is none other than the laws of YHWH in which the people will walk. There is the assurance that the people will follow the laws of YHWH. Its usage here denotes the commitment that the people will have in regard to the laws of God, based on the fact that:

[7]ו 'follow' or 'to walk after' is to suggest commitment of life and purpose (cf. also Jdg 2:19; Rt 3:10; 1 Ki 11:10, 21:26; 2 Ki 23:3; Jer 7:9). A similar idea is expressed by the preposition *b* + *hlk*. (Merrill 1997, p. 1035)

In Ezekiel 37:24, there is no mention of particular laws of God that the people will follow, supporting the idea that the laws of YHWH can be 'the individual commandments as well as the summary of the entire law' (Merrill 1997, p. 1035).

---

32. I will discuss the Davidic Prince that occurs in Ezekiel 37:25 later in this chapter and then draw a conclusion about the usage of מְלֶךְ and נָשִׂיא in Ezekiel 37:22, 24 and 25.

To accentuate the commitment of the Jewish people – in addition to following the laws – they will keep and enact YHWH's ordinances or decrees. The root שמר used in Ezekiel 37:24b 'expresses the careful attention to be paid to the obligations of a covenant, to laws, statutes, etc.' (Austel 1980, p. 939). The relevance of keeping the decrees of YHWH is intensified by a second verb from the root עשה. J Herman Austel (1980) adds an important point regarding the use of שמר with עשה.<sup>33</sup>

It means that the people of God will intentionally commit themselves to obey the laws of God. Block (1997b) says:

[T]he nation will have a new commitment to the will of Yahweh, the divine patron. The triad of expressions, *follow my laws* (*hālak bēmišpāṭay*), *observe my decrees* (*šāmar ḥuqqōtay*), and *put them into practice* (*'āšā 'ōtām*), captures the essence of the response of faith to the privilege of being Yahweh's people. (p. 417)

The three phrases express the same idea and stress the importance of YHWH's laws and the obligations of the people to comply with them. These expressions are Deuteronomic in nature and can be described as 'obeying the law of God' (Dt 8:20; 13:18; 15:5; 27:10; 28:15, 45, 62; 30:8, 10). Theologically, there are connections between the Deuteronomic language and Samuel (1 Sm 12:15; 15:19, 20; 28:18). While the text of Deuteronomy is about people obeying God or not, in Samuel, the concern is for both the people and Saul as an individual. Obeying God is none other than following, observing and doing what is required by the laws of God.

Regarding the theology of Ezekiel 37:24b, there is a guarantee that the people will be in a position to obey YHWH's laws. This guarantee resides in the fact that it is under the new ruler, David, that the people will be able to put into practice the laws of YHWH. In part, the people were disobedient to the divine laws because of the bad shepherds (cf. Ezk 34). Another indication is that under David, there will be a theological reformation making it possible for the people to obey the laws of God. This idea is also expressed by Block (1997b):

Verse 24b represents a shorthand announcement of the inner transformation to be experienced by the Israelites, resolving forever the issue of the rebellion that had originally brought on their judgment and deportation. (p. 417)

If inner transformation can resolve the problem of past rebellion, it will also enable the people to obey YHWH.

---

33. It should be noted that the observance of God's laws was not to be a matter of theory only or of perfunctory compliance. The expression 'to do them' is frequently appended such as in Ezekiel 37:24 (1980, p. 939) (cf. Lev 19:37 and 20:22; Deut 6:1, 11:32 and 27:10; Ezek 11:20, 20:19, 36:27, 43:11, etc.).

## ■ Returning to the land and Davidic Prince

Another outcome of spiritual salvation resides in the return of the Jewish people to their land (Ezk 37:25). The people have the guarantee of living again in their land and never leaving it again. The assurance of living in the land after the return is indicated by עַד־עוֹלָם, which has been discussed in the previous chapter. Once again, the promised ruler, David, will lead them לְעוֹלָם. The use of עוֹלָם twice in Verse 25b is relevant and stands as a firm assurance in the promise that YHWH gives to his people, suggesting that there will be no more exile. In this regard, Zimmerli (1979b) correctly comments that:

We can discern the statement which was really intended, the key-word of which עוֹלָם, predominates in all that follows. Here is the confirmation of the sustained duration of that which has been promised by God. עוֹלָם serves as the 'designation of the definitive nature of the coming salvation'. That promise is expressed in four different ways: (1) The people will acquire a lasting dwelling place in the land. They will live there till their children's children, 'for ever'. That is God's definitive rejection of a renewed threat of exile. (2) David's rule will last 'for ever'. (p. 276)

As indicated in Block's quote, עוֹלָם serves as the signature of the promise that YHWH makes to his people. The word עוֹלָם is used at the end of Verse 25 to describe the role that David will play. In that verse, David is described by YHWH as דָּוִד עַבְדִּי [David, my servant], who will be a נָשִׂיא. Zimmerli (1979b) observes a wordplay that he attributes to the redaction process of the book of Ezekiel, and according to him:

Here the key-word given in v. 24a is taken up and at the same time altered. Even if one were to regard the change of word order from the עַבְדִּי דָוִד ('my servant David') of v. 24 [= 34:23, 24] to דָוִד עַבְדִּי ('David, my servant') as no more than an essentially unimportant stylistic variation, which, for all that, could reveal the hand of a different author, nevertheless the replacement of the מֶלֶךְ ('king') of v. 24 [v. 22] by נָשִׂיא ('prince') (v. 25) is due to conscious reflection [...] (3) The covenant of salvation is to be an 'everlasting covenant'. [...] (4) Finally, 'for ever' [...] Yahweh's sanctuary is to stand in the midst of his people. There is to be no further destruction of the temple by fire. (p. 276)

While the remark that Zimmerli makes about the word order is relevant when it comes to the composition of the text, here דָּוִד comes before עַבְדִּי for emphasis. It is firstly about David but not about him being YHWH's servant, which already appears in Verse 24. In addition, the attention of the reader is directed to the role of נָשִׂיא that David will play forever. Summarising the role of David as מְלִיךְ and נָשִׂיא, Block (1997b) expounds that:

Shifting attention away from political reunification in the first panel, Ezekiel reverts to his preferred designation for Israel's kings, *nāšī'*, *prince* (cf. vv. 22, 24a), and defines David's role spiritually as Yahweh's *servant* and their 'prince', rather than politically as 'king over them' (v. 24). The term *nāšī'* alludes to the prince's ties with the people and his function as regent under Yahweh, and prepares

the way for chs. 40–48, where the person with this title functions primarily as religious leader. (p. 418)

Considering what David, as נָשִׂיא, will do, he is both a political as well as a religious leader. The striking aspect is that the promised ruler will be under the leadership of YHWH. In the rest of the section, the term עוֹלָם appears to be relevant because of its multiple uses. As we will see, the promise in Verse 26 is sanctioned twice by the word עוֹלָם.

It is interesting that David appears twice in Ezekiel 37 (vv. 24 and 25). Why is he mentioned twice? Was the information about him in Verse 24a not sufficient? The first thing that we observe is that in Verse 24a, David is mentioned in relation to the role that he will play; he will be king over the Judeans. As already mentioned, it is under the leadership of David, the promised ruler, that the religious transformation will take place. The second aspect stresses the fact that David will be the prince of the people (in the two verses, David is described as the servant of YHWH). As previously indicated, the term נָשִׂיא concerns the relation of David with the people and his function under YHWH. Looking together to David as king and prince suggests that YHWH's promises will be fulfilled under the leadership of David, who at that time will be the reigning king, and under David, who will be devoted to serving the people as YHWH's vice. As a king, David will play his political role as well as his religious role as prince. It also indicates the ability of David to play the two roles at the same time. From the literary perspective, it appears that the term נָשִׂיא has replaced מְלִיךָ, which no longer occurs in the rest of the book. As per the preceding discussion, it may serve to stress a religious rather than political angle.

## ■ Obedience and land

In addition, there are two other aspects in Verse 25 which relate to David: obedience and land. How does David relate to obedience and a return to the land? Could it be that because mention of David encloses these two ideas, Ezekiel's point is that David is very much related to these two things? I argue, in an attempt to answer to these questions, that it is during the future David that the people will obey the laws of YHWH.<sup>34</sup>

The promise of land points to the return of the Jewish people to their historical land that they left because of the exile. The promise indicates that 'the people-land divorce effected by the exile will be reversed' (Block 1997b, p. 418). But the important element is that this will only happen

---

34. I indicated that it is under David that the religious and spiritual transformation will take place, enabling people to obey YHWH. As obedience and land are associated with David in Verses 24 and 25, it makes sense to look at them here.

under the leadership of David, putting him as the agent at the centre of the transformation. It is during the time of the promised leader, David, that the Jewish people will experience spiritual as well as social transformation.

## ■ Covenant of peace

Another blessing that the Jewish people will obtain under the new leadership is that of YHWH making a covenant of peace with them (Ezk 37:26). Rightfully, there is a connection between the Davidic leadership and the covenant of peace. Having in view that the Davidic leadership in Ezekiel is an echo of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7, it can be confirmed that the covenant of peace constitutes an outcome of YHWH's covenant to David.

There is a clear progression in the restoration plan that YHWH has for his people. From saving them from their sins, giving them a new leader and assuring the people of living in their land forever after their return, the oracle climaxes with YHWH's covenant of peace with them. This is YHWH's direct announcement - וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם בְּרִית עוֹלָם [I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant]. As explained in the previous chapter, the בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם [the covenant of peace] is a promise that offers the people of YHWH true security. The guarantee of that security exists in the fact that it is a divine covenant. It is a covenant that encompasses many blessings. Although there are no prior elements in the text under study that describe restoration as part of the covenant of peace, the restoration leads to an everlasting covenant of peace. In relation to עוֹלָם, Jamie Viands (2014) précises its usage in Ezekiel 37:24b-28 and Israel's blessings:

This final unit in Ezekiel 37 stresses the perpetuity of the new ideal conditions. 'Forever' (לְעוֹלָם) serves as a Leitwort in the verses, occurring five times in vv. 24-28, but only four times elsewhere in the book in restoration contexts (16:60; 43:7 and 9; 46:14). Four of Israel's most cherished blessings from Yahweh will endure לְעוֹלָם: possession of the land (v. 25), Davidic rule (v. 25), the covenant (v. 26), and Yahweh's presence among his people in the land (vv. 26, 28). (p. 222)

In Ezekiel 37:26b, we find three important things that YHWH will do for his people as an outcome of the covenant of peace: (1) YHWH will establish them; (2) YHWH will multiply them - YHWH will increase the number of his people; (3) YHWH will put his sanctuary among his people forever - וְנִתְּתִים וְהִרְבִּיתִי אוֹתָם וְנִתְּתִי אֶת־מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכְכֶם לְעוֹלָם. The root נתן, translated by 'establish' and 'put', considered broadly means 'give', 'put' or 'set'. The text is not clear about what YHWH will give to his people or where he will put them. Allen attributes the lack of precision to 'a principle of filling the gaps' (Leslie 1990, pp. 9, 194). Referring to Eichrodt, Viands (2014, p. 223) indicates that the phrase וְנִתְּתִים וְהִרְבִּיתִי אוֹתָם does not appear in the LXX.<sup>35</sup>

---

35. In the mentioned reference, the phrase appears as אוֹתָם וְהִרְבִּיתִי וְנִתְּתִים.

The understanding here is that the Masoretic Text inserted what was missing in the LXX. However, Greenberg (1997, p. 757) gives a clue that ‘Kara and Ehrlich [Hebrew] guessed that it is the start of some such an expression as “set them supreme over all nations” (cf. Dt 26:19)’. While this is not mentioned in the text, the promise of divine restoration in Ezekiel 34 and 37, the punishment of the nations in Ezekiel 35 and 36, and the elements from Leviticus 26 in Ezekiel may support the idea. It is in such a condition that YHWH will make the people grow in number in their own land.

The most captivating component of the promise is that God will put his sanctuary in the midst of his people. The Hebrew word for sanctuary is *מִקְדָּשׁ* and evokes the temple that the Jewish people used to have in Jerusalem before the Babylonian exile. While the idea of a physical temple comes in mind, the promise is beyond the structure; it focuses on the presence of YHWH among his people. This idea is extended in Verse 27, stating that because of the presence of God in the midst of the people, he will be their God and they will be his people. The prepositional word *לְעוֹלָם* modifies the relationship between YHWH and his people.

While Greenberg (1997, p. 757) refers to *מִקְדָּשׁ* as a spiritualisation of the antique term for the tabernacle in the desert, unquestionably, both the promises of *מִקְדָּשׁ* and *מִשְׁכָּן* recall the idea of the destroyed temple in Jerusalem. As Greenberg (1997) connects *מִקְדָּשׁ* to the desert tabernacle, he views *מִשְׁכָּן* as an updated version of *מִקְדָּשׁ*, explaining that:

[T]he antique term was freed for a new meaning. Now the tent-sanctuary of the priestly writings was closely associated with the divine cloud that covered it by day, appearing as fire by night (Ex 40:34–38, abbreviated from Nm 9:15–23). (p. 757)

The understanding is that *מִקְדָּשׁ* and *מִשְׁכָּן* concern the presence of YHWH among his people, which presence was later expressed in the temple. Joyce (2009, p. 211) admits that the term *מִשְׁכָּן* is here ‘associated with the “tent of meeting” in the Priestly account of the wilderness wanderings’. Using the Priestly term in the text of Ezekiel may not be questionable because it is linked to the background of Ezekiel as a priest. This idea is supported and explained by Block (1997b):

Yahweh’s residence is identified by two expressions, which reflect opposite dimensions of the divine character *miqdāš*, Ezekiel’s favorite designation for the *sanctuary* (5:11; 8:6; 9:6), from *qdš*, ‘to be holy’, highlights the holiness of the residence and reflects the transcendent nature of the one who dwells within. *miškān*, *residence* from *šākan*, ‘to reside, dwell’, occurs only here in the book with reference to the house of God (cf. 25:4, used of human dwellings). This expression reflects the immanence, the condescending presence, of God. In Exodus it is often associated with the *’ōhel mō’ēd*, ‘tent of appointment’, which symbolized Yahweh’s desire for regular contact with his people. (p. 421)

In relation to the presence of God among his people, undeniably, the exiles in Babylon could have had a better remembrance of the temple than of the

desert tabernacle, considering the proximity of the period of the temple to their exilic experience. Taking into account the place of the temple in the life of the Jewish people, its destruction was a tremendous loss to the nation of Judah. With the promise of restoration, the people could have developed hope for the future under the direction of a new ruler. The promise ends with a covenant formula. This is the same formula as in Verse 23. The only difference is that in Verse 27 God comes first. The formula reads **וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים וְהָמָּה יִהְיוּ לִי לְעָם** [and I will be their God, and they shall be my people]. In the covenant formula here, God comes first because of the promise of his presence among his people. The focus is no longer on the spiritual restoration of the people, as it is in Verse 23, but as the result of restoration. It puts God as the initiator and the executor of the restoration, culminating with his presence among his people.

## ■ Knowledge of YHWH

The oracle in Ezekiel 37:28 ends with a significant indication that the knowledge of YHWH will extend beyond the Jewish people. What YHWH will do for his people will go beyond the territory of the Promised Land and will achieve a greater goal. The text states that even the nations – Babylon included – will be aware of what God will be doing amid his people. The presence of God’s sanctuary among his people will serve to make Israel holy. The nations will observe a shift regarding the relationship between God and his people. History may suggest to the nations a possible abandonment of the Jewish people by their God. However, ‘the nations will recognise the Godhead of Jahveh by the effects of his special providence over Israel’ (Cooke 1970, p. 404). Block observes that the presence of God’s sanctuary among his people will be the critical demonstration of his commitment to them and his sanctification of Israel as the final proof to confirm his election of Israel as a holy nation (Block 1997b, p. 421). The concluding words in Ezekiel 37:28 indicate that the knowledge of YHWH and what he will do, providing an avenue for the complete restoration of his people. Zimmerli (1979b) affirms:

It is towards such hope that the prophetic word directs the people of God, so that, on such a basis, they can also bear the affliction of the present with upturned face. It assures them that in this fourfold final act by which God sanctifies the people amongst whom he himself dwells the mystery of the divine truth will be discernible to all nations. (p. 280)

Basically, the covenant of peace will deeply contribute to restoring the people. It will play a crucial role in the healing process of the exiles. In addition, the covenant will give them a new perspective, one which will help deportees confront the realities of exilic life with courage.

The glorious future promised to the Jewish people is strongly based on the covenant that YHWH made with King David in 2 Samuel 7.

The closeness of the divine promise in Ezekiel 37:24–28 indicates the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on the section of the text of Ezekiel 37. The claim that there is influence from 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 37 needs to be considered.

## ■ Influence of 2 Samuel 7

In Chapter 3, I discussed the dependence of the text of Ezekiel on other biblical texts before considering the probable influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 34. In this section, the discussion will directly focus on the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 37. The point of view is that ‘the core of the vision in Ezekiel 37 is clearly shaped by alluding to existing Old Testament [OT] motifs and metaphors that are referred to and transferred into concrete imagery’ (Klein 2010, p. 575). In the effort of establishing any influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 on that of Ezekiel 37, the points of discussion will consider the following three areas: (1) literary influence, (2) theological influence and (3) conceptual influence.

### ■ Literary influence

There are similarities between 2 Samuel 7:4 and Ezekiel 37:15.

**TABLE 4.1:** Hebrew-English translation of 2 Samuel 7:4 and Ezekiel 37:15.

2 Samuel 7:4	Ezekiel 37:15
וַיְהִי בַלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי־נָתָן לֵאמֹר:	וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:
That night <b>the word of the Lord came to</b> Nathan, saying	<b>The word of the Lord came to me:</b>

Source: English from the New International Version and from the Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Codex) in Unicode.

The expression דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי־נָתָן לֵאמֹר [The word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying] appears in 2 Samuel 7:4. A similar expression also appears in Ezekiel 37:15 as וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר [The word of the Lord came to me]. The difference in the two texts resides in the fact that in the text of 2 Samuel, there is mention of נָתָן, while in the text of Ezekiel the name of the prophet is replaced by the pronoun אֵלַי and the verb וַיְהִי at the beginning. The expression used in 2 Samuel and in Ezekiel is known as the messenger formula.

This messenger formula introduces in the two texts what the prophets – Nathan and Ezekiel – received from YHWH and had to communicate to their respective receivers. Nathan and Ezekiel are, here, messengers of YHWH. As messengers of YHWH, their prophetic speech:

[/]s not then a form of revelation that is valid everywhere and for all times, but is one that would have been considered necessary for this period of time, within these limits. (Westermann 1991, p. 99)

However, this similar phrase in the two texts does not necessarily imply dependence of Ezekiel 37 on 2 Samuel 7, because the phrase is very common. Rather, this similarity establishes that the prophetic word contexts are the same in both cases. The messenger formula directs that the task of the two prophets will be to repeat the same message they received from YHWH. The message, at the time of its proclamation, will still be ‘the word of the sender, corresponding, therefore, to the signature in our letter form’ (Westermann 1991, p. 100). Nathan is sent to communicate to David the message that he received from God, while Ezekiel directly received his message from God. Considering the source of the message underscores its authenticity and the veracity of the message.

**TABLE 4.2:** Hebrew-English translation of 2 Samuel 7:5 and Ezekiel 37:24.

2 Samuel 7:5	Ezekiel 37:24
<p>לך ואמרת אל־עבדי אל־דָּוִד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הֲאֵתָה תִּבְנֶה־לִּי בַּיִת לְשִׁבְתִּי:</p> <p>‘Go and tell <b>my servant David</b>, “This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? [...]”</p>	<p>וְעַבְדִּי דָּוִד מְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם וְרוּעֵה אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לְבָלֶם וּבְמִשְׁפָּטֵי יִלְכוּ וְחֻקֹּתַי יִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשׂוּ אֹתָם:</p> <p><b>My servant David</b> will be king over them, and they will have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.</p>
	<p><b>Ezekiel 37:25</b></p> <p>וַיָּשְׁבוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְעַבְדִּי לְיַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבּוּ־בָהּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ עֲלֶיהָ הֵמָּה וּבְנֵיהֶם וּבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם עַד־עוֹלָם וְדָוִד עַבְדִּי נָשִׂיא לָהֶם לְעוֹלָם:</p> <p>They will live in the land I gave my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there for ever, and David my servant will be their prince for ever.</p>

Source: English from the New International Version and Hebrew from the Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Codex) in Unicode.

David is identified as a servant of YHWH in the two texts. The identification of David as a servant of YHWH appears as well as in 2 Samuel 3:18 and Ezekiel 34:23 (cf. 1 Ki 11:13, 34, 38; 2 Ki 19:34; 20:6; 1 Chr 17:7; 19; Is 37:35; Jr 33:21, 22). In these references, identifying David as a servant of YHWH indicates the relationship that existed between David and YHWH. In general, where David is called ‘servant of YHWH’, God specifies what he will do. The text of 2 Samuel 3 reads:

Now, do it! For the Lord promised David, ‘By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies’.(v. 18)

In Isaiah 37:35, for example, the defence of the city by YHWH is based on his relationship with David – ‘I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of my servant David’. Being a servant of YHWH, David is the instrument by which YHWH will fulfil his promise to his people. Identifying David as a servant of YHWH in 2 Samuel 7:5 and Ezekiel 37:24, 25 underlines the connection between the two texts and, possibly, the influence of the text of Samuel on that of Ezekiel.

The ‘servant language’ in 2 Samuel 7 plays a pivotal role in our understanding of David as God’s servant. It underscores the relationship between God and David. Twice in 2 Samuel 7 (vv. 5 and 8), YHWH refers to David as his servant. YHWH chooses to address David from the relationship point of view and not from his role as king. While this language of David as a servant of YHWH is not unique to 2 Samuel 7, its use in this text is quite significant, considering the context. The text of 2 Samuel 7 centres on YHWH’s covenant with David and marks the manifestation of the relationship between him and David. YHWH addressing David as his servant shows that the nature of the relationship is rooted in 2 Samuel 7, to the point that one could say that, in some sense, all of the references to David as ‘servant’ in the text of Ezekiel are dependent on 2 Samuel 7. As support to the claim, Block (1997b) confirms that:

The language obviously depends on 2 Samuel 7, where David is twice identified by Yahweh as [...] ‘my servant’ (vv. 5, 8), and where he acknowledges this role no fewer than ten times. This link is strengthened by the description of the new David’s tenure as *forever* [...], a word that occurs eight times in 2 Samuel 7. (p. 418)

In 2 Samuel 7:13, the phrase עַד־עוֹלָם is used for the duration of the throne of the kingdom of David’s descendant; in Verse 16, it occurs twice to describe the house and the kingdom, as well as the throne; in Verse 24, it is used in relation to the people of Israel; in Verse 25, it is about the promise that YHWH made; in Verse 26, it is in connection to the name; and in Verse 29, עַד־עוֹלָם appears twice for the house of David. In sum, the term is used to confirm the perpetuity of each and every one of the divine promises.

**TABLE 4.3:** 2 Samuel 7:6 and Ezekiel 37:21.

2 Samuel 7:6	Ezekiel 37:21
<p>כי לא ישכתי בבית למיִום העלתי את־בני ישראל ממצרים ועד היום הנה ואהיה מתהלך באהל ובמשכן:</p> <p>I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the <b>Israelites</b> up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling.</p>	<p>ונבר אליהם כה־אמר אֲדַבֵּר יְהוָה הנה אֲנִי לֹקֵחַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבְּיַן הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִלְכוּ־שָׁם וְקִבַּצְתִּי אֹתָם מִסָּבִיב וְהִבֵּאתִי אוֹתָם אֶל־אֶרְצָתָם:</p> <p>And say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the <b>Israelites</b> out of nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around from all around and bring them back into their own land.’</p>
	<p><b>Ezekiel 37:28</b></p> <p>וְדָעוּ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהִיּוֹת בְּתוֹכָם לְעוֹלָם: ס</p> <p>Then the nations will know that I the Lord make <b>Israel</b> holy, when my sanctuary is among them for ever.</p>

Source: English from the New International Version and Hebrew from the Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Codex) in Unicode.

The two texts use ‘the sons of Israel’ and ‘Israel’ for the people of God. However, the usage of ‘the sons of Israel’ does not necessarily establish the dependence of the text of Ezekiel on that of 2 Samuel but demonstrates that the subject matter is the same.

**TABLE 4.4:** Hebrew-English translation of 2 Samuel 7:8 and Ezekiel 37:19.

2 Samuel 7:8	Ezekiel 37:19
<p>ועתה כה־תאמר לעבד־י לְדָוִד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲנִי לְקַחְתִּיךָ מִן־הַבָּיִת מֵאֶחָר הַצֹּאן לְהִיטֵן נָגִיד עַל־עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:</p>	<p>דַּבֵּר אֲלֵהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה הִנֵּה אֲנִי לֹקֵחַ אֶת־עֵץ יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר בְּגִד־אֶפְרַיִם וְשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל [כ=קבריו] [ק=קבריו] וְנָתַתִּי אוֹתָם עָלָיו אֶת־עֵץ יְהוּדָה וְעָשִׂיתֶם לְעֵץ אֶחָד וְהָיוּ אֶחָד בְּיָדִי:</p>
<p>Now then, tell my servant David, '<b>This is what the Lord Almighty says:</b> I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel.'</p>	<p>say to them, '<b>This is what the Sovereign Lord says:</b> I am going to take the stick of Joseph - which is in Ephraim's hand - and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.'</p>
	<p><b>Ezekiel 37:21</b></p> <p>וְדַבֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה הִנֵּה אֲנִי לֹקֵחַ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבְּיַד הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִלְכוּ־שָׁמָּה וְקִבְצָתִי אֹתָם מִסָּבִיב וְהִבֵּאתִי אוֹתָם אֶל־אֲדָמָתָם:</p> <p>And say to them, '<b>This is what the Sovereign Lord says:</b> I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back to their own land.'</p>

Source: English from the New International Version and Hebrew from the Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Codex) in Unicode.

The formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה [this is what the Lord Almighty says] appears in 2 Samuel 7:8 and in Ezekiel 37:19, 21 we have כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה [this is what the Sovereign Lord says]. The only difference is the attribute צְבָאוֹת (in Samuel) and אֲדֹנָי (in Ezekiel) used to describe YHWH. Being also a messenger formula (Greene 1989):

[/ts] purpose was to legitimize the speaker and to compel the hearer to accept the message which followed as indeed coming from the sender of the message. This messenger formula has been replaced by the official seal of times past. (p. 86)

In the text of 2 Samuel 7, as well as that of Ezekiel 37, the two formulae introduce the message that Nathan and Ezekiel received from YHWH. Yet, the messages and the receivers are not the same.

The formula כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה is extensively used in the book of Ezekiel (cf. Ezk 5:7, 8; 6:3; 7:2; 11:5, 7, 16, 17; 12:10, 23; 13:18; 14:6; 16:3, 59; 17:3; 20:39; 21:8, 29; 33; 22:3, 19, 28; 23:28, 35, 46; 24:3, 6, 9; 25:6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16; 26:3, 7, 15; 27:3; etc). The parallel with the text of 2 Samuel 7 does not signify influence but underlines a shared prophetic context between the two texts. Nevertheless, the connection of the formula to David in 2 Samuel 7 is crucial. As a messenger, Nathan was sent to give a message from YHWH to his servant David - כֹּה־תאמר לעבד־י לְדָוִד [tell my servant David].

**TABLE 4.5:** 2 Samuel 7:10 and Ezekiel 37:23.

2 Samuel 7:10	Ezekiel 37:23
<p>וְשִׂמְתִי מָקוֹם לְעַמִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִטְעַמְתִּיו וְשָׁכַן תַּחְתָּיו וְלֹא יִרְגְּזוּ עוֹד וְלֹא־ יִסִּיפוּ בְנֵי־עוֹלָה לְעִזְבוֹתָו כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּרִאשׁוֹנָה:</p>	<p>וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ עוֹד בְּגִלּוּלֵיהֶם וּבִשְׂפוֹתֵיהֶם וּבְכָל פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּי אֹתָם מִכָּל מוֹשְׁבֵתֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּטְאוּ בָהֶם וְטַהַרְתִּי אוֹתָם וְהוֹדִלְתִּי לָעַם וְאֲנִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים:</p>
<p>And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning.</p>	<p>They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.</p>

Source: English from the New International Version and Hebrew from the Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Codex) in Unicode.

The expression עֹד [...] לֹא [no longer], used in 2 Samuel 7:10, also appears in Ezekiel 37:23. In 2 Samuel 7:10, the people ‘will no longer be disturbed – וְלֹא יִרְגְּזוּ עוֹד’, while in Ezekiel 37:23, the people ‘will no longer defile themselves – וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ עוֹד’. The words עֹד [...] לֹא in the text of Samuel are used to describe what the people will experience. According to Anderson (1989, p. 121), ‘the people will dwell securely and unmolested in contrast with the earlier oppressions during the period of the Judges’. The promise states that the people of YHWH will cease to be disturbed. While the expression עֹד [...] לֹא is a common phrase found in many texts throughout the OT, the actions that it describes express the idea to stop experiencing and doing what is wrong. Both disturbance and defilement are negative. In the two cases, the two actions will come to an end.

**TABLE 4.6:** Hebrew–English translation of 2 Samuel 7:13 and Ezekiel 37:25.

2 Samuel 7:13	Ezekiel 37:25
הוא יבנה בית לשמי וכננתי את־כסא ממלכתו עַד־עוֹלָם:	וַיֵּשְׁבוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְעַבְדִּי לְיַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר יָשְׁבוּ בָהּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ עָלֶיהָ הָמָּה וּבְנֵיהֶם וּבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם עַד־עוֹלָם וַדָּוִד עַבְדִּי נִשְׂאֵי לָהֶם לְעוֹלָם:
He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom <b>for ever</b> .	They will live in the land I gave my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children’s children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince <b>for ever</b> .
	<b>Ezekiel 37:26</b> וְכָרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם בְּרִית עוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אִוְתָם וְנִתְמַתִּים וְהָרַבִּיתִי אִוְתָם וְנִתְמַתִּי אֶת־ מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם לְעוֹלָם: I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them <b>for ever</b> .
	<b>Ezekiel 37:28</b> וַיָּדְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מַשְׁדֵּשׁ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהִיּוֹת מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכָם לְעוֹלָם: ם Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them <b>for ever</b> .

Source: English from the New International Version and Hebrew from the Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Codex) in Unicode.

The term עוֹלָם, preceded by the particle עַד, is used three times in 2 Samuel 7 (vv. 13 and 16). The same word occurs five times in Ezekiel 37. It is preceded once by the particle עַד (v. 25), three times by the preposition לְ (vv. 25, 26 and 28) and once alone (v. 26). In the text of 2 Samuel 7, the expression is linked to the throne (v. 13), to the house and the kingdom of David (v. 16). This word is connected to some important aspects of the Jewish people’s life. In Ezekiel, upon return to their land, they will live ‘forever’ (v. 25), and David will be their prince ‘forever’ (v. 25). In 2 Samuel 7:13, עוֹלָם is used to determine the duration of David’s throne. In a particular way, the same word pertains to the throne of David in Ezekiel 37:25, suggesting the use of the text of Samuel in that of Ezekiel. Additionally, the covenant of peace that YHWH will make with them will be an ‘everlasting covenant’ – בְּרִית עוֹלָם (v. 26). Although the two texts are different in content, they both relate to covenants (with David and the covenant of peace).

In 2 Samuel 7:13, the word עולם specifies the length of the reign of David's descendant. The same word pertains to David on the throne in Ezekiel 37:26. The important aspect to note here is not the occurrence of עולם in the two texts but its connection to the Davidic reign. The use of עולם in relation to the throne of David in the text of Ezekiel is indicative of the influence of the text of 2 Samuel. We do not find other texts that talk about David's throne 'forever'. The prophecy in Isaiah 9:7 mentions the child who will reign on the throne of David without specifying if that throne will be there 'forever'. In Jeremiah 23:5 and 30:9, we have the promise of a future leader in the person of David, but the throne is not explicitly described as 'forever'. The occurrence of David's throne in these prophecies depends on the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7. Apart from the many uses of לעולם in the refrain of Psalm 136 - more than in any other text in the OT - its use many times in a short span of verses in Ezekiel 37 attracts attention and is significant (Viands 2014, p. 222).

## ■ Theological influence

In relation to the Davidic Covenant, the dominant theocentric aspect of the promise in Ezekiel 37 is based, at some point, on 2 Samuel 7. It is YHWH who takes the initiative to give a perpetual reign to David's descendants and bless his people. Again, it is YHWH who will fulfil his promise. The agent through whom he will realise his promise is עבדֵי יְהוָה. In the same way, the divine promise in Ezekiel 37 expresses the faithfulness of YHWH and his grace to his people. In relation to 2 Samuel 7, the covenant that YHWH made with David was also characterised by his faithfulness and his grace.

Theologically, the elements of influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7:1-16 on that of Ezekiel 37:15-28 are perceptible. Considering the theological aspects in Ezekiel 37, the reader can easily connect them to 2 Samuel 7. The key components of YHWH's promises in Ezekiel 37 also feature in 2 Samuel 7, as indicated by Block (2013):

YHWH's promises are eternal: (1) Israel is his covenant people forever; (2) the land of Canaan has been given to them as their territorial homeland forever; (3) YHWH will dwell in the midst of his people forever; (4) YHWH's commitment to his servant David endures forever. He will not go back on his word. (p. 38)

## ■ Conceptual influence

Reading together 2 Samuel 7 and Ezekiel 37, there are similar ideas or concepts that occur in the two texts. The text of 2 Samuel 7 seems to have offered a point of reference for that of Ezekiel 37. I divide the different areas of influence into five points: (1) the concept of leadership, (2) the concept of territory, (3) the concept of peace, (4) the concept of house and (5) the concept of temple.

In reference to the background of David and his rise to power, the text in 2 Samuel 7:8 reads *אָנִי לָקַחְתִּיךָ מִן־הַבָּשָׂה מֵאַחַר הַצֹּאן לְהִיּוֹת נָגִיד עַל־עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל* [I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel]. The reference demonstrates that David was a shepherd before becoming king. In Ezekiel 37:24, in the programme of restoration, David, who will be made king, will play the role of shepherd – *וְעַבְדִּי דָוִד מֶלֶךְ* [My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd]. The difference between David being a shepherd before becoming a ruler (2 Sm 7:8) and David as king and shepherd in a restored nation (Ezk 37:24) resides in the fact that the text of Ezekiel uses shepherd in a metaphorical way, while the text of 2 Samuel 7 reminds us of the choice of David as Saul's replacement in 1 Samuel 16. The notion of leaders as 'shepherds' appears elsewhere in Ezekiel (as in Ezk 34).

Whereas the text of 2 Samuel describes from where David was taken – *מֵאַחַר צֹאן* – and who he became – *נָגִיד עַל־עַמִּי עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל* – the text of Ezekiel uses specific words to describe the role that the promised ruler – *מֶלֶךְ* – will play as a *רוֹעֶה* over the people of YHWH. In the text of Ezekiel, as in that of Samuel, David is ruling over the same group: a united nation of the twelve tribes of Israel, as suggested in Ezekiel 37:15–23.

The promise in Ezekiel 37:24 that the Jewish people will have one shepherd to lead them has traits of the description of the background of David in 2 Samuel 7:8. David, who became king, was once a shepherd ('I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel'). The ruler identified as a shepherd in the text of Ezekiel is none other than David, the servant of YHWH – *וְעַבְדִּי דָוִד*. Describing David, both in 2 Samuel 7:8 and Ezekiel 37:24 and 25, as 'servant of YHWH' means that his function was to serve the people of God. According to Blenkinsopp (1990, p. 176), the word used to designate David 'is an honorific title, but it also implies the view that public office has to be seen in terms of service rather than self-advancement or domination'.

There is a connection between the concept of *מֶלֶךְ* in the text of Ezekiel and that of *נָגִיד* in the text of 2 Samuel. The two terms, however, display some difference. Blenkinsopp gives a good explanation as he tries to differentiate between the use of *נָגִיד* and *מֶלֶךְ* in Ezekiel – specifically in Ezekiel 37:22 and 24. He states that the reason for using *מֶלֶךְ* 'is to emphasize the quite different role of political office conformable to the kind of community Israel is called to be' (Blenkinsopp 1990, p. 176). Nevertheless, the use of *מֶלֶךְ* should not be limited to the king's political role; it encompasses as well a religious role in that 'the king represents both the people in their unity and the rule of Yahweh [...] as the earthly guardian of the people's worship and way of life' (Leslie 1990, p. 193). The word *נָגִיד* is used for leaders in general, who may be military leaders or religious leaders (Anderson 1989, p. 120).

Hence, the preference of מְלֶכֶת for the future leader in Ezekiel highlights his specific function as a political and religious ruler. This function is well-described by Allen (1990):

As 'servant' or vassal of an overlord, he would be committed to Yahweh's will. His designation as 'David' characterizes him not only as a scion of Davidic lineage but as an upholder of the united kingdom, such as David himself was a nominee of all tribes of Israel (2 Sm 5:1-4; cf. 1 Ki 3:28). (p. 193)

While the words used in 2 Samuel and Ezekiel are different, the connection between the two texts is obvious. This connection is not only based on words but also the key character to whom they are linked – David.

When YHWH promises to provide a place – מְקוֹם – for his people (2 Sm 7:10), it is the same as promising his people the land – הָאָרֶץ – where they will live (Ezk 37:25). In the Promised Land, the people of YHWH will experience peace. YHWH, in 2 Samuel 7:10, promises to provide a place for his people – וְשָׂמָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְשָׂמָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל [And I will provide a place for my people Israel]. Similar language appears in Ezekiel 37:22, where YHWH promises to make the Jewish people 'one nation' – וְעָשִׂיתִי אֹתָם לְגוֹי אֶחָד בְּאֶרֶץ [I will make them one nation in the land]. The Hebrew verb used in the text of 2 Samuel is שָׂם. The verb שָׂם has the idea of 'put, place, set, appoint, make' (Cohen 1980, p. 272). In regard to this range of meaning, it still makes sense if one says that YHWH 'will make a place for his people'. Instead of the root שָׂם, in Ezekiel 37:22 we have the root עָשָׂה, which generally means 'to make'. Although the roots of the two verbs are different, the concept that they display is the same. While YHWH will provide a place for his people (2 Sm 7:10), he will make his people one nation in a specific land (place).

In addition, in the two promises, the concern is the people of YHWH. A people cannot be one if they are not in one place. Hence, the idea of the Jewish people being one comes from them being put in one place. Despite the fact that the words and statements in the text of Ezekiel are not the same as in the text of 2 Samuel, it is possible there is an influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7:10 on that of Ezekiel 37:22.

Whereas the text of Ezekiel 37:26 makes mention of בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם [covenant of peace], the idea, however, is contained in 2 Samuel 7:10 that reads וְלֹא־יִכְסִיפוּ בְּגִי־עוֹלָה לְעִנּוֹתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּרִאשׁוֹנָה [Wicked people shall not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning]. Technically, 'peace' here modifies 'covenant', as the peace that the Judeans will have is connected to the land where they will be. In a specific way, it is in their land that they will experience peace, which will be accompanied by an increasing population and the presence of YHWH's sanctuary in their midst. The lack of oppression in the covenant in 2 Samuel 7:10 appears as the prosperity of the people in Ezekiel 37:26, which is the result of the covenant of peace that God will make with his people.

The covenant of peace<sup>36</sup> is detailed in Ezekiel 34:25-30 (Batto 1987, pp. 188-189). This covenant consists of YHWH giving his people safety, security and blessings.<sup>37</sup> The covenant of peace here is the reflection of already existing covenants as per its content. In his discussion on this covenant, Viands (2014) indicates that:

Furthermore, it is clear that the content of the covenant of peace is continuous with the blessings of the Sinai Covenant since they correspond to Lev 26. Therefore, vv. 24-28 probably allude to the original promise of the patriarchs, mediated through the blessings of the Sinai Covenant, and now permanently enacted for the sake of Yahweh's name. Thus, the covenant of peace is both new and not new. Yahweh's previous covenants made with Abraham, Israel, and David are all affirmed and realized in the context of this final covenant. (pp. 227-228)

The mention of the word 'covenant' in Ezekiel 37:26 with its outcomes ascertains the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7, where we have the Davidic Covenant. Although the word 'covenant' does not appear in 2 Samuel 7, it is made clear in Ezekiel 37:26 that the divine promise is based on the covenant that YHWH made to David.

The promises of God to David are characterised by stability and perpetuity. Specifically, in the covenant to David in 2 Samuel 7:11, 12 and 16, YHWH confirms that he will establish a house for David - יהוה כִּי־בֵית יַעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ יְהוָה - [YHWH will make a house] and he will establish the kingdom of David's offspring - וְהָכִינֹתִי אֶת־מַמְלַכְתּוֹ - There will be continuity in the line of David in the matter of kingship. The idea of a continual line in the offspring suggests a vertical multiplication. On the other side, the idea of establishing (making) and multiplying appears also in the text of Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 37:26, YHWH promises to establish or set and bless his people - וְנָתַתִּים וְהָרַבִּיתִי אוֹתָם - and his sanctuary among them - וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־מִקְדָּשִׁי בְּתוֹכְכֶם - The text clearly indicates that YHWH will increase the number of the people. This is a horizontal multiplication, as it concerns the whole nation. The picture that we are getting here is that (Viands 2014):

At the very least, the people will probably be as numerous as they were in the days of David and Solomon. Perhaps they will even transcend these proportions since the covenant is inviolable and perpetual and therefore this blessing will never cease. (p. 225)

Explicitly, the promise of horizontal multiplication in Ezekiel is constructed on the Davidic Covenant in Samuel, where we find the vertical multiplication. The presence of God's sanctuary among the people, who will have increased by then, will be another blessing.

---

36. The 'covenant of peace' was already discussed in detail.

37. See discussion on the covenant of peace in Ezekiel 34:25.

Although the text of Ezekiel uses a different root verb – נתן – from that of 2 Samuel – עשה and כון – the idea that it expresses turns around the same themes that we find in 2 Samuel: house and kingdom. The promise of YHWH consists in YHWH establishing a house for the offspring of David (2 Sm 7:11) and his kingdom (2 Sm 7:12, 13). David already had his house (2 Sm 7:1), and God did not intend to build another physical house for him. The house that YHWH will establish from David’s descendant is not physical; rather, it is his dynasty. Looking at the house as a dynasty, there is a connection with throne and kingdom. The promise in Ezekiel 37:26, 28 follows the same pattern, where YHWH will bless and set his sanctuary among his people. In this text, sanctuary replaces house (temple), which here is not a dynasty but a place for worshipping YHWH. And this place of worship is what David had in mind. Hence, the sanctuary of YHWH and his house reflect almost the same idea.

Initially, the intention of David, in 2 Samuel 7:2, was to build a house for YHWH. YHWH turned this intention aside, saying that it is not David but his offspring who will build the intended house (2 Sm 7:13). The intention of David became a covenant (2 Sm 7:13).<sup>38</sup> In the Davidic Covenant, building a house for YHWH is one of the important elements. The desire that David had to build a house for YHWH was assigned by YHWH to David’s offspring (2 Sm 7:13). In the promise to the exiles in Ezekiel 37:26, 27 and 28, YHWH will establish his sanctuary – וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־מִקְדָּשִׁי – and his dwelling place – וְהָיָה מִשְׁכְּנִי – among his people. The words ‘sanctuary’ and ‘dwelling place’ recall the idea of ‘house’ that appears in 2 Samuel 7. Moreover, the exiles could understand the promise as referring to the temple which, before their deportation, expressed the presence of YHWH among them. It is in the temple that YHWH (Nickelsburg 2005):

[...] caused his name to dwell (Dt 12:11; 2 Ki 21:4), the cultic center of his religion, where sacrifice was offered and where ‘the tribes go up [...] to give thanks to the name of YHWH’ (Ps 122:4). (p. 9)

## ■ Findings: Recommendations for further study

In this chapter, the task was to establish any influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7:1-16 on that of Ezekiel 37:15-28. Considering the literary, theological and conceptual aspects, I focused on the similarities between the two texts to determine if, in any case, there is influence. No single piece of evidence on its own argues strongly for Ezekiel’s dependence on 2 Samuel 7. However, cumulatively, the study shows that the text of

---

38. YHWH refused to allow David to build him a house because it was not an urgent need (cf. 2 Sm 7:6); YHWH never ordered any ruler in Israel to build a house for him (2 Sm 7:7); and David was not qualified to build a house for YHWH because he had shed much blood (cf. 2 Sm 7:5; 1 Chr 22:8; 28:3).

Ezekiel 37 depends on that of 2 Samuel 7 at a certain level. The fact that the text of the book of Ezekiel has affinities with other texts in the OT and, at some point, depends on them – as discussed in Chapter 3 in this book – supports the affirmation that 2 Samuel 7:1-16 has influenced, in one way or another, the text of Ezekiel 37:15-28.

In Chapter 1, the focus was on previous research conducted in the area of this study, with an outline of the approach to undertake in this study – as a contribution to scholarship, my emphasis has been to find any possible influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34 and 37. Specifically, grasping the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7 helps in understanding the significance of the Davidic ruler in Ezekiel 34 and 37.

The discussion in Chapter 2 focused on covenant in the ANE and ancient Israel. It was established that the pattern of covenant in the OT has similarities with covenants in the ANE. While in the ANE we have the parity and the vassal treaties, in the OT we find the obligatory and the promissory types of covenant. This chapter also emphasised the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7. It looked at some aspects like the establishment of a house for David, the significance of the Davidic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant in the prophets. It appeared that the Davidic Covenant might have influenced many texts in the OT, including Ezekiel 34 and 37.

Chapter 3 paid attention to Ezekiel 34, with emphasis on the Davidic Covenant as found in 2 Samuel 7. The study established that the text of Ezekiel has affinities with other texts, including the text of Samuel. The influence of 2 Samuel 7 on Ezekiel 34 was examined from three angles: (1) literary influence, (2) theological influence and (3) conceptual influence. It was determined that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that Ezekiel 34, in relation to the promised ruler David, was influenced by and dependent upon the Davidic Covenant as found in 2 Samuel 7. The discussion in Chapter 4 was similar to the previous chapter, but it focused on Ezekiel 37.

This study has been an effort to understand the Davidic ruler in Ezekiel. It has also attempted to discern the reason behind the divine restoration of the Jewish people: YHWH's covenant with David. Although David will not come back to lead the people of God, because of the covenant, YHWH will restore the people and appoint a leader over them. The research demonstrated that there are important connections between 2 Samuel 7:1-16 and Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28.

To establish the influence of the text of 2 Samuel 7:1-16 on that of Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28, I discovered that there are many words that are shared between Ezekiel and Samuel. As there are many common words in these texts, there are those that captivate attention: they are used in the same context and in relation to David in both texts. Concerning the theological connection and influence, the theocentric aspect of the origin

of the message and the promises became apparent. YHWH is the one who sent Nathan and gave the message to Samuel and Ezekiel. It is YHWH who made the covenant with David and who promised a future ruler in the person of David to his people. Finally, the conceptual influence included the concepts of covenant, territory, rest and peace, leadership, possession, multiplication and temple.

From a closer look, there is no one individual element that confirmed that the text of Samuel might have influenced that of Ezekiel. However, when we cumulatively look at the different elements from the literary, theological and conceptual points of view, there is a compelling case for the dependence of the text of Ezekiel on that of Samuel when it comes to the Davidic Covenant.

In this study, I considered the intertextual connections between 2 Samuel 7:1-16 and Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28, with specific emphasis on the Davidic Covenant. The concepts of the Davidic Covenant that we find in 2 Samuel 7:1-16 and the promise of the restoration of the Jewish people in Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28 are widely approached by scholars; I do not claim to have covered all the necessary areas in this research when it comes to the relation between the mentioned texts. Therefore, in relation to the Davidic Covenant, some areas of research can be considered. Specifically, there is a need to probe the fulfilment of the promises of YHWH in Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28. Such a study will help to establish the supremacy of YHWH and his faithfulness throughout the story of his people. However, this study offers some implications for African leadership.

# Implications for African leadership

King Leopold of Belgium claimed the country now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo as his personal property in 1870, setting in motion one of the most monstrous plunders ever by a colonial power. Ivory, gold, rubber, and an array of minerals were taken in his name, along with millions of lives. But the plunder did not end with the Congo's independence in the mid-1960s - it intensified under the corrupt thirty-two year regime of Mobutu Sese Seko that ended in 1997. In the years since, the pillage and bloodletting in the Congo have continued at a frightening pace. Some five million Congolese died unnecessarily from 1998 to 2007, according to the International Rescue Committee, making it the worst toll on human life since World War II. Yet the carnage has gone largely unnoticed in the outside world. (Eichstaedt 2011, p. 1)

How can an intertextual study of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sm 7:1-16; Ezk 34:23-31; 37:15-28) be relevant to the aforementioned situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and in Africa at large? The approach used in this research is literary, and the focus pertains more to scholarly interests in terms of intertextuality and the unity of God's redemptive-historical plans in Scripture. With such an approach, it may seem quite difficult to draw straight implications for the church in Africa. The discussion here will help to enlighten important aspects in the Davidic Covenant in the three texts studied, as well as its benefits from a biblical-theological perspective for Africa. I refer to biblical theology as it contributes to understanding (1) the meaning of a text and (2) how it applies to us

**How to cite:** Budha, VL 2023, 'Implications for African leadership', in *The biblical concept of 'Davidic Covenant' in 2 Samuel and Ezekiel and its implications for African leadership*, HTS Religion & Society Series, vol. 16, AVARSITY Books, Cape Town, pp. 105-116. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2023.BK470.05>

(Alexander et al. 2000, p. 110). In that way, biblical theology serves as a bridge between the exegesis stage and the application stage (Osborne 2006, p. 373). In relation to the study conducted in this research and biblical theology, I will focus on the unity of the Bible and the Davidic Covenant, particularly as it relates to the concept of leadership.

Biblical theology puts stress on the unity of the Bible, as it provides grounds on which to understand the relation between biblical texts. The unity of the Bible does not only exist in the fact that it is one physical book containing the OT and the New Testament (NT), but in one story that the Bible presents: the story of divine salvation. The establishment of that basis - unity - helps to read the biblical texts in a suitable way to discover God's intention (Wellum 2016, pp. 7-8). The unity of the story of the Bible is then foundational to looking at the Bible as a whole and defines how to approach the Scriptures. The tools and approaches used in studying the Bible are useful means to understand what a text meant then and what it means today in a given context. Plantinga indicates that 'the serious and scholarly study of the Bible is of first importance for the Christian community' (eds. Bartholomew et al. 2003, p. 19). It implies that a substantial study of the Bible is pointless if it does not apply to the current context. One of the aspects to consider in achieving this is the unity of the Bible, because 'no exegetical task is complete until we have related a specific text to the overall message of Scripture' (Goldsworthy 2006, p. 8). The Bible is not a loose collection of various ideas from various human authors who all have their own ideas about God, but rather a tightly unified programme that God has undertaken to redeem humanity, ultimately through Christ. The Bible is 'gospel-centered, Christ-exalting, life-transforming Scripture' (Lawrence 2010, p. 83).

With this perspective, I argue that this study should encourage people to study the Bible for themselves to uncover and discern the overall plan of God and how they fit into it. The study should also encourage people to interpret later Scripture in light of earlier Scripture, as the texts of the Bible are constantly dependent on earlier portions. As an example, in the three texts that make up the core of this research (2 Sm 7:1-16, Ezk 34:23-31 and 37:15-28), there is a consistent picture of a human leader who leads for the benefit of the people rather than for himself, and whose authority is granted by YHWH, reflects YHWH and answers to YHWH.

As believers, we are still living within the redemptive-historical story, in which it is God who grants leadership and authority (cf. Rm 13:1). While God's desire for leadership has never changed, leadership in Africa is often characterised by selfishness, oppression, discrimination and nepotism. Considering those vices, Africa is in need of a type of leadership shaped by the divine model. In the Davidic Covenant, the promises were for David as

well as for the people as a whole. In Ezekiel 34, the bad leaders were dismissed because they mistreated the people, whom YHWH promised to restore, putting them under a leader who would submit to him and serve his people. Considering the context of African leadership today and its outcomes, the texts of 2 Samuel 7:1-16, Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28 are still relevant for the continent. These texts clearly indicate that successful leadership is that which follows God's principles. It is leadership that focuses on serving people with justice. It is such leadership that brings peace and development to a country.

As mentioned in the previous section, the biblical text is useful when it is applied to the people of today and not seen just as a text written to the people of the past (Lawrence 2010, p. 70). This means that, while the promise in 2 Samuel 7:1-16 was specifically for David and his house, the text still speaks to the Christian community in Africa. In the same way, the promises in Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28 are still relevant for Africans. It means that the church in Africa has lessons to learn from these texts in order to address, as per her mission, issues that the continent is facing. However, one must take care in determining in exactly what way such texts remain relevant.

The Bible is God's covenant-led programme. In a progressive way, the Bible presents the divine plan, the promises and their achievement, and the fulfilment of the story of salvation (past, present and future). It does not suggest that all the promises to David and the Judeans are applicable in the same way to the people in Africa. Nevertheless, those promises underline the redemptive plan of God for his people. The promises also display important principles for the well-being of the people. In Africa, the church should consider reading the Bible intertextually, having Biblical Theology in mind. In this way, the church will be able to unpack the guidance of God and to think according to God's thoughts (Wellum 2016, p. 8).

While looking for an appropriate hermeneutic for contextualising the biblical message to Africa, I suggest that such an approach considers reading one biblical text in light of other biblical texts and viewing the Bible as a unity from a Biblical Theology angle. In reality, what we need is not to have a specific and separate approach for Africa and another for the West. Africa and the West have the same biblical story, which needs to be considered in its unity. Whatever approach we use should lead us to understand the Scripture and reach out to the people of YHWH. The seriousness in the tools and methodology that we use as we approach the Scripture serves as a frame so that we do not destroy the message. The Scripture should prevail over our context – African or Western. Reading the story of the Bible as a unity is critical. Ignoring this aspect can lead to intentional or unintentional abuses of the Scripture, which 'are often the

result of letting our backgrounds, preoccupations or biases influence and control the way we read and apply Scripture' (Brauch 2009, p. 16).

The overall idea is that when Scripture is not taken in its unity, we tend to misapply it and sometimes to manipulate people. An example that Benno van den Toren (2007) gives is the understanding of the text of Mark 12:17:

This text is probably a good candidate for a contest for the most abused Scripture verse. This text is often used to justify an obedience to the state and service of the state that are contrary to our belonging to the Kingdom of God. One can find Christian government officials and employees who use this verse to justify the need to obey their government even when this means disobeying the law of God. (p. 76)

It is possible that this text is easily abused, and inappropriate applications are drawn because people fail to connect it to other texts and read it having in mind the unity of the Bible that could shed light on its meaning. Reading the texts of Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28 in light of the text of 2 Samuel 7:1–16 did much to help understand the meaning and the place of the Davidic Covenant in the restoration of YHWH's people and its implications today for Africa.

Having studied the texts of 2 Samuel 7:1–16, Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28 in relation to the Davidic Covenant, I present the following areas of relevance, from a biblical-theological perspective, for the church in Africa when it comes to leadership.

In light of the focus of this study, rather than providing a detailed definition of leadership in this section, I will consider the type of leadership that the Davidic Covenant suggests. In 2 Samuel 7:1–16, YHWH made sure that there was no power vacuum after the reign of his servant David. YHWH determined and planned the years following the reign of David. In the same way, in Ezekiel 34:23–31 and 37:15–28, YHWH decided to bring a change in the leadership of Israel when his people were mistreated and suffered. The complete restoration was to be achieved when YHWH appointed the right human leader for his people in the person of the Davidic king. The action of YHWH is enough evidence of his desire for people to always have leaders who are fit for the task. While the texts of 2 Samuel 7:1–16, Ezekiel 34:23–31 and Ezekiel 37:15–28 help to understand the kind of leaders God desires for his people, Deuteronomy 17:14–20 and Psalm 72 highlight in more detail what a leader should do and be for the people.

The text of Deuteronomy 17:14–20 gives clear instructions about the behaviour of a king to the Israelites, even before they had requested one so that they might become like nations around them (cf. 1 Sm 8:5, 20). This text portrays YHWH 'as a God who makes plans, who has purposes, and who includes humans in his plan as fellow workers' (Walton 2017, p. 106).

The text encompasses instructions as well as prohibitions concerning kingship in Israel. There are conditions a king should fulfil. These conditions concern eligibility (Dt 17:15), social limitations (Dt 17:16), personal limitations (Dt 17:17) and the submission of the king to the divine (Dt 17:18–20) (Scheffler 2017, pp. 161–162). In relation to eligibility, the king in Israel will be chosen by YHWH and will not be a foreigner (v. 15). Besides, there are clear restrictions to the king (vv. 16–17): (1) The king must not amass horses, nor return the people to Egypt to add to his horses; (2) he shall not have many wives; and (3) he shall not amass silver and gold to excess. These instructions are the guidelines for preventing the king from considering himself more important than the rest of the people (v. 20). To avert falling into that danger, he must have a copy of the whole law to help him remember concerning his behaviour (vv. 18–19). These are useful instructions where ‘the king is warned to behave justly toward his subjects and to fulfil his roles’ (Wazana 2016, p. 182).

The summary of the instructions resides in the king giving justice to the people he is leading. They also suggest that the king should be a role model to his people. Amassing horses, gold and silver and having many wives can easily lead to corruption and the misuse of public resources. These instructions point out the humility that the king should display. His focus should be on the people he is leading as he applies justice, described as (Branch 2004):

Israel’s ideal king rules with a bag full of the law! He is more a student on foot carrying books than a ruler being driven around by a slave in a chariot. He’s ‘the people’s king’ – accessible, ‘a regular Joe’, the boy next door, a good neighbour. If anything, this king would rather take the back seat than sit at the head table. This king doesn’t introduce himself as king. This king doesn’t make people bow before him. Instead as an ideal Israelite, he introduces people to the real king of Israel, Yahweh. Because he reads the law constantly, he is not self-important or haughty. (pp. 383–384)

The depiction is that the king should be a man ready to serve his subjects and not a king living in an ivory tower. However, living in humility does not diminish the king. Humility does not open the door for people to despise their leader. In fact, humility will attract respect for the king. Nevertheless, beyond how this text provides a model for all Israelite kings, the text envisages Jesus, the king *par excellence*.

The theme of justice being crucial in the kingship in Israel appears in a detailed way in Psalm 72. The most important virtue that a king needs is the justice that God gives (Ps 72:1). The purpose of justice is to help the king to judge people without discrimination. As he applies justice, he will defend the afflicted ones and punish their oppressors. As a result, the king will gain power and honour. In other words, the king ‘will judge fairly and remove the oppression of the poor from the land (Ps 72:1–4, 72:12–14),

will rule widely and in peace (Ps 72:5-9)' (Jerome 2012, pp. 196-197). This is a simple and concise description of good leadership 'that makes the defence of the less privileged of the society a top priority' (Jerome 2012, pp. 196-197). Where there is justice, there is peace. This psalm is not describing only one specific leader or even just Israel's leaders but what any ruler of any nation should look like. The issue of justice and peace is central in this psalm, summarising the capital need of any country. Africa should strive for this type of leadership. For African leaders, Psalm 72 suggests that (Human 2002):

Modern leaders should orientate themselves towards the basic function of leadership, namely to establish justice and peace – *ṣedakah* and *šalom* – in their societies. Core objects of their enterprise should be the poor, the oppressed and the afflicted – figures and groups on the periphery of society; people who find themselves in marginalised and distressful social circumstances [...] Leaders should constantly be made aware of the social and cosmic implications of their leadership as well as the interrelatedness between these two dimensions. Rule by just reign results in the well-being of a society. (p. 674)

Psalm 72 displays the type of leaders God desires, but at the same time, it points to the ideal king, Jesus Christ. Being one of the 'royal psalms', Psalm 72 contains (Human 2002):

[A] series of entreaties that God will establish and extend the righteous rule of the monarch so that all nations will submit to his reign and experience the blessings of God's kingdom through him. (p. 985)

The texts of Deuteronomy 17 and Psalm 72 describe how a leader should behave and what he should do for his people. These texts complement texts pertaining to the promised ruler in the text of Ezekiel. Considering the text of Ezekiel, I argue that the portrayal of a leader in Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28 just refers to the future Messiah, as that is the specific figure in view there. However, Deuteronomy 17 and Psalm 72 lend further support to the notion that the kind of ruler envisioned in Ezekiel has broader relevance for how all Israelite kings – and even non-Israelites rulers – are to act, as they are all to reflect God's own kingship in his justice. Thus, the texts of 2 Samuel 7:1-16, and Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28, in relation to the Davidic Covenant, are relevant in a broader sense for how leaders in Africa should rule.

A leadership that fits the desired divine type will establish peace in the country. In the absence of peace, insecurity will reign, leading to internal as well as external exile. Currently, this has been a trend in Africa, in that thousands of people from the continent seek refuge in their neighbouring countries and some outside of Africa to the peril of their lives. The movement of the population to look for 'greener pastures' that has become a routine in African countries like the DRC, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Libya and South Sudan, to name just a few, is the outcome of poor leadership. The bad and greedy

leaders have put their citizens in a difficult situation. The situation of Africa is not different, for example, from that of Chile, where (Barbera 2008):

The military regimes used horrifically brutal techniques to subjugate those whom they considered subversive, or just to instill profound fear and insecurity in the population. These techniques included all forms of torture, mass detentions and arrests, exile, assassination, disappearance, arbitrary search and seizure operations, and internal exile, also known as *relegación*. Poor neighbourhoods and rural peasant communities were especially affected and afflicted by these practices. Life was disrupted, families were torn apart, and whole neighbourhoods and communities were physically and psychologically destroyed. Such was the situation in Chile. (p. 69)

The situation that prevailed in Chile mirrors daily life in many places in Africa. The oppressive and brutal practices of military, political and administrative authorities have put people in continuous fear. The ideal is for leaders to focus on serving people rather than on their selfish interests; they should commit themselves to defending the poor and applying justice.

In many African countries, people suffer oppression from inside as well as from outside. While displaced or exiled, they are not in a position to prosper, and as a result, poverty increases daily with all its consequences: death, lack of education for children, lack of food and so on. Socially, there are three effects of exile: (1) diminishment of resources and security; (2) increased effect of morbidity and mortality; and (3) pragmatic responses to the two first-mentioned effects, where the composition of households becomes more extensive and inclusive (Kelle, Ames & Wright 2012, pp. 175–177). Ames (in Kelle et al. 2012, pp. 175–177) summarises that exile has cascading effects. When people are in exile or displacement, it is obvious that they may not have access to their resources. They cannot go back to their initial areas because of insecurity. Considering the conditions imposed on them, they are exposed to diseases and illnesses that easily lead to death. In addition, as a result of the complexity of the situation, the affected people do not get appropriate help.

Without peace, Africa will not come out of poverty despite the natural resources that the continent contains. The conditions of lack of peace in some African countries are indicators that there is still a long way for them to go to obtain political stability and economic development. With continuous and recurrent conflicts, Africa is not stable, and its affected population lives in extreme poverty that ruins the economy of the region. As long as Africa is not stable, it will never benefit from the vast natural wealth that it has (Ahere 2012, p. 1). Being part of society, the church has a crucial role to play when it comes to leadership.

The promise of YHWH to David was to bring up a descendant through whom his kingship would last forever. Based on this promise, in the restoration plan of the Jewish people, he promised to appoint his servant

and prince, David, to rule over them, followed by the guarantee of security and blessing. At some point, one may think that leadership in some African countries follows the Davidic pattern, where a son succeeds his father as president, putting those countries in the state of kingdom. For example, in the DRC, Joseph Kabila Kabange replaced his father, Laurent-Désiré Kabila. In the Republic of Kenya, many years after the death of its founder and first president, Jomo Kenyatta, his son Uhuru Kenyatta became the fourth president of Kenya. In Gabon, Ali Bongo succeeded his father, Omar Bongo. Because the mentioned leaders came to power by way of election or consensus, this does not mean that presidency in Africa is hereditary, and the Bible does not provide clear instructions in terms of how nations should choose leaders or whether such leadership should be hereditary. However, the Davidic hereditary covenant pertains to the Messiah, and God in his providence decided to use a hereditary covenant with David to anticipate the coming of his Son. This is a unique redemptive-historical event. It does not indicate that it is God's desire for all leaders and kings to be hereditary in the same way. Nor is the opposite necessarily the case. While the Davidic Covenant encompasses the kind of desired leadership, it is important to note that the covenant, as made with David, was applicable to the Judean community. The critical insight for African leadership is to have in place a leadership that meets the standard that God desires.

Concerning the study in this work, I do not suggest that churches should appoint national leaders but that the profile of what the leader should be is much the same as in Ezekiel 34 and 37. A servant leader should not look for the first position but the last, as the expression of his commitment to serve others (Mt 20:16; Mk 9:35). It is by serving others faithfully that his greatness comes (Mt 20:26-28; Mk 10:42-45). Serving others is possible if a leader chooses humility as Jesus did (Jn 13:12-16; Phlp 2:3). Focusing on the servant leadership model, the church has the mandate to offer her support and to accompany a nation's leadership to become reliable. As observed by Jo-Ansie van Wyk (2007):

Reliable leadership is an indispensable component of any progressive society. The rapidly changing African society with its numerous challenges calls for reliable leadership. The Church which is the most trusted institution has failed to offer this reliable leadership to the African society. In spite of the fact that the Church in Africa is experiencing tremendous numerical growth, she has failed to produce enough leaders and the few available are not well-equipped to meet the needs of the African people in this century. If the Church in Africa hopes to be relevant to the African society, she has to re-think her training system. She must produce leaders who can be relied on by the African people. This is only possible if she produces enough well-qualified leaders to match the rapidly growing African Church and society. (p. 4)

Considering what Van Wyk affirms, the church is called to play her prophetic role. It is not that the church must go to the political arena and abandon

her prophetic task; rather, the church should act as a 'watchman' of the nation. However, I do not fully agree with Van Wyk when she claims that the church in Africa has not produced enough well-equipped leaders. So far, the church has done her best in the area of training. It is for the graduates to put in place what they learned. In difficult conditions and situations, courage and boldness are needed. David received the message of the perpetuity of his house through the prophet Nathan. In the same way, the bad leaders of Israel and the people received the message of their restoration through the prophet Ezekiel. Similarly, the church in Africa should not hesitate to teach concerning the servant leadership model that God desires for his people. It is for the church to communicate what the will of God is for the leadership as well as for the people.

Certainly, the church in Africa has the obligation to execute her prophetic mandate. This does not necessarily mean that by fulfilling her prophetic role, the church has the capacity to save her country. Although the message of the church can be rejected, she must nevertheless speak the truth and act like salt and light in the world (cf. Mt 5:13).

For the church to play her role in an appropriate way, she must manifest integrity, honesty, credibility and love (Lk 16:10; 2 Cor 8:21; Eph 4:25; Col 3:9; Phlp 4:8; 2 Tm 2:15; Tt 2:7-8; 1 Jn 4:7-10). Unfortunately, these virtues have not always been in the church as they should. The lack of these values has sometimes weakened the impact of the church. Referring to the role of the church in the DRC – and Africa by extension – and its failure to fulfil its prophetic role, Katho is right when he points out that the church has not been a role model to society (Katho 2003, p. 422). The church must pursue her task in helping people to understand Christianity and to know God. 'Understanding Christianity' should not be limited to an intellectual or a doctrinal comprehension. It should be comprised of Christians practising what they know. Failure to practise Christianity is at the basis of the weakness of the church in Africa in making considerable impact in society. It is because of that lack that tribalism, mismanagement and corruption have taken place in the church.

The church should seek the root causes of the problems that ravage Africa and address them, using appropriate approaches to interpret the Bible and from a Biblical Theology point of view. The question to ask is whether the church in Africa is in the position to play her role as she should and make her voice heard, or if she is like the church in South Africa. Thomas Resane (2017) describes the situation prevailing in the church in South Africa:

For the South African Church today, the pulpit has lost its beauty. Opposition against the Church's role is distressing. South Africans, together with their political leaders have generally stopped consulting the Lord both for personal or national welfare. The religious condition is deficient and morale low.

People's spirits are crushed and in a despair. Human ideologies such as egotism, individualism, secularism, and atheism have taken control of some of the nation's moral foundations. These were the conditions in which the Church's prophetic role should become conspicuous. South Africa is faced with what Israel of Samuel's days faced. (p. 6)

It means that the church has to take a firm stand in the fulfilment of her prophetic mission. This quote rightly depicts what is happening in many African countries and even proposes how to address the problem. To avoid going off track, the church has to ground her teaching in Scripture, considering its unity and its application to the current community.

As both Nathan and Ezekiel received their message from YHWH, in the same way the church should make the will of God and the truth of Scripture known. In the Davidic Covenant, we see YHWH's concern for his servant and his offspring. In Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28, we also find YHWH concerned with the future of his people. Considering the divine plan for humanity, the spiritual, social and economic welfare of human beings remains the desire of God. The church, as God's agent in the world, should speak out about the sovereignty of God and the kingship of Jesus, and it is by doing so that the church in Africa will influence the political leaders. It is for the church to draw the attention of leaders to serve the people they are leading and not to focus on their selfish interests. It is for the church to teach that it is God who gives authority (Rm 13:1) (Moila 1990, p. 21). Therefore, a leadership that cares for people should put stress on the Davidic leadership model, where the leader submits to God and serves the people.

Faced with the alarming situation in Africa, some hope remains in the prophetic role of the church. The study of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:1-16, and its echo in Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28, gives a clue of the type of leaders that God desires. Although this was the design for the king of the Israelites, it is still relevant for the servant leadership model that is needed for Africa today. It is the promise in the Davidic Covenant that gave hope to the desperate Jewish people, as their restoration by YHWH was guaranteed.

Yet while the church may do her best to address the issue of political leadership in Africa, and despite Christians making their prophetic voices heard, the church and the Christians who make up the church may be disappointed because their leaders may not heed God's leadership principles. The appropriate way for Christians to manage their disappointment is to put their hope in the kingdom that Jesus Christ will one day bring.

Although the texts from 2 Samuel 7:1-16 and Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28 do inform the leadership in Africa in an analogous sense, in terms

of emphasising what a godly leader should look like, the actual fulfilment of these texts from Ezekiel is not found in any national leaders but in Christ himself. For this reason, the primary focus in application must be on the need for Christians to look to Christ as their king. We are citizens not only of the DRC or of the Republic of Kenya, or of any other earthly country, but of the kingdom of Christ. Thus, for the believer, our hope never lies in political leaders but in Christ, the David of Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28. So inasmuch as Christians should have a prophetic voice and should do what they can to bring good political leaders into power, hope never lies truly there but in the kingdom that Christ will one day bring fully and finally.

There are many references to Jesus Christ as King in the NT. The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the King, and the kingdom of heaven constitutes its main theme. In Matthew 2:2, Jesus is described as the 'king of the Jews'. In Luke 1:32-33, Jesus, before his birth, is designated as the owner of David's throne. The text of Mark 15:32 identifies Jesus as the 'King of Israel'. In John 1:49, Nathan declares, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in John 12:12-19 also refers to Jesus as the 'King of Israel'. The text of 1 Timothy 6:15 portrays Jesus as the 'blessed and only Sovereign', indicating that Jesus is the King of kings, as found in Revelation 19:16. Stated succinctly, the title attests that God the Father has bestowed royal authority upon the incarnate son, Jesus, who becomes Christ the King, to accomplish in the power of the Spirit the proclamation and the re-establishment of divine sovereignty in a world enslaved by falsehood, disordered power, corruption, evil and death (Sherman 2004, p. 117).

The truth is that most national governments do not acknowledge Jesus as King. Therefore, we cannot expect their leaders to be Jesus-like kings. But in the church, where leaders do acknowledge Jesus as King, the nature of Jesus' kingship (as foreseen in the Davidic Covenant and the text of Ezekiel) has some bearing on how pastors and church leaders lead. In 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, what the NT expects a leader to look like in the local church overlaps with Jesus' own leadership. A church leader must be morally upright (1 Tm 3:2-5; Tt 1:7-8) and a mature Christian (1 Tm 3:6-8; Tt 1:9). The ideas that we derive from the mentioned texts are that a church leader must be selfless, sacrificial, a servant of others, disciplined in character and having a high moral standard (Oginde 2011, p. 30). Christ being the head of the church, leaders of a church are merely servants. As Davidic kings or princes, they receive instructions from Christ. The fact that church leaders are accountable to Jesus is stressed in Titus 1:7, where they are identified as people who '[are] entrusted with God's work'. In other words, they are managers who have to work under the guidance of the church owner (cf. Mt 16:18) through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, church

leadership remains a matter of humble service, loving service, characterised by purity, sacrifice, diligence and devotion (Helfers 2000, p. 56).

Church leadership is not about positions and titles but about the service rendered under the main church leader, Jesus Christ. The ultimate way to lead according to God's desire is to receive directives from Scripture concerning the spiritual and behavioural qualifications of a church leader. The expectation is that '[t]he local churches in Africa could benefit greatly both spiritually and physically if they were to bring these church offices into proper biblical perspective' (Helfers 2000, p. 72).

In this chapter, I attempted to establish the relevance of the Davidic Covenant for African leadership from a biblical-theological perspective. Scripture remains the principal tool for the church to address various issues in the life of Africans. For a better result, reading and studying Scripture in its unity is the appropriate way that will help to avoid the abuse of Scripture and draw appropriate application.

The situation of some African countries is shameful, disrespectful and disgraceful. Lack of stability and peace, recurrent conflicts, the killing and displacement of innocent villagers, insecurity and impoverishment have become the daily portion of the people. In relation to the Davidic Covenant, there is hope for Africa if leaders opt to serve their people in justice. In addition, there is hope if the church rightfully plays her prophetic role by using Scripture appropriately and pointing people to Jesus Christ, the King *par excellence*.

# References

- Ackroyd, PR 1971, *The second Book of Samuel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Adeyemo, T (ed.) 2006, *Africa Bible Commentary*, WordAlive Publishers, Nairobi.
- Ahere, J 2012, *The peace process in the DRC: A transformation quagmire*, *Africa Portal*, viewed 11 July 2019, <<https://www.africaportal.org/publications/the-peace-process-in-the-drc-a-transformation-quagmire/>>
- Albertz, R 2003, *Israel in Exile: The history and literature of the sixth century B.C.E.*, Studies in biblical literature, vol. 3, transl. D Green, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta.
- Alexander, TD, et al. 2000, *New dictionary of biblical theology*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Alfaro, MJM 1996, 'Intertextuality: Origins and development of the concept', *Atlantis*, pp. 268–285.
- Allen, G 2011, *Intertextuality*, 2nd edn., Routledge, Abingdon.
- Alt, A, et al. (eds.) 1997, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 5th edn., Deutsche Bibelges, Stuttgart.
- Andersen, FI & Freedman, DN (eds.) 2000, *Micah: A new translation with introduction and commentary*, Doubleday, New York.
- Anderson, AA 1989 *2 Samuel*, DA Hubbard et al. (eds.), Word Books Publishing, Waco.
- Anthozio, S 2010, 'Crise et théologie de l'exil chez les trois grands prophètes', in *Actes Du VIIIe Colloque international: La transeuphratène à l'époque perse: Crises et autres difficultés, Transeuphratène*, vol. 1, Gabalda, Paris.
- Arnold, BT 1989, 'The Amalekite's report of Saul's death: Political intrigue or incompatible sources?', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 289–298.
- Arnold, BT 2003, *1 and 2 Samuel: The NIV application commentary from biblical text ... to contemporary life*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Arnold, BT & Williamson, HGM (eds.) 2005, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical books*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Austel, HJ 1980, 'עֲמִיר', in RL Harris, GL Archer & BK Waltke (eds.), *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., Moody Press, Chicago, pp. 939–940.
- Averbeck, RE 1997, 'טוֹרָה', in W VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 338–353.
- Baer, DA & Gordon, RP 1997, 'חֶסֶד', in W VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 211–218.
- Baltzer, K 1971, *The covenant formulary in Old Testament, Jewish, and early Christian writings*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia.
- Barbera, RA 2008, 'Internal exile: Effects on families and communities', *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, vol. 25, no. 1, viewed 12 January 2015, <<http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/refuge/article/view/21399>>
- Barrick, WD 1999, 'The mosaic covenant', *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2, viewed 16 March 2019, <[https://scholar.google.de/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5&q=The+Mosaic+covenant&btnG=](https://scholar.google.de/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=The+Mosaic+covenant&btnG=)>
- Bartholomew, CG, et al. (eds.) 2003, *'Behind' the text: History and biblical interpretation*, The Scripture and Hermeneutics series, vol. 4, Paternoster Press, Carlisle.
- Batto, BF 1987, 'The covenant of peace: A neglected Ancient Near Eastern motif', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 49, pp. 187–211.
- Beal, KT 1992, 'Glossary', in DN Fowell (ed.), *Reading between texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, pp. 21–24.
- Bergen, RD 1996, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 7, Broadman & Holman Publishing, Nashville.
- Biwul, JKT 2013, *A theological examination of symbolism in Ezekiel with emphasis on the shepherd metaphor*, Langham Monographs, Carlisle.

## References

- Biwul, JKT 2019, 'The restoration of the "dry bones" in Ezekiel 37:1-14: An exegetical and theological analysis', *Scriptura*, vol. 118, no. 1, n.p. <https://doi.org/10.7833/118-1-1528>
- Blenkinsopp, J 1990, *Ezekiel*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.
- Block, DI 1987, 'Gog and the Pouring out of the spirit: Reflections on Ezekiel xxxix 21-9', *Vetus Testamentum*, n.v., pp. 257-270.
- Block, DI 1997a, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.
- Block, DI 1997b, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.
- Block, DI 2010, 'Transformation of royal ideology in Ezekiel', in W Tooman & M Lyons (eds.), *Transforming visions: Transformations of text, tradition, and theology in Ezekiel*, Pickwick Publications, Eugene, pp. 208-246.
- Block, DI 2013, *By the river Chebar: Historical, literary, and theological studies in the book of Ezekiel*, Cascade Books, Eugene.
- Block, DI 2021, *Covenant: The framework of God's grand plan of redemption*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids.
- Boadt, L 1990, 'The function of the salvation oracles in Ezekiel 33 to 37', *Hebrew Annual Review*, vol. 12, pp. 1-21.
- Boda, MJ & McConville, JG (eds.) 2012, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Booth, F 2013, 'Covenant & promise: An analysis of biblical principles of covenant, the interaction of conditionality and promise in covenant theology and the significance for Israel today', *Olive Press Research Paper*, no. 18, The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People (CMJ), London.
- Bosworth, DA 2006, 'Evaluating King David: Old problems and recent scholarship', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 2, pp. 191-210.
- Botterweck, GJ & Ringgren, H (eds.) 1974-2014, *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*, 15 vols., transl. JT Willis, GW Bromiley & DE Green, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.
- Boyarin, D 1990, *Intertextuality and the reading of Midrash*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Branch, RG 2004, 'The messianic dimensions of kingship in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 as fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew', *Verbum et Ecclesia*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 378-401.
- Brauch, MT 2009, *Abusing scripture: The consequences of misreading the bible*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Brettler, MZ 1989, 'God is King: Understanding an Israelite metaphor', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, suppl. 76, Sheffield.
- Brown, F 2007, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody.
- Brownlee, WH 1986, *Ezekiel 1-19*, DA Hubbard (eds.), Word Books, Waco.
- Brueggemann, W 1990, *First and second Samuel*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.
- Budha, VL 2020, 'An intertextual study of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:1-16/Ezekiel 34:23-31 and 37:15-28)', PhD thesis, Department of Theology, Africa International University, Nairobi.
- Callender, DE 1998, 'Servants of God(s) and servants of kings in Israel and the Ancient Near East', *Semeia*, vols. 83-84, pp. 67-82.
- Carpenter, E 1997, 'עֶבֶד', in WA VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 304-309.
- Clements, RE 1965, *Prophecy and covenant*, SCM Press, Bloomsbury.
- Clines, DJA (ed.) 1993, *The dictionary of classical Hebrew*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield.
- Cohen, GG 1980, 'עֶבֶד', in RL Harris, GL Archer & BK Waltke (eds.), *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., Moody Press, Chicago, pp. 252-253.

- Cook, SL & Patton, C (eds.) 2004, *Ezekiel's hierarchical world: Wrestling with a tiered reality*, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series, vol. 31, Brill, Leiden.
- Cooke, GA 1970, *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh.
- Cooper, LE 1994, *Ezekiel*, The New American Commentary, vol. 17, Broadman and Holman Publishers, Nashville.
- Darr, KP 1987, 'The wall around paradise: Ezekielian ideas about the future', *Vetus Testamentum*, n.v., pp. 271-279.
- Davis, DR 1999, *Expositions of the Book of 2 Samuel: Out of every adversity*, Christian Focus, Fearn.
- De Jong, J 2015, 'Making sense in Zephaniah: An intertextual reading', PhD thesis, Laidlaw College, Christchurch.
- De Vaux, R 1961, *Ancient Israel: Its life and institutions*, transl. J McHugh, Darton, Longham & Todd, London.
- Douglas, JD, et al. (eds.) 1990, *New commentary on the whole bible: Based on the classic commentary of Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*, Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton.
- Douglas, JD & Tenney, MC (eds.) 1987, *New international dictionary of the Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Duguid, IM 1994, *Ezekiel and the leaders of Israel*, Brill, Leiden.
- Duguid, IM 1999, *Ezekiel*, NIV Application Commentary, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Dumbrell, WJ 1984, *Covenant and creation: An Old Testament covenantal theology*, Paternoster Press, Exeter.
- Eichstaedt, P 2011, *Consuming the Congo: War and conflict minerals in the world's deadliest place*, Lawrence Hills Books, Chicago.
- Elwell, WA (ed.) 1989, *Evangelical commentary on the Bible*, Baker Reference Library, vol. 3, Baker Books, Grand Rapids.
- Eslinger, LM 1994, *House of god or house of David: The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7*, JSOT Press, Sheffield.
- Evans, CA 2006, 'Messianic hopes and messianic figures in late antiquity', *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, vol. 3, pp. 9-40.
- Evans, CA, Talmon, S & Sanders, JA (eds.) 1997, *The quest for context and meaning: Studies in biblical intertextuality in honor of James A. Sanders*, Biblical Interpretation Series, vol. 28, Brill, Leiden.
- Evans, JF 2006, 'An inner-biblical interpretation and intertextual reading of Ezekiel's recognition formulae with the Book of Exodus', DTh thesis, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch.
- Evans, MJ 2000, *1 and 2 Samuel*, New International Biblical Commentary, vol. 6, Hendrickson, Peabody.
- Fewell, DN (ed.) 1992, *Reading between texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.
- Floyd, MH 1992, 'Psalm LXXXIX: A prophetic complaint about the fulfillment of an oracle', *Vetus testamentum*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 442-457.
- Fretheim, TE 1997, 'ידע', in W VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 409-414.
- Friedman, RE 1987, 'The hiding of the face: An essay on the literary unity of biblical narrative', in J Neusner, BA Levine & ES Frerichs (eds.), *Judaic perspectives on ancient Israel*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia.
- Gaebelein, FE (ed.) 1985, *The expositor's Bible commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible: Minor prophets*, Regency Reference Library, Grand Rapids.
- Gaebelein, FE, Douglas, JD & Polcyn, D (eds.) 1976, *The expositor's Bible commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.

## References

- Gates, JF 1987, 'Ezekiel, book of', in JD Douglas & MC Tenney (eds.), *The new international dictionary of the Bible: Pictorial edition*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Gentry, PJ & Wellum, SJ 2018, *Kingdom through covenant: A biblical-theological understanding of the covenants*, 2nd edn., Crossway, Wheaton.
- George, MK 2002, 'Fluid stability in Second Samuel 7', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 1, p. 17.
- Goldsworthy, G 2006, 'Biblical theology and hermeneutics', *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 4-18.
- Gordon, RP 1986, *1 & 2 Samuel: A commentary*, Paternoster Press, Exeter.
- Greenberg, M 1997, *Ezekiel 21-37: A new translation with introduction and commentary*, Doubleday, New York.
- Greene, JT 1989, *The role of the messenger and message in the Ancient Near East: Oral and written communication in the Ancient Near East and in the Hebrew scriptures: Communicators and communiqués in context*, Brown Judaic studies, no. 169, Scholars Press, Atlanta.
- Grisanti, MA 1999, 'The Davidic covenant', *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 233-250.
- Guthrie, D (ed.) 1973, *The new Bible commentary revised*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.
- Gwilym, HJ 1990, *The Nathan narratives*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, vol. 80, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield.
- Hamilton, MW 2018, *A theological introduction to the Old Testament*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Hamilton, VP 1997, 'זרע', in W VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 1151-1152.
- Harris, RL, Archer, GL & Waltke, BK (eds.) 1980, *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., Moody Press, Chicago.
- Hatina, TR 1999, 'Intertextuality and historical criticism in New Testament studies: Is there a relationship?', *Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 28-43.
- Haynes, SR & McKenzie, SL (eds.) 1999, *To each its own meaning: An introduction to biblical criticisms and their applications*, Rev. and expanded edn., Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.
- Hays, RB 1989, *Echoes of Scripture in the letters of Paul*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Helfers, HN 2000, 'Leadership of the church', *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, vol. 1, no. 19. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351151160-30>
- Henry, M 1985, *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible volume 4 Isaiah to Malachi*, Fleming H Revell Company, Downers Grove.
- Hooke, SH (ed.) 1958, *Myth, ritual, and kingship: Essays on the theory and practice of kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- House, PR 1998, *Old Testament theology*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Howard, DM 1993, *An introduction to the Old Testament historical books*, Moody Publishers, Chicago.
- Hubbard, RL, Jr 1997, 'ישע', in W VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 556-562.
- Human, DJ 2002, 'An ideal for leadership - Psalm 72: The (wise) king - Royal mediation of God's universal reign: Words on leadership', *Verbum et Ecclesia*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 658-677.
- Jenson, RW 2009, *Ezekiel*, Brazos theological commentary on the Bible, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids.
- Jepsen, A 1979, 'אֶזְרָא', in GJ Botterweck, H Ringgren & JT Willis (eds.), *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*, rev. edn., WB Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, pp. 292-323.

- Jerome, OM 2012, 'Prayer for good governance: A study of Psalm 72 in the Nigerian context', *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 12–29.
- Johnson, B 1998, 'מִשְׁפָּט', in GJ Botterweck et al. (eds.), *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*, WB Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, pp. 96–98.
- Joseph, AL 2015, *Who is like David? Was David like David? Good kings in the Book of Kings*, Villanova University, Villanova, viewed 06 September 2023, <[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewizivapkaBAxU2a\\_EDHek8C6MQFnoECBAQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcommons.org%2Fdeposits%2Fdownload%2Fhc%3A13628%2FCONTENT%2Fwho-is-like-david.pdf%2F&usq=AOvVaw1eoOmApnkzAdnk5iw3yIOV&opi=89978449](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewizivapkaBAxU2a_EDHek8C6MQFnoECBAQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcommons.org%2Fdeposits%2Fdownload%2Fhc%3A13628%2FCONTENT%2Fwho-is-like-david.pdf%2F&usq=AOvVaw1eoOmApnkzAdnk5iw3yIOV&opi=89978449)>
- Joyce, P 2009, *Ezekiel: A commentary*, T&T Clark, New York.
- Jumper, JN 2013, 'Honor and shame in the Deuteronomic covenant and the Deuteronomistic presentation of the Davidic covenant', PhD thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, viewed 26 October 2023, <[https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/11124848/Jumper\\_gsas.harvard\\_0084L\\_10892.pdf?sequence=3](https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/11124848/Jumper_gsas.harvard_0084L_10892.pdf?sequence=3)>
- Kaiser, WC 1980, 'זָרֵי', in RL Harris, GL Archer & BK Waltke (eds.), *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., Moody Press, Chicago, pp. 252–253.
- Kasher, R 2009, 'Haggai and Ezekiel: The complicated relations between the two prophets', *Vetus testamentum*, vol. 59, no. 4, pp. 556–582. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853309X445016>
- Katho, B 2003, *To know and not to know YHWH: Jeremiah's understanding and its relevance for the church in DR Congo*, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.
- Kelle, BE 2013, *Ezekiel: A commentary in the Wesleyan tradition*, New Beacon Bible Commentary, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, Kansas City.
- Kelle, BE, Ames, FR & Wright, JL 2012, *Interpreting exile: Displacement and deportation in biblical and modern contexts*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta.
- Klein, A 2010, 'Prophecy continued: Reflections on innerbiblical exegesis in the book of Ezekiel', *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 60, no. 4, pp. 571–582. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853310X530460>
- Klingbeil, GM 1997, 'הִדְרָה', in W VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 1012–1013.
- Koch, K 1995, 'פִּוֵּן', in GJ Botterweck et al. (eds.), *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*, WB Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, pp. 89–101.
- Köhler, L 2001, *The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*, study edn., Brill, Leiden.
- Laato, A 1997, 'Second Samuel 7 and Ancient Near Eastern royal ideology', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 2, pp. 244–269.
- Launderville, D 2003, *Piety and politics: The dynamics of royal authority in Homeric Greece, Biblical Israel, and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia*, WB Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.
- Lawrence, M 2010, *Biblical theology in the life of the church: A guide for ministry*, Crossway, Wheaton.
- Leene, H 2014, *Newness in Old Testament prophecy: An intertextual study*, Old Testament studies, vol. 64, Brill, Leiden.
- Lemke, WE 1984, 'Life in the present and hope for the future', *Interpretation*, vol. 38, pp. 165–180.
- Leslie, CA 1990, *Ezekiel 20–48*, DA Hubbard et al. (eds.), Word Biblical Commentary, Word Books, Dallas.
- Levenson, JD 1976, *Theology of the program of restoration of Ezekiel 40–48*, Scholars Press for the Harvard Semitic Museum, Cambridge.
- Levenson, JD 1979, 'The Davidic covenant and its modern interpreters', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 205–219.
- Lipton, D 2006, 'Early mourning? Petitionary versus posthumous ritual in Ezekiel xxiv', *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 185–202.

## References

- MacDonald, W & Farstad, AL 1995, *Believer's Bible commentary*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville.
- Martens, EA 1994, *God's design: A focus on Old Testament Theology*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids.
- Martens, EA 1997, 'נוֹן', in W VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 615-617.
- Matthews, VH 2005, *Old Testament turning points: The narratives that shaped a nation*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids.
- McCarter, PK 1984, *II Samuel: A new translation with introduction, notes, and commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 9, Doubleday, Garden City.
- McCarthy, DJ 1981, *Treaty and covenant: A study in form in the ancient oriental documents and in the Old Testament*, Biblical Institute Press, Rome.
- McConville, JG 1993, *Grace in the end: A study in Deuteronomic theology*, Paternoster Press, Carlisle.
- McKay, N 2013, 'Status update: The many faces of intertextuality in New Testament study', *Religion & Theology*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 84-106.
- McKenzie, SL 2000, *King David: A biography*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Mein, A 2001, *Ezekiel and the ethics of exile*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Merrill, EH 1997, 'הֶלֶךְ', in W VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 1032-1035.
- Middlemas, JA 2007, *The templeless age: An introduction to the history, literature, and theology of the 'exile'*, 1st edn., Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville.
- Miller, GD 2011, 'Intertextuality in Old Testament research', *Currents in Biblical Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 283-309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476993X09359455>
- Miscall, PD 1992, 'Isaiah: New heavens, new earth, new book', in DN Fewell (ed.), *Reading between texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, pp. 41-56.
- Moila, MP 1990, 'God's kingship and political commitment', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, vol. 71, pp. 18-28.
- Murray, DF 1998, *Divine prerogative and royal pretension: Pragmatics, poetics, and polemics in a narrative sequence about David (2 Samuel 5.17-7.29)*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield.
- Nicholson, EW, Mayes, ADH & Salters, RB (eds.) 2003, *Covenant as context: Essays in honour of E.W. Nicholson*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Nickelsburg, GWE 2005, *Jewish literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A historical and literary introduction*, 2nd edn., Fortress Press, Minneapolis.
- Noth, M 1958, *The history of Israel*, Harper, Manhattan.
- Obinwa, IMC 2012, 'I shall feed them with good pasture' (Ezek 34:14): *The shepherd motif in Ezekiel 34: Its theological import and socio-political implications*, Echter, Würzburg.
- Odell, MS 2000, *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and anthropological perspectives*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta.
- Oginde, DA 2011, 'Antecedents of Christian leadership: A socio-rhetorical analysis of 1 Timothy 3: 1-7', *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 23-31.
- Osborne, GR 2006, *The hermeneutical spiral: A comprehensive introduction to biblical interpretation*, rev. and expanded 2nd edn., InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Pate, CM (ed.) 2004, *The story of Israel: A biblical theology*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Pomykala, KE 1995, *The Davidic dynasty tradition in early Judaism: Its history and significance for messianism*, Early Judaism and its literature, no. 7, Scholars Press, Atlanta.
- Preuss, HD 1996, *Old Testament theology*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh.
- Preuss, HD 1999, 'נוֹלָם', in GJ Botterweck et al. (eds.), *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*, WB Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, pp. 530-545.

- Purvis, JD & Meyers, EM 1999, 'Exile and return: From the Babylonian destruction to the reconstruction of the Jewish state', in *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman destruction of the temple*, rev. and expanded edn., Biblical Archaeology Society, Washington, pp. 201-229.
- Putney, SB 2015, 'The moral conflicts of a man after God's own heart', *Eruditio Ardescens*, vol. 2, no. 1, p. 2.
- Ramsey, GW 1977, 'Speech-forms in Hebrew law and prophetic oracles', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 96, no. 1, pp. 45-58.
- Renaud, B 1986, 'L'alliance éternelle d'Ez 16, 59-63 et l'alliance nouvelle de Jér 31, 31-34', in J Lust, D Baltzer & W Zimmerli (eds.), *Ezekiel and his book: Textual and literary criticism and their interrelation*, BETL 74, Leuven University Press, Leuven.
- Renaud, B 1994, 'La prophétie de Natan: Théologies en conflit [Nathan's prophecy: Conflicting theologies]', *Revue Biblique*, vol. 101, no. 1, pp. 5-61.
- Rendtorff, R 1986, *The covenant formula: An exegetical and theological investigation*, transl. M Kohl, Clark, Edinburgh.
- Renz, T 2002, *The rhetorical function of the book of Ezekiel*, Brill Academic Publishers, Boston.
- Resane, KT 2017, 'The church's prophetic role in the face of corruption in the South African socio-political landscape', *Pharos Journal of Theology*, vol. 98, no. 1, pp. 1-13.
- Reviv, H 1989, *The elders in ancient Israel: A study of a biblical institution*, Magnes Press, Jerusalem.
- Richter, SL 2008, *The epic of Eden: A Christian entry into the Old Testament*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Ringgren, H 1986, 'קָהָר', in GJ Botterweck, H Ringgren & DE Green (eds.), *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament*, WB Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, pp. 288-296.
- Rogers, IC 1997, 'קָנְיָהּ', in WA VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 1012-1013.
- Salanga, VR 2003, 'Berit as biblical foundation for religious vows', *Landas: Journal of Loyola School of Theology*, vol. 17, no. 1, viewed 10 August 2017, <<http://journals.ateneo.edu/ojs/landas/article/viewFile/958/987>>
- Scheffler, E 2017, 'Royal care for the poor in Israel's first history: The Royal Law Deuteronomian 17: 14-20), Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2: 1-10), Samuel's warning (1 Samuel 8: 10-18), David's attitude (2 Samuel 24: 10-24) and Ahab and Naboth (1 Kings 21) in intertext', *Scriptura*, vol. 116, pp. 160-174.
- Schniedewind, WM 1999, *Society and the promise to David: The reception history of 2 Samuel 7:1-17*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Sherman, R 2004, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A trinitarian theology of atonement*, T&T Clark, New York.
- Smith, DL 1989, *The religion of the landless: The social context of the Babylonian exile*, Meyer Stone Book, New York, pp. 50-55.
- Smith, GV 2001, *Hosea, Amos, Micah: The NIV application commentary from biblical text to contemporary life*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Smith, HP 1977, *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Books of Samuel*, The International Critical Commentary, T&T Clark, Edinburgh.
- Soggin, JA 1999, *An introduction to the history of Israel and Judah*, SCM, London.
- Speiser, EA 1963, 'Background and function of the biblical Nāšī', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 111-117.
- Talmon, Y 1996, 'Millenarian movements', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, vol. 7, p. 159.
- Tannen, D 2007, *Talking voices: Repetition, dialogue, and imagery in conversational discourse*, Cambridge University Press, Leiden, viewed 30 September 2020, <<http://www.SLQ.ebibl.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=321304>>

## References

- Tannen, D, Hamilton, HE & Schiffrin, D (eds.) 2015, *The handbook of discourse analysis*, 2nd edn., Wiley Blackwell, Malden.
- Taylor, JB 1969, *Ezekiel: An introduction and commentary*, Tyndale House Publishers, London.
- Tenney, MC & Douglas, JD (eds.) 1987, *The new international dictionary of the bible*, pictorial edn., Regency Reference Library, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Tiemeyer, LS 2012, 'Ezekiel: The book of', in MJ Boda & JG McConville (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, pp. 214–229.
- Tomasino, A 1997, 'עֹזֵי', in WA VanGemeren (ed.), *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology & exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 345–351.
- Tooman, W & Lyons, M (eds.) 2010, *Transforming visions: Transformations of text, tradition, and theology in Ezekiel*, Pickwick Publications, Eugene.
- Tuell, SS 1992, *The law of the temple in Ezekiel 40–48*, Scholars Press, Atlanta.
- Tuell, SS 2009, *Ezekiel*, New International Biblical Commentary, Hendrickson Publishers Inc., Peabody.
- Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research (ed.) 1995, *The Lord's anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament messianic texts*, Paternoster Press, Carlisle.
- Unger, MF n.d., 'Ezekiel's vision of Israel's restoration part 3', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 106, pp. 311–324.
- Van den Toren, B 2007, 'The political significance of Jesus: Christian involvement for the democratisation of Africa', *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 65–88.
- Van Wyk, J-A 2007, 'Political leaders in Africa: Presidents, patrons or profiteers?', *ACCORD Occasional Paper*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 1–38.
- VanGemeren, WA 1997, *New international dictionary of Old Testament theology and exegesis*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Viands, J 2014, *I will surely multiply your offspring: An Old Testament theology of the blessing of progeny with special attention to the latter prophets*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene.
- Villa-Flores, J 2007, 'Religion, politics, and salvation: Latin American millenarian movements', *Radical History Review*, vol. 99, pp. 242–251. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-2007-014>
- Voelz, JW 1995, 'Multiple signs, levels of meaning and self as text: Elements of intertextuality', *Semeia*, vols. 69–70, pp. 149–164.
- Voldeng, E 1982, 'L'intertextualité dans les écrits féminins d'inspiration féministe [Intertextuality in women's writings of feminist inspiration]', *Voix et images*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 523–530.
- Waltke, BK & O'Connor, MP 1990, *An introduction to biblical Hebrew syntax*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake.
- Walton, JH (ed.) 2009, *Zondervan illustrated Bible backgrounds commentary*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Walton, JH 2017, *Old Testament theology for Christians: From ancient context to enduring belief*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Walvoord, JF, Zuck, RB & Dallas Theological Seminary (eds.) 1983, *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty*, Victor Books, Wheaton.
- Watty, WW 2016, *The Nathan narrative in 2 Samuel 7:1–17: A traditio-historical study*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene.
- Wazana, N 2016, 'The Law of the King (Deuteronomy 17:14–20) in the light of empire and destruction', in P Dubovský, D Markl & JP Sonnet (eds.), *The Fall of Jerusalem*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, pp. 169–195.
- Weber, PC 1980, 'הָיָה', in RL Harris, GL Archer & BK Waltke (eds.), *Theological wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., Moody Press, Chicago.

- Weeks, N 2004, *Admonition and curse: The Ancient Near Eastern treaty/covenant form as a problem in inter-cultural relationships*, T&T Clark, London.
- Weidner, EF 1923, *Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien*, Olms, Hildesheim.
- Weinfeld, M 1970, 'The covenant of grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, n.v., pp. 184-203.
- Wellum, SJ 2016, 'Reflections on the significance of biblical theology', *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 5-8.
- Westermann, C 1991, *Basic forms of prophetic speech*, transl. HC White, Westminster John Knox Press, Cambridge.
- Wevers, JW 1982, *Ezekiel*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids.
- Williams, RJ 2007, *Williams Hebrew syntax*, 3rd edn., University of Toronto Press, Toronto.
- Wilson, GH 2002, *Psalms: Volume 1*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids.
- Wright, BGI 1998, 'Ebed/doulos: Terms and social status in the meeting of Hebrew biblical and Hellenistic Roman culture', *Semeia*, vols. 83-84, pp. 83-111.
- Wright, CJH 2006, *The mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove.
- Yoon, DI 2013, 'The ideological inception of intertextuality and its dissonance in current biblical studies', *Currents in Biblical Research*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 58-76.
- Youngblood, AF 1976, '1, 2 Samuel', in FE Gaebelein, JD Douglas & D Polcyn (eds.), *The expositor's Bible commentary: With the new international version of the Holy Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, pp. 553-1104.
- Zimmerli, W 1971 *Man and his hope in the Old Testament*, transl. GW Bowen, AR Allenson, Naperville.
- Zimmerli, W 1979a, *Ezekiel: A commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia.
- Zimmerli, W 1979b, *Ezekiel: A commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, FM Cross, K Baltzer & LJ Greenspoon (eds.), transl. RE Clements, Fortress Press, Philadelphia.
- Zimmerli, W 1983, *Ezekiel: A commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia.



# Index

## #

2 Samuel 7, 1-7, 9-13, 15-20, 22-24, 26-39, 41-44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54-56, 58, 60-62, 64, 66-75, 77-78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92-104, 107-108, 110, 114

## A

affinities, 61-64, 66, 75, 103  
African leadership, 1, 3, 15, 41, 77, 104-108, 110, 112, 114, 116  
African, 1, 3, 15, 41, 50, 77, 104-108, 110-114, 116  
approach, 1-4, 6-8, 10-13, 19, 62, 103, 105-107

## C

conceptual, 2, 41, 66, 71, 75, 93, 98, 102-104  
covenant of peace, 46, 58-61, 71, 73-75, 90, 92, 97, 100-101  
covenant, 1-7, 10, 12-13, 15-20, 22-39, 41, 46, 52-53, 55, 58-62, 64-75, 77-79, 81-84, 87-88, 90, 92, 95, 97-98, 100-108, 110, 112, 114-116

## D

David, 1-9, 12-13, 17-20, 22-39, 41, 44, 46, 51-59, 61, 63, 65-75, 78, 82, 85-90, 92, 94-104, 106-108, 111-113, 115  
Davidic Covenant, 1-7, 10, 12-13, 15-20, 22-30, 32, 34-39, 41, 61-62, 66-67, 69-73, 75, 77-78, 90, 98, 101-106, 108, 110, 112, 114-116  
Davidic, 1-10, 12-13, 15-20, 22-30, 32-39, 41, 51-53, 55, 59, 61-62, 66-67, 69-73, 75, 77-78, 80-81, 85-86, 88, 90, 98, 100-106, 108, 110, 112, 114-116  
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), 105, 110, 112-113, 115

## E

Ezekiel 34, 1-8, 10-12, 17, 19, 23, 32, 36-37, 39, 41-54, 56, 58-64, 66-75, 77-78, 85, 91, 93-94, 101, 103-104, 107-108, 110, 112, 114-115  
Ezekiel, 1-13, 15, 17, 19-20, 23, 32, 36-39, 41-56, 58-75, 77-105, 107-108, 110, 112-115

## G

Gog, 9, 64

## H

house, 3, 6, 23-33, 36, 38-39, 45, 52, 55, 67, 69, 71-72, 74, 78, 91, 94-95, 97-98, 101-103, 107, 113

## I

implications, 1-3, 11, 15, 41, 77-78, 104-106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 116  
influence, 1-3, 5, 7, 9-11, 19, 36-37, 41-42, 44, 46, 48-50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-64, 66, 68-72, 74-75, 77-78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92-94, 96, 98, 100-104, 108, 114

## J

Jewish, 1-2, 4, 6, 15, 17, 22, 38, 41, 43-47, 51, 54, 59-61, 69, 71-74, 77, 79-81, 83-92, 97, 99-100, 103-104, 111, 114  
Judeans, 1, 15, 22, 43-44, 47, 61, 70, 72, 78-79, 81, 83, 89, 100, 107  
judgement, 8-9, 44-47, 49-50, 61  
judgment, 45, 53, 60, 81, 87  
justice, 45, 48-50, 57, 72-73, 107, 109-111, 116

## K

king, 2, 4, 6, 16, 19, 21, 23-25, 28, 32-34, 36-38, 46, 51-58, 64-65, 68-70, 80-82, 85, 88-89, 92, 94-95, 99, 105, 108-110, 114-116

## L

land, 8-9, 16, 24, 44, 47, 50, 59-60, 64-65, 68, 72-74, 77-79, 81, 88-92, 94-98, 100, 109  
leadership, 1-3, 5, 8-9, 15, 36, 41, 46, 49-52, 54, 56-58, 60-61, 71, 73-75, 77-79, 81, 86, 89-90, 98, 104-108, 110-116  
literary, 1-2, 4, 7-8, 10-12, 18-20, 34-37, 39, 41, 63, 66, 68, 75, 89, 93, 102-105

## M

methods, 1-2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

**O**

Old Testament, 1, 15, 35-36, 93

**P**

paucity, 1-2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

peace, 16, 25, 28, 34, 36, 46, 52, 58-61,  
71-75, 90, 92, 97-98, 100-101, 104, 107,  
110-111, 116

poverty, 111

prince, 46, 51, 54, 56, 86, 88-89, 94, 97, 112

promise, 1-7, 9-10, 12-13, 22, 27-38, 41, 44,  
46, 48-49, 51-53, 55-56, 58-61, 63,  
68-72, 75, 78-83, 85-86, 88-95,  
97-99, 101-102, 104, 107, 111, 114

**R**

Republic of Kenya, 112, 115

restored nation, 2, 70, 80, 99

**S**

Samuel, 1-7, 9-13, 15-24, 26-39, 41-44, 46,  
48, 50, 52-56, 58, 60-62, 64-75,  
77-78, 80, 82, 84, 86-88, 90, 92-105,  
107-108, 110, 114

shepherds, 4, 45-48, 51, 67-68, 74, 87, 99

significance, 3, 5, 13, 15, 33-37, 39, 44, 77,  
103

South Sudan, 110

**T**

theological, 2, 4, 6, 20-22, 34-35, 37, 39,  
41, 44-45, 66, 69, 75, 83, 87, 93, 98,  
102-104, 108, 116

**Z**

Zimmerli, Walther, 3-4, 6-7, 42, 47-48, 50,  
54, 59, 78, 81, 84, 88, 92

This monograph deals with a significant issue related to the Davidic Covenant as an important theological concept. The author points out that little research has been conducted on the possible influence of the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 on important passages in Ezekiel 34 and 37, where David is mentioned in connection with the future restoration of Israel. Chapter 1 in this book deals with the rationale of the presented research and the approach followed and presents a survey of previous research, especially on Ezekiel.

Chapter 2 deals with the Davidic Covenant, especially in 2 Samuel 7, in which Lonu Budha discusses the covenant in the Old Testament. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the two passages in Ezekiel. The discussions in these chapters follow a clear pattern, moving from dating to structure and discussing the biblical text. In the final section of each chapter, the author deals with the relationship between the passages in Ezekiel with 2 Samuel 7, and the concept of the covenant in the two passages. He discusses three kinds of influences: literal, theological and conceptual.

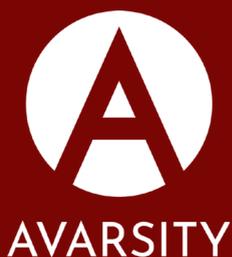
In Chapter 5, the author delves into the implications of his theological research on African leadership. He offers a refreshing critical perspective on contemporary leadership, emphasising the importance of governments serving the people and not exploiting the country and its people for personal gain.

**Prof. Herculaas Frederik van Rooy, Department of Ancient Texts, Faculty of Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa**

---

Victor Lonu Budha brilliantly draws the attention of academics to the existing intertextual gap in reading the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 in conversation with its fulfilment in Ezekiel 34 and 37. The author's successful argument that a detailed discussion on the subject, which is still lacking to date, adds value to Ezekiel's research.

**Rev. Prof. Joel KT Biwul, Department of Biblical Studies, Faculty of Theology, ECWA Theological Seminary, Jos, Nigeria; and Department of Old and New Testament, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa**



Open access at  
<https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2023.BK470>



ISBN: 978-1-991269-02-7