1989

The "Throne of God" Motif in the Hebrew Bible

Daegeuk Nam
Andrews University

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The "throne of God" motif in the Hebrew Bible

Nam, Daegeuk, Th.D.
Andrews University, 1989

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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE "THRONE OF GOD" MOTIF
IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Theology

by
Daegeuk Nam
February 1989
THE "THRONE OF GOD" MOTIF
IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Theology

by
Daegeuk Nam

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

[Signatures and names of committee members]

Raoul Dederen, Acting Dean
SDA Theological Seminary
Date Approved: 7 April 1989
ABSTRACT

THE "THRONE OF GOD" MOTIF
IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

by

Daegeuk Nam

Faculty Advisor: Gerhard F. Hasel
Title: THE "THRONE OF GOD" MOTIF IN THE HEBREW BIBLE
Name of researcher: Daegeuk Nam
Name and degree of faculty chair: Gerhard F. Hasel, Ph.D.
Date completed: February 1989

This dissertation explores the biblical significance and theological implications of the "throne of God" motif through an exegetical investigation of the texts of the Hebrew Bible which have direct reference to it.

Chapter I states the problems which the biblical "throne of God" motif poses, and also the objectives, limitations, methodology, and procedure of this study.

Chapter II reviews pertinent literature since the turn of the century. This survey reveals the current status of investigation on our topic to be only fragmentary.

Chapter III is devoted to the investigation of the "divine throne" motif in ancient Near Eastern literatures
such as Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Egyptian texts. One of the remarkable points in these texts is that the throne was deified and/or worshiped as a cult object.

Chapter IV presents a brief study of the throne terminology in order to provide a linguistic background for the exegetical study which follows. Four Hebrew terms (kisse', kisseh, mōšāh, and te'kūnāh), one Aramaic word (korsē'), and other related expressions are surveyed here.

Chapter V undertakes an exegetical analysis of the "throne of God" passages of the Hebrew Bible. The throne of God symbolizes His eternal kingship/kingdom, judgeship, and creatorship. Thus, it points to both sides of time, i.e., Urzeit and Endzeit. It also represents the authority of the One who calls and sends the prophets: it functions as the place of revelation. It is the insignia of God's victory over the enemies and His absolute power. It is the guarantee of safety for God's people. There are many other implications. In sum, the throne of God stands for the totality of God's attributes and activities in sustaining the universe and bringing about salvation of His people.

Chapter VI summarizes and synthesizes the results of the investigation. This chapter also compares the biblical "throne of God" motif with the extrabiblical "divine throne" motif. Many peculiar aspects of the "throne of God" motif in the Hebrew Bible attest to its own unique provenance.
Dem, der
"kissē'  kāḇōḏ" und "miqwēh yišrā'ēl"
(Jer 17:12, 13) ist,
mit Ehrfurcht und Zuversicht
gewidmet
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACor</td>
<td>Acta Orientalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACOT</td>
<td>An American Commentary on the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfO</td>
<td>Archiv für Orientforschung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfOB</td>
<td>Archiv für Orientforschung, Beihefte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGJU</td>
<td>Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AION</td>
<td>Annali dell'Instituto Orientale di Napoli</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJSL</td>
<td>The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALBO</td>
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<td>AnOR</td>
<td>Analecta Orientalia</td>
</tr>
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<td>Alter Orient und Altes Testament: Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTS</td>
<td>Augsburg Old Testament Series</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>ArBiTg</td>
<td>The Aramaic Bible (The Targums)</td>
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<td>ASTI</td>
<td>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</td>
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<td>ASTS</td>
<td>The ArtScroll Tanach Series: A Traditional Commentary on the Books of the Bible</td>
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<td>ASV</td>
<td>American Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Altes Testament, or Ancien Testament</td>
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<td>ATA</td>
<td>Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen</td>
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<td>ATANT</td>
<td>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</td>
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<td>ATBAT</td>
<td>Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATD</td>
<td>Das Alte Testament Deutsch: Neues Göttinger Bibelwerk</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUMSR</td>
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<td>AUSS</td>
<td>Andrews University Seminary Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAR</td>
<td>Biblical Archaeology Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>BASOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASORSS</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Supplementary Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAT</td>
<td>Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments: Erläuterungen alttestamentlicher Schriften</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB</td>
<td>Bonner biblische Beiträge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETL</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium</td>
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<td>Beiträge zur historischen Theologie</td>
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<td>Bib</td>
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<tr>
<td>BibLeb</td>
<td>Bibel und Leben</td>
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<tr>
<td>BibOr</td>
<td>Biblica et Orientalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BibTo</td>
<td>The Bible Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJRL</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKAT</td>
<td>Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Mesopotamica: Primary sources and interpretive analyses for the study of Mesopotamian civilization and its influences from late prehistory to the end of the cuneiform tradition</td>
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<tr>
<td>BN</td>
<td>Barnes' Notes</td>
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| BN | Biblische Notizen: Beiträge zur exegetischen Diskussion
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<tr>
<td>BO</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Orientalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Biblische Studien</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSac</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Sacra</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSC</td>
<td>Bible Student's Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>BST</td>
<td>Basel Studies of Theology</td>
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<td>BTB</td>
<td>Biblical Theology Bulletin</td>
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<td>BTS</td>
<td>Biblisch-theologische Studien</td>
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<tr>
<td>BWANT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
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<td>BWAT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td>Biblische Zeitschrift</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAT</td>
<td>Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>The Cambridge Bible Commentary: New English Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB-OTS</td>
<td>Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBSC</td>
<td>The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJT</td>
<td>Canadian Journal of Theology: A Quarterly of Christian Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ConJ</td>
<td>Concordia Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRB</td>
<td>Cahiers de la revue biblique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>DD</td>
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<td>DSB</td>
<td>The Daily Study Bible Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSSIsa</td>
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<td>EB</td>
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<td>EBC</td>
<td><em>The Expositor's Bible Commentary</em>. 12 vols. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein et al. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979-</td>
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<td>EF</td>
<td>Erträge der Forschung</td>
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<td>EvQ</td>
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<td>FF</td>
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<td>FOTL</td>
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<td>FRLANT</td>
<td>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</td>
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<td>Freiburger theologische Studien</td>
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<td>FV</td>
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<td>FzB</td>
<td>Forschung zur Bibel</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAT</td>
<td>Handbuch zum Alten Testament</td>
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<td>HDR</td>
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<td>HKAT</td>
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<td>HSM</td>
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<td>HUCA</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
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<td>Int</td>
<td>Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology</td>
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<td>Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching</td>
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<td>JDAI</td>
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<td>Kommentare und Beiträge zum Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>KBB</td>
<td>Kleine biblische Bibliothek</td>
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<td>KD</td>
<td>Kerygma und Dogma: Zeitschrift für theologische Forschung und kirchliche Lehre</td>
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<td>KJV</td>
<td>King James Version</td>
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<td>LAPO</td>
<td>Litteratures anciennes du Proche-Orient: Collection publiée sous le patronage de l'Ecole biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem</td>
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</tbody>
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LSS  --  Leipziger semitistische Studien
Luther  --  Die Bibel nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers
LWCOT  --  The Living Word Commentary on the Old Testament
LXX  --  Septuagint
MANE  --  Monographs on the Ancient Near East
MRS  --  Mission de Ras Shamra
MS(§)  --  Manuscript(s)
MT  --  Masoretic Text
NASB  --  New American Standard Bible
NCB  --  The New-Century Bible
NCBC  --  The New Century Bible Commentary
NEB  --  The New English Bible
NF  --  Neue Folge
NICOT  --  The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV  --  New International Version
NJB  --  The New Jerusalem Bible
NJV  --  The New Jewish Version (Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text)
NKJV  --  The New King James Version
NKZ  --  Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift
NSB  --  Neukirchener Studienbücher
NT  --  New Testament

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<table>
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<td><em>Numen: International Review for the History of Religions</em></td>
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<td>OBO</td>
<td><em>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>OBT</td>
<td><em>Overtures to Biblical Theology</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Or</td>
<td><em>Orientalia</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td><em>Old Testament</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>OTG</td>
<td><em>Old Testament Guides</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>OTL</td>
<td><em>The Old Testament Library</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>OTM</td>
<td><em>Old Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>OTS</td>
<td><em>Oudtestamentische Studien</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>PEO</td>
<td><em>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTR</td>
<td><em>The Princeton Theological Review</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td><em>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td><em>Revue biblique</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>RevExp</td>
<td><em>Review and Expositor: A Baptist Theological Quarterly</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHPR</td>
<td><em>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHV</td>
<td><em>The Revised Hankul [Korean] Version</em></td>
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<td>xv</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RSV -- Revised Standard Version
RV -- The Revised Version
RWB -- Religionswissenschaftliche Bibliothek
SAHG -- Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete.
Die Bibliothek der alten Welt. Eingeleitet und
Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953
SANT -- Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SAT -- Die Schriften des Alten Testaments
SB -- Sources bibliques
SBB -- The Soncino Books of the Bible
SBLDS -- Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation
Series
SBLMS -- Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBM -- Stuttgarter biblische Monographien
SBONT -- The Sacred Books of the Old and New Testaments:
A New English Translation with Explanatory
Notes and Pictorial Illustrations
SBS -- Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT -- Studies in Biblical Theology
SDABC -- The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary. 7
vols. Rev. ed. Edited by Francis D. Nichol et
SGKA -- Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums
SGVS -- Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und
Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und
Religionsgeschichte
SJT -- Scottish Journal of Theology
SKK -- Stuttgarter kleiner Kommentar
ST -- Studia Theologica
Syria -- Syria: Revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie
xvi
TARWPV -- Theologische Arbeiten aus dem Rheinischen wissenschaftlichen Prediger-Verein

TB -- Theologische Bücherei

TBC -- Torch Bible Commentaries


TEV -- Today's English Version (Good News Bible)


ThSt -- Theologische Studien

TLZ -- Theologische Literaturzeitung: Monatsschrift für das gesamte Gebiet der Theologie und Religionswissenschaft

TOTC -- Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries

TriJ -- Trinity Journal

TRu -- Theologische Rundschau

TS -- Theological Studies

TSJTS -- Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America

TSK -- Theologische Studien und Kritiken: Eine Zeitschrift für das gesamte Gebiet der Theologie

TTS -- Trierer theologische Studien

TTZ -- Trierer theologische Zeitschrift

xvii
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TynB</td>
<td>Tyndale Bulletin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TZ</td>
<td>Theologische Zeitschrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCOIP</td>
<td>The University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCPNES</td>
<td>University of California Publications, Near Eastern Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UF</td>
<td>Ugarit-Forschungen: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Altertumskunde Syrien-Palästinas</td>
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<td>Ugar</td>
<td>Ugaritica</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMPBS</td>
<td>The University Museum Publications of the Babylonian Section, The University of Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UUÅ</td>
<td>Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Vigiliae Christianae: A Review of Early Christian Life and Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VE</td>
<td>Vox Evangelica: Biblical and Historical Essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS</td>
<td>La vie spirituelle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xviii
| VT  | -- Vetus Testamentum |
| VTSup | -- Supplements to Vetus Testamentum |
| VKVAW | -- Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van Belgie |
| WBC | -- Word Biblical Commentary |
| WBT | -- Word Biblical Themes |
| WC | -- Westminster Commentaries |
| WMANT | -- Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament |
| WSB | -- Wuppertaler Studienbibel |
| WTJ | -- The Westminster Theological Journal |
| YOSBT | -- Yale Oriental Series: Babylonian Texts |
| ZA | -- Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete (vols. 1-48) or Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie (from vol. 49 [NF 15] on) |
| ZAW | -- Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft |
| ZBK | -- Zürcher Bibelkommentare |
| ZDMG | -- Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft |
| ZDPV | -- Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins |
| ZMR | -- Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft |
| ZNW | -- Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche |
| ZTK | -- Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche |

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Above all, I thank and praise God, "the King Yahweh of Hosts" (Isa 6:5), who has graciously sustained me while wrestling with the great motif of the "throne of God" and has bestowed upon me all the gifts and blessings needed from His throne of glory.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Scripture contains a great number of references to the divine throne and to human thrones. In some of these references, the term "throne" simply indicates the chair on which a king or God sits. But in many cases, it seems to

1The Hebrew Bible uses three main words to indicate "throne": two are Hebrew (kisse' and kisseh) and one is Aramaic (korse'). According to the concordances, kisse' is used 135 times, and kisseh and korse' 3 times each. Cf. Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae, 2nd rev. ed. (Berlin: F. M. \-lin, 1925), 589-590, 1329; Gerhard Lisowsky, Kork- in \- zum Hebräischen Alten Testament, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1958), 686-687, 155; Abraham Even-Shoshan, ed., A New Concordance of the Bible: Thesaurus of the Language of the Bible, Hebrew and Aramaic Roots, Words, Proper Names, Phrases and Synonyms (Jerusalem: "Kiryat Sefer" Publishing House, 1985), 552-553, 563; Julius Fürst, Liborum Acrorum Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae (Lipsiae: Sumtibus et Typis Caroli Tauchnittii, 1840), 562-563, 572; Heinz-Josef Fabry, "kisse'," TWAT, 4:256. The NT uses mainly the word thronos for "throne," and it occurs 62 times. Cf. Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung und Rechenzentrum der Universität Münster, ed., Computer-Konkordanz zum Novum Testamentum Graece von Nestle-Aland, 26. Auflage und zum Greek New Testament, 3rd Edition (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1980), 857-858. Thus, the whole Scripture uses the term "throne" more than two hundred times, not to mention the minor terms which also may indicate the seat of a king or the dwelling-place of God.

2E.g., Judg 3:20; 1 Kgs 10:18, 19; 22:10; 2 Kgs 25:28; 2 Chr 9:17, 18; Esth 5:1; Ezek 26:16; Jonah 3:6.
mean more than an item of furniture in the royal palace or in the temple of deity. It appears to be used as a symbol, i.e., the symbol of kingship or royal authority.¹ In other cases, it occurs with some profound meanings or theological implications.

The present dissertation is particularly concerned with the motif of the "throne of God." This motif has formed one of the most important parts of the religious life of the Hebrew nation in OT times. The sanctuary, which was regarded as the center of life for God's people, was built in order for God Himself to dwell among His people (Exod 25:8). This means that the sanctuary was God's dwelling-place on earth in which He sat upon His throne. Therefore, the sanctuary and the throne of God are two concepts which cannot be separated from each other.

It has been conventionally understood that the ark of the covenant functioned as the throne of God on earth. L. E. Toombs has stated:

God's throne was early represented by the Ark of the Covenant. . . . The cherubim associated with the royal throne appear around Yahweh's throne

as well, either supporting it (Ezek. 1:22) or flying around it (Isa. 6:2).  

Edmond Jacob, in the same vein, observes:

. . . the ark was conceived, at least in the most ancient tradition, as a real dwelling-place of the deity. Whether it had the form of a throne or . . . of a chest, it is certain that it was considered as the dwelling-place of Yahweh, to such a degree that the terms Yahweh and ark of Yahweh are sometimes interchangeable. . . . As a symbol of the deus absconditus and of the deus revelatus, the ark lacked neither dynamism nor objectivity.2

On the other hand, recent studies,3 based on archaeological discoveries as well as biblical texts (1 Kgs

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"If the ark could have been called the throne of Yahweh, it owes it not to its form, which was quite unlike a throne, but to its association with the cherubim which stood over it and which were considered in certain texts as the bearers of Yahweh (Ps. 18.11)."

6:23-28, esp. vs. 27), propound the idea that the cherubim functioned as the throne, while "the Ark served as the footstool of the cherubim throne . . ."¹ Tryggve N. D. Mettinger continues:

thus we are told that David intended to build "a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God" (1 Chron 28:2). The expression does not describe two different objects, but one and the same, since the waw connecting both phrases is an example of the waw explicativum: the Ark is identical with the footstool. Similarly, haddōm, "footstool," seems in Pss 99:5 and 132:7 to refer to the Ark.²

The Psalmist sings:

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
thou who leadest Joseph like a flock!  
Thou who art enthroned upon the cherubim,³  
shine forth.  
(Ps 80:2 [ET 80:1, RSV], emphasis supplied).

The LORD reigns;  
let the peoples tremble!  
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim,⁴  
let the earth quake!  
(Ps 99:1, RSV, emphasis supplied).

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¹Mettinger, The Dethronement of Sabaoth, 23.
²Ibid.

³The MT reads, yōšēb hakkerūbim. Since there is no particular preposition in front of "cherubim," the translation of this phrase can vary: "between the cherubim" (KJV, NIV), "upon the cherubim" (RSV, AB), "above the cherubim" (ASV, NASB), "on the cherubim" (NEB) or "on the cherubs" (JB). The same phrase is found also in 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15 (yōšēb hakkerūbim). The only difference here is the vowel point under r (u instead of ū) in hakkerūbim.

⁴The MT reads, yōšēb kerūbim. Cf. n. 3 above.
These arguments and texts seem to suggest that the throne of God is not only connected with but also composed of the cherubim. Thus their mission or function is to constitute the divine throne chariot upon which God sits (cf. 1 Chr 28:18) as well as to escort the presence of the holy God who is enthroned between them. Accordingly, the appearance of the cherubim always seems to lead to the concept of God's throne and to the presence of God Himself (up)on/above or between them.

Walther Eichrodt, on the other hand, holds that the ark of the covenant together with the cherubim functioned as the throne of God on earth. He remarks:

The earthly counterpart of the heavenly throne, however, is the Ark of Yahweh with the cherubim. This sacred object belongs to the class of empty divine throne, and as the God of the Ark Yahweh acquires the epithet יְהֹוָה חָקֵּקְרוּבִּים, he who is enthroned upon the cherubim. . . . In the cherub-throne memory patently returns to Yahweh enthroned upon the Ark. . . .

This is an apparent disagreement in answering the question: What really represented the throne of God in the sanctuary in OT times?

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A further question is, Where is the throne of God located? Some texts say, "Yahweh's throne is in heaven" (Ps 11:4) or "Yahweh has established His throne in heaven" (Ps 103:19), and the other text reports that Yahweh proclaims, "Heaven is My throne" (Isa 66:1). Another text in the prophetic context states, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem 'The Throne of Yahweh,' and all the nations shall gather to it for the name of Yahweh in Jerusalem" (Jer 3:17), and still another text quotes Yahweh's words, "I will set My throne in Elam, and I will destroy out of it king and the princes" (Jer 49:38). These texts seem to mean that the throne of God is movable and moving. If so, what do its movability and motion imply? What are the real meanings of these texts and how are they related to one another?

In one group of passages the throne of God is referred to as the seat of rule or government (cf. Pss 47:9 [ET 47:8]; 103:19), and in the other group of passages it indicates the seat of judgment (cf. Pss 9:5, 8 [ET 9:4, 7]; 11:4; Zech 6:13). In yet another group of texts the divine throne is considered as the dwelling-place or the seat of the divine presence of Yahweh (cf. Ezek 43:7; Ps 93:2; Jer 17:12; Job 26:9 [KJV, RSV margin, NJV]). This phenomenon

1Job 26:9 has a textual problem: the Hebrew word ksh can be read either as kissēh ("throne") or keseh ("full moon [day]" or "moon"). LXX, Theodoticon, Targum, Vulgate, KJV, NJV, etc., read ksh as kissēh and RSV, NIV, NASB, AB, JB, etc., read it as keseh.
poses another question: What is the meaning and significance of the "throne of God"? This question leads to some further questions: What theological implications are intended by Bible writers when they mention the divine throne or describe visions in which it is revealed? In other words, what place does the "throne of God" have in OT thought? What is signified by its reference and what role does it play in the relation between God and His people?

In view of the problems noted above and the significance which the "throne of God" as a biblical motif has, it is not only important but necessary that we examine all of the passages which have references to the "throne of God" so that we may obtain a full picture of the biblical symbolism and theological implications of the "throne of God." Hence, the necessity for a thorough exegetical study on this topic. In the research which follows, the throne passages are explored in order to respond to this need.

Objectives and Limitations

The present research has one major objective in view: What biblical significance and theological implications does the "throne of God" have? To answer this main question one needs to deal with the following subsidiary questions: (1) What is the relationship between the divine/heavenly throne and the human/earthly one? (2) What connection exists between the concepts of the divine throne in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature?
What is in common between them and what is unique in the OT concept of the throne of God? (3) Is there any development in the concept of the throne of God in the OT? (4) When the divine throne is mentioned in a certain passage, does it refer to the real heavenly throne, or is it mentioned in a symbolic sense, or both? (5) Regardless of whether it refers to the real throne or is mentioned in the symbolic sense, what is the purpose of its visions or references? (6) In cases of the symbolic use, what theology do those scenes present?

The present investigation is limited to the Hebrew Bible and the major literature of the ancient Near East. It does not deal with every one of the 141 references to "throne" in the Hebrew Bible. The focus is limited to the foundational passages which contain the term kisse', excepting those that deal with the human throne, in order that its basic meaning, theological and biblical, may be drawn out. Some selectivity has been imposed in this examination of the references to the "throne," in general. The twenty-seven passages\(^1\) which have direct reference to the throne of God are thoroughly explored, with an emphasis on their historical background, Sitz im Leben, context, and meaning. Since there exists an organic relationship between the two Testaments regarding the concept of the

\(^1\)H.-J. Fabry finds only twenty-two references to the throne of God in the OT (cf. "kisse'\(^3\)," TWAT, 4:266).
This study aims to grasp a comprehensive view of the OT motif of the "throne of God" and its theological implications. It is by no means intended to provide a definitive and conclusive statement on the total biblical concept of the throne of God, because the scope of this study is limited to OT passages in which the divine throne is directly mentioned. The conclusions remain limited to the extent that other related issues such as the heavenly sanctuary, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim are not within the purview of this study.

Methodology and Procedure

The present dissertation is a biblical study, i.e., an analysis of the way the OT writers employed the term "throne," especially "the throne of God." This requires exegetical analysis of the relevant texts in which the term is used. The method used in this dissertation is that of investigating the "throne of God" motif in the various types of OT literature and the investigation is primarily synchronic.

It is assumed that the thrones of the earthly kings reflect somehow the throne of the heavenly King or God or vice versa. Therefore, some attention is paid to the earthly thrones. This may help one to obtain a more
comprehensive concept of the "throne of God" by way of analogy.

In order to achieve the above-stated objectives, the following procedures have been followed: First, as a foundational step, a survey that covers research done in the area of this topic since the rise of modern scholarship is presented in Chapter II. This indicates what particular issues and aspects of the divine throne have been investigated in the modern period and what results have been reached. The review of literature follows generally a chronological order.

Chapter III is devoted to determining how the "divine throne" motif was used in ancient Near Eastern literature. The extrabiblical texts are investigated because Israel was not isolated from its surrounding cultures but interacted with them. The materials treated in this chapter are not exhaustive but are representative. This procedure provides a general view of the concept of the divine throne in the Near East during OT times. It also provides points of similarity and contrast between biblical and extrabiblical concepts regarding the divine throne.

In Chapter IV, research is conducted on the throne terminology in the Hebrew Bible. This is for the purpose of providing a linguistic and theological background for the exegetical explorations which follow. A brief survey
of the thrones of humans in the OT is given at the end of this chapter.

Chapter V is the key part of the present dissertation, because here the twenty-seven passages of the Hebrew Bible which mention the throne of God in various contexts are investigated. Each passage is explored against its own historical background and within its own context.

The final chapter summarizes and synthesizes the results of the research. It also compares the biblical "throne of God" motif and the extrabiblical "divine throne" motif and reassesses the significance of the "throne of God" as a biblical motif. Thus, an attempt is made to integrate the motif of the "throne of God" into a biblical theology.
CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Preliminary Remarks

In the Hebrew Bible, the "throne" as a theological theme can be traced in two different ways: (1) as the divine or heavenly throne and (2) as the human or earthly throne. As far as the latter is concerned, the throne of David or the Davidic throne is the most important one, and it has been investigated as a biblical motif by several scholars.¹

However, research on the "divine throne" or "throne of God" motif has generally been limited to a few scholarly articles or prolegomena to cognate studies. Nevertheless, many studies have been published in the areas which are connected with our topic: e.g., the kingship of God¹; the


ark of the covenant, the cherubim, the sanctuary (tabernacle and temple) as the dwelling-place of God;¹ the


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so-called "enthronement psalms"\(^1\) and "royal psalms";\(^2\) etc.


\(^1\)E.g., Hugo Greßmann, \textit{Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie}, \textit{FRLANT} 6 (Göttingen: Vanden-
These areas are inseparably associated with the concept of the divine throne, because to speak about the throne of God inevitably means to speak about the God as the King who sits enthroned upon it.

In the following section we review the studies on the throne of God which have been published since the rise of modern scholarship.


Review of Research on the Throne of God

The first study that dealt with an aspect of the "throne of God" concept in modern times is Wolfgang Reichel's book entitled Über vorhellenische Götterculte.¹ Reichel's argument starts from a gold ring which was found at Mycenae. On the surface of the ring three figures are portrayed engaged in a religious act, that of adoration. The object towards which they turn and for which in some way their adoration is necessarily meant had been explained to be a temple or an altar. Reichel, however, placed it beyond doubt that it is no other than a chair or throne. It is seen from the side, the back is higher than the arms, and the legs are all four, without regard to the laws of perspective, presented as visible. Reichel's conclusion, as simple as it is surprising, is:

A throne before which an act of worship is performed must be that of a god. But an empty throne is, of course, only part of the apparatus used in worship, and cannot be itself the object of adoration. To complete the scene we should expect a divine figure upon the seat. This, however, is wanting... Since no one of course can imagine that any god was ever worshipped in the form of a chair, there must be here a certain amalgamation of realism and idealism: in other words, the visible throne is set up for an invisible god, to whom, and not to the throne, the religious service of the three women is addressed.²

¹Wolfgang Reichel, Über vorhellenische Götterculte (Wien: Verlag Alfred Hölder, 1897).

²Ibid., 5-6 (ET quoted from K. Budde, "Imageless Worship in Antiquity," ExpTim 9 [1897-98]: 396).
Scarcely was this conclusion announced, when many evidences in support of it presented themselves. To this throne cult discovered by him, Reichel assigns the Yahweh-worship of Israel. To him, the ark of the covenant is simply an empty throne of God, like the throne of Amyclæ, or more precisely, like the portable throne of the sun-god which accompanied the march of Xerxes.

Reichel's argument was immediately rebutted by K. Budde who claimed as follows:

Against this explanation of Israel's shrine, which perhaps may appear to many very attractive, decided protest should, in my opinion, be raised. It is not a throne for the simple reason that it is an ark. For even if the name of this piece of ritual apparatus underwent manifold changes in the course of Israel's history, yet it never interchanged its general designation of 'aron with any other, and this word means, not only in Hebrew but in nearly all Semitic dialects, "ark," "chest," "receptacle." Such a name is never given to a throne, for which, on the contrary, the Hebrew has the quite common word kissē'.

In the years 1900 and 1901, Johannes Meinhold published two articles on the ark of Yahweh. In these two articles Meinhold surveyed various cases of divine thrones in ancient times from Persia to Greece and concluded on the

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analogy of these that the "ark of Yahweh" was regarded as "a portable throne of Yahweh" ("ein tragbarer Jahvethron")\(^1\) who is invisibly present upon it.\(^2\)

In 1901, Wilhelm Lotz devoted a 44-page article to the subject of "Die Bundeslade."\(^3\) While his main concern in this article is on the history and significance of the ark of the covenant, Lotz offers some notable observations about the functions of the cherubim and the ark. He maintains that Israel has generally considered the cherubim as the "carrier" ("Träger") as well as the "guardian" ("Hüter") of Yahweh's presence.\(^4\) To put it more precisely: "Die Kerube galten als eine Art von lebendem Thron Jahves, . . . ."\(^5\) As for the function of the ark, Lotz holds that it was not regarded as a "dwelling" ("Wohnung") or a "receptacle" ("Behälter") for Yahweh,\(^6\) but that

die Lade als mit ihm in einer geheimnisvollen Verbindung stehend gedacht, man kann sagen, etwa wie ein Schemel aufgefasst ward, wo der Überirdische seinen Fuss in die sinnliche Welt hereinsetze.\(^7\)

\(^{1}\) J. Meinhold, "Die 'Lade Jahves'," TARWPY, NF 4 (1900): 29.

\(^{2}\) Cf. ibid., 31-34.


\(^{4}\) Ibid., 9.

\(^{5}\) Ibid.

\(^{6}\) Ibid., 22-23.

\(^{7}\) Ibid., 23.
In 1905, Hugo Greßmann published a book entitled Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie.¹ Greßmann did not treat the "throne of God" motif itself in this book but touched on the "enthronement of Yahweh" idea within a discussion of the origin of eschatology in ancient Israel.²

Greßmann's discussion on the topic in question starts with the statement that the Messiah is the same divine figure as Yahweh and His function is that of the eschatological King.³ This statement is followed by the discussion of the well-known formulaic clause YHWH mlk (Pss 93:1; 97:1; 99:1; cf. 47:9 [ET 47:8]; 95:3; 96:10; 98:6). His own translation of YHWH mlk, "Jahve ist König gewor- den,"⁴ is problematic in itself because it may imply that there exists a certain time when Yahweh is not king.⁵ Greßmann's point is that Yahweh who is enthroned as king is the eschatological King. Thus, he says, "Was bedeutet die Thronbesteigung Jahves? Sie dient zunächst zum Ausdruck

¹Hugo Greßmann, Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie, FRLANT 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1905).
²Ibid., 294-301.
³Ibid., 294.
⁴Ibid., 295.
⁵For detailed discussions on the meaning of YHWH mlk, see pp. 385-393 below.
der Tatsache, daß Jahve das Weltregiment ergriffen hat.\textsuperscript{1}

Yahweh is the King not only over all peoples (Pss 47:9 [ET 47:8]; 99:1) but also over all gods (Pss 95:3; 97:7).\textsuperscript{2}

Greßmann appropriately maintains that "das Weltregiment Jahves bedeutet zugleich das Weltgericht."\textsuperscript{3} Yahweh comes to judge the earth (cf. Pss 96:10, 13; 98:9)\textsuperscript{4} and even the gods (Ps 86).\textsuperscript{5}

What attracted Greßmann's attention is the "ascension" ( Ṭālāḥ) of Yahweh (Ps 47:6 [ET 47:5]).\textsuperscript{6} He remarks, "Merkwürdig ist nun, daß mit dem Gedanken der Thronbesteigung Jahves noch die Idee einer Himmelfahrt Jahves verknüpft scheint!"\textsuperscript{7} According to him, the "ascension" means Yahweh's eschatological "Hinauffahren" to heaven, where His throne stands, in order to take "universal sovereignty" ("Weltherrschaft").\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{1}Greßmann, \textit{Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie}, 295 (emphasis his).

\textsuperscript{2}Cf. ibid., 295-296.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 297 (emphasis his).

\textsuperscript{4}Cf. ibid., 297.

\textsuperscript{5}Cf. ibid., 298.

\textsuperscript{6}Cf. pp. 358-359, 364 below.

\textsuperscript{7}Greßmann, \textit{Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie}, 299.

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid.
Greßmann's emphasis upon the "Endzeit"\textsuperscript{1} is doubtless adequate, but his idea of "Krönungszeremonien" is also problematic, since it may have the same implication as that of his translation of YHWH mlk. His understanding of Yahweh's eschatological kingship in the Psalms is expanded in one of his later works.\textsuperscript{2} In 1920, he published a booklet on the ark of the covenant.\textsuperscript{3} In this book he deals only with the form, contents, and origin of the ark, from the history-of-religions point of view, and does not relate the ark to the throne concept.

In 1906, Martin Dibelius published his inaugural dissertation entitled \textit{Die Lade Jahves: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung}.\textsuperscript{4} In this book the author, following Reichel and Meinhold, has searched the concept of the ark from the history-of-religions viewpoint and concluded that the ark was initially "an empty throne" ("einen leerer Thron"),\textsuperscript{5} such as other nations of ancient time had for their gods. Thus it was aniconic in its nature.

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{3}Hugo Greßmann, \textit{Die Lade Jahves und das Allerheiligste des salomonischen Tempels}, BWAT, NF 1 (Berlin: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1920).


\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 59ff.
Regarding the function of the cherubim, Dibelius lists two main groups of texts: in one group, the cherubim are the "Träger der Gottheit," and the other group finds in the cherubim the "Schützer des Heiligtums." He traces the same functions in the archaeological discoveries of the mythological animals of ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, Asia Minor, and Cyprus.

With regard to the relation between the ark and the cherubim, Dibelius offers the following résumé of his study:

Es zeigt sich dabei, daß, wenn die Lade ein Thron ist, die Keruben zu diesem Thron gehören nicht als ein zufälliges Merkmal, sondern als ein wesentlicher Bestandteil. Durch ihre Stellung an der Lade bringen sie—eben nach Art des erwähnten Schemas—eine Verherrlichung des Gottes zum Ausdruck, dem sie als Thronträger dienen. . . . Das wichtige aber ist: An der Lade gehören Thron und Keruben zu einander.

The first influential studies in connection with the topic of the "throne of God" are the works by Sigmund Dibelius, Die Lade Jahves, 72. To this group belong the following texts: 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 22:11; 2 Kgs 19:15; Isa 37:16; Ezek 9:3; 10:1-19; 11:22; Pss 18:11; 80:2; 99:1; 1 Chr 13:6; (28:18). "Die letzte genannte Stelle [1 Chr 28:18] ist zweifelhaft," adds Dibelius, "weil einerseits das "Gefährt" auf die Bedeutung des Tragens hinweist, während sich der Ausdruck "schirmende Flügel" der zweiten Vorstellung nähert" (ibid., 72, n. 2).

2Ibid., 73. The texts in this group are: Gen 3:24; Exod 25:18-22; 37:7-9; Num 7:89; 1 Kgs 6:23-35; 8:6, 7; Ezek 22:14, 16; 41:18-25; 2 Chr 3:10-13, 5:7, 8; (1 Chr 28:18). For 1 Chr 28:18, see n. 1 above.

3Ibid., 74-85.

4Ibid., 85 (emphasis his).
Olaf Plytt Mowinckel, one of the great Scandinavian OT scholars.¹ His considerable contribution to religious understanding arises from a strictly academic treatment of biblical problems,² especially from the scholarly study of the OT.

Mowinckel's major contribution in biblical scholarship is his work on the Psalms and their problems, entitled Psalmenstudien (6 vols.), which appeared over the years 1921-1924.³ The other two important works by him are The Psalms in Israel's Worship⁴ and He That Cometh.⁵ These three works form his great trilogy. All of this trilogy, especially, vol. 2 of Psalmenstudien, subtitled Das Thronbesteigungsfeest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie, and The Psalms of Israel's Worship,⁶ include many allusions


³The most recent edition is: Sigmund Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, 6 vols. (Amsterdam: Verlag P. Schippers N. V., 1966).


⁶See esp. pp. 106-192 (chap. 5: "Psalms at the Enthronement Festival of Yahweh").
to the significance of the throne of God, although they do not directly deal with the "throne" motif itself.

According to the so-called "Uppsala School," to which Mowinckel belongs, the psalms are nearly all cultic songs, and a number of psalms were for use at the harvest festival or *Laubhüttenfest* at which an important ceremony was the enthronement of Yahweh. In Mowinckel's view, the "enthronement psalms" are the songs of praise which salute Yahweh "as the new, victorious king" "on his 'epiphany'."

The festival is said by Helmer Ringgren to celebrate "the

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"The title of the book of Psalms in Hebrew is Tehillim, which means 'cultic songs of praise.' This tallies with the indications we have that the songs and music of the levitical singers belonged to the solemn religious festivals as well as to daily sacrifices in the Temple."

And he continues on p. 15:
"What is meant by cult? It has been said that religion appears in three main aspects, as cult, as myth and as ethos. Or, in other terms, as worship, as doctrine, and as behaviour (morals). . . . Cult or ritual may be defined as the socially established and regulated holy acts and words in which the encounter and communion of the Deity with the congregation is established, developed, and brought to its ultimate goal. In other words: a religion in which a religion becomes a vitalizing function as a communion of God and congregation, and of the members of the congregation amongst themselves."

2Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien*, 2:3-4, states, "Unter Thronbesteigungspsalmen versteht man traditionell die Ps. 47; 93; 95; 96; 97; 98; 99; 100. Diese Psalmen bilden deutlich eine eigenartige Gruppe" and adds many more psalms in this category: Pss 8; 15; 24; 29; 33; 46; 48; 50; 66A; 75; 76; 81; 82; 84; 87; 114; 118; 132; 149.

3Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:106.
kingship of Yahweh, the creation of the world, and the defeat and 'judgment' of enemies and rebellious nations."¹

This hypothetical argument has met with both pros and cons. John Gray not only accepts Mowinckel's view but tries to give more evidence for it. He argues that Zechariah 14:16-19 is a seasonal epiphany of Yahweh as king and that Nahum 2:1 (ET 1:15) must refer to the autumnal festival. He says that, ultimately, the hymns to Yahweh's kingship "reproduce the theme of the vindication of the Kingship of God in the cosmic conflict."²

On the other hand, this festival was reconstructed on a hypothesis which has been refuted through decades by several scholars who have raised convincing counterarguments.³ They have searched the OT for evidence of the


enthronement festival, but no proper evidence for such has been found so far. As Roland de Vaux notes, there is no trace of an enthronement festival in the historical texts of the OT.1 There is no evidence in the OT for any fertility rite or any battle between Yahweh and chaos deities such as are found in the related theogonies of Israel's neighbors.2

Like Greßmann, Mowinckel understands the formulaic clause YHWH mlk as meaning "Jahwā ist König geworden"3 ("Yahweh has become King"4) rather than "Yahweh is King" or "Yahweh reigns." He definitely says, "It is not a lasting condition that the poet describes with this expression, and the older translation 'The Lord reigneth' is misleading."5

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1De Vaux, Ancient Israel, 2:505-506.
2Cf. Kaufmann, 118. For a further discussion, see pp. 355-369 below.
3Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, 2:3.
5Ibid., 1:107.
He continues:

The poet's vision is of something new and important which has just taken place: Yahweh has now become king; hence the new song of joy and praise to be sung. What the poets have seen in their imagination, and describe or allude to, is an event and an act which was linked with an enthronement, Yahweh's ascent of the throne.

Mowinckel emphasizes that Yahweh has become king not only of Israel but of the whole earth and that this universalistic idea is connected with the great deed of Yahweh, namely, the Creation (Pss 93:1b; 95:3-5; 96:5).

The only problem with him is to relate this Creation to the Babylonian creation myth, in which Marduk becomes king, because he has defeated Tiamat and made the world.

Mowinckel also remarks that the idea of "judgment" is involved in the act of Creation, for "judging" means "setting conditions on earth in the right order" and "that

1Ibid.
2Ibid.
3Ibid., 1:108. S. Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, 2:45, states:
"Daß die Königsherrschaft Jahwā's im A. T. ursprünglich nicht eine eschatologische war, das ist schon lange zur Genüge bekannt. Sie war den älteren Israelisiten eine in der Gegenwart wirksame Realität, denn Jahwā ist jetzt König, ... Wenn dann überhaupt von einem Königwerden Jahwā's geredet wurde ... so muß man von irgend einem Ereignis in der Vergangenheit geredet haben, bei dem Jahwā König ward.

"Wiederholt heißt es nun in den Thronbesteigungspsalmen, daß die Schöpfung die Grundlage seines Königtums ist. Jahwā ist der Weltkönig, weil er die Welt selbst geschaffen hat" (emphasis his).

4Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, 2:45.
is the meaning of Yahweh's 'judgment' as a king."\(^1\) Accordingly, "der Thronbesteigungstag Jahwâ's bringt Unheil über Israels Feinde und Heil über Israel, das sind von jeher die beiden Momente der Erwartung."\(^2\)

Besides the Creation, Mowinckel mentions a historical foundation for the kingship of Yahweh: "the creation of Israel" as Yahweh's chosen people, i.e., "the Election," and "the Covenant" at the time of the Exodus from Egypt (cf. Pss 99; 114; Deut 33:2-5).\(^3\) In Mowinckel's view, Yahweh's enthronement or sitting on the throne means all of these.

We may sum up that while Greßmann's understanding of Yahweh's kingship and enthronement is eschatological, Mowinckel's is protological and historical.

Hermann Gunkel devoted an article in 1906 to the subject of "Die Lade Jahves ein Thronsitz."\(^4\) His argument is "daß die Lade ein Thron, eine Art Sitz sei, und daß Keruben an der Lade ursprünglich so angebracht gewesen sein müssen, daß sie sich unter dem Sitz des Gottes befanden."\(^5\) In order to avoid the apparent conflict between the two

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\(^1\)Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:108.

\(^2\)Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien*, 2:263.


\(^5\)Ibid., 37 (emphasis his).
kinds of seats, he suggests "daß die Hebräer zwei Arten von
Sitzen gekannt und die erste, kastenförmige 'arón=Kasten,
die zweite aber kissé'=Sessel genannt haben."¹

Gunkel's comprehension of the "enthronement psalms"
is also eschatological.² He notes as follows:


Der Stoff dieser Gedichte ist die Eschatologie. Jahves künftiges Reich ist, darin stimmen all diese Psalmen überein, ein Weltreich, das alle Völker umfaßt . . .³

On Ps 97, one of the "enthronement psalms," Gunkel writes:

Der Psalm besingt das Ende der Welt, da Jahve als König der ganzen Erde erscheint, . . . Dem Inhalt nach ist das Lied also eine Prophetie: . . . beschreibt der Psalmist die Zukunft . . . er preist die zukünftige Herrlichkeit Gottes.⁴

Following Mowinckel's hypothetical argument for the
"enthronement festival," Gunkel observes:

Nun ist für das Thronbesteigungsfest . . . bezeich-
nend, 1. daß Jahve an diesem Tage König ward, und

¹Ibid., 39.

²Cf. Hermann Gunkel, Die Psalmen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1929), 410-411; idem, Ausgewählte Psalmen, vierte verbesserte Auflage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917), 134-139; idem, Einleitung in die Psalmen, 94-116 (§ 3: "Lieder von Jahves Thronbesteigung").

³Gunkel, Einleitung in die Psalmen, 98-99 (emphasis his).

⁴Gunkel, Ausgewählte Psalmen, 134.
2. daß er dabei, um seinen Thron zu besteigen, in sein Heiligtum einzieht.¹

On the basis of this idea, he understands YHWH mlk as König-Werden rather than as König-Sein. Thus his rendition of the formula is "Jahve ist König geworden"² or "Jahve ward König!"³

In 1923, Hans Schmidt published an article on the topic of the cherubim throne and the ark.⁴ In this article Schmidt first discusses the cherubim throne in Ezekiel and the cherubim in Solomon's temple with emphasis on their constitutions,⁵ and then the concept of the One who sits enthroned on the cherubim, citing seven texts from the OT.⁶ This is followed by the review of the empty throne of God in the temple of Jerusalem from the history-of-religions point of view.⁷ Finally, he argues that the "mercy-seat" (kappōret) functioned as the throne of God.⁸

¹Gunkel, Einleitung in die Psalmen, 101 (emphasis his).

²Cf. ibid., 94-100.

³Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 410 and passim; idem, Ausgewählte Psalmen, 134.


⁵Ibid., 120-129.

⁶Ibid., 129-132. The texts cited are Isa 6; Jer 17:12-18; Ps 22:5; 2 Kgs 19:14ff.; Pss 80; 99; 132; cf. Lam 2:11.

⁷Ibid., 132-137.

⁸Ibid., 137-144.
Four years later (1927), Schmidt published a booklet entitled *Die Thronfahrt Jahves am Fest der Jahreswende im alten Israel.*\(^1\) In this work, he compares the two different understandings (of Gunkel and Mowinckel) of the "YHWH mlk psalms"\(^2\) and gives credit to Mowinckel because he believes that Yahweh's kingship should be based upon "not a hope but an experience."\(^3\)

Schmidt's main contribution in these two works, especially in the latter, is that he deduced the concept of the moving throne from various texts of the OT.\(^4\) He emphasizes that many texts, e.g., Pss 47 and 68, refer to the "movement of God" ("Zug des Gottes")\(^5\) and this movement or "processions" (ha\(\text{lik}\)\(\text{ôt}\), Ps 68:25 [ET 68:24]) of God are made in a divine "chariot" ("Wagen"),\(^6\) in other words, in the "Thronwagen, der als Zeichen der Anwesenheit Jahves im Zuge zum Tempel gefahren wird."\(^7\)

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\(^1\)Hans Schmidt, *Die Thronfahrt Jahves am Fest der Jahreswende im alten Israel*, SGVS 122 (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1927).

\(^2\)Ibid., 4-9.

\(^3\)Ibid., 7 (emphasis his): "keine Hoffnung, sondern ein Erlebnis."

\(^4\)Ibid., 9-36. Schmidt cites the following texts: Pss 47; 68; 24 65; Amos 4:12b-13; 5:8f.; 9:5f.; Pss 96; 99:1; 97; Isa 30:29; Pss 48; 149; 75:9; Oba 16; Jer 25:15ff.; 51:7; Ezek 23:31-33; Isa 51:17, 22; Zech 12:2; Hab 2:16; Lam 4:21; Ps 81; etc.

\(^5\)Ibid., 13 (emphasis his).

\(^6\)Ibid., 21.

\(^7\)Ibid., 19.
Gerhard von Rad's article, published in 1931, reveals a new idea about the concepts of the tent and the ark. He notes that in many of the biblical narratives their point depends on "the intimate association of Yahweh with the ark." To quote him, "Where the ark is, there is Yahweh," and "Where the ark went, Yahweh went too." While he recognizes the inseparable association of Yahweh with the ark, he finds, on the other hand, a clear indication that "the conception of the ark has not by any means developed along one single, straightforward, ascertainable line."

Von Rad supposes that there was a very old tradition according to which the ark was, as its name 'aron implies, a box, and at a later time the ark began to be thought of as a throne. He further suggests that still later the Deuteronomist regarded the ark as a chest and did not intend to perpetuate the view that it is a throne; in other words, he rather preferred to link up with the older

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3 Ibid. ("Wo die Lade ist, da ist Jahwe").

4 Ibid., 117 ("Wo die Lade hinkam, da war Jahwe").

5 Ibid., 112.
tradition. But the OT gives no hint as to the provenance of this view.

Apart from this, von Rad observes that the purpose of the tent is clearly defined: "Yahweh is not in the tent, but always comes down to it from the heaven above, for which reason the tent is correctly known as the 'tent of meeting'." This idea of von Rad is elaborated in his later work. He states that "two completely different 'theologies' are connected with the Tent and with the Ark—with the former it is a theology of manifestation, but with the latter one of presence," but in the so-called Priestly document "the dwelling-place and throne idea is practically superseded." In other words, as the place of expiation and also the place where Yahweh spoke (Num 7:89), the ark with its cherubim had an indispensable importance, but it no longer functioned as Yahweh's throne.


2Von Rad, The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, 117.


4Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 1:237 (emphasis supplied).

5Ibid., 1:239.

6Ibid.
Von Rad's concept of "two theologies" may be biblically established, but his proposal that the ark was regarded first as a box, then as a throne, and then again as a chest, is somewhat artificial and can hardly find scriptural evidence.

After publication of von Rad's article, two decades passed without any noticeable studies related to the "throne of God" motif. It is in 1951 that Hans-Joachim Kraus published a thorough research on the "enthronement psalms." For Kraus "YHWH mlk" is the "Inthronisationsruf," meaning "Jahwe ist König geworden!" He notes further:

\begin{quote}
Der Gott Israels hat \textit{soeben} den Thron bestiegen, er hat die Königsherrschaft angetreten und regiert jetzt im Lichtglanz seiner göttlichen Majestät. Als überraschende und staunenerregende Neuigkeit dringt der Jubelruf in alle Welt hinaus: "Jahwe ist König geworden!"
\end{quote}

It is to be noted that in this statement Kraus places two actions in parallel to sitting on the "throne":

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

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\begin{quote}
3Kraus, \textit{Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament}, 3 (emphasis his). However, in his book, \textit{Psalmen}, 2:646, 670, etc., Kraus translates "YHWH mlk" as "Jahwe ist König," while he thinks that the translation "Jahwe ist König geworden" is better fit for the "Inthronisationsruf."
\end{quote}
"royal dominion" ("Königsherrschaft") and ruling with the "divine majesty" ("göttliche Majestät").

In 1958, Menahem Haran of Hebrew University, Jerusalem, published a paper on the symbolic significance of the ark and the cherubim in Hebrew in EI 5 (1958): 83-90, and its English version with some alterations was published in the following year. Haran's argument is that in biblical ritual the cherubim were intended to represent a throne for God, and their wings, spread horizontally, formed the throne proper, while the ark was the footstool of the throne.

However, Haran is overshooting the mark when he says that the "cherubim cannot serve as a throne unless they spread their wings." In the parallels provided by


archaeological investigation, the "cherubim" frame the seat and are not a load-bearing component. Moreover, the cherubim of Solomon's Temple cover the Ark (cf. 1 Kgs 6:27) just as those in the tabernacle cover the kappōret (Exod 25:20; 37:9).

According to Haran, "the throne and footstool indicate God's very presence in that place, and therefore constitute the essence of the house of God." Without the two items the entire complex of ritual practices in the temple loses its meaning. Consequently, "the whole Temple is sometimes designated 'throne' or 'footstool', after these two focal symbols." 

In 1960, Josef Schreiner submitted a dissertation to Universität Würzburg as his Habilitationsschrift, which was published later under the title Sion-Jerusalem Jah-wes Königssitz: Theologie der Heiligen Stadt im Alten

E.g., relief on the sarcophagus of Ahiram of Byblos (cf. ANEP, 456, 458); ivory plaque from Megiddo; ivory model from Megiddo. Cf. Mettinger, The Dethronement of Sabaoth, 21-22.


3Haran, Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel, 256. Haran calls attention to the following texts: Isa 66:1; Jer 3:16-17; 14:21; 17:12; Ezek 43:7; Lam 2:1; 1 Chr 28:2; Pss 99:5; 132:7. Especially, for the word "footstool" in 1 Chr 28:2 and Pss 99:5; 132:7, see ibid., 256, n. 12, and 91, n. 13.
Testament. In chap. 9 of this book ("Jahwes Königsherrschaft auf Sion") Schreiner is particularly concerned with the formulaic clause YHWH mlk and interprets it as König-Sein. Against Greßmann and Gunkel, he concludes:


In the same year (1960), de Vaux published vol. 2 of his work, Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament. In this book de Vaux remarks that the religious significance of the ark had two notions: "as the throne of God and as a receptacle for the Law." On the other hand, he notes that the ark "était considéré comme le «trône» et le «marchepied» de Dieu." De Vaux objects to the idea "that we

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2Ibid., 191-216.

3Ibid., 193-197.

4Ibid., 216.


6Ibid., 129 (ET 2:299).

7Ibid., 130 (emphasis supplied). The ET ("was considered as the 'throne' or the 'foot-stool' of God") is misleading (ET 2:299, emphasis supplied).
should make a distinction between the footstool and the throne," because

there seems little foundation for this theory: in the prose texts, the throne is never mentioned as an object distinct from the Ark, and there is no evidence that there was anything other than the Ark and the Cherubim inside the Debir.¹

His conclusion is that "the Ark, with the Cherubim, could be said to represent both the footstool and the throne of Yahweh."²

In his other book, Bible et Orient,³ de Vaux seems to specify his position on the question of the function of the ark. In the article entitled "Les chérubins et l'arche d'alliance, les sphinx gardiens et les trônes divins dans l'ancien Orient," in this book, de Vaux states:

L'arche, en effet, n'est pas le trône, mais le trône a son marchepied et l'arche est le «marchepied» de Yahvé... Ce sont l'arche-marchepied et les chérubins-siège qui, ensemble, constituent le trône de Yahvé... Cette définition de l'arche comme le marchepied du trône divin s'accorde mieux que sa définition comme un trône avec le nom qu'elle porte, 'aron, «coffre», et avec la seule description qui en soit donnée, Ex. xxv,10: c'est un coffre rectangulaire.⁴

¹Ibid. (ET), 2:300.

²Ibid.


⁴De Vaux, Bible et Orient, 234 (emphasis his).
De Vaux provides a great number of archaeological and scriptural evidences to support his new position.\(^1\) His is the fullest and most comprehensive examination of the question of the cherubim in the light of ancient Near Eastern iconographies, together with a detailed study of the OT references. He concludes that the cherubim were a form of the winged sphinx and their origin goes back to ancient Egypt.\(^2\) But de Vaux's argument seems somewhat fluctuating, because, in his other article in the same book, "Arche d'alliance et tente de réunion," he stresses the significance of the ark as the divine presence.\(^3\) He says, "L'arche est, en effet, le trône sur lequel Yahvé siège, invisible, sur les chérubins [1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2]."\(^4\) Nevertheless, he concludes: "De ce trône, l'arche est le marchepied et les chérubins sont le siège."\(^5\) On this point, de Vaux agrees with Haran.

In the year 1961, R. E. Clements submitted a dissertation entitled "The Divine Dwelling-Place in the Old

\(^1\)Cf. ibid., 235-259. On p. 254 he restates:
"Les chérubins étant le siège de Yahvé, l'arche est le marchepied de ce siège et elle est ainsi désignée dans 1 Chr. xxviii,2; Pss. xcix,5; cxxxii,7; Lam. ii,1. Un trône, en effet, se complète d'un tabouret."

\(^2\)Ibid., 258-259.

\(^3\)Ibid., 271 (ET 146).

\(^4\)Ibid.

\(^5\)Ibid., 272 (ET 147).
Testament" to the University of Sheffield, out of which arose a book entitled God and Temple.\textsuperscript{1} In chapter 3 of this book, Clements thoroughly discusses the subject of "The Ark, the Cherubim and the Tent of Meeting,"\textsuperscript{2} and concludes that the ark "was not a throne, but sometime, probably when it was at Shiloh (i.e., before 1050 B.C.), it came to be associated with the cherubim-throne."\textsuperscript{3}

In this study, the purpose of which is "to inquire into the meaning and theological significance of the Jerusalem temple as a witness to the presence of God in Ancient Israel,"\textsuperscript{4} Clements shows that throughout the pages of the OT the conviction of Yahweh's dwelling in the midst of Israel forms a unifying theme and there is a certain historical development of ideas.\textsuperscript{5}

The credit for the first full-dress study on the "throne of God" motif is ascribed to Johann Maier. In 1963, he presented a thesis to Universität Wien as his Habilitationsschrift, under the title Vom Kultus zur Gnosis: Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte der "jüdischen Gnosis": Bundeslade, Gottesthron und Märkabāh. It was


\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 28-39.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 35.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., ix.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 135.
published in the following year. The body of this thesis is composed of three parts: Part 1 looks at the Jerusalem Temple from the historical and history-of-religions point of view; Part 2 deals with the relationship between the ark of the covenant and the throne of God; and Part 3 traces the development and significance of the "throne of God" concept from the time of ancient Israel to that of rabbinic tradition.

With regard to the function of the cherubim, Maier observes:

Es gibt auf Grund dieses (keineswegs vollständig aufgeführten) archäologischen Materials kaum eine andere Möglichkeit, als die Deutung der beiden Keruben im Allerheiligsten zu Jerusalem als Träger der Gottheit.

In more detail he continues:

Der Ausdruck jošeb hak-kerubim ("Kerubentroner") weist jedoch darüber hinaus darauf hin, daß die Keruben im Allerheiligsten Thronträger darstellen sollten.... Die geöffneten Flügel der Keruben lassen vermuten, daß schon für den Tempel Gefährt und Thron in einem zu denken ist.

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2 Ibid., 72 (emphasis his). Cf. Johann Maier, Das altisraelitische Ladeheiligtum, BZAW 93 (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Topelmann, 1965), 53: 
"Das archäologische Vergleichsmaterial aus der Umwelt Altisraels führt zu dem Schluß, daß die »Keruben« geflügelte Sphingen waren und u. a. paarweise als Trägerfiguren, und zwar auch für Throne, dienten."

3 Maier, Vom Kultus zur Gnosis, 73 (emphasis his).
As a summary, he states most specifically:

Aus der engen Verbindung zwischen den Vorstellungen von der Wohnstatt Gottes (dem Adyton des Tempels) und dem Gottesgarten erklärt sich schließlich das Nebeneinander von Keruben mit zweierlei Funktion im Tempel: die Einzelkeruben, vor allem mit dem heiligen Baum, in der Wächterfunktion, und das Kerubenpaar als Träger des Gottesthrones.¹

One of Maier's outstanding observations is about the significance of the verb yāšāb in connection with the concept of the God who sits on the throne. He remarks that this verb occurs² only in the Psalter except in Exod 15:17 and Isa 40:22, and that these texts can be divided into two groups: one group "localisiert den Sitz des thronenden Gottes an einem mythischen Ort, dem Gottesberg (bzw. Tempel)," and the other "läßt die Gottheit im Himmel thronen."³

As far as the biblical texts are concerned, Maier deals with the throne visions only (1 Kgs 22:19⁴ [= 2 Chr 18:18]; Isa 5; Ezek 1; Dan 7:9),⁵ and thus the majority of the references to the throne of God are not included in his study. His statement "Der Begriff 'Thron [kissē'] Gottes' ³¹¹²³⁴⁵

¹Ibid. (emphasis his).
²Apart from the kissē' passages.
³Maier, Vom Kultus zur Gnosis, 96.
⁴This text is mistakenly printed as "I Kön 19,22" instead of "I Kön 22,19" in two places of his book (cf. ibid., 6 [table of contents], 107).
⁵Cf. Maier, Vom Kultus zur Gnosis, 106-128.
begegnet im AT verhältnismäßig selten" is not only oversimplified but misleading. Against the reading of the MT, he notes that the ks yh in Exod 17:16 is certainly to be emended to ns yh ("Feldzeichen Jah's"). Toward the end of the thesis, he treats the concept of the throne ("Thronvorstellung") in the rabbinic tradition and the symbolism and interpretations of the "Märkabāh."4

According to Maier, the "throne of God" motif has a cosmological significance and this is illustrated through Ps 93.5 He adds: "Der ewige Gottesthron als Symbol der Königsherrschaft Gottes garantiert Bestand und Ordnung des Kosmos, wogegen sich die Chaosmächte vergeblich empören."6 The "throne of God" motif also implies an "eschatological expectation."7 This means "ein Zerreifen der mythischen Einheit zwischen dem Thron im Tempel und der 'eigentlichen' Wohnstatt der Gottheit,"8 and "der himmlische Thron

1Ibid., 96 (emphasis his).


3Cf. Maier, Vom Kultus zur Gnosis, 128-131.

4Cf. ibid., 131-146.

5Ibid., 101-102.

6Ibid., 102.

7Ibid., 105.

8Ibid., 106.
In the conclusions of Maier's thesis, three remarks draw our attention: (1) The throne of God stands in the foreground as the "place of revelation" ("Ort der Offenbarung") or "revelation scene" ("Offenbarungsstätte"), especially in apocalyptic. (2) The throne of God became an "aim," i.e., "Ziel einer in meditativer Versenkung ritualistisch-magisch bewerkstelligten und als real empfundenen Aufstiegspraxis." (3) "Die Vorstellung vom Gottesthron war in der israelitisch-jüdischen Religion so sehr Veranschaulichung der Welt- und Geschichtsmächtigkeit des Schöpfergottes . . ." It is surprising that Maier does not find any significance related to judgment in the throne visions except in Daniel's vision (Dan 7:9). This seems to be

1 Ibid. (emphasis his).
2 Ibid., 126.
3 Ibid., 147.
4 Ibid. Maier provides two bases for this: "Die besondere Bedeutung des Gottessthrone als Ziel beruht teils auf der verarbeiteten liturgischen Überlieferung—wahrscheinlich aus dem Hékāl-Kult des Tempels—und teils auf der durch die eschatologische Erwartung wie einst in der Apokalyptik neu aktualisierte Bedeutung des Thrones als der Offenbarungsstätte schlechthin" (ibid.).
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 126.
mainly because he approaches the motif in question from the cultic and history-of-religions point of view.\textsuperscript{1}

In 1964, Jan Dus contributed an article entitled "Die Thron- und Bundeslade."\textsuperscript{2} In this article Dus argues that "die Lade hat den Israeliten ursprünglich als der Thron Jahwes gedient"\textsuperscript{3} and "schon vor der hebräischen Gruppe, die sie aus der Wüste nach Kanaan brachte, wurde sie zweifellos als ein Gottesthron verehrt."\textsuperscript{4} However, his argument is faulty because it is based on the sheer assumption that whenever God is present or appears to His people, there is His throne and He sits on it.

In 1965, E. Lipiński published a large volume of his extensive research on three psalms (Pss 93; 97; 99) under the title, La royauté de Yahwé dans la poésie et le culte de l'ancien Israël.\textsuperscript{5} After a full discussion of the three psalms, he devoted two additional chapters--one to the topic of the formulaic clause YHWH mlk\textsuperscript{6} and the other to the enthronement and kingship of Yahweh.\textsuperscript{7}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1]Cf. ibid., 27-54.
\item[3]Ibid., 251 (emphasis his).
\item[4]Ibid. (emphasis his).
\item[5]Cited above (see p. 13, n. 1).
\item[6]Lipiński, La royauté de Yahwé, 336-391.
\item[7]Ibid., 392-456.
\end{footnotes}
Lipiński reviews five different opinions on the interpretation of YHWH mlk represented by many scholars through the years and concludes:

Le cri Yahweh mālāk ne constitue ni une formule d'investiture, ni une acclamation, ni une formule d'hommage au roi divin, mais il est, du moins à l'origine, une annonce, une proclamation de l'accession de Yahvé à la royauté. L'ordre des mots sujet-verbe indique que l'on veut mettre en relief le sujet Yahvé.¹

The enthronement of Yahweh is presented by Lipiński under three different points of view: (1) victory and enthronement in terms of the holy war; (2) cultic victory and enthronement in Jerusalem; (3) eschatological victory and enthronement.² His emphasis on the significance of the eschatological enthronement is noteworthy.³

G. Henton Davies wrote an article in 1966 on the topic of the ark of the covenant.⁴ It is rather strange and interesting to find that he enumerates six different views on "the function and significance of the ark,"⁵ but

¹Ibid., 391.
²Cf. ibid., 456.
³Cf. ibid., 453.
⁵Cf. ibid., 42-45. The six views are: (1) the ark is identical with Yahweh (H. Schrade); (2) the ark bears "witness to the invisibility of the divine Lord, whose presence as Leader during the migration or . . . ." (W. Eichrodt); (3) the ark is "a domicile of deity" (R. H. Pfeiffer, A. Kuenen, W. R. Arnold, H. G. May); (4) the ark is "the guarantee of Yahweh's presence with His people" (A. R. Johnson); (5) the ark is the pledge or guarantee of
does not mention the view that it functioned as God's throne.

In his book, *Zelt und Lade als Thema alttestamentlicher Wissenschaft*, published in 1972, Rainer Schmitt provides the most thorough and extensive research on the topic of the ark of the covenant. After reviewing and evaluating all the authors, from Reichel to his contemporaries who have written on the topic, Schmitt is inclined to agree with R. de Vaux, J. Maier, and E. Kutsch who hold that the cherubim, not the ark, functioned as the throne or "Träger der Gottheit." He rounds off his argument with the remark that there is "kein Platz für den Gedanken, die Lade sei der Thron Jahwes" and "»Die Thronvorstellung besteht neben der L[ade] und unabhängig von ihr«, bemerkt Kutsch mit Verweis auf Jes 6,1 und Ez 1,26 richtig." Instead, Schmitt finds three different functions of the Yahweh's presence (H. H. Rowley, etc.); (6) the ark is the "representation" to describe the relation between Yahweh and the ark (L. Koehler, E. Kautzsch, H. Wheeler Robinson). Cf. ibid., 44.

1Cited above (see p. 14, n. 1 [on p. 15]).


4Schmitt, 127.


6Schmitt, 127.
ark: "Die Lade als Wander- und Kriegsheiligtum," "die Lade als Prozessionsheiligtum," and "die Lade als Orakelheiligtum."¹ Thus, Schmitt maintains that the ark has various functions as the sanctuary but it does not play any role of the throne of God.

John Gray has written several articles on kingship² and a book on the reign of God.³ Gray regards the kingship of God as the "central theological concept in the Old Testament and even in the New."⁴ It is rather disappointing to find that, in such a thorough and extensive study on the kingship of God, Gray did not pay any serious attention to the references to the "throne" which is the emblem of "kingship." For, as Haran has correctly noted, "side by side with the motif of God's kingship, these psalms [the enthronement psalms] also contain the motif of his throne, and the two are usually associated . . ."⁵

As mentioned earlier, Mettinger holds that "the Ark served as the footstool of the cherubim throne both at Shiloh and in Solomon's Temple"⁶ and "the Ark is identical

¹Cf. ibid., 138-173.
²See bibliography.
⁴Ibid., vii.
⁶Mettinger, The Dethronement of Sabaoth, 23.
with the footstool."\(^1\) In order to support his argument, Mettinger cites several archaeological discoveries and biblical texts.\(^2\) The same idea was expressed in his previous article: "YHWH SABAOTH--The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne."\(^3\)

Heinz-Josef Fabry's study on the word *kisse* in *TWAT* contains a considerable amount of valuable information regarding the etymology, usage, and meaning of the term.\(^4\) In the section of "Thron JHWs" of this article, Fabry deals with the "throne of God" motif from the historical and chronological point of view. He observes that the concept of the throne of God was first connected with the ark of the covenant, then with the temple, then with Jerusalem (or Zion), and finally with heaven.\(^5\) This idea of a "line of development" ("Entwicklungslinie")\(^6\) in the history of the throne motif calls for further attention.

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\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) Cf. ibid., 19-24.


\(^6\) Fabry, "kisse," *TWAT*, 4:269.
It is the great merit of Martin Metzger that he began to think seriously about the concept of "throne" and published his studies on the subject. His two-volume magnum opus Königtsthrone und Gottesthrone (1985) is, as its subtitle tells us, mainly a research on the forms and descriptions of the throne in the ancient Near Eastern nations in the third and second millennia B.C. and their relationship to and significance for the understanding of the throne in the OT. This is a kind of comparative study of the throne between the Hebrew nation and its surrounding nations, as well as between the throne of a king and that of God. The first volume (Text, AOAT 15/1) is divided into two main sections: the first is entitled, "Thronformen und Throndarstellungen in der Umwelt des Alten Testaments," and the second "Der Thron Salomos, der Kerubenthron Jahwes und die Lade im Lichte von Thronformen der Umwelt des Alten Testaments." The second volume (Katalog und Bildtafeln, AOAT 15/2) is a sort of companion volume to the first. 

a whole, this study is concerned with the physical or structural aspect rather than the theological or symbolic significance of the throne.

Metzger is specially interested in the title "YHWH ṣebā'ōt yōšāh hakkerubim" (1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2). After examining various theories proposed by some twenty scholars during the first three quarters of this century and the biblical texts depicting the cherubim in the dēbîr (1 Kgs 6:23-28; 2 Chr 3:10-14), Metzger concludes that the divine title yōšāh hakkerubim was most probably associated with the concept of the "sphinx-throne" ("Sphingenthron").

Metzger also reviews all the arguments on the question of whether the ark functioned as the throne of God. A great number of the names of the scholars who dealt with this issue are mentioned—from J. Chr. K. Hofmann, who published a two-volume book as early as in

1Metzger, Königsthron und Gottesthron, 1:309-351 (§ 56: "Jahwe Zebaoth, der Kerubenthroner").

2Metzger provides an excellent epitome of these theories together with some analytic comments (ibid., 1:326-330).

3Cf. Metzger, Königsthron und Gottesthron, 1:366: "Alle Wahrscheinlichkeit spricht dafür, daß sich mit der Gottesbezeichnung 'Kerubenthroner' die Vorstellung eines Sphingenthrones verband, analog zu den Sphingenthronen, die von der Späten Bronzezeit bis in die römische Zeit hinein im phönikischen Einflußbereich kontinuierlich bezeugt sind" (italics his).

4Ibid., 1:352-365 (§ 57: "Thron und Lade").
1841 and 1844, in which he expressed the idea that the ark should be understood as a throne, to Hans-Jürgen Zobel, who wrote the article on "ארון" in TWAT in 1971. Metzger's conclusion is:

Die Lade ist aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nicht als leerer Thron verstanden worden. Die Aussagen des Alten Testaments über die Lade zwingen an keiner Stelle zu der Annahme, daß sich mit der Lade die Vorstellung eines leeren Gottesthrones verband. . . . Aber die Hypothese, daß die Lade als tragbarer Untersatz eines nicht sichtbaren Jahwethrones verstanden worden ist, fügt sich gut in die wechselnden Vorstellungen, die mit der Lade verbunden waren, ein und läßt manche Aussagen über die Lade verständlicher werden, als das bei anderen Hypothesen der Fall ist.3

In one of his earlier articles, "Himmlische und irdische Wohnstatt Jahwes," Metzger already touched on the topic of the divine throne. In this article, he observes that the sanctuary is the place where the distinction

1J. Chr. K. Hofmann, Weissagung und Erfüllung im alten und im neuen Testament: Ein theologischer Versuch, 2 vols. (Nördlingen: Druck und Verlag der C. H. Beck'schen Buchhandlung, 1841, 1844), 1:140-143. This book is cited by Maier and Metzger, but it is regrettable that both quote it with a wrong title ("Verheißung und Erfüllung im Alten und Neuen Testament") and even a wrongly spelled name of the author ("Chr. von Hoffmann"). Cf. Maier, Das altisraelitische Ladeheiligum, 55, n. 97; Metzger, Königsthron und Gottesthron, 1:352, n. 3.


3Metzger, Königsthron und Gottesthron, 1:367 (italics his).

between heaven and earth is removed\textsuperscript{1} and that this concept was attested also for the Jerusalem Temple and especially in the call vision of the prophet Isaiah (Isa 6).\textsuperscript{2} This is an overstated idea which cannot be proved by Scripture.

Another related idea that Metzger presents in this article is what he calls the "Gesamtkomplex der Gottesbergvorstellung."\textsuperscript{3} According to him, "das Heiligtum, der Thron und das Königsein Jahwes sind Elemente, die zum Gesamtkomplex der Gottesbergvorstellung gehören,"\textsuperscript{4} and all these elements are found already in the "Song of the Reed Sea" (Exod 15:17-18) and the concept of the divine mountain is transferred upon Zion.\textsuperscript{5} Metzger summarizes his idea in the following r\textsuperscript{é}sum\textsuperscript{é}:

\emph{Im Gesamtkomplex der Gottesbergvorstellung besteht kein grundsätzlicher Unterschied zwischen himmlischem und irdischem Heiligtum, zwischen Jahwes Thronen im Heiligtum, auf dem Zion, auf dem Gottesberg oder im Himmel. . . . Im Alten Testament findet sich nirgends eine systematische Entfaltung der Gesamtvorstellung, eine Aufgliederung des Gesamtkomplexes oder eine genaue Abgrenzung der verschiedenen Aspekte voneinander. Man betont jeweils nur einen Aspekt—den himmlischen oder den irdischen, den Berg, das Heiligtum, den Palast oder den Thron—ohne dabei die Gesamtvorstellung aus dem Auge zu verlieren.}\textsuperscript{6}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 144. See p. 185 below.
\item Ibid., 144.
\item Ibid., 147, 149.
\item Ibid., 147.
\item Ibid., 147, 148.
\item Ibid., 149.
\end{enumerate}
While Fabry finds a "line of development" in the concept of the throne of God through biblical history,¹ Metzger notices that in one total and complex concept there were various "aspects" from which the Bible writers (and redactors) made selections for their own times and for their individual purposes.

The other article by Metzger, which is the most recent publication on the subject of "throne," is titled "Der Thron als Manifestation der Herrschermacht in der Ikonographie des Vorderen Orients und im Alten Testament."² In the first section of this research, Metzger demonstrates various parallel usages of two terms, "Thron" (kisse') and "Königsherrschaft" (mamlakāh), from the OT and the Ugaritic texts.³ However, his concern in this study is limited to three fundamental concepts:

1. Im Thron ist der Herrscher- und Wirkungsbereich des Throninhabers präsent;  2. der Thron repräsentiert den Herrscher selbst;  3. der Thron repräsentiert den Palast bzw. den Tempel als Stätte der Macht, der Heiligkeit und der Präsenz des Königs bzw. der Gottheit.⁴

¹Fabry, "kisse'," TWAT, 4:269.
²Cited above (see p. 2, n. 1).
To support the third concept, the identification of throne and sanctuary, Metzger cites examples of the palace-façade-throne of ancient Egypt and the temple-door-throne of the ancient Near East.¹ For the biblical evidences, he initially quotes Jer 17:12 (kisṣē' kāḇōd mārōm mēriṣôn meqōm miqdāšēnū). As he has suggested in his previous works,² Metzger interprets this text as follows:

Hier wird das Heiligtum als Thron, der Thron wird als Heiligtum interpretiert. Sämtliche Termini dieses Verses haben sowohl zum Heiligtum als auch zum Thron Bezug.

Das Heiligtum kann als kisṣē' kāḇōd, »Thron der Herrlichkeit«, bezeichnet werden, da sich sowohl im Thron als auch im Palast-Heiligtum der kāḇōd, »die Gewichtigkeit«, »die Machtfülle«, »die Herrlichkeit«, »die Glorie«, »die Verehrungswürdigkeit« des Herrschers, der Gottheit manifestieren.³

This interpretation is subject to a thorough examination, because Jer 17:12 is one of the cruces interpretum in the OT. As explicated later in Chapter V,⁴ Jer 17:12-13a may be poetically and logically better understood when it is interpreted as a series of vocatives addressing God. Thus, it may be translated as follows:

[O] Throne of Glory,
Exalted [One] from the Beginning,

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¹Ibid., 289.


So far we have surveyed the major books and articles by some twenty-five scholars who have substantially contributed to the study of the "throne of God" motif during the last nine decades (1897-1988). The works by other authors which are indirectly related to our subject and the Bible commentaries are referred to when the "throne of God" passages are expounded in Chapter V.

Our survey reveals that among the studies related to the throne of God which have been published so far, many are concerned with the question, Which represents the throne of God on earth, the ark of the covenant, the cherubim, or the mercy-seat? Some of the studies are on the Psalms, particularly the "enthronement psalms." Two are

1Cf. NJV: "O Throne of glory exalted from of old,/ Our Sacred Shrine!/ O Hope of Israel!/ O Lord!"; Helmut Lamparter's translation: "Thron der Herrlichkeit, erhaben von Beginn,/ Stätte unseres Heiligtums!/ Du Hoffnung Israels!" (Helmut Lamparter, Prophet wider Willen: Der Prophet Jeremia, BAT 20 [Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1964], 161). For a detailed discussion, see pp. 222-236 below.

2The works by Reichel, Budde, Lotz, Meinhold, Dibelius, Gunkel, Schmidt, von Rad, Haran, de Vaux, Clements, Maier, Dus, Davies, Schmitt, and Mettinger.

3Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, vol. 2; idem, The Psalms in Israel's Worship; Gunkel, Die Psalmen; idem, Ausgewählte Psalmen; idem, Einleitung in die Psalmen; Schmidt, Die Thronfahrt Jahves am Fest der Jahreswende im alten Israel; Kraus, Psalmen, 2 vols.; Schreiner, Sion-Jerusalem Jahwes Königssitz; Lipiński, La royauté de Yahwé.
on the kingship or reign of God, and one is a dictionary article on the throne in general. Only two studies deal with the significance of the throne of God per se.

In summary, the following issues are raised as a result of our survey of literature. First, the question of the earthly representation of God's throne is not yet fully answered. Although, in recent years, stronger arguments and more archaeological support are presented for the cherubim as the throne of God, arguments for the ark and/or the mercy-seat are still preponderant. Further study is called for on this issue. Second, with regard to the significance of "throne," only one aspect—the idea of kingship or royal authority—has been dealt with; other theological meanings are not yet explored. Third, as for the ancient Near Eastern material, only some of iconographies have been treated. So far, the literary texts of the ancient Near East and the OT have not been investigated for the motif of divine throne. This present dissertation, therefore, attempts to pursue some of these issues and to answer the questions they pose.

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2Fabry, "kisse2", TWAT, 4:247-272.

3Maier, Vom Kultus zur Gnosis; Metzger, "Der Thron als Manifestation der Herrschermacht," in Charisma und Institution, ed. Rendtorff, 250-296.
CHAPTER III

THE DIVINE THRONE IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LITERATURE

This chapter is designed to examine the usage of the term "throne" in ancient Near Eastern texts. Since the history of kingship in the Near East is as old as its own history, the terms associated with king or kingdom such as "kingship," "crown," "scepter," "dais," and "throne" are found even in very ancient texts from that area. I deal


here mainly with the "throne" passages. While I examine the references to the throne in general, my attention is focused on the divine throne. This investigation is undertaken not because it is believed that there is always a general literary dependence of the OT on ancient Near Eastern texts or vice versa, but because it is expected to find between them some points of contact, either similarity or contrast, in the concept of the divine throne.

1For the study of the forms and descriptions of the throne in the ancient Near East, see Martin Metzger's two-volume masterpiece, Königsthron und Gottesthron.

This chapter seeks to discover the various connotations and usage of the "divine throne" in Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Egyptian texts. It examines as many texts as possible in which the term "throne" refers to the divine throne, regardless of whether the texts are religious, didactic, epical, mythological, historical, or economical. The material here treated, however, is intended to be representative of what is presently published and accessible.

Sumerian Literature

Since Sumerian is the earliest known written language in the Near East\(^1\) or in the world,\(^2\) and the Sumerians are "die älteste Bevölkerungsschicht, die in den Inschriften Babyloniens fassbar wird,"\(^3\) it is natural that this study should begin with the Sumerian texts.

As in the so-called "royal psalms" in the book of Psalms, the king is eulogized and glorified in a number of

Matthias Augustin and Klaus-Dietrich Schunck (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1988), 51.


The king of Sumer, in the eyes of the hymnographers, was the ideal man, physically powerful and distinguished-looking, intellectually without peer, spiritually a paragon of piety and probity. Of divine birth and divinely blessed from the womb, he is portrayed as a comely youth, full of charisma and majesty; his mouth was comely and his countenance most fair; his "lapis lazuli" beard overlaying his breast was a wonder to behold; his august appearance qualified him eminently for the dais and the throne, and for the precious regalia that covered him from the crown on his head to the sandals on his feet. . . .

The Sumerian word gišgu-za may mean either "throne" (of a king or god) or "chair" (of common people). However, it is obvious that the Sumerians considered the "dais" (ba-ra) and the "throne" (gišgu-za or sometimes


3The Sumerian word ba-ra means "Göttergemach," "Heiligtum," "Wohnraum," etc. (Anton Deimel, ed., Sumerisches Lexikon, Scripta Pontificii Institutii Biblici, vol. 3:1, Sumerisch-akkadisches Glossar [Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum (Verlag des Päpstlichen Bibelinstituts), 1934], 29). In the English versions this word is rendered usually as "dais" and sometimes as "throne." However, A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden translate this term as "Hochsitz": e.g., SAHG, 73, 80, 90, 96, 98, 102, 105, 106, 132, 134, 155, 179. In many cases, it is used as a symbolic term for royal authority or kingship: e.g.,
aš-te as essential to the royalty or kingship. In many of the royal inscriptions from Ur are found expressions alluding to this fact.2

"May Ur, the dais of kingship, the city . . . , [bring (?)] to you grain, sesame oil, noble garments, fine garments, (and) large boats." (Kramer, The Sumerians, 279 ["Enki and Ninhursag"], emphasis supplied);

"When Father Enlil seats himself broadly on the holy dais, in the lofty dais, When Nunamnir carries out to supreme perfection lordship and kingship." (ANET, 573 ["Hymn to Enlil, the All-Beneficent"], emphasis supplied).

In one of the early incantations, the ba-ra (here translated as "throne") is praised with majestic words:

"throne, full of awe, throne, clad in splendor, throne! Enki founded it [throne!] king heaven adorned it, [the . . . god] gave it its nature, [the . . . god] embraced, . . . "

(J. van Dijk, A. Goetze, and M. I. Hussey, Early Mesopotamian Incantations and Rituals, YOSBT 11 [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985], 39 [§ 54]).

1The term aš-te is not so frequently used as gu-za, but we find it in several texts. E.g.,

"II:22 ud-gid-du mu-ĝe- Length of days, abundance of gâl-la years,
23 aš-te suhuš-gi- a throne firmly established, na
24 pa uku gam-gam a scepter subduing the people
25 sag-e ǰa-ma-ni- may she as a gift bestow upon in-pa-tug-du me." (Leon Legrain, Historical Fragments, UMPBS 13 [Philadelphia: University Museum, The University of Pennsylvania, 1922], 53 ["Votive Cone of Arad-Sin"]);

"35 me-e é-mu aš-te-bé ga-tuš aš-te-bi zé-ba-ám At my house I shall sit upon its throne! That throne is sure to be good." (Mark E. Cohen, Sumerian Hymnology: The Eršemma, HUCASup 2 [Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College--Jewish Institute of Religion, 1981], 104-105 ["Eršemma No. 159"]).

2ANET, 575 ("Hymn to Enlil, the All-Beneficent," line 161), 584 ("Ur-Nammu Hymn: Building of the Ekur and Blessing by Enlil," line 66), 586 ("The King of the Road: A Self-Laudatory Shulgi Hymn," line 89), etc.
In one of the inscriptions (U. 188) by Kudur-Mabug, king of Larsa, one reads:

(40) Over my work (41) may Nannar, my king (42) rejoice; (43) a decree of life (44) a prosperous reign (45) a throne securely founded (46) as a present (47) may he grant me; (48) the shepherd beloved (49) of Nannar may I be, (50) may my days be long!*

Similar expressions are repeated in several other inscriptions. The immediate context of these epigraphs clearly shows that "a throne securely founded" or "a throne solidly established" is parallel to "a prosperous reign" or "a long reign." More simply speaking, the "throne" is an emblem of "reign" or "rulership."* 

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*Also U. 212, 217, 325, 333, 861, 2611, 2614, 2679, 2794, 6329.


4A brick inscription of Sin-idinnam, king of Larsa, contains the following:


It is remarkable that the term "throne" (gu-za) is used for the seat of the king who is also called a "high priest." Cylinder A of Gudea, king of Lagaš, reads:


This reminds one of the "chair" (kisse') upon which the priest Eli was sitting by the side of the gate (1 Sam 1:9; 4:13, 18). It is interesting that, although Gudea is both the king of Lagaš and the high priest of Ningirsu in the present text, only the latter is referred to in connection with the "throne" in this particular context.

In the thought of ancient Sumerians, sitting place and seating arrangement were so important that even at the banquets the gods were given specific seats and order for sitting in relation to one another. Gudea has prepared a banquet in Ningirsu's honor to which have been invited the gods An, Enlil, and Ninmah:


For Ningirsu he (Gudea) prepared a fine banquet. An sat at the "big side" ["place of honor"]. Next to An was Enlil, Next to Enlil was Ninmah.¹

In one of the temple hymns one reads:

An seats him [Enki] on the place of honor (ki-mah) Next to An seats he Enlil, Nintud he seats in the "great sanctuary" (?), The Anunnaki seat themselves next to them at their places.²

This phenomenon presents a striking contrast with the biblical accounts of Israelite monotheism in which only God sits upon His throne and all the host of heaven stand beside Him (cf. 1 Kgs 22:19=2 Chr 18:18; Isa 6:1-2).

The term "throne" occurs more often as indicating the divine or mythical throne in the Sumerian literature.³


First of all, one of the hundred-odd me's\(^1\) which are listed in the myth, "Inanna and Enki: The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization from Eridu to Erech," is "the throne of kingship." The items of the me's consist of various institutions, priestly offices, ritualistic paraphernalia, mental and emotional attitudes, as well as sundry beliefs and dogmas. Kramer enumerates sixty-eight of them, some of which are:

1. en-ship
2. godship
3. the exalted and enduring crown
4. the throne of kingship
5. the exalted scepter
6. the royal insignia
7. the exalted shrine
8. shepherdship
9. kingship
10. lasting ladyship
11. (the priestly office) "divine lady"
12. (15) truth
13. (22) the flood
14. (24) sexual intercourse
15. (28) art
16. (32) music
17. (35) power
18. (63) judgment
19. (64) decision

Two facts are self-evident in this list: First, the Sumerians regarded the throne as an item of the divine laws which regulate the cosmic orders and human institutions. Second, the Sumerians thought that the throne is a sign of kingship. This idea is more clearly presented in other texts. In one of the Sumerian sacred-marriage texts,\(^2\)

\(^1\)The exact meaning of the Sumerian word me is still uncertain. In general, however, "it would seem to denote a set of rules and regulations assigned to each cosmic entity and cultural phenomenon for the purpose of keeping it operating forever in accordance with the plans laid down by the deity creating it." (Kramer, The Sumerians, 115). In other words, the me's mean something like "the divine laws . . . which govern mankind and his institutions" (ibid., 160).

\(^2\)Ibid., 116 (emphasis supplied).
"Inanna and the King," Ninshubur, the trustworthy vizier of the Eanna, asks Inanna to bless the king with everything essential for the well-being of the king and his people.

II:9 Give him a reign favorable (and) glorious,
10 Give him the throne of kingship on its enduring foundation,
11 Give him the people-directing scepter, the staff (and) the crook,
12 Give him an enduring crown, a diadem which ennobles the head.¹

Another text, entitled "The Curse of Agade," starts with the following:

1 After the frowning forehead of Enlil
2 Had killed (the people of) Kish like the "Bull of Heaven,"
3 After he had ground the house of Erech into dust, like a giant bull,
4 After in due time, to Sargon the king of Agade,
5 From below to above, Enlil
6 Had given him lordship and kingship,
7 Then did holy Inanna, the shrine of Agade,
8 Erect as her noble chamber,
9 In Ulmash did she set up a throne.²

Later in the same text, over the city of Agade, which the gods—Ninurta, Utu, and Enki—deprived of the powers and endowments they had conferred upon it, the poet laments:

66 In days not five, in days not ten,
67 The fillet of lordship, the tiara of kingship,
68 Mansium, the throne given over to kingship,
69 Ninurta brought into his Eshumesha.
70 Utu carried off the "eloquence" of the city,
71 Enki poured out its wisdom.³

¹ANET, 641.
³ANET, 648; cf. Cooper, 52-53.
When the city of Ur was destroyed and its kingship was overthrown by Elam, the poet lamented:

196 Its dais stretching to heaven was filled with lament,
197 Its heavenly throne stood there no longer,
   (its) head was glorious no longer.¹

416 Its throne was hurled down in front of it,
   it "sat" in the dust.²

One of the liturgical texts begins with the following words:

Obverse II:
1 Whatsoever things are named . . .
2 May he with understanding of the seven (numbers)
   grandly [adorn me].
3 Sin first born son of Enlil,
4 A throne of royalty [g13gu-za nam-lugal-la] . . .
5 In a chamber of ruling loftily [may . . .].³

Inanna, the so-called "Queen of Heaven and Earth," who planted a huluppu-tree by the banks of the Euphrates, sings:


²ANET, 618 ("Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur"). A similar idea is found in one of the liturgical texts: "In its holy throne the stranger sits" (Stephen Langdon, Sumerian Liturgical Texts, UMPBS X/2 [Philadelphia: University Museum, The University of Pennsylvania, 1917], 168 ["Like the Sun Hasten"]).

How long will it be until I have a shining throne to sit upon? 
How long will it be until I have a shining bed to lie upon?1

Inanna sings that she wants a throne and a bed. By this she means that she wants "the end result--her rule and womanhood."2

In these and other texts, the throne, along with the fillet, tiara, crown, scepter, and dais, serves as a symbol of kingship, royalty, reign, or sovereignty.

Among the many Sumerian records from Drehem, we find a tablet which reads:

Obverse:
1 2 fattened sheep
2 (the) first time;
3 1 fattened sheep, (the) second time;
4 1 fattened sheep, (the third time);
5 (for the) throne (of the) divine Bur-Sin
6 Ur-Bau (being) "great official" (for the) year.3

The significance of this tablet lies in the fact that it refers to the throne of a god as a cult object. In other words, the throne not only represented the one who occupied it, but the throne itself was deified and worshiped: the sacrifices were brought before it. N. Schneider has indicated that the practice of this cult is found in the Ur

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2Ibid., 142 (emphasis supplied).

III documents from the Drehem archive and the thrones of at least six gods—An, Enlil, Ur-Nammu, Sulgi, Bur-Sin, and Susin—were deified.¹ Schneider observes that

Der Kult der gu-za dauert auch dann noch fort, wenn die entsprechenden Herrscher schon tot sind. Wie mit ihrem Tode der Kult der vergöttlichten Könige nicht aufhört, so dauert der Kult ihrer Thronsessel auch weiter.²

In the other text, the god is called by the seat upon which he is enthroned:

Wenn du in Ur das heilige Schiff besteigst,
 wenn dich der Herr Nudimmud hegt,
 wenn du in [Ur] das heilige Schiff besteigst,
 Held, Vater Nanna, wenn man dich hegt,
 bist du ein goldener Hochsitz,³ der in Sumer errichtet ist,
 bist du ein silberner Hochsitz, der sich in Sumer erhebt.⁴

²Ibid., 65.
³The word "Hochsitz" (ba-ra) is often used in parallelism to "Thron" (qiṣ-gu-za): e.g.,
 "Ihren geliebten Gemahl umarmt sie,
 umarmt die heilige Inanna,
 erstrahlt auf dem Thron, dem großen Hochsitz,
 wie der Tag.
 . . .
 Ama'uschumgalanna steht da in höchster Freude:
 Auf dem leuchtenden Thron möge er lange Tage verbringen,
 auf dem königlichen Hochsitz möge er stolz thronen!"
⁴SAHG, 80 ("Lied auf Nanna-Su'en").
Another interesting phenomenon is that, besides the famous "Sumerian King List,"1 which was made, it seems, as early as the reign of Utu-hegal, last king of the Late Dynasty of Uruk about 2071 B.C., there have been found many lists of years, each year with a distinctive name. These "year-names" are sometimes called "year-formulae."2 Samuel A. B. Mercer enumerates as many as 753 of them.3 It is noticeable that many of these year-formulae are dated with building the thrones for deities. E.g.,

gu-dé-a pa-te-si mu gišgu-za dnīnā ba-dīm-ma,
"Gudea, patesi: year the throne of Ninā was made."4

mu gišgu-za maḫ ēn-līl-lā ba-dīm, "year the great throne of Enlil was made."5

mu ḫi-bī-uṣīn lugal urīki-ma-kē gu-za an ṃn-na-ra
mu-na-dīm, "year Ibi-Sin, King of Ur, made the high throne for Nanna."6

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3Cf. Mercer, Sumero-Babylonian Year-Formulae, 5-53.

4Ibid., 6 (No. 31).

5Ibid., 11 (No. 108); cf. Gadd and Legrain, 59 (No. 202).

6Mercer, Sumero-Babylonian Year-Formulae, 14 (No. 139). For the other examples, see ibid., Nos. 140, 143, 161, 171, 172, 175, 176, 179, 186, 222, 315, 338, 503, 510, 519, 521, 523, 527, 555, 569, 571, 594, 622, 648, 689, 707,
Year in which the throne of Bêl was erected.¹

mu ilI-din-ilDa-g[an] lugal-e gišgu-za bâ[ra]
DIškur IMki mu-na-d[im] . . . , "The year Idin-
Dagan, the king, made the throne of the shrine of
of Ishkur of IMki. . . ."²

1 Jahr: Amarsuena wurde König. 2 Jahr: Amarsuena,
der König, zerstörte Urbilum. 3 Jahr: Amarsuena,
der König, fertigte den Thronsessel Enilils der
Herzensfreude an.³

This reveals that for the Sumerians the construc-
tion of the thrones for deities was so significant and
important as to be remembered by everybody and thus to
become a time indicator both in their daily life and in
their history and chronology.⁴

720, 721, 737. Cf. Gadd and Legrain, 61, 62 (Nos. 213,
215, 216, 221).

¹Robert Julius Lau, Old Babylonian Temple Records,
CUOS 3 (New York: Ams Press, 1966), 48-49 (No. 16). The
same or similar clauses are found in many other tablets:
e.g., ibid., Nos. 75, 79, 80, 93, 104, 107, 135, 165, 187,
205, 220, 236; cf. ibid., 5 (#20).

²Ferris J. Stephens, "New Date Formulae of the Isin

³TUAT, 1:338 ("Die Jahresnamen Amarsuenas von Ur
III [etwa 2045-2037 v. Chr.]"); cf. ibid., 1:340 ("Die
Chr.]"). An inscription by Sinidinnam of Larsa includes a
similar statement:
"V.(194) Damals (198) fertigte er [Sinidinnam] (195)
für Utu, seinen König, (197) seinen (196) erhabenen
goldenen Thron (197) des Wohnsitzes (198) an . . ."
(TUAT, 1:324 ["Eine Inschrift Siniddinams von Larsa"]).

⁴Cf. J. J. Finkelstein, "The Name of Hammurapi's
Sixth Year," RA 67 (1973): 114: "The year in which (King
Apil-Sîn) fashioned for Shamash the (golden) throne, the
exalted dais"; Eckhard Unger, Babylon: Die heilige Stadt
nach der Beschreibung der Babylone, 2nd ed. (Berlin:
Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1970), 144, 149, 156, 157, 158,
etc.
Another concept which the throne alludes to is that of judgment. In one of the Sumerian myths, "Inanna's Descent to the Nether World," Inanna, queen of heaven, visits the nether world for some unknown reason. The queen of the nether world is Inanna's older sister and— at least so it seems— bitter enemy, Ereshkigal. When Inanna went through the seven gates of the nether world and at last appeared before the queen Ereshkigal, the text continues as follows:

162 The pure Ereshkigal seated herself upon her throne,
163 The Anunnaki, the seven judges, pronounced judgment before her.

This scene provides the impression that the queen who is seated upon the throne is the chief judge and the seven judges, the Anunnaki, are the judges who pronounce and execute the sentences under the supervision of the chief judge. Thus the scene with the throne is that of a court room. This concept is more clearly presented in the following temple hymn:

Daß der Gerechte geleitet werde, 
   der Böse unterworfen werde,

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1ANET, 52-57.

2Inanna as the queen of heaven has her own throne. Cf. SAHG, 98 ("Lied auf Inanna und Iddindagan von Isin als Tammuz"); Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East, 28.

3For the reason of Inanna's visit to the nether world, see ANET, 52, n. 1.

4ANET, 55; cf. Wolkstein and Kramer, 60.
The term "der Thron der Schicksalsentscheidung" or "le trône du destin"\(^3\) is reminiscent of the biblical term "the thrones of judgment" (kis'sôt le'mišpāt, Ps 122:5). It seems to have been the common idea among the Semites that the "throne" should include the concept of judgment in its symbolism.

To sum up, in Sumerian literature the divine throne signifies primarily king(queen)ship/royalty/reign of deity or celestial being. Especially, "the throne of kingship" is one of the me's, i.e., the divine principles which regulate the cosmic orders and human institutions. It also symbolizes the authority of judging and deciding destiny for deities. In addition to these, building the thrones for deities was so significant that it became one of the time indicators in the year-formulae. The thrones of some gods were deified and worshiped as cult objects. At least once the throne appears as the seat for the high priest-king.

\(^1\)It is to be noted that in this Sumerian text the concept of judgment is linked with the cleansing of the sanctuary as in Dan 8:14.


Akkadian Literature

Akkadian literature contains a great number of occurrences of the word "throne" (kussû), but the majority of them are references to the thrones of the human kings. In this case, the most common usage of the term is that as the symbol of kingship, royalty, or reign. For instance, the inscription of the stela of Haği reads:

Obverse:
24 . . . Je me suis porté
25 au trône de la royaute.
26 Il m'a assis sur le royal (litt.: de la royaute)
27 siège à moi. . . .


3The kingship which is symbolized by "throne" was regarded by the Akkadians as a gift from Ashur who is the "king of the gods of heaven and earth, father begetter of the gods, the chieftain and first of all, . . . bestower of sceptre and throne [kussi]" (S. Langdon, Tammuz and Ishtar: A Monograph upon Babylonian Religion and Theology Containing Extensive Extracts from the Tammuz Liturgies and All of the Arbela Oracles [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914], 187 ["Prayer and Ceremony at a Dedication," lines 1-4]).

Other inscriptions say:

On my accession to the royal throne, in my first year of reign, I carried off 28,800 Hittite warriors from the other side of the Euphrates . . . 1

In the beginning of my kingship, in my first year of reign, when I solemnly took my seat upon the royal throne, at the command of Assur, the great lord, my lord, I mobilized my chariots (and) I marched against Kumanè.2

At that time, at the beginning of my kingship, in my first year of reign, when I solemnly seated myself on the royal throne, I mustered my chariots and armies . . . 3

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1ARAB, 1:57 (§ 164, "Inscriptions Commemorating the Founding of the Suburb of Assur Called Kar-Tukulti-Urta" by Tukulti-Urta I).

2ARAB, 1:117 (§ 380, "Quay-Wall Inscription" by Adad-Nirari II). The Assyrian and Babylonian chronicles used a fixed term, "... ascended the throne in ..." to express a new king's mounting to his kingship (cf. A. K. Grayson, Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles, Texts from Cuneiform Sources 5 [Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1975], 71-86 passim).

The so-called "Building Inscriptions" by Esarhaddon include a characteristic phrase, "my priestly throne."

My [priestly seed], may it endure, together with the [foundation platform] of Esagila and Babylon, for all time to come; my kingship, may it bring bodily comfort (lit., comfort the flesh) to the people, like the plant of life. . . . May I keep the foundation of my priestly throne firm as a rock. May my rule be secure as (lit., with) heaven and earth.1

The wider context of this phrase tells us that the king, Esarhaddon, possessed not only kingship but also priesthood,2 and thus his throne could be called either the royal throne or the priestly throne. It is worthy of note that in Assyria one person could be both the king and the priest, whereas in Israel kingship and priesthood were normally separate from each other.

It is somewhat surprising that there are found only scanty references to the thrones of deities or mythical beings in the Akkadian texts. In the creation epic, "Enuma


2Cf. ARAB, 2:258-259 (§ 668; K 2801, emphasis supplied):
". . . son of Sennacherib, [the great king], the mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria; . . . who from days of old, at the word of Marduk, came forth to rule land and people, and to be advanced to the kingship; whose priesthood is pleasing unto Assur; whose sacrificial offerings the gods of heaven and earth desire."
Marduk who is granted the "kingship of universal power over the totality of all things," is provided with "a lordly chamber," because "he was made exceedingly tall and he surpassed them somewhat" and "his limbs were made massive, and he was made to excel in height." The epic continues:

IV:28 They [the gods] were glad and did homage (saying) "The king is Marduk."
29 They added unto him a scepter, a throne [iṣu-kussa] and hatchet.

3King, The Seven Tablets of Creation, 1:59 (IV:1). The Akkadian text reads: id-du-šum-ma pa-rak ru-bu-tim ("They prepared for him a lordly chamber"). E. A. Speiser renders this as "They erected for him a princely throne" (ANET, 66).
4Langdon, The Babylonian Epic of Creation, 81 (I:92); cf. ANET, 62.
5Langdon, The Babylonian Epic of Creation, 81 (I:100); cf. ANET, 62.
It is self-evident that here the throne is given as one of the insignia of kingship.

The other reference to the divine throne occurs in "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon":

104. (662) May Enlil, lord of the throne, [. . . .]¹

The poet's real intent in stating this phrase is by no means clear, but it seems that he praises Enlil as the sovereign ruler.

Two other references are found in the hymns to Sin:

Sin, heller, glänzender Gott; Nannar, [. . . .] Sohn Bel's. [Erstgeborener (?)] E[kur's!]
In gewaltiger Königsherrschaft regierst du die Länder, ste[llst hin am glänzenden] Himmel (deinen) Thron,
legst ein hehres Linnen hin, [bekleidest dich] mit der Herrschermütze, Sprießender, herrlicher!
Ein Herrscher ist Sin; sein Licht ist ein Führer der Menschen; Hehrer, herrlicher!²

Erhabener, bei dessen Erscheinen die Länder [Sprößling?] Anu's [barmherziger [Gott], bei d[em]
. . . . . Erschaffer der Ge[schöpfe(?)]
. . . . Zepter, Thron [i]m Herzen der Mensch[en]
. . . . Assurbanipal . . . .³

It is obvious that in these two hymns the throne is mentioned to make clear the idea that Sin is the king or supreme ruler. In other words, the "throne" is used as a

¹ANET, 541. Cf. TUAT, 1:176 (§ 104. [662]): "Enlil, der Herr des Thrones [. . . .]."

²E. Guthrie Perry, Hymnen und Gebete an Sin, LSS II/4 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1907), 23 (Nr. 5, lines 1-4).

³Ibid., 29 (Nr. 6, lines 10-16).
symbol of kingship or rulership of a deity. This concept has been explored by H. Zimmern, who wrote an article on the god-symbols of Nazimaruttaš-Kudurru.¹

There is one other Akkadian hymn, "Hymn to the Sun-God," which may refer to the divine throne; however, it is tantalizing that the inscription has lacunae in the spot where the word "throne" is expected to appear. Ferris J. Stephens renders the hymn as follows:

40 In all directions thou dost investigate their past.²

If Stephens' translation and restoration of the text are correct, we have another aspect of the "throne" symbolism in the Akkadian texts: it symbolizes the authority of investigation or the power of judgment. So to speak, the sun-god Shamash was sitting on the throne of judgment. Supporting this idea is the famous stone tablet of Nabu-aplu-iddina which was found in an earthenware casket at Sippar. In this sculpture, Shamash, the sun god, sits on a carved throne in his shrine or most holy place. Before his eyes there is written, "Tiara of Shamash, exalted of eyes,"


²ANET, 389 ("Hymn to the Sun-God" [italics the translator's]). R. E. Brünnow omits this part (lines 36-40) in his translation of this hymn (cf. R. E. Brünnow, "Assyrian Hymns," ZA 4 [1889]: 19).

Other references to the thrones of the gods are found in the myth called "Nergal and Ereshkigal." However, they are not referring to the royal seats but to the ordinary chairs which were supposed to be used by the gods. E.g.,

\begin{verbatim}
II:36 He (Ea) called to him to give him instruction:
37 "O traveller, dost [thou] wish . . . ?
38 Whatever instructions [. . .] . . . [. . .]
39 As soon as they bring thee a throne,
40 Thou must not go and sit on it."\footnote{ANET, 509. Cf. \textit{ANET}, 510 (III:51-55).}
\end{verbatim}
VI:7 When [thou] hast departed from this place,
8 **I shall provide** a throne for [thee to carry].

Among the Akkadian economic texts found at Ugarit, there are some tablets which give the same idea as the Sumerian record from Drehem does, i.e., the concept of deification of the throne:

50 (pièces d’étoffe) x, 10 tuniques, 10 manteaus.
50 (pièces d’étoffe) x, **pour sièges**, en laine uqnu.
3 lits, incrustés d’ivoire, avec leurs marchepieds.
x + 1 lits, de buis.

3 fourneaux, de bronze, pesant: 2 talents 1600 (sicles).
6 marcassites remplies d’huile douce.
20 boîtes à fard (?), d’ivoire. 4 salières, d’ivoire.
4 (pièces d’étoffe) x, **pour sièges**. Total: 53 liv-raisons.
Sceau du roi DU-tešub.

In these two quotations, the phrase "**pour sièges**" (ša kussi) indicates that the thrones were deified and worshiped and thus the worshipers brought the sacrifices and offerings before them.

One interesting fact is that in the Marduk temple, Esagila, there were among others the bed (iršu) and the

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1ANET, 512.


3Ibid., 186 (16.161, lines 40-44, emphasis supplied).

throne (kussu) for Marduk. According to the descriptions, the throne stood facing the bed in the southwest hall of the temple complex, and was 3 and 1/3 cubits (ca. 1.66 m) long, 3 and 1/3 cubits (ca. 1.66 m) wide, and 1 and 2/3 cubits (ca. 0.83 m) high.\(^1\) This may reflect how ancient people in Mesopotamia thought in regard to the dwelling of their god Marduk. They probably believed that it was necessary for Marduk to take rest: he needed a bed to lie down or sleep on and a chair to sit on. It seems that this chair was not regarded as a ceremonial or administrative throne, because it was located facing the bed in the same room called "Bed-House" (bit irši).\(^2\)

In sum, the Akkadian literature has a great number of references to the human throne, but few to the divine or mythical throne, and the "throne" is generally referred to as an emblem of kingship or ruling power and probably of judgeship or investigating authority of the king or deity. The deification of the thrones is noticed in the Akkadian texts from Ugarit.

**Hittite Literature**

The Hittites used at least two different words to refer to "seat": one is asanna and the other dag. While the former seems to mean an ordinary chair or stool, the

\(^1\)Ibid., 178-179.

\(^2\)Cf. ibid., 178.
latter is used for the royal seat or throne. The word asanna appears twice in "The Song of Ullikummi"\(^1\) which belongs to the so-called Kumarbi cycle. In both cases it refers to the ordinary "chair" or "stool."\(^2\)

Several of the Hittite texts from Boghazköy\(^3\) refer to the thrones of deities or mythical beings. As in the other ancient Near Eastern texts, the "throne" (dag) is primarily the symbol of kingship in the Hittite literature. In the political testament of Hattusilis I (1650-1620 B.C.), which is one of the "two very important documents in Hittite from the Old Kingdom,"\(^4\) Hattusilis I enumerates the reasons why instead of his nephew, the heir-presumptive, he chooses as his successor his grandson Mursili I (1620-1590 B.C.). The text reads:

Great King Tabarna spoke to the fighting men of the Assembly and the dignitaries, saying: Behold, I have fallen sick. The young Labarna I had proclaimed to you, saying: "He shall sit upon the

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\(^2\)Güterbock, "The Song of Ullikummi," JCS 5 (1951): 151 (Col. II.C:23), 161 (Col. A IV:52); ANET, 122, 123.

\(^3\)Cf. NERTOT, 146-150. For the excavations and the deciphering of the Hittite texts from Boghazköy, see Keith N. Schoville, Biblical Archaeology in Focus (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 220-222.

I, the king, called him my son, embraced him, exalted him, and cared for him continually. But he showed himself a youth not fit to be seen; he shed no tears, he showed no pity, he was cold and heartless.¹

The statement "He shall sit upon the throne" in the text is simply a metonymic expression of "He shall be the king" or "He shall hold the kingship."

One of the Hittite myths, entitled "Kingship in Heaven,"² makes references to the thrones of celestial or mythical beings. This fragmentary myth begins as follows:

Once upon a time Alalu was king. Alalu sat upon the throne and the mighty Anu, the first among the gods, stood before him (in service). He bowed down at (his) feet, whenever he handed him his cup to drink. Alalu was king in heaven for nine "counted" years. In the ninth year Anu made war on Alalu. He defeated Alalu, who fled before him and went down to the dark earth. He went down to the dark earth, and Anu (now) sat on his throne. Anu sat on his throne and the mighty Kumarbi waited on him with food. He bowed down at his feet, whenever he handed him his cup to drink.³

When Anu dethroned Alalu and occupied his throne, he became the ruler in his domain, although he did it by usurpation. Thus the throne represents the kingship: as one of the Hittite ritual texts calls it, it is "the throne of kingship."⁴

¹Ibid., 53 (emphasis supplied).
²Cf. ANET, 120-121; NERTOT, 153-155.
³NERTOT, 154 (emphasis supplied); cf. ANET, 120.
⁴ANET, 356 ("Ritual for the Erection of a House"). Cf. ANET, 206 ("God List, Blessings and Curses of the Treaty between Suppiluliumas and Kurtuwaza"): "May they overthrow your throne, (yours), of Kurtuwaza."
On the other hand, the throne sometimes represents the king himself. The other ritual text, "The Festival of the Warrior-God," reads:

The king takes his stand at the throne, but the queen enters the inner temple.
The foreman of the cooks brings kattapalaš cuts. He puts down one portion before the throne and before the War-god; he puts down one at the hearth, one at the throne, one at the window, one at the bolt of the door, furthermore he puts down one by the side of the hearth.1

The phrases "before the throne" and "at the throne" in the second paragraph mean actually "before the king" and "at/to the king," respectively.

One of the characteristics of the Hittite texts, especially of the historical-chronological texts, is the expression "to sit on the throne of one's father" ("sich auf den Thron seines Vaters setzen"): e.g.,

A II:(16) Sowie ich, Telipinu, mich auf den Thron meines Vaters setzte, (17) zog ich nach Hassuwa zu Felde und zerstörte Hassuwa.2

I:(Vorgeschichte:) (3) Schon bevor ich mich auf den Thron meines Vaters setzte, hatten die angrenzenden (4) Feindländer sämtlich Krieg gegen mich begonnen: . . .3

I:(14) Derjenige aber, der sich jetzt auf den Thron seines Vaters gesetzt hat, der (ist doch) klein, (15) der wird das Land Hatti und die Gebiete des Landes Hatti nicht am Leben erhalten.4

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1ANET, 359 (emphasis supplied).
2TUAT, 1:467 ("Der Thronfolgeerlaß des Telipinu").
3TUAT, 1:471 ("Die Zehnjahr-Annalen Mursilis II").
4TUAT, 1:472 ("Die Zehnjahr-Annalen Mursilis II"); cf. TUAT, 1:472 (lines I:12, 19, 28), 481 (line IV:44).
§ 4:(22) Als aber mein Vater Mursili Gott ge-
worden war, (23) setzte sich mein Bruder Muwatalli
aber auf den Thron seines Vaters.¹

This expression seems to have been the typical
description for the occasion when the kingship of a father
was succeeded by his son. The succession of the throne
meant the succession of the kingship.

A striking feature of the "throne" in Hittite
literature is noticed in another ritual text, entitled
"Ritual for the Erection of a New Palace."² In the first
part of this text,³ the "Throne" (gišdag) is personified
and engaged in a mock quarrel with the king: the king
pretends to desire the Throne's banishment, but piously
yields to the wishes of the gods, expressed through the
Throne.

The dialogue between the king and the Throne runs
as follows:

The king says to the Throne: "Come! Let us go!
But stay thou behind the mountains! Thou must not
become my rival, thou must not become my in-law!
Remain my [equal] (and) my friend!

¹ TUAT, 1:483 ("Die Apologie Hattusilis III").
² Cf. ANET, 357-358; Benjamin Schwartz, "A Hittite
Ritual Text (KUB 29.1=1780/C)," Or, nova series 16 (1947):
23-55.
³ The text is divided roughly into three parts: the
second part describes the ceremonies attendant upon the
construction of the new palace; and the third part reports
the rites of sympathetic magic in behalf of the king and
queen upon the completion of the new palace and its hearth.
Cf. Schwartz, 23.
"Come! Let us go to the Mountain! I, the king, will give thee glassware. Let us eat from glassware! Rule thou over the Mountain! . . .
". . . I hailed the Throne, my friend (and said):
"'Art thou not a friend of me, the king? Let me have that tree (that) I may cut it down?"' And the Throne answers the king: "Cut it down, cut (it) down! The Sun-god and the Storm-god have placed it at thy disposal."¹

The personified Throne talks with the king and later provides him with the wills of gods. This kind of literary style is unique in the Hittite literature. As is the case with the deification of the throne in the Sumerian and Akkadian texts, the personification of the throne is something special in the Hittite texts.

Ugaritic Literature

Since its discovery in 1928 the literature from the ancient city Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra, "Fennel Mound" or "Hill of Fennel")² has shed much new light on the study of the biblical world,³ especially due to the linguistic

¹ANET, 357 (italics the translator's); Schwartz, 25, 27 (lines 10-16, 34-38).


affinity between the Ugaritic language and the biblical Hebrew and Aramaic.¹

Richard E. Whitaker² and H.-J. Fabry³ find thirty-nine references to the word ks' in the Ugaritic literature. Besides ks' there is at least one more term in Ugaritic which means "throne" or "chair," and that is kht.⁴ The


³Fabry, "kissē", TWAT, 4:251, notes: "ks' 'Thron' begegnet im Ugar. 30mal (+ 9 Rekonstruktionen)."

⁴UT, 418 (No. 1219). This word is used eighteen times in the Ugaritic texts (cf. Whitaker, 348 [kht]). Cf. ANET, 132 (II AB I:34); G. R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, OT Studies 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 93 ("Baal," II I:31); John C. L. Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 56 ("The Palace of Baal," 4 I:34); Ch. Virolleaud, "Un nouveau chant du

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other words, mtb,1 tbt,2 'd,3 alt,4 and nht5 which are related with ks', are usually rendered as "sitting," "dwellings," "throne room," "support or pillar," and "resting place or rest," respectively. The term kht is used in several cases in parallel to ks' and the two words are interchangeable.6 The legend of King Keret has the following synonymous parallelism:


1Cf. UT, 416 (No. 1177 [ytb]); Whitaker, 326-327 (ytb).

2UT, 500 (No. 2646a); cf. UT, 416 (No. 1177).

3Cf. UT, 453 (No. 1814 ['d]); Whitaker, 477-478 ('d).

4UT, 360 (No. 211). Here Gordon suggests three possibilities for the meaning of alt: (1) it is a synonym of ksu ("throne"); (2) it means "tool, instrument"; (3) it means "platform" on which the throne is placed. This word occurs four times in three different texts (cf. Whitaker, 22 [alt]).

5UT, 443 (No. 1640). While Gordon, Ginsberg, Driver, and Gibson suggest "resting place, couch, resting, rest (of a chair)" as the meaning of nht, A. van Selms explains that nht is a third synonym for "throne": cf. A. van Selms, "A Guest-Room for Ilu and Its Furniture," UF 7 (1975): 472.

6Generally ks' is translated as "throne" and kht as "seat," but Johannes C. de Moor renders them reversely. Cf. Johannes C. de Moor, New Year with Canaanites and Israelites, part 2, The Canaanite Sources, Kamper Cahiers 22 (Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, 1972), 6 (lines 5-6).
16 VI:
22 ytb. krt. l'dh (and) Keret sat down on his
dais,
23 ytb. lksi mlk he sat down on the throne of
(his) kingdom,
24 lnht. lkht. drkt on the cushion on the seat of
(his) dominion.1

In the myth entitled "Baal and Yam," Kothar-and-
Khasis proclaims:

IV:12 grš ym. lksih chase away Yam from his
throne,
13 [n]hr lkht drkth. Nahar from the seat of his
dominion.2

As already noted in above cited passages, both ks' and kht are used quite frequently in juxtaposition to the


2Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 44 (lines 19-20 and 1 IV:24). Cf. Julian Obermann, How Baal Destroyed a
Rival: A Mythological Incantation Scene, Publications of the
American Oriental Society, Offprint Series 23 (New
Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1947), 200-201;
ANET, 131 ("Poems about Baal and Anath," III AB A); CTCA,
17 (3 D IV:46-47), 43 (6 VI:33-35), 51 (10 III:12-15);
Peter J. van Zijl, Baal: A Study of Texts in Connexion
with Baal in the Ugaritic Epics, AOAT 10 (Kevelaer: Verlag
Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag
des Erziehungsvereins, 1972), 62 (ib III:34-IV:50), 140
(127:22-24), 250 (76 III:12-15); Dennis Graham Pardee,
"The Preposition in Ugaritic," UF 7 (1975): 358; H. L.
Ginsberg, The Legend of King Keret: A Canaanite Epic of
the Bronze Age, BASORSS 2-3 (New Haven, CT: The American
Schools of Oriental Research, 1946), 31; Gray, The Legacy
of Canaan, 24, 25, 39; Ulf Oldenburg, The Conflict between
El and Baal in Canaanite Religion, Supplementa ad Numen,
André Caquot, Maurice Sznycer, and Andrée Herdner, Textes
words "kingdom" or "kingship" and "dominion" or "rule."

The Ahiram Inscription says:

tḥtsp. ḫtr. mšpṭh dann soll der Stab seiner Herrschaft entblättert werden,
thtfk. ks'. mlkh soll sein Königsthron [der Thron seines Königtums] umgestürzt werden.¹

In the myths of Baal one reads:

3 D IV:

46 gršh. lkṣi. mlkh who drove him forth from the throne of his kingdom,
47 lnḥt. lkḥt. drkṭh from the cushion on the seat of his dominion.²

6 V:

5 [yṭb.] b[']l. lkṣi. (Then) did Baal [sit] upon mlkh
6 [lnḥt]. lkḥt. drkṭh [on the cushion] on the seat of his dominion.³

It seems that kḥt is used idiomatically together with drkṭ ("rule, dominion")⁴ or zblkm ("princeship"),⁵


⁴Cf. UT, 387 (No. 702).
whereas ks' is juxtaposed with mlk ("kingship, kingdom").

The concept of the "throne" as a symbol of kingship or dominion apparently prevails in the Ugaritic texts. The fight of the gods, especially Baal, Yam, and Mot, for the hegemony among them is the fight for the "throne of kingship" (ks' mlk) and the "seat of dominion" (kḥt drk).

Thus "to sit (ytb) on the throne" or "to ascend (yrd)" the throne means "to be the king," while "to drive out (grš or mr) someone from the throne" means "to deprive him of the kingship or kingdom." As Arvid S. Kapelrud correctly

\[5\] Cf. ANET, 130 ("Poems about Baal and Anath," III AB B:23-29); KTU, 6-7 (1.2 I:23-29); UT, 197 ("Text 137," lines 23-29); NERTOT, 204 (lines 23-29); Caquot, Szynycer, and Herdner, 130-131 ("Ba'al et la mer, II," III AB, B:23-29); van Selms, 260-261, 265; Gray, The Legacy of Canaan, 22 and 23, n. 6. Also cf. ANET, 148 ("The Legend of King Keret," KRT C, V:25); Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 100 ("Keret," 16 V:25); Caquot, Szynycer, and Herdner, 566 ("La légende de Keret," II K, V:25).

\[1\] Cf. UT, 433-434 (No. 1483). There are few exceptions: e.g., 2.4 (68):

6 wtnh. gh. ygr  
7 tht. kṣl. zbl. ym Under the throne of Prince Sea."  


pointed out, it constitutes a motif that "the victorious god . . . has to fight and defeat his opponents before he can ascend to the throne."¹

On the other hand, the word ks' is also used for the ordinary chairs in the mythical world. In the myths of Baal one reads:

17 whln. 'nt. lbth. tmpryn And see! Anat reaches her house,
18 tštql. 'ilt. l̄hk̄lh The goddess comes to her palace,
   . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
   t' r. (21) ks'at. lmhr She arranges seats for the warriors,
   t' r. tl̄hnt (22) l̄sb'im Dressing tables for the soldiers,
   hdm̄m. lḡzrm Footstools for the heroes.
   . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
36 [t] r[.] ks'at. lks'at She rearranges chairs by chairs,
   tl̄hnt (37) [l]tl̄hn<t> Tables by tables,
   hdm̄m. t̄tar. l̄hd̄m Footstools by footstools she arranges.²


In the descriptions of building the palace of Baal,

one reads:

4 VI:

38 ḫdb. bht[h. b]l Baal put his mansion in
(39) y'[db.
hd. Ḫdb[. Ḫ]bl Hadad put his palace in
(40) hkh. order.
thb. alpm[. ap] He did slay oxen, [also]
(41) sin sheep,
. . . .

51 ᵉʰḳ. ḫtm. he did supply the gods with
yn seats (and) with wine,

52 ᵉʰḳ. ilḥt. kṣat[.] he did supply the goddesses
yn with thrones [(and) with
wine].

In one of the new mythological texts found in 1961,

RS 24.244 ("Šapaš, la déesse du Soleil, et les serpents"),
ksa is also used to indicate the chair which the sorcerer
(mlhs) sets and sits on.2

1Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 63-64 ("The
Palace of Baal," 4 VI:38-41, 51-52). Cf. KTU, 19 (1.4
VI:38-41, 51-52); Caquot, Szynecer, and Herdner, 213-214
("Le palais de Ba' al," II AB VI:38-41, 51-52). Ginsberg
translates lines 51-52 as "He sates the throne-gods with
wi[ne]./ He sates the chair-goddesses [. . . ?]" (ANET,
134, italics his). This translation is somewhat unnatural,
because we cannot find any other references to "chair-
goddesses" or "throne-gods" in the Ugaritic texts. How­
ever, if Ginsberg's translation is correct, we find a
common idea of "throne-god(dess)" between the Ugaritic and
the Egyptian literatures (cf. Thomas George Allen, ed., The
Egyptian Book of the Dead Documents in the Oriental
Institute Museum at the University of Chicago, UCOIP 82

2Ch. Virolleaud, "Les nouveaux textes mythologiques
et liturgiques de Ras Shamra (XXIVé Campagne, 1961)," Ugar
5 (1968): 564-572 (RS 24.244, lines 7, 12, 18, 23, 29, 34,
39, 44, 49, 56). The clause, y'[db. kṣa. wyṭb ("he set a
chair and he sat [on it]"), is repeated ten times in this
myth like the refrain in a song.
The position of the seat and the order of seating were very important in the mind of the Canaanites as they were in the thought of the Sumerians. In Ugaritic texts mention is also found of the seating of specific gods according to their relationship to one another. Kothar, at Baal's invitation to a divine banquet, comes before the gods to the seat (ksu) which is assigned to him.

A chair is readied and he is seated
At the right hand of Aliyan Baal,
Until the gods have eaten and drunk.1

One of the most notable scenes associated with the throne is that of El's mourning for the death of Baal. H. L. Ginsberg's translation reads:

"We came upon Baal
Fallen on the ground:
Puissant Baal is dead,
The Prince, Lord of Earth, is perished."
Straightway Kindly El Benign
Descends from the throne,
Sits on the footstool;
From the footstool,
And sits on the ground;
Pours dust of mourning on his head,
Earth of mortification on his pate;
And puts on sackcloth and loincloth.2

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2ANET, 139 (I AB VI:8-17 [italics the translator's]); KTU, 23 (1.5 VI:8-17). Cf. Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 73 ("Baal and Mot," 5 VI:8-17); Gaster, Thespis, 212-213; Gray, The Legacy of Canaan, 51; Caquot, Sznycer, and Herdner, 250 ("Ba'al et la mort," I AB VI:8-17); Ch. Virolleaud, "La mort de Baal: Poème de Ras-Shamra (I AB)," Syria 15 (1934): 330-331; N. Wyatt, "Cosmic Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
El, in mourning the dead Baal, sits on the footstool on coming down from the throne and before descending further to the ground. This is not simply a stereotyped description but an extraordinary expression of mourning. El's action of mourning as a whole is of enormous significance.\(^1\) He lowers himself from the throne "to the ground" (l'ärṣ) as a gesture of grief over the peer who has "fallen on the ground" (mpl l'ärṣ). "Footstool" (ḥdm) appears as an item of furniture, though perhaps with cultic association, in the scene of Anat at war.\(^2\)

Frequently, however, the footstool is mentioned in association with the throne of god: the feet of Athtar the substitute king of the gods do not reach to the footstool of Baal's throne;\(^3\) El sets his feet on his footstool as

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\(^1\) M. Dietrich and O. Loretz, "Die Trauer Els und Anats (KTU 1.5 VI 11-22. 31 - 1.6 I 5)," UF 18 (1986): 105, 110.

\(^2\) KTU, 11 (1.3 II:37).

Asherah approaches him;\textsuperscript{1} El does the same thing as Anat comes to him;\textsuperscript{2} and in the above quoted text El comes down to "sit on the footstool" (ytb. lhdm) as he mourns over the dead Baal.\textsuperscript{3} These divine footstools are mentioned only in connection with rulers among the gods and clearly contain an element of royal symbolism.\textsuperscript{4}

In connection with the footstool, a few comments on the limestone stela of a god seated on the throne are in order. One of the most interesting iconographies from Ugarit is the well-known stela showing two figures: the one on the left is standing, while the other on the right is sitting on a throne with his feet on a footstool.\textsuperscript{5} Much interest has been raised about the identity of the seated figure. Most scholars identify him as the chief god El with more or less confidence.\textsuperscript{6} Especially, the footstool trace of the mythology of Baal as King" ("The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms," VT 11 [1961]: 14).

\textsuperscript{1}KTU, 17 (1.4 IV:29).
\textsuperscript{2}KTU, 26 (1.6 III:15).
\textsuperscript{3}KTU, 23 (1.5 VI:11-14).
on the stela is consistent with the identification of the
god as El.¹ This reminds one of the OT references to the
"footstool" (ḥādām, 1 Chr 28:2; Pss 99:5; 110:1; 132:7; Isa
66:1; Lam 2:1)² and of the Egyptian iconography of the
footstools of Tutankhamun, decorated with nine bows or nine
bound enemies for whom the bows are metaphors.³

One Ugaritic text from Mari mentions the "House of
the Thrones" as a ritual building for sacrificing the
animals:

(1) Wenn der 1. Tag des Monats Addaru vergangen
ist, (2) dann (findet) das kispum inmitten (3) der
Stadt (und) im Umland (statt):

Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985), 206 (§ 283); André
Caquot and Maurice Szynyer, Ugaritic Religion, Iconography
of Religion XV/8 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 23 (§ VII);
Pfeiffer, Ras Shamra and the Bible, 29; Wyatt, "The Stela
Schaeffer, "La stèle de l'homage du dieu El (?)"; ANEP,
168, 307 (§ 493); John Gray, Near Eastern Mythology

¹Wyatt, "The Stela of the Seated God from Ugarit," 275. Regarding the identity of the figure on the stela,
Wyatt continues:
"This may be further supported by his beard. Gods in
Egyptian and Mesopotamian iconography are commonly
shown with beards, but this is not the case with
Syrian or Palestinian examples. The only deity in
the Ugaritic texts whose beard is mentioned is El
(KTU 1.3 v 2, 25), in the episode where 'Anat
threatens him with violence. It seems to indicate
his age and seniority, highlighting the impropriety
of 'Anat's language" (ibid.).

²Cf. pp. 132-133 below.

³Wyatt, "The Stela of the Seated God from Ugarit,"
World, 255 (§§ 342, 342a).
Das Mahl soll vom Palast ausgehen: Ein Schaf wird für die Statuen Sargons und Naram-sins im >Haus der Throne< geopfert. Ein Schaf wird als kispum geopfert. Vor der Ankunft des Königs soll das Opfer im >Haus der Throne< stattfinden.1

The German translators of this text provide the following explanation for the "Haus der Throne": "Gebäude, in dem sich die geweihten Götterthrone befanden."2 If this footnote is correct, the thrones in the building were not those of human kings but those of gods. People brought the sacrifices for the statues of the kings, not for the thrones. They killed the animals in the "House of the Thrones." Thus, this is not necessarily related to the deification of the thrones which is found in the Sumerian and Akkadian texts. However, it is significant that the divine thrones were there in the building for sacrifices.

Another symbolic usage of ks' is found in KTU 1.3 VI, where a messenger is instructed to go from the abode of Ilu to the home of the divine craftsman Kothar. The passage runs as follows:

Pass over a thousand acres of sea,
   ten thousand square miles of the Two Rivers,
   pass Byblos,
   pass Qa’ila,
   pass the islands of Memphis.


2 TUAT, 2:326, n. 7 a).
... the skies, o fisherman of Athiratu,
come on, o Quidshu-Amruru!
Then you shall head straight
for all the divine Egypt.
Kaphtor is the chair he sits on,
Egypt the land of his inheritance.¹

The statement "Kaphtor² is the chair [ks'u, throne] he sits on" is analogous to Jer 3:17, "At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD" (RSV),³ and to Jer 49:38, "I will set my throne in Elam, and destroy their king and princes, says the LORD" (RSV).⁴ The implication of these texts is that Jerusalem and Elam shall be the places where God's presence is immediate and His rule is exerted in a special way. Therefore, the metaphorical clause "Kaphtor is the chair [throne] he sits on" means that Kaphtor is the area of his direct administration or rule.

It is rather surprising to learn that in Ugaritic texts one does not find any passage in which the term ks' is used in association with the concept of "judgment." However, one text which "seems to be a prayer to several


²According to Amos 9:7 and Jer 47:4, Caphtor is the country from which the Philistines came. Since Deut 2:23 speaks of "the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor," it would seem that "Philistines" and "Caphtorim" are synonymous terms. However, it is impossible to exactly locate Caphtor and one can never be sure if the biblical Caphtor and the "Kaphtor" in our text are identical. Cf. F. W. Bush, "Caphtor; Caphtorim," ISBE, 1:610-611.

³Cf. pp. 205-216 below.

⁴Cf. pp. 236-240 below.
gods, especially Rapi'u,\textsuperscript{1} connects the verb \textit{ytb} with the other verb \textit{tpt}. The immediate context of the passage runs as follows:

\begin{quote}
May the Healer, the Eternal King, drink wine,
yea, may the god drink, the Strong and Noble,
the god who thrones [\textit{ytb}] with `Attartu,
the god who judges [\textit{tpt}] with Haddu,
the Shepherd who sings and plays
the lyre and the oboe,
\end{quote}

The two verbs, \textit{ytb} and \textit{tpt}, are found in parallelism and may be understood as more or less synonyms. In any case, "sitting" and "judging" are closely connected. And although the word "throne" is not mentioned in the text, it is presupposed by the verb \textit{ytb} ("to sit" or "to throne"). Consequently, this passage alludes to the association of the throne with the concept of judgment.

In summary: The word ks' in Ugaritic texts, together with kht, is by and large the term for the prerogative of kingship and dominion as in other ancient Near Eastern literatures. However, it is also used for the ordinary chair and the sorcerer's chair. For the Canaanites, the position of the seat and the order of seating were so important that they were prearranged according to

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{1}Johannes C. de Moor, "Studies in the New Alphabetic Texts from Ras Shamra I," \textit{UF} 1 (1969): 175.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
the status and relations among those who were present. The connection between the throne and the concept of judgment is not spelled out but hinted at.

**Egyptian Literature**

The ancient Egyptians are unique in that they used a great variety of terms to indicate the throne. They were also more concerned about the seating furniture than any other nation in their neighborhood. This is evidenced by the fact that stools were used from the very earliest period, even from the predynastic era.

According to Martin Metzger, the oldest Egyptian stelae of the kings who are seated on the throne come from the First Dynasty (ca. 3100-2890 B.C.). The carved stelae that have been found from the private tombs of the First and Second Dynasty (ca. 2890-2686 B.C.) have the customary scene showing "the owner of the tomb seated on a stool in front of a round pedestal"


3Metzger, Königsthrone und Gottesthrone, 1:5.
table on which offerings are represented."\(^1\) The chair proper which developed from the stool appeared already during the Second Dynasty.\(^2\)

The royal and ceremonial chairs, or thrones, were so much developed in both shape and decoration\(^3\) that the Eighteenth Dynasty (ca. 1567-1320 B.C.) could produce the so-called "Golden Throne" of King Tutankhamun, which is "one of the most beautiful pieces of furniture ever made."\(^4\)

It seems that the development of the form of the throne led naturally to the development of its significance and the latter, in turn, played an important role in forming the concept of the divine or mythical thrones.

In Egyptian literature, the idea of the "throne" is, first and foremost, that it represents the godship. Many of the gods, goddesses, and mythical beings are


\(^2\) Killen, 51.


referred to as seated on, or in connection with, their thrones: e.g., Amon-Re, Osiris, Isis, Horus, Thoth.


3This goddess was the wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus. Her commonest names are "the great goddess, the divine mother, the mistress of charms or enchantments," and in later times, "the mother of the gods" and "the living one." She is usually depicted in the form of a woman, with a head-dress in the shape of a seat or throne (āuset), the hieroglyphic for which forms her name. Cf. E. A. Wallis Budge, The Egyptian Book of the Dead (The Papyrus of Ani): Egyptian Text, Transliteration and Translation (New York: Dover Publications, 1967), cxiv; idem, The Gods of the Egyptians, 2:202; H. Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 6; Hermann Kees, Der Götterglaube im alten Ägypten (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983), 101, 145; Meyerowitz, 48; Watterson, 89-97.
Ptah,\(^1\) Keb,\(^2\) Menthu-Re,\(^3\) Har-akhti,\(^4\) Schu,\(^5\) Geb,\(^6\) Tem,\(^7\) Neserser,\(^8\) Sekhet,\(^9\) Khopri,\(^10\) 'Ipzsf,\(^11\) the Falcon,\(^12\) the


\(^4\)Budge, The Book of the Dead, 548.


\(^6\)ANET, 263 ("The War Against the Peoples of the Sea").

\(^7\) TUAT, 1:549 ("Die Israel-Stele des Mer-en-Ptah, 1208 v. Chr.").


\(^9\)Budge, The Book of the Dead, 448, 563.

\(^10\) Ibid., 563, 564.


Cat,1 the Beetle,2 and even Astarte.3 The following two statements from The Book of the Dead provide the impression that each god or goddess had his or her own throne: "May every god transmit unto thee [Tem] his throne for millions of years";4 "Every god giveth up to Pepi his throne in his boat."5


1Allen, The Egyptian Book of the Dead, 149 ("BD 75").

2Ibid., cx.

3Astarte was a Phoenician goddess. This foreign goddess was brought into Egypt and became a familiar figure to the Egyptians of the Nineteenth Dynasty; under Ramesses II she possessed a special temple in his residence. This intrusion of a foreign goddess has given rise to a tale in which Astarte is provided with a throne. Cf. Adolf Erman, The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians: Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction, from the Third and Second Millennia B.C., trans. Aylward M. Blackman (London: Methuen & Co., 1927), 169-170.

4Budge, The Book of the Dead, 563 (emphasis supplied).

5Ibid., 605 (emphasis supplied). A statement from The Book of Two Ways alludes to the fact that wherever a god may go, there is provided a throne: "I go down to your bark that I may provide your throne" (Leonard H. Lesko, The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways, JCPNES 17 [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972], 106). The other statement from another text supports this idea: "Now Re entered every day at the head of the crew, taking his place on the throne of the two horizons" (ANET, 12 ["The God and His Unknown Name of Power"]). As John A. Wilson explained in his note, it seems that Re "made the daily journey between east and west in his sun barque" (ANET, 12b, n. 1).
As in other literatures, the second concept of the divine "throne" in the Egyptian texts is that it symbolizes kingship and its power. As Henri Frankfort pertinently pointed out, many peoples consider the insignia of royalty to be charged with the superhuman power of kingship, and among these objects, the throne occupies a special place: the prince who seats himself upon it at the coronation arises king.\(^1\) The other two objects which signify the kingship are the crown and the scepter. In Egyptian literature, these two—especially the crown—are by no means less important than the throne in symbolizing the kingship or kingdom.

For the significance of the throne, Frankfort further observes:

The throne "makes" the king—the term occurs in Egyptian texts . . . The bond between the king and the throne was the intimate one between his person and the power which made him king.\(^2\)

The remark by the god Osiris Ani, "I am crowned upon my throne like the king of the gods,"\(^3\) is one of the numerous statements which indicate the close connection between the throne and the king.

One of the most frequently occurring phrases in Egyptian literature, "Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the

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\(^1\) Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, G.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 459.
Two Lands,"¹ characterizes the hierarchy of the deities in the ancient Egyptian mythology. The god Amon (or Amun)-Re² was the king or ruler of the two lands—Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. The title "Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands," not only expresses the status of the god but also specifies his domain or territory. As the "primeval deity and supreme god of the Egyptian pantheon,"³ Amon is first mentioned in the Pyramid Texts which are from the end of the Fifth Dynasty (ca. 2494-2345 B.C.)⁴ and later holds the "universal kingship."⁵

The third concept of the mythical throne is that of judgment. This concept is plain especially in the following passage:

He [Thoth] is one who has come forth from that Sound Eye. His throne is at his seat, his judgment hall; <he> is one who has come forth from . . . the


²Re was the creator sun-god of Heliopolis and thus signified "the quintessence of all manifestations of the sun-god, permeating the three realms of the sky, earth and Underworld. Hence many deities enhance their own divinity by coalescing with this aspect of the sun-god, e.g., Khnum-Re, Amun-Re" (Hart, 179).

³Hart, 4.

⁴Cf. Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts, 234: "... you have come, O King, as the son of Geb upon the throne of Amun."

⁵Hart, 5.
Sound Eye. He is lord of the Double Crown; he shall not be kept from seeing his father before him. He goes forth from him; he goes forth as Atum. He has traversed his every seat <as> he goes to the ways of the west. He is lord of the double crown; his seat, his throne, he traverses <it>.¹

Thoth has come from the "Sound Eye" who scrutinizes and examines the deeds of the dead, and "his throne" is in "his judgment hall." In addition to this, the phrases such as "the seat of right and truth" (āuset maāt)² and "the seat of peace for doing what is right and true" (āuset ḫetep en āri maāt)³ clearly indicate that the seat or throne (āuset) was a kind of forensic or judicial chair. They also allude to the moral quality or ethical dimension which the ancient Egyptians attached to the mythical throne. Thus, they remind one of the Bible texts saying, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His [God's] throne" (Pss. 97:2; cf. 89:14 [ET 89:15]).

One of the characteristics in Egyptian mythology is that there are so many different classes or groups of gods, one of which is "Throne Gods."⁴ This seems to be a power

¹Allen, The Egyptian Book of the Dead Documents, 126 ("BD 42").

²Budge, The Egyptian Book of the Dead, 233, 179.

³Ibid., 242.

⁴Allen, The Egyptian Book of the Dead Documents, 226 ("BD 141"). The other groups of gods are: "the southern Gods, the northern Gods, the western Gods, the eastern Gods; the Kneeler Gods and the Gods who bring offerings; the Gods of the Upper Egyptian shrine and . . . the regional Gods, the Horizon Gods, the Cave Gods, . . ." (ibid.).
term: in other words, the term "throne god" may indicate a certain category of celestial beings or deities, as noticed in the NT (Col 1:16) and the extrabiblical literature (T. Levi 3:8).

Another characteristic feature is that the ancient Egyptians used various explanatory adjectives and modifiers for the divine thrones. There were the Great Throne, the mighty seat, the holy seats, the Beautiful Throne of the great god, the chief seat, the hidden throne, the

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3Budge, The Book of the Dead, 473.

4Lichtheim, 3:45, 50, 51, 52.


invisible seat,¹ the veiled seat,² the empty throne,³ the throne of Ruler,⁴ the iron or alabaster throne,⁵ the rectangular throne,⁶ the throne of the Dweller in the fiery Lake,⁷ the throne of the Great Lady,⁸ the throne of the two Distant Ones,⁹ the Thrones of the Two Lands,¹⁰ the thrones of the Two Banks,¹¹ the throne of the two horizons,¹² the thrones of the West,¹³ the seat of the Foremost of the Westerners,¹⁴ the throne of Southern

¹Budge, The Book of the Dead, 475.
²Ibid., 542.
³Budge, The Egyptian Book of the Dead, cx.
⁴ANET, 17; Simpson and Faulkner et al., 134.
⁷Budge, The Book of the Dead, 563-564.
⁸Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, 2:129.
⁹Ibid., 2:246.
¹¹Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts, 1:274.
On,¹ the seat in the land of Upper Egypt,² the seat in the land of Lower Egypt,³ the throne of the land,⁴ the seat of right and truth,⁵ the throne of the joy of heart,⁶ the throne of the living,⁷ the seat of the quiet,⁸ the throne in the darkness,⁹ the throne in the Field of Rushes,¹⁰ the twin seats,¹¹ etc.

Still another characteristic point is that the god Horus inherited the throne of his father Osiris and, sitting on it, he ruled the world. Great emphasis is laid upon this in many hymns which relate to Osiris and his successor Horus;¹² e.g.,

¹Lichtheim, 2:26.
²Allen, The Egyptian Book of the Dead Documents, 228 ("BD 142a").
³Ibid.
⁶Budge, The Book of the Dead, 534.
⁷Lichtheim, 2:40.
⁸Ibid., 1:59.
⁹Budge, The Book of the Dead, 366.
¹¹Allen, The Egyptian Book of the Dead Documents, 283 ("BD 159a").
¹²Budge, Osiris, 2:262.
Thy throne hath descended unto thy son Horus.¹

Exalted is thy throne, O Osiris. . . .
Thy son Horus hath ascended thy throne.²

In truth he shall rule from thy throne, and he shall be heir to the throne of the Dweller in the fiery Lake [Neserser].³

The throne of Horus passed naturally to his representative on earth, i.e., to the king of Egypt. Budge has provided a synopsis of how the throne of Osiris and Horus was regarded.

When the first king of Egypt sat upon that throne the spirit of Horus, as well as that of Osiris, protected and inspired him, and the divine power which these gods conferred upon him, by virtue of his succession to their sovereignty, gave to his words and deeds an authority which was divine and absolute.⁴

All these characteristic features of the mythical thrones are the indication that the ancient Egyptians put extraordinary importance and significance upon the throne. In the following text one finds that they even personified the throne:

My seat, my throne, come, given to me, and serve me. I am your Lord, (O) gods; come to me as (my) Followers. I am the Son of your Lord; ye belong to me. It was my Father who made you for me while

²Ibid., 534-535.
³Ibid., 563 (chap. CLXXV:15). Cf. ibid., 564 (chap. CLXXV:20-21): "And, verily, his son Horus is seated upon the throne of the Dweller in the fiery Lake [of Neserser], as his heir. . . . Horus is stablished upon his throne."
⁴Budge, Osiris, 2:262.
I was in the retinue of Hathor. I was the priest there, Ihy, while I was in the retinue of Hathor.¹

The god who pronounces this is Osiris and he addresses both his throne and the other gods. By doing this he seems to regard his throne as one of the gods or to divinize it.

This investigation of the divine throne motif in Egyptian literary texts can be summarized in the following way: There is a "throne" for almost every god and each goddess in the Egyptian pantheon and, consequently, one may say that the throne primarily connotes godship. It also signifies both kingship (ruling power) and kingdom (ruling territory). The throne of Osiris was inherited by his son Horus and later the Pharaohs themselves succeeded to this throne: this was the source of the royal authority and the symbol of sovereignty. In rare cases the throne is related to the idea of judgment and moral quality. The variety of the hieroglyphic terms for "throne" as well as of the descriptive words for it is something peculiar in Egyptian literature. The idea of personification or divinization of the throne is present in one of the texts.

In summary, all of the major ancient Near Eastern literatures—Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Egyptian—speak more or less of the thrones of deities. The idea which is clear and common to all of them is that

¹Allen, The Egyptian Book of the Dead Documents, 130 ("BD 47a").
the "throne" signifies kingship or royal authority. Many of the texts associate the throne with the concept of judgment. For the Sumerians and the Canaanites the position of the seat and the order of seating were so important that the gods were given specific seats and order for sitting according to their status and relationship to one another. In some of the Sumerian, Akkadian, and Egyptian texts, the mythical thrones are deified and/or worshiped as cult objects. The Sumerians regarded the throne as one of the me's or divine principles which regulate the cosmic orders and human institutions. In one of the Hittite texts, the throne is personified, and in one of the Ugaritic texts, it is mentioned metaphorically. In the Egyptian literature almost every deity has its own throne, and the throne of Osiris is inherited by his son Horus and later by the Pharaohs. The characteristic title, "Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands," indicates both the king's status (kingship) and his domain (kingdom).

What emerges from this study is that there is in the ancient Near Eastern texts no exact parallel to the idea expressed in Ps 89:15 (ET 89:14) or Ps 97:2, except an allusion to this in an Egyptian text. In other words, the idea of righteousness and justice as the foundation of the throne of deity is not found in any of the Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, and Ugaritic texts. This implies that the moral quality or ethical principle upon which the
throne of God in these hymns of the OT is set up was missing in the concept of the mythical throne in Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, and Canaanite literatures.

The task now is to examine in the remainder of this study the "throne of God" motif in the Hebrew Bible. In Chapter IV the throne terminology of the Hebrew Bible is investigated and this is followed by a brief survey of the thrones of humans in the OT. In Chapter V an exegetical exploration of the relevant passages is undertaken.
CHAPTER IV

THE THRONE TERMINOLOGY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

This chapter presents a study of the throne terminology, i.e., the OT terms for "throne" and other related expressions, and the thrones of humans in the OT with the purpose of providing a linguistic background for the exegetical study of "throne of God" texts. First, some etymological investigations are pursued. Etymology may not reveal the total meaning of a given word, but it can contribute to comprehending the historical development of a term.¹ As James Barr asserted, "The etymology of a word is

not a statement about its meaning but about its history."¹ Barr warns us against the so-called "root fallacy" and against what he calls "illegitimate totality transfer."²

While Barr is correct in insisting that meaning is found in contexts (clauses and sentences), his criticism must be tempered.³ Although the history of a certain word sometimes demonstrates that the word has moved far from the sense with which it was first used, the etymology of a given word is still useful as an introduction to revealing its semantic value.⁴ In other words, it is logical and natural that when we try to expose the meaning and significance of a certain term we should trace its origin or root as far back as possible.

There are three terms used in the Hebrew Bible which are translated "throne." The two Hebrew terms are kisse' and kisseh and the Aramaic term is korse'.⁵ Two other Hebrew terms, mōšāb and teḵūnāh, are used to indicate the divine habitation and the seat of God respectively.

²Ibid., 218.
⁴Blosser, 3.
⁵Cf. Mandelkern, 589-590, 1329; Lisowsky, 686-687, 1554; Even-Shoshan, 552-553, 563; Fürst, 562-563, 572; Fabry, "kisse'" TWAT, 4:256.
The Hebrew Terminology

kisse'

The noun kisse' occurs 135 times in the OT. It is suggested that the word is a derivative of the root ks' which is of Common Semitic origin. It has been linked to two different groups of meanings: "full moon" and "throne." Richard S. Tomback suggests that these two groups of meaning are originated from two separate roots: "ks' I" (Common Semitic) for "throne" and "ks' II" (Biblical Hebrew) for "covered (?) or full (?) moon."

On the other hand, some scholars suggest that the term kisse' derives from an Akkadian noun. According to Maximillian Ellenbogen, the Hebrew word kisse' "is derived from the Akkadian word kussù, which is, as the cuneiform

1Fabry, "kisse'," TWAT, 4:256. The breakdown of occurrences is as follows:
"Am häufigsten begegnet das Wort im DtrGW (50mal, davon 20mal in 1 Kön 1 und 2), Pss (18mal), Jer (17mal) und im Chronistischen Geschichtswerk (16mal). Sonst begegnet das Wort nur sehr sporatisch (Jes 3mal, Spr 6mal, Ez 5mal, Pent 4mal, Esth 3mal, Sach und Hi je 2mal, Jon, Hag und Kl je 1mal)."

2Cf. Mitchell Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography III," Bib 46 (1965): 330. The form ks' in the sense of "full moon" appears only once in the Hebrew Bible (Prov 7:20). The other form ksh is used also once (Ps 81:4 [ET 81:3]).

3"Vollmond" and "Thron" (Fabry, "kisse'," TWAT, 4:247-248).

spelling indicates, but an Akkadianized version of the Sumerian word gišGU.ZA.1

The Sumerian noun gu-za or guzza, meaning "seat, chair" ("Sessel"),2 is probably "derived from the Sumerian verb GUZ 'to cower, to squat (Ak. napalsuḫu), to be lowered (Ak. šapālu')."3 This in turn is related to the Old Akkadian kussû(m) and the Old Assyrian term kussīum, both of which mean "Stuhl, Thron"4 or "chair, sedan chair, throne, rule, dominion, royal property and service. . . ."5 One scholar suggests that kussû(m) may derive from the verb ksi, which means "binden (von Schilf und Rohr)."6 If this is correct, it may be assumed that the word "throne" or "chair" originally meant a binding or fastening (a person


5Oppenheim et al., eds., The Assyrian Dictionary, 8:587.

on a seat), or that the "throne, chair" was something that was bound (together) or fixed (in a certain place). However, there is no certainty that this Akkadian etymology is correct, since the majority of scholars believe that the Akkadian noun is a loanword taken over from Sumerian.

There are several Ugaritic terms which indicate "chair" or "throne": kht,1 tbt,2 and ks'.3 The most important among these is ks', and its nominative form is ks'u4 or ks'u.5 Besides ks' or ks (ks'u), Ugaritic has also ks3 and ks3 for "seat, chair, throne." According to Cyrus H. Gordon, the last three letters of the Ugaritic alphabet (i, u, h) have been appended to a preexisting alphabet ending in t.6 Regarding the usage of those three letters, he observes as follows:

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\[\text{\footnotesize 1UT, 418 (No. 1219).}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 2UT, 500 (No. 2646a). Cf. UT, 416 (No. 1177).}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 3UT, 421 (No. 1277).}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 4Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 5Aistleitner, Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache, 153 (No. 1351).}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 6UT, 11.}\]
to interchange with s as the variants ssw and ksu show.¹

Based on these and other comparative Semitic connections in cognate languages, the noun kisse'² is used in Hebrew with the meaning of "seat, chair, throne."

kisseh

The Hebrew term kisseh has the same meaning as kisse'. The difference rests with the third radical. Instead of an ' there is a h. One could conclude that kisseh is simply a variant of kisse'. The term kisseh occurs only three times in the Hebrew Bible: twice in 1 Kgs 10:19 and once in Job 26:9. It is remarkable that, in the description of the throne which King Solomon made, the two forms of the same word are used without any distinction in meaning as follows:

The king also made a great ivory throne [kisse'], and overlaid it with the finest gold. The throne [kisseh] had six steps, and at the back of the throne [kisseh] was a calf's head, and on each side of the seat were arm rests and two lions standing beside the arm rests (1 Kgs 10:18, 19, RSV).

It is noted in this passage that the two occurrences of kisseh indicate the subject or a part of the subject, while kisse'² is an object and in the construct state. The two occurrences of kisseh in this passage refer to the royal throne of King Solomon, whereas the other

¹UT, 11-12.
²HAL, 464; KBL, 446; BDB, 490.
occurrence in Job 26:9 refers to the divine throne. The following translation seems to deliver the right meaning of Job 26:9:

He [God] shuts off the view of His throne [kissēn], Spreading His cloud over it. (NJV).\(^1\)

mōṣāb

The noun mōṣāb is a derivative of the verb yāṣāb ("to sit, sit down, dwell, inhabit, remain sitting").\(^2\) The term mōṣāb is generally rendered as "seat, dwelling, dwelling-place, habitation."\(^3\) The KJV, RSV, and NASB never translate this word as "throne," and even when it refers to the place where the king (Saul) or God sits, these versions all render it as "seat" (1 Sam 20:25; Ezek 28:2). The NIV, however, renders mōṣāb 'ēlōhim yāṣābti of Ezek 28:2 as "I sit on the throne of a god,"\(^4\) while the NJV paraphrases it

\(^1\)Thus KJV. Cf. RSV, NIV, NASB, NEB, JB, NJB, etc., have "moon" or "full moon" for kissēn in Job 26:9.


\(^3\)BDB, 444; KBL, 507; HAL, 532.

\(^4\)Since the Hebrew word 'ēlōhim can be translated both in singular ("God") and plural ("gods"), the translations of this text vary: "I sit in the seat of the gods" (RSV); "I sit in the seat of gods" (NASB, NKJV); "I sit in the seat of God" (KJV); "I am sitting on the throne of God" (JB); "I am divinely enthroned" (NJB); etc. For a further discussion, see Walther Zimmerli, Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, vol. 2, Chapters 25-48, Herm, trans. James D. Martin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 77-78; Moshe Eisemann, Yechezkel: The Book of Ezekiel: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources,
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as "I sit enthroned like a god." The JB translates it as
"I am sitting on the throne of God," but the NJB reads, "I
am divinely enthroned."

Fabry's observation, that "mōšāb 'Sitz' als überge-
ordneter Begriff alles bezeichnen kann, was sich zum Sitzen
eignet,"¹ is felicitous. The noun mōšāb occurs forty-four
times in the Hebrew Bible, and in most cases it refers to
"[usual] dwelling,"² "dwellingplace,"³ "habitation,"⁴
"seat,"⁵ etc.

In Ezek 28:2 mōšāb is used to refer to the "seat"
of God (KJV) or gods (RSV, NASB)⁶ and in Ps 132:13 it
refers to the "habitation" (KJV, RSV) of Yahweh. It is not
clear whether or not the mōšāb in these two texts refers to
God's throne itself. It is more likely that it indicates
God's habitation or the place where the throne of God is
located.

¹Fabry, "kisse"," TWAT, 4:258.
²Gen 10:30; 27:39; Exod 10:23; Lev 3:17; 7:26;
23:3, 14, 21, 31; 25:29; Num 35:29; Ezek 48:15 (KJV).
³Num 24:21; 1 Chr 6:54; Ezek 6:6; 37:23 (KJV).
⁴Gen 36:43; Exod 12:20; 35:3; Lev 13:46; 23:17; Num
15:2; 1 Chr 4:33; 7:28; Ps 107:7, 36; Ezek 6:14 (KJV).
⁵1 Sam 20:18, 25; Job 29:7; Ps 1:1; Ezek 8:3 (KJV).
⁶NIV and JB render mōšāb in Ezek 28:2 as "throne" and
some other versions translate the clause mōšāb 'Elōhím
yāšābti rather dynamically: "I sit enthroned like a god"
(NJV); "I am divinely enthroned" (NJB); etc.
teḵūnāh

The word teḵūnāh occurs three times in the OT (Job 23:3; Ezek 43:11; Nah 2:10 [ET 2:9]). William Gesenius thinks that the teḵūnāh of Job 23:3 derives from the root kûn and that of Ezek 43:11 and Nah 2:10 (ET 2:9) from the root tākan.¹ In other words, while their forms are identical, their etymologies would be different on this basis and thus their meanings should differ from each other. This would mean that the former is a hapax legomenon and the latter is another dislegomenon. However, N. H. Tur-Sinai² takes tkn for the root of the teḵūnāh of Job 23:3, and F. Delitzsch,³ Édouard Dhorme,⁴ E. Gerstenberger,⁵ John N. Oswalt,⁶ and K. Koch,⁷ on the other hand, take kwn for the root of all three. It is difficult to decide which is the real etymon of teḵūnāh, because the two candidate verbs,

¹GHCL, 863.
³F. Delitzsch, KD:COT, 4:2:2, notes: "everywhere from kûn, not from tākan."
kwn\(^1\) and tkn,\(^2\) have some of their meanings in common.\(^3\) However, it seems more likely that tekūnāh is a "tagtul-form" noun which was derived from kwn and obtained the noun preformative tāw (t) and the feminine ending (-āh).\(^4\) In any case, the term tekūnāh literally means "established place" or "fixed place."\(^5\) In the case of Job 23:3, the majority of the versions render it as "seat" or "chair."\(^6\)

1The original meaning of the verb kūn (in the gal form) is "be firm, straight" (KBL, 426). Its polel form means "set up, erect, establish, found, direct" (GHCL, 386-387; BDB, 466-467; KBL, 426-428; HAL, 442-444). Cf. E. Gerstenberger, "kūn ni. feststehen," THAT, 1:812-817.

2tkn is derived from the Akkadian taqanu ("be set in order") and means "prüfen; estimate [gal], fest hinstellen; adjust; bemessen; mete out [piel]" (KBL, 1028; BDB, 1067) or "weigh, prove, examine, measure, set up, fix" (GHCL, 864). Cf. Delcor, "tkn bemessen," THAT, 2:1043-1045.

3The major meanings of both verbs are as follows: tākan—"to estimate, make even, level, poise, weigh" (gal), "to adjust, mete out, weigh, prove, examine, measure, set up, establish, fix, arrange" (piel); kūn—"to be firm, firmly established" (nifal), "to set up, erect, confirm, establish, maintain, found, direct, form" (polel), "to constitute, appoint, arrange, prepare" (hifil). Cf. KBL, 1028, 426-427; GHCL, 864, 386-387; BDB, 1067, 465-466; HAL, 442-443.


5BDB, 456; KBL, 1028.

6In the case of Job 23:3, the term tekūnāh is translated as "mvtb" (Peshitta, "dwelling place"), "hedra" (Symmachus, "seat"), "solum" (Vulgate, "seat, chair"), "seat" (KJV, RSV, ASV, NASB), "dwelling" (NIV), "judgment seat" (NAB), "Stuhl" (Luther), "trône" (La Sainte Bible,
In the other two cases (Ezek 43:11; Nah 2:10 [ET 2:9]), it is translated in many different ways.\textsuperscript{1} The KBL renders it as "Einrichtung, Ausstattung (e[ines] Hauses)," i.e., "arrangement, disposition (of house)."\textsuperscript{2}

The immediate context of Job 23:3 discloses that this word refers to the seat or dwelling-place where God sits enthroned as Judge (vs. 7) or it indicates His throne itself. It is evident that the scene as a whole is related to judgment, as we hear Job's utterance in the following verse: "I would present my case before Him/ And fill my mouth with arguments" (Job 23:4, NASB).

\textbf{The Aramaic Terminology}

\textit{korse'}

The term \textit{korse'} is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew term \textit{kisse'}.\textsuperscript{3} In place of the gemination of the

\begin{itemize}
\item Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible), "pojwa" (RHV, "throne" in Korean), etc. But the LXX renders it as "telos" ("end, accomplishment"), and this reflects that its translator understood the word as deriving from \textit{takan} rather from \textit{kūn}.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{E.g.}, \textit{Ezek 43:11}--"fashion" (KJV, ASV), "arrangement" (RSV, NIV, NKJV), "structure" (NASB), "plan" (JB), "fittings" (NEB), "layout" (NJV); \textit{Nah 2:10} (ET 2:9) --"store" (KJV, ASV, NEB), "treasure(s)" (RSV, NASB, NKJV, NJV, JB), "supply" (NIV).

\textsuperscript{2}KBL, 1028.

\textsuperscript{3}GHCL, 415; BDB, 1097, 1098; KBL, 1087.
sibilants ss the Aramaic has the sequence rs.\textsuperscript{1} This phenomenon is also known from various other ancient Semitic languages: e.g., Syriac (kûrs\textsuperscript{2}yā'), Arabic (kursiyun), Mande\textsuperscript{2}an (kursia), and most South Semitic languages.\textsuperscript{2} The Syriac kûrs\textsuperscript{2}yā' means "thronus," especially "sedes episcopi," "dioecesis," and "caput (regionis)."\textsuperscript{3} The Arabic word, kursiyun, has a rather broad spectrum of meanings. It primarily means "throne, seat, stool, dais," especially, "God's throne," "the sovereign's throne," and "the bride's seat." Metonymically, it is used to indicate "royal seat, residence," and later "the see of a bishop, patriarch." The range of its meaning has been extended to include "professor's chair, lecturing desk," "desk on which the Qur'an is placed," "base, chapter (of a column)," "pillar (of a bridge)," and "mounting (of a catapult)."\textsuperscript{4}  

\textsuperscript{1}Cf. Fabry, "kisse\textsuperscript{1}," TWAT, 4:248, who comments, "Im Wege der Dissimilation wird im aram. Sprachbereich die Sibilanten-Gemination ss aufgebrochen zur Konsonantenfolge rs . . . , die zum Morphem krs' führt." Cf. GHCL, 407 (kisse\textsuperscript{1}), 415 (korse'), 748 (r).  

\textsuperscript{2}Cf. Tomback, 146. Fabry, "kisse\textsuperscript{1}," TWAT, 4:248, enumerates as follows: "Südsemit. begegnen Tigre kursi 'kleines Bett, Sessel', Tigri\textsuperscript{n}a kūras . . . ., Mehri karsī, Šhauri kersi und Soq. korsi 'trône' . . . ., Harari kursi 'chair, stand on which the Koran is placed while one recites it.' . . . "  

\textsuperscript{3}Karl Brockelmann, Lexicon Syriacum (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966 [reprint]), 348.  

In the OT, the term *korsē'* is found only three times in the Aramaic portion of the book of Daniel: once in 5:20, where it refers to the throne of Nebuchadnezzar, and twice in 7:9, where it refers to the thrones (*korsāwān*, plural) in heaven and the throne (*korsē',* singular) of the Ancient of Days.

**Other Related Expressions**

The Hebrew Bible knows no real synonyms of kissē' other than kissāh. Yet several terms or expressions are employed to refer to the place where God is enthroned or to indicate the objects related to kissē' . One of these is the expression *mēkôn-šibtō* (Ps 33:14), which means "His dwelling place" (NASB; cf. NJV) or "the place of his habitation" (KJV). The Psalmist states that Yahweh as Lord of creation and history

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looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men;
From His dwelling place [mimmēkôn-šibtō]
He looks out
On all the inhabitants of the earth,
He who fashions the hearts of them all,
He who understands all their works.
(Ps 33:13-15, NASB, emphasis supplied).
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One phrase analogous to this is *mākôn lešibtekā*, "a place for you to dwell" (1 Kgs 8:13). This is a part of what Solomon spoke to Yahweh when the ark was brought into the temple. It is apparent that this phrase refers to the temple built by Solomon and called "an exalted house" in the same verse.
The other term for the place where God dwells is mēnūḥāh, "resting place" (Ps 132:8). Its context reveals that it refers to "His Tabernacle" in which Yahweh's "footstool" and "ark" (vss. 7, 8) are laid and resting.2

Another term which is closely connected with kisse' is ḥāḏôm, which is normally translated as "footstool."3 Deriving from the verb dwm ("to lie quietly, motionless"), ḥāḏôm originally meant "a place which gives rest."4 The word ḥāḏôm always occurs with raglayim in the Hebrew Bible. This is to say that it appears only in the construct phrase ḥāḏôm raglayim, "the footstool of the feet." This phrase is found six times in the OT and

is used only figuratively [metaphorisch] for the ark, Zion, and the earth as the "footstool of God" (Pss 99:5; 132:7; Isa 66:1; 1 Chr 28:2), and for enemies as the "footstool of the king" (Ps 110:1; Lam 2:1).5

The only synonym of ḥāḏôm is kebeḵ, "footstool,"6 which is used to denote the golden footstool of Solomon's

1BDB, 629; KBL, 537; HAL, 568.
2The noun mēnūḥāh derives from the verb nūḥāh, which means "to settle down upon, remain, rest, take rest" (gal), and "to cause to settle down, give rest, set, lay (aside), let (someone or something) stay" (hifil). Cf. BDB, 628; KBL, 601-602; HAL, 641-642; GHCL, 538, 539; H. D. Preuss, "nūḥāh; mēnūḥāh," TWAT, 5:297-307.
3BDB, 213; KBL, 225; HAL, 229.
4Heinz-Josef Fabry, "ḥāḏôm," TDOT, 3:325.
5Ibid., 331 (Fabry, "ḥāḏôm," TWAT, 2:353).
6BDB, 461; KBL, 423; HAL, 439.
throne (2 Chr 9:18). This word, a **hapax legomenon**, derives from the verb καβασ,\(^1\) which means "to tread with the feet, trample under feet," or "to bring into bondage, dominate, subject, subdue, subjugate." The meaning of the root is suggestive of the function which this footstool played for the one who was seated on the throne.

The footstool of Yahweh is also called μεγόμον κισ'ί, "the place of My throne" (Ezek 43:7); and μεγόμον καππότ ῥαγλαγ, "the place of the soles of My feet" (Ezek 43:7). This is what Yahweh calls His sanctuary on Zion, where He "will dwell among the sons of Israel forever" (Ezek 43:7, NASB) in the temple vision of Ezekiel. In the book of Isaiah, Yahweh's footstool is called μεγόμ ῥαγλαγ, "the place of My feet," in synonymous parallelism with μεγόμ μιγдασί, "the place of My sanctuary" (Isa 60:13). Here Yahweh's power and καβόδ ("glory") is manifested and the subjugated enemies of Israel follow it in procession to show their respect to the city of Yahweh.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)Cf. S. Wagner, "καβασ; καβεσ; κιβας," TWAT, 4:54-60; BDB, 461; KBL, 423; HAL, 439; GHCL, 383-384. G. Henton Davies suggests that κεβας "is probably a deliberate alteration of κβας, 'lamb,' which in turn is probably a scribal alteration for '(gl, 'calf')" (G. Henton Davies, "Footstool," IDB, 2:309). This suggestion seems to be based on the LXX rendition of 1 Kgs 10:19, "and there were calves' heads [πρωτομαὶ μοσχῶν] to the throne behind," and on the remarks by C. R. North ("The Religious Aspects of Hebrew Kingship," ZAW 50 [1932]: 28-29). This may seem "probable" but is open to serious question.

\(^2\)Fabry, "חָדֹם," TDOT, 3:331-332.
The Thrones of Humans in the Old Testament

In the OT possession of a throne is the privilege of the king (Gen 41:10 and passim). The Hebrew word kisse' is primarily used for the seat of the king. How closely the king and the throne are linked may be seen from the following passages:

And the woman of Tekoa said to the king [David], "O my lord, the king, the iniquity is on me and my father's house, and the king and his throne are guiltless" (2 Sam 14:9, NASB, emphasis supplied).

And it came about, when he [Zimri] became king, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha . . . (1 Kgs 16:11, NASB, emphasis supplied).

However, kisse' is also used for the seat of any distinguished person: the seat of the queen mother (1 Kgs 2:19), the judicial seat of the governor (Neh 3:7), the tribunal of a judge (Ps 122:5), especially, the chair of an old man who is the priest (1 Sam 1:9; 4:13, 18) and the seat for the prophet as an honored guest (2 Kgs 4:10). English translations normally do not use the word "throne" in these instances, but reserve it for the ceremonial chair of a king from which, equipped with the other symbols of his office, he discharges his duties.¹

The word "throne" can refer to the actual seat, but more often simply stands for the authority of the king² or

²Cf. p. 1, n. 2 and p. 2, n. 1 above.
for the kingdom as a whole (2 Sam 7:16; 1 Kgs 8:20). The thrones of many foreign kings are mentioned in the OT,¹ but attention naturally centers on the Hebrew throne, particularly on the throne of David which was established by divine covenant. Thus, there are many references to the Davidic throne in the sense of the eternal duration of the Davidic dynasty promised in 2 Sam 7:12-16.² On one occasion one finds a similar reference to the throne of Israel (1 Kgs 2:4). It is in similar terms that Isaiah prophesies that the Messiah will sit "on the throne of David and over his kingdom" (Isa 9:6 [ET 9:7], NASB). This throne is distinguished not only by power but also by justice (Isa 16:5; cf. Ps 122:5).³ To the degree that this kingship of the Davidic dynasty implies the kingship of Yahweh,⁴ the

¹E.g., Gen 41:40; Exod 11:5; 12:29; Judg 3:20; 2 Kgs 25:28b=Jer 52:32b; Isa 14:9; 47:1; Jer 43:10; Esth 1:2; 5:1; Jonah 3:6.

²Cf. 1 Chr 17:11-14; Pss 89:4, 28, 29, 36; 132:11, 12; Jer 13:13; 17:25; 22:30; 36:30; etc. For the studies on the throne of David and its succession as theological or biblical motifs, see p. 12, n. 1 above. The most remarkable and scholarly treatment on this subject is Oliver Raymond Blosser's A Study of 'the Throne of David' Motif in the Hebrew Bible.

³For the general link between the throne and justice, see Prov 20:28; 25:5; 29:14.

⁴The Davidic kingdom is "the kingdom of Yahweh in the hand of the sons of David" (2 Chr 13:8, emphasis supplied). In connection with this, the Queen of Sheba's praise of Solomon contains the following significant words: "Blessed be the LORD [Yahweh] your God who delighted in you, setting you on His throne as king for the LORD [Yahweh] your God" (2 Chr 9:8, NASB, emphasis supplied).
The throne of David to which Solomon succeeded can also be called "the throne of the kingdom of Yahweh over Israel" (1 Chr 28:5) or "the throne of Yahweh" (1 Chr 29:23).\(^1\)

The description of Solomon's throne in 1 Kgs 10:18-20 gives us an idea of the physical appearance of the Hebrew throne in OT times.

Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with refined gold. There were six steps to the throne and a round top to the throne at its rear, and arms on each side of the seat, and two lions standing beside the arms. And twelve lions were standing there on the six steps on the one side and on the other; nothing like it was made for any other kingdom (1 Kgs 10:18-20, NASB).

In other words, Solomon's throne was a high-backed chair and had wide armrests. On the back of the throne was "a round(ed) top" or "a calf's head" (1 Kgs 10:19, RSV),\(^2\) the ancient symbol of strength, and two lions stood beside the armrests, while twelve lions stood one on each end of six steps, symbolizing the royal authority and power. All


\(^2\) This is a case of textual problem: the MT reads, \(\text{w}\text{e}\text{r}\text{o}^\prime \text{š}^-\text{\'a}g\text{\'ol},\) which means "the round(ed) top" or "(the top (is) round(ed))." However, Greek texts have the equivalent of "heads of calves" (\(\text{w}\text{e}\text{r}a^\prime \text{š}\text{ē} \text{\'e}g\text{el}\))—i.e., "calves" for "round(ed)" (\(\text{\'e}g\text{el} \text{for} \text{\'a}g\text{\'ol}\). Following these texts, the RSV translates: "At the back of the throne was a calf's head" (1 Kgs 10:19). Although this is generally accepted, the other, "the round(ed) top," is also supported by some important versions (e.g., Peshitta, Vulgate, MT), and adopted as original by F. Canciani and G. Pettinato. Cf. F. Canciani and G. Pettinato, "Salomos Thron, philologische und archäologische Erwägungen," ZDPV 81 (1965): 88-108; Simon J. De Vries, 1 Kings, WBC 12 (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1985), 140.
these descriptions and their symbol of the Solomonic throne contribute in one way or the other to understanding the biblical concept of the throne.

The Hebrew Bible contains numerous construct chains in which the term kisse' is found as the first component (nomen regens),¹ and these can be divided into several groups. The first one is the "throne of kingdom" group. To this group belong kisse' mamlāḵāh (Deut 17:18; 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 9:5; 2 Chr 23:20), kisse' mamlāḵōt (plural, Hag 2:22), kisse' malkōt (1 Chr 22:10; 2 Chr 7:18), and kisse' melūḵāh (1 Kgs 1:46). One other form, kisse' hammelāḵīm ("throne of the kings," 2 Kgs 11:19; 25:28; Jer 52:32), may also belong to this category.

The second group is the "throne of Israel" group. The construct form, kisse' yiārā'ēl, is found four times in the formula promising the continuous succession of the Davidic throne: "There shall not fail you [David] a man on the throne of Israel" (1 Kgs 2:4=9:5, RSV; cf. 1 Kgs 8:25=2 Chr 6:16²). Later, in the book of Jeremiah, we find a similar form, kisse' bēt-yiārā'ēl: "David shall never lack

¹ Fabry, "kisse'"; TWAT, 4:256, observes: "kisse' begegnet in knapp 2 Drittel seiner Belege in prosaischen, sonst in poetischen Texten. 23mal begegnet kisse' absolut, 61mal suffigiert (46mal mit Bezug auf den König, 15mal mit Bezug auf JHWH)."

²The wordings of these two verses are slightly different from those of 1 Kgs 2:4=9:5. 1 Kgs 8:25=2 Chr 6:16 reads, "There shall never fail you a man before me to sit upon the throne of Israel" (RSV, emphasis supplied).
a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel" (Jer 33:17, RSV, emphasis supplied).

The third group is the "throne of his father" group. This form, kissē' 'ābiw, which emphasizes the dynastic element, occurs once with reference to David (1 Kgs 2:12) and once with reference to Ahab (2 Kgs 10:3). When Solomon applies this formula to his own relationship to David, he naturally changes the form from "his father" to "my father": kissē' dāwīd 'ābi (1 Kgs 2:24).

The fourth group is the "throne of judgment" group. In this category we find two different forms of the same idea: kissē' lēmišpāt, "throne of judgment" (Ps 122:5) and kissē' din, "throne of judgment" or "throne of justice" (Prov 20:8, NASB). Ps 122, one of the Songs of Degrees,\(^1\) includes a meaningful verse which says, "For there are set thrones of judgment [kis'ōt lēmišpāt], the thrones of the house of David" (vs. 5, KJV). The expression, "thrones of judgment," is not used here to introduce anything new that is unknown but to indicate and explain an already existent concept. That concept is "the thrones of the house of David." Syntactically, the "thrones of judgment" is in

\(^1\)This group of psalms (Pss 120-134; probably also Ps 84) is otherwise called the Songs of Ascents, the Gradual Songs, the Pilgrim or Pilgrimage Songs (Wallfahrtslieder). Cf. Klaus Seybold, Die Wallfahrtspsalmen: Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte von Psalm 120-134, BTS 3 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1978); idem, "Die Redaktion der Wallfahrtspsalmen," ZAW 91 (1979): 247-268; Cuthbert C. Keet, A Study of the Psalms of Ascents (London: Mitre Press, 1969).
apposition to "the thrones of the house of David." Thus, this verse (Ps 122:5) reveals how closely government is related to judgment.

The same idea is apparent also in Prov 20:8, where the wise man says, "A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes" (RSV). Here, the king's throne, the seat of the ruler's authority, functions as the tribunal of the king as the judge. It was for this reason that Solomon "made the Hall of the Throne ['ullam hakkissê'] where he was to pronounce judgment, even the Hall of Judgment ['ullam hammispâl]" (1 Kgs 7:7, RSV). Therefore, it becomes evident that "throne" signifies both government and judgment.

For the fifth group, there are a few attributive construct chains² with kissê': kissê' hawwòt, kissê' kābôd, and kissê' qōdeš. The first one is found only in Ps 94:20: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with

¹According to Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, the lexical form of 'ullám is 'Ēlām. But its orthography is varying: 'ullám (20 times), 'ulám (12 times), 'elammāw (7 times), 'ēlammāw (7 times), etc. The LXX has always ailam, which is a borrowed word or a transliteration. The origin of this word is the Akkadian i/ellāmu ("vor, in front of") or i/ellāmi ("vorn, in front"), thus it means "Vorhalle (des Tempels), porch, vestibule." Cf. KBL, 38; HAL, 39-40.

²Cf. GHG, 417. By the "attributive construct chains" are meant the construct chains in which the nomen rectum does not represent merely what is the genitive relation to the nomen regens, but only adds a nearer definition of the nomen regens, especially the attribute of a person or a thing.
thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" (KJV, emphasis supplied). According to Mitchell Dahood, the Psalmist contrasts kisse' hawwôt ("the seat of iniquity") with 'ad ṣedeq ("the tribunal of justice") in vs. 15 (AB), thus "the phrase is metonymic for iniquitous rulers." James G. Murphy has the same idea when he comments: "The throne of mischief [his own translation]. The throne is the seat of judgment. The throne of mischief is that which decides contrary to justice." 

The tenor of the entire psalm is, as Derek Kidner puts it, "A God who Punishes." This is obvious from the very beginning of the psalm. Therefore, as a part of the psalm whose theme is judgment or punishment, the expression

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1Dahood's own translation of the whole verse (Ps 94:15) is: "But the tribunal of justice will restore equity,/ and with it all upright hearts"; whereas NKJV has, "But judgment will return to righteousness,/ And all the upright in heart will follow it." Dahood gives the following comments on "the tribunal of justice":

"Crucial for the interpretation of the immediately preceding verses, vs. 15 is unfortunately the thorniest line of the entire psalm, grammatically and lexically. What is proposed here is at least syntactically feasible.

"A comparison with vs. 20, kisse' hawwôt, 'the seat of injustice,' reveals that 'ad ṣedeq is its antonym, and that 'ad equals Ugar.-Heb. 'd . . . '"


2Ibid., 350.


"the throne of iniquity" should mean "the tribunal of destruction" and denote "the rulers or judges who were ready like a yawning gulf to swallow up the innocent."¹

The second occurrence of this type of construction is kisšē' kābōd, which means "the throne of glory" or "the glorious throne." This phrase occurs four times in the OT. It stands as a metaphor for Jerusalem (Jer 14:21),² as the divine epithet of Yahweh (Jer 17:12),³ and for the throne of David (Isa 22:23). In Hannah's prayer, it simply means an honorable position (1 Sam 2:8). The NT has two references to "the throne of glory" (thronos doxēs),⁴ and in both cases (Matt 19:28; 25:31) "it is used for the sovereign seat of the Son of Man when He is manifested in His Messianic glory to judge and to rule [zum Gericht und zur Herrschaft]."⁵ In other words, it is the Son of Man who will sit "on the throne of His glory" (ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξας αὐτοῦ).

²Cf. pp. 217-222 below.
³Cf. pp. 222-236 below.
⁴In addition to this phrase ("the throne of glory" [thronos doxēs]), the NT has also "the throne of grace" (ho thronos tēs charitos, Heb 4:16) and "the throne of the Majesty" (ho thronos tēs megalōsunēs, Heb 8:1), both in the book of Hebrews.
⁵Schmitz, "thronos," TDNT, 3:164-165.
The third occurrence of this type, kissē' qōdeš, is found only once in the Hebrew Bible: "God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne" (Ps 47:9 [ET 47:8], RSV, emphasis supplied). The MT for "His holy throne," kissē' qodēš, literally means "the throne of His holiness." qōdeš, as a nomen rectum of the construct chain, describes the attribute of the nomen regens, kissē' (throne).

The sixth group consists of the "throne of David" and "throne of Solomon" group. We have already noticed the significance of the Davidic (and Solomonic) throne and its succession. The following statement by Fabry may serve as a good summary of what the Davidic throne signifies:

Der kissē' dāwīd ist damit der Inbegriff für die von Gott erwählte Königsherrschaft Davids und der Davididen in Jerusalem (vgl. Jer 13,13; 17,25; 22,2. 4. 30; 29,16). In ihm verwirklicht sich die Königsherrschaft JHWHs auf Erden (1 Chr 28,5), deshalb ist ihm beständige Sukzession und Bestand auf immer verheissen (2 Sam 7,13; par. 1 Chr 17,12. 14; Ps 132,11).2

The seventh and most important group is the "throne of God" or "throne of Yahweh" group. As stated earlier, the Hebrew Bible contains twenty-seven passages which have direct reference to the throne of God. Each of these is studied in the next chapter.

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1See p. 12, n. 1 above; Fabry, "kissē'" TWAT, 4:259-262.

2Fabry, "kissē'" TWAT, 4:259-260.
CHAPTER V

THE THRONE OF GOD IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

Pentateuch

The Pentateuch contains four occurrences of the word kisse' (Gen 41:40; Exod 11:5; 12:29; Deut 17:18). In Gen 41:40, it refers to the throne of the Pharaoh of Joseph's time; in Exod 11:15 and 12:29, to that of the Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus; and in Deut 17:18, to that of the king who will be enthroned when the Israelites will conquer the Promised Land and be given the monarchy. Thus, in all of these occurrences, the term refers to the throne of the earthly king.

The fifth probable reference to the throne, which may be the only reference to the throne of God in the whole Pentateuch, is found in the book of Exodus (17:16).

The Book of Exodus

Exodus 17:16

Exod 17 reports the experiences that Israel had at Rephidim during their journey through the wilderness. The second half of the chapter (vss. 8-16) is the narrative of the fight between Israel and Amalek. The account after defeating Amalek runs as follows:

143
Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Write this in the book as a memorial, and recite it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Yahweh-nissi [Yahweh is my banner], and he said, "Because a hand [has been lifted] against the throne of Yah[weh], Yahweh [will be at] war against Amalek from generation to generation."

(Exod 17:14-16).1

The MT of vs. 16 reads:

wayyō'mer
ki-yāḏ `al-kēs yāh milḥāmāh laYHWH baʾāmālēq middōr dōr.:2

It is extremely difficult to gain a correct understanding of the Hebrew text because it contains a very obscure expression. Two basic questions arise regarding this verse: (1) "What does the hapax legomenon kēs3 mean?" and (2) "whose 'hand' does the yāḏ refer to?"

First, what is the meaning of kēs? The problem of the meaning of ki-yāḏ `al-kēs yāh has been debated throughout the history of exegesis. The LXX reads, hoti en cheiri kruphaiai, meaning "for with a secret [literally, covered or concealed] hand." This Greek translation suggests the same consonants for kēs yāh as the MT, but pointed as a verb—kēsuyāh (gal passive participle of kāsāh, "cover,

1My translation.

2Both BHK and BHS have the exactly same form.


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conceal") and with the preposition transposed to go with yād. Both Samaritan and Syriac versions read kisṣē' for kēs, and the Vulgate's "solium Domini" suggests a text such as kisṣē'-Yāh ("throne of Yahweh"). This interpretation is followed by many other Bible translators and commentators.1 It is interesting that the KJV and many other versions provide a paraphrase in terms of "swearing" for this phrase.2

On the other hand, the RSV and some other versions3 follow the emendation nēs-Yāh ("banner of Yah[weh]"), because it is possible that kēs is a scribal error for nēs ("banner"), as in vs. 15.4 J. P. Hyatt considers the emendation made by the RSV as "the best solution for an obscure text"5 and maintains that "the meaning of the RSV

1E.g., NIV—"For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD"; NJV—"Hand upon the throne of the LORD!" Fox's translation is quite literal: "Hand on Yah's throne!" (Everett Fox, Now These Are the Names: A New English Rendition of the Book Of Exodus [New York: Schocken Books, 1986], 98).

2E.g., KJV ("the LORD hath sworn"; the margin has "the hand upon the throne of the LORD"); cf. The Geneva Bible, NKJV, ASV, NASB, and RHV.

3E.g., JB, NJB, Zürcher Bibel ("Die Hand an das Panier des Herrn!").


5Hyatt, 186.
text as emended and punctuated is that Moses took an oath by the 'banner of the Lord' (i.e., by the altar), declaring that Yahweh would have continual war with Amalek.\(^1\)

After probing various possible interpretations of this verse, Roland Gradwohl also concluded that "die Übersetzung des Verses lautet daher richtig: 'Fürwahr, Hand an, auf der Gottesstandarte, Krieg hat JHWH gegen Amalek von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht'.\(^2\) By saying this, Gradwohl proposes the theory that the hand in vs. 16 is a reference to "a votive hand" ("Votivhand")\(^3\) on the scepter of God to guarantee continual war against Amalek.

However, this argument has a couple of serious weaknesses. First, it does not have any support from the ancient MSS and old translations. It has been observed that

conjectural emendations are not to be adopted without necessity. . . . The text as it stands was undoubtedly that which was alone known to the Targumists, the Samaritan, the Syriac, the Latin and the Arabic translators.\(^4\)

Second, it is unnatural and less logical to understand ki-yāḏ 'al-ḵēs yāh as meaning "because a hand [is] on the banner of Yahweh," since this clause is expected to

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Gradwohl, 493.

\(^3\)Ibid., 494.

offer the reason why Yahweh "will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exod 17:16b, KJV, RSV). In other words, it is more logical and natural to interpret the clause as meaning "because a hand [has been lifted] against the throne of Yah[weh]," for this explains why Yahweh will have continuous wars against the Amalekites. Recently, this has been reaffirmed by John I. Durham, who makes the following significant remarks:

Such an interpretation ["the banner of Yah"] may be borne out by the explanation of Moses, though [vs.] 16 is complicated by what appears to be a corrupt text at its crucial point. As noted above . . . , the reading kisse' yāh "throne of Yah" is preferable to the other possibilities, in part because it requires less textual emendation and in part because it better fits the context. The Amalekites have raised a hand against Yahweh's sovereignty, symbolized repeatedly in the OT by reference to his ks'/ksh "throne" . . . , but not against a flag or banner of Yahweh, never mentioned in the OT at all.1

The recent article by David Horowitz also advocates "throne" rather than "banner."2 More convincingly, the Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project, citing its "Factor 8" ("Misunderstanding of

1John I. Durham, Exodus, WBC 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), 237.

2David Horowitz, "ky yd `l ks h' [yh]," DD 14 (1985): 56, maintains as follows: "The passage should be translated in its literal meaning: (Because) there is a hand on the Throne of the Lord (there is) war unto Amalek in every generation (Midor dör, and not midör ledör). This passage reveals a fundamental fact that there is a negative 'hand' interfering with the Throne of the Lord."
linguistic data"). reads this text as follows: "(For a hand) [has been raised] against the throne of the LORD: ([therefore there is] war between the LORD and Amalek)."

Second, whose "hand" is referred to by the word yāḏ? There have been at least three suggestions to answer this question: (1) "Yahweh's hand; (2) Moses' hand; and


2Ibid., 110.


"And he said, 'By oath it was pronounced by the Awe-inspiring One whose Divine Presence is upon the throne of glory that it is destined that war will be waged before the Lord against Amalek in order to destroy them for eternal generations.'"

(Bernard Grossfeld, The Targum Onkelos to Exodus: Translated, with Apparatus and Notes, ArBiTg 7 [Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1982], 48).


"The Lord hath sworn. A very terse form of oath
(3) Amal'ok's hand.¹ In the first two suggestions, the hand (yād) is lifted as a cursing formula (Fluchformel)² or a swearing gesture (Schwurgestus).³ The third suggestion holds that the hand is raised as a rebelling gesture.

Menahem M. Kasher summarizes a great variety of interpretations and comments on this verse.⁴ The rendition of the text in his suggestion is "The hand upon the throne of the LORD." U. Cassuto's interpretation is different:

(introduced by ki, the particle of asseveration), which may have been frequently employed in ancient days--yād * al kēs Yāh. The alliteration formed by the first and the last word is characteristic of popular sayings and proverbs. The four words denote a hand on the throne of Yah. The expression 'lift up the hand' as a form of oath is found in vi. 8, Gen. xiv. 22, Num. xiv. 30, Ps. cvi. 26 al. The words may therefore be rendered, not as in R.V. but, I [or We] lift up a hand to the throne of Yah" (emphasis his).

¹J. Clericus (cf. KD:COT, 1:2:82; Childs, The Book of Exodus, 311); KJV margin; Samson Raphael Hirsch, Der Pentateuch, part 2, Exodus (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der J. Kauffmann'schen Buchhandlung, 1869), 205; Durham, 237.

²Elias Auerbach, Moses (Amsterdam: G. J. A. Ruys, 1953), 86.


Truly (ki), this altar shall be a hand [monument], that is, a memorial pillar, to the Lord's plan (kēs being from the stem kāṣas, "count," "reckon") to blot out Amalek's memory.¹

In order to find the most suitable answer to this question, one needs to look at the text in a broader perspective.² Exod 17, which is the immediate context of the present passage, reports a crowning event on the top of a series of God's working for His children. This chapter is put there as a conclusion of a wider context, Exod 15-17. The first notable thing in this series is God's working the natural miracle at the sea which is sung by Moses (15:1-19) and Miriam (vss. 20-21). The second notable thing is His physical miracles to provide for Israel's physical needs: (1) the sweetening of the bitter water of Marah (15:22-27); (2) the miraculous provision of manna and quail (chap. 16); and (3) the supply of water out of the rock (17:1-7). The third notable thing is the victory over the Amalekites which is recorded in Exod 17:8-16. This is Israel's first warfare after leaving Egypt and


²One of the studies in this method on the present text is Bernard P. Robinson's "Israel and Amalek: The Context of Exodus 17.8-16," *JSOT* 32 (1985): 15-22. In this article (p. 15), Robinson looks at the text in several contexts: e.g., Exod 17 and 18; Exod 17:8-16 and Num 21:4-9; Exod 17:8-16 and Deut 25:17-19; the wandering stories as context; and the Pentateuch as context. He also provides a beautiful chiastic structure of the text.
it is their first victory over a heathen or Gentile enemy.\footnote{Harold L. Willmington, \textit{Willmington's Survey of the Old Testament: An Overview of the Scriptures from Creation to Christ} (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 130.} This quintet of God's provisions should be the monuments which remind the Israelites of God's capability and willingness to meet any future needs of His people.

Amalek comes to the stage here as the first enemy or hindrance on the way of God's people to the Promised Land. Since the Israelites' procession and entering into the Promised Land was God's will and plan for them, any power or "hand" raised against His people to hinder them from marching forward is, in reality, against the authority of God who has chosen and led them. Accordingly, what Amalek did toward God's people is understood by Moses as that Amalek raised its hand against God's throne, which is the seat of His authority.

Thus, it becomes evident that the throne of Yahweh is mentioned here as the symbol of His sovereign power and invincibility. Whoever raises his hand against it, Yahweh will have war with him "from generation to generation" (Exod 17:16) until He gets the final victory over him.

**The Historical Writings**

While there are many references to the thrones of human kings, only four references to the throne of God are
found in the Historical Writings:¹ 1 Kgs 22:19; 1 Chr 29:23; 2 Chr 9:8: 18:18. 1 Kgs 22:19 and 2 Chr 18:18 are identical because both report one and the same narrative.

In addition to these four passages, Lam 5:19 may be mentioned in this section, not because Lamentations by nature belongs to this division of the Hebrew Bible, but simply because, among the five divisions of the Hebrew Bible adopted in the present dissertation,² the "Historical Writings" is the nearest division that Lamentations can be grouped into.³ This means that the historical character of the book is more distinct than anything else.

¹By "the Historical Writings" here are meant the books of the OT, the contents of which are history: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

²The five divisions are: the Pentateuch, the Historical Writings, the Prophetic Writings, Wisdom and Hymnic Literature, and the Apocalyptic Literature.

³Lamentations, together with the other four books of the Five Scrolls or Megilloth, belongs to the third major part, Kethubim, in the Hebrew Bible. However, more often it is juxtaposed with the book of Jeremiah among the Prophetic Books, because it has been believed that both books are by the same author. The position in the English Bible—immediately after the book of Jeremiah—is due to the LXX. Cf. H. L. Ellison, "Lamentations," EBC, 6:695; Leonard L. Thompson, Introducing Biblical Literature: A More Fantastic Country (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 11; Norman L. Geisler, A Popular Survey of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), vi; Robert T. Boyd, Boyd's Bible Handbook, Cross Reference Edition (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1983), viii. This kind of classification is not always adequate, especially when the characteristic of each division should be emphasized. Even though Lamentations was written by a prophet, its contents and messages are historical rather than prophetical. This is why Lam 5:19 is included in this section.
The Books of Kings and Chronicles

1 Kings 22:19 // 2 Chronicles 18:18

The historical setting of these texts is the last campaign of Ahab, the king of Israel, against the Syrians. Apparently part of the territory which Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, ought to have returned to Ahab after the battle of Aphek (cf. 1 Kgs 20:26, 34) included Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab takes steps to secure the return of this city which is important "because of its proximity to the eastern caravan route through Gilead." 1 Ahab had already had two battles with the Syrians in chap. 20, and this is now his third and last campaign against them. 2 Ahab asks his ally, Jehoshaphat of Judah, to join him. The king of Judah wishes to consult the prophets over the wisdom of the venture, and with one accord they all prophesy victory. All of those 400 prophets are, as De Vries calls them, "well-sayers." 3


2 In the LXX and Lucian, chap. 22 follows chap. 20, since they have placed chap. 21 after chap. 19. This arrangement may be better for showing that chap. 22 is a continuation of chap. 20. But the narrative of Naboth's vineyard in chap. 21 must be describing what took place between the first two battles of chap. 20 and the last campaign of chap. 22. The introductory remarks of chaps. 21 and 22, such as "And it came to pass after these things that . . ." (21:1) and "Now three years passed . . ." (22:1), affirm that the order of the chapters reflects the chronology of the events.

3 De Vries, 1 Kings, 272.
Only Micaiah ben Imlah appears as a "doom-sayer." He prophesies the death of Ahab and the defeat of Israel.

According to Richard D. Nelson, Micaiah's vision offers "an explanation of how the prophets could be inspired and deceived at the same time" and "the four hundred are not intentionally 'false prophets,'" because "God still controls what they speak" and "they are part of God's ruse to entice or deceive (Jer. 20:7; Ezek. 14:9) Ahab that he might fall at Ramoth-gilead." The account of the clash between the prophet Micaiah and all the other prophets (1 Kgs 22:5-28) gives some insight into the tensions that existed within the prophetic movement in Israel and Judah.

Right at the climax of the interlocution between the prophet and the king, the former presents to the latter what he saw in vision from Yahweh:

\[
\text{wayyō'mer lākēn sēma' dēbar-YHWH ra'iti 'et-YHWH yōseb 'al-kis'o wēkol-šēbā' haššāmatim ōmed ālāyw mīmīno ūmīṣēmōlō (1 Kgs 22:19).}
\]

1Ibid.


And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left" (RSV).

It is not only interesting but astonishing that the heavenly scene which this vision delineates is very similar to the picture which the kings of Israel and Judah show us at the same moment on earth. A close relationship between the earthly thrones and the throne of God in heaven is strikingly demonstrated by the juxtaposition of the two in the same chapter.

1 Kgs 22:10 (RSV)

Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them.

1 Kgs 22:19 (RSV)

And Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing before him on his right hand and on his left."

Despite this kind of relationship, the earthly king and his throne do not always well reflect their heavenly counterparts. In other words, it is noticed that there exist both similarity and dissimilarity, or comparison and contrast, between the heavenly throne and the earthly ones. In the contexts of the two texts cited above, these two aspects are present at the same time. As the kings are sitting on their thrones on earth, so is God sitting on His throne in heaven. As the kings have "all the prophets" before them as their council, so does God have "all the
host of heaven” beside Him as His entourage. But the counsel of the prophets on earth is not same as that of the spirit in heaven. Actually, they are contrary to each other. After all, the central lesson of this narrative, as De Vries says, is that "Yahweh's ultimate purpose supersedes his [the king's] proximate, traditional purpose.”

De Vries proceeds:

The king was counting on the proximate goal: deliverance for Israel, fame and fortune for himself. But nothing could prevent the ultimate purpose of Yahweh from reaching fulfillment. Nothing—putting Micaiah in jail, dressing for battle as a common soldier, standing propped up in his chariot—could bring the king back home in peace. Four hundred

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1The term "all the host of heaven" (kol-šēḇā' haššāmâyim) has various meanings in the OT. But there can be no mistake about its usage here. It does not refer, as elsewhere, to the astral deities that were introduced with the Baalim and Ashtoreth (2 Kgs 21:5; 23:4), nor to the stars serving as God's innumerable armies (Gen 2:1; Deut 4:19; Ps 33:6; Isa 34:4; 45:12; Jer 33:22), but rather to the heavenly beings or angels that act as God's servants (cf. Ps 103:21). Cf. Gwilym H. Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 2 vols. NCBC (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 2:367; Bähr, "The Books of the Kings," L:CHS, 6:1:252; Walther Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, 2 vols., OTL, trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961, 1967), 2:194; De Vries, Prophet against Prophet, 43-44.


2De Vries, 1 Kings, 270.
popular prophets had advised him wrongly, but Yahweh had spoken truth through the one that resisted.\footnote{1}

The vision of God as sitting (יָסֹהַב yəšəḇ) on the throne is significant not only because of the throne motif but also due to the verb yāšāḇ. Quite often this verb is used as a technical term to imply that the one who is sitting (yəšəḇ) is the ruler.\footnote{2} In the passage under discussion, therefore, YHWH yəšəḇ 'al-kis'ô clearly points to Yahweh as the Ruler of the world.\footnote{3}

What Micaiah describes in vss. 19-22 is not a mere parable but a "parabolic vision,"\footnote{4} or more generally, a prophetic vision which, as the Berleburger Bibel says, represents God and His government and providence in an appropriate symbolical manner.\footnote{5} Thus, the truths which are presented to us by the prophet's vision are twofold:

\begin{quote}
1Ibid.
\end{quote}
(1) Yahweh in heaven stands above all earthly thrones—He appoints and deposes kings and has power over all kingdoms; and (2) Yahweh is pure to the pure and brings judgment to the perverse—He gives over the perverse and hard-hearted to the judgment of obstinate error.¹

As Raymond B. Dillard summarized, the present text speaks eloquently of the sovereignty of God. It was not Ahab who ruled over Israel, seated on his throne surrounded by his flattering prophets, but Yahweh sitting on his throne surrounded by the host of heaven.²

Yahweh is in control of the affairs and events in human history. "Above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions,"³ Yahweh is working out the counsels of His own will. He is the great Mind who operates and controls the entire macro-cosm and His throne room is the control center for the


universal administration. These concepts are implied by the throne of Yahweh in the present texts.

1 Chronicles 29:23

The last two chapters of 1 Chronicles (chaps. 28-29) contain David's last speeches (28:1-21; 29:1-9), his blessing (29:10-19), and the succession of his throne to his son Solomon (29:20-30).1 Our text is part of the concluding narrative which describes the enthronement of King Solomon.

And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and they anointed him as prince for the LORD, and Zadok as priest. Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father; and he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him (1 Chr 29:22b-23, RSV, emphasis supplied).

The accession of Solomon was already once mentioned in 1 Chr 23:1. This seems to be why the Chronicler writes, "they made Solomon king the second time" (1 Chr 29:22).2 As Roddy Braun notes, the mention of both Solomon and David in vss. 22, 23, and 24 seems somewhat contrived and brings

1There is general consensus among scholarship on the unity of 1 Chr 29. However, Rudolph Mosis is an exception, for he challenges the unity of 1 Chr 29:1-19 (Rudolf Mosis, Untersuchungen zur Theologie des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes, Freiburger theologische Studien 92 [Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1973], 105-107; cf. Mark A. Throntveit, When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles, SBLDS 93 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], 89-92).

2The words "the second time" are missing in the LXX. For a discussion of this problem and the possible reason for that, see Peter R. Ackroyd, I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah: Introduction and Commentary, TBC (London: SCM Press, 1973), 95.
together the two unique kings of the United Monarchy.¹ The fact that the Davidic kingdom is Yahweh's kingdom has been affirmed emphatically (cf. 1 Chr 17:14; 28:5; 2 Chr 9:8).² It is notable that the two parallel accounts of one and the same event, i.e., the enthronement of Solomon, are different in their expressions: while our text (1 Chr 29:23) states, "Then Solomon sat upon the throne of Yahweh," 1 Kgs 2:12 reports, "So Solomon sat upon the throne of David his father." This means that the throne of David to which Solomon succeeded was in fact the "throne of Yahweh"³ (kisse YHWH), and that the real king of the kingdom was Yahweh Himself⁴ and Solomon would be ruling over the kingdom only "as a leader for Yahweh" (laYHWH lēnāgid, 1 Chr 29:22). The term nāgid, which means "chief (Vorsteher), leader (Anführer), minor leader (Unterführer),"⁵ was used as a characteristic title among the early sovereigns of

¹Roddy Braun, 1 Chronicles, WBC 14 (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1986), 290.
⁵KBL, 592.
Israel (1 Sam 9:16; 13:14; 25:30; 1 Chr 5:2; 11:2; 17:7). Here is implied that Solomon is given the rulership by Yahweh, the real King. This is certainly a reflection of the Chronicler's theology of kingship and kingdom.

It is adequate to understand the phrase "the throne of Yahweh" in the present text as a briefer form of the phrase "the throne of the kingdom of Yahweh" in 1 Chr 28:5. In the Chronicler's thought, therefore, the "throne of Yahweh" stands for the theocratic kingdom of Yahweh which is represented by the Davidic Dynasty.

2 Chronicles 9:8

2 Chr 9, which reports the visit of the queen of Sheba, closely follows the parallel account in 1 Kgs 10:1-28 and 11:41-43 with some minor modifications. The writer of the books of the Kings records the blessing of the queen for Solomon as follows:

Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness (1 Kgs 10:9, NASB, emphasis supplied).

However, the Chronicler records the same blessing of the queen in a different expression:


Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you, setting you on His throne as king for the LORD your God; because your God loved Israel establishing them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness (2 Chr 9:8, NASB, emphasis supplied).

Here again the Chronicler's theology, i.e., his "theocratic standpoint,"\(^1\) is reflected. He firmly believes that the "throne of Israel" is "His [Yahweh's] throne" and the Davidic kingdom is the kingdom of God. This Tendenz of the Chronicler\(^2\) is found also in the other texts which emphasize that the throne and kingdom belong to God: e.g., 1 Chr 17:14; 28:5; 29:23-25; 2 Chr 13:8.\(^3\) Yahweh God was and remains the true King of Israel, even when no descendant of David sits on a throne, for instance, during the Babylonian Captivity, for He "loved Israel establishing them forever" (2 Chr 9:8).


3Cf. Dillard, 2 Chronicles, 72.
The purpose of God's setting Solomon upon "His throne" is to do "righteousness and justice," which constitute the foundation of His divine throne (Pss 89:15 [ET 89:14]; 97:2). Solomon must have represented God by accomplishing righteousness and justice in his government and judgment.

As in 1 Chr 29:23, the throne of God in 2 Chr 9:8 is referred to as the sign of the true kingship of God over Israel and His delegation of ruling authority to Solomon.

The Book of Lamentations

Lamentations 5:19

The book of Lamentations, which is called 'ēkāh,1 threnoi,2 or qinōt,3 is traditionally believed to be the work of Jeremiah.4 It consists of five laments presented

1This is the name in the MT, meaning "How," the first word of the first, second, and fourth laments.

2The name in the LXX, meaning "Lamentations."

3The name in the Talmud, meaning "Dirges" or "Lamentations." Cf. B. B. Bat. 15a (The Babylonian Talmud, Baba Bathra, 71).

4The book does not expressly state who its author was, yet it seems obvious that there was an early and consistent tradition that Jeremiah composed it. This tradition is reflected in the title of the book in the LXX as well as by the Aramaic Targum of Jonathan. The early Church Fathers, such as Origen and Jerome, also understood Jeremiah to be the author without any question. A group of modern critics, however, have rejected this tradition on the ground of internal evidence. For a detailed discussion, see Gleason L. Archer, Jr., A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 365-367; S. K. Soderlund, "Lamentations," ISBE, 3:65-66. For

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because of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587/86 B.C. After the death of good king Josiah, the political, social, and religious situation of the kingdom of Judah deteriorated rapidly under the successive reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. The people of Jerusalem suffered the most intense hardships during the final siege of the city, 588-586 B.C. Practically the whole population of the kingdom was swept away by successive waves of Babylonian conquest and captivity. Given this setting, it is no wonder the book of Lamentations pours forth the mournful tones of distress and sorrow.


1For a fuller discussion of this period, see SDABC, 4:346-348.

Lamentations is closely related to a historical crisis. The book was written, however, not simply to memorialize the tragic destruction of Jerusalem but to interpret the meaning of God's rigorous treatment of His people to the end that they would learn the lessons of the past and retain their faith in Him in the face of overwhelming disaster.

As Norman K. Gottwald observes, the theological significance of Lamentations consists in its bold and forthright statement of the problem of national disaster:

What is the meaning of the terrible historical adversities that have overtaken us between 608 and 586 B.C.? How are we to read these events in the light of our past? What is our duty in this present? Are we to look for deliverance and a new life? Have the promises of Yahweh failed? Is he powerless or does he no longer care? What are we to make of God's nature and purpose?

Bearing these perplexities in mind, the prophet tries to give an answer to them by means of poems of lament. In ancient Israel, as Delbert R. Hillers

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3. The first four chapters in which the poet mourns over the destroyed city of Jerusalem are predominantly in the so-called "qināh meter," a term coined by C. Budde in 1882 (cf. C. Budde, "Das hebräische Klagelied," ZAW 2 [1882]: 1-52). Budde claimed that the qināh meter was the meter generally used in laments. It consists of a long...
observes, laments of the community were evidently composed and used in times of great national distress when the whole nation appealed for help against its enemies. Lam 5 exemplifies the salient characteristics of the type: this chapter is a prayer for restoration to God's favor rather than mere poetry; the prayer is collective, making use of "we," the first-person plural pronoun; it contains a description of the distress; and it has an appeal to God for help.

After describing in some length the pitiful plight of the people after the fall of Jerusalem (Lam 5:1-18), the prophet rounds off his dirge with a relatively short but sincere supplication for restoration of the city as follows:

Thou, O LORD, dost rule forever; Thy throne is from generation to generation. Why dost Thou forget us forever; Why dost Thou forsake us so long? Restore us to Thee, O LORD, that we may be restored; Renew our days as of old.

line, normally of five beats, dividing unevenly (3+2) and showing much less parallelism than normal Hebrew poetry. As Ellison points out, "Whether Budde was correct in linking this metre with funeral laments remains an open question, for it is used elsewhere as well; but it would certainly have suited impromptu eulogizing of the dead."


Unless Thou hast utterly rejected us,
And art exceedingly angry with us.
(Lam 5:19-22, NASB).

Yahweh is entreated to remove the disgrace from His people and restore them to their former state of grace. It is remarkable that at this important moment the poet does not merely invoke Yahweh but also makes reference to His throne (vs. 19). The glory of Zion, the earthly dwelling-place of Yahweh, is at an end, but the throne of Yahweh endures eternally. Through this thought, the lamentation rises to the prayer that Yahweh may not forsake His people forever but reestablish His kingdom on the earth.

The MT of Lam 5:19 reads, 'attāh YHWH leʾôtām tēsēb kisʾāḵā leḏōr waḡōr. The use of the independent personal pronoun 'attāh and the prominent position in which it is placed suggest the translation "Yet You" or "But You," whether or not one reads the conjunctional wāw. This makes the contrast between the bitter experience in the past and the bright vision for the future more striking.

C. W. Eduard Naegelsbach observes that this short prayer contains four thoughts: (1) a positive source of consolation: the throne of Yahweh stands immovably fast (vs. 19); (2) a question: Why then should Yahweh forget His people forever? (vs. 20); (3) a petition: that Yahweh should reestablish His people spiritually and temporally (vs. 21); and (4) a negative source of consolation: Yahweh cannot be angry forever (vs. 22) (C. W. Eduard Naegelsbach, "The Lamentations of Jeremiah," L:CHS, 12:2:189).


The MT does not have the conjunction (w), but most of the other ancient versions do. Cf. RSV ("But thou"); JB ("But you"); AB ("Yet you").
The Hebrew verb tešāb, the lexical form of which is yāšāb, means literally "you sit" or "you are sitting." When this verb is used with God or human monarchs as its subject, it always refers to their occupying the throne. The king sits, the subject stands. The mention of the throne shows that this is the meaning here. Yahweh is sitting enthroned for eternity and His throne endures from generation to generation. Emphasis is not placed upon God's continual existence but upon His uninterrupted sovereignty over His creatures and the perpetual stability of His kingdom. Against the changing fortunes of men, the poet sets the strength and stability of Yahweh's throne, which still continues despite the destruction of the temple and the suspension of the cultus.

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2Naegelsbach, ibid.

3Cf. Hans Jochen Boecker, Klagelieder, ZBK, AT 21 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1985), 94, where he comments: "Durch das Thronmotiv wird die Vorstellung vom Königtum Gottes präsent."

The preceding verse says, "For Mount Zion which lies desolate;/ jackals prowl over it" (Lam 5:18, RSV). As Ralph W. Klein observes, "Precisely at this nadir of emotion and theology the poet dares to confess [5:19 quoted]."\(^1\) While Yahweh's earthly dwelling-place, where He sat enthroned on the cherubim, is destroyed, He lives above the reach of change, and His heavenly habitation, where He sits enthroned, abides throughout the generations. The foundations have been shaken, but the divine government of the world is still administered from the steadfast throne of Yahweh. The poet makes this the basis of his appeal for divine compassion and restoration in vss. 20-22.\(^2\) Vs. 21 expresses the longing of the poet for national renewal and reconciliation with God in the light of his conviction that He still has a sovereign purpose or plan for His covenant people.

This brings us to the conclusion that the theology of Lamentations is, as Gottwald puts it, "the theology of hope"\(^3\) which looks up beyond the present tragic circum-


\(^2\)A similar appeal is found also in Hab 1:12-13. Haller considers this kind of appeal as a motif (Motiv) and calls it "den Appell an Gottes Grösse und Ewigkeit." Cf. Max Haller and Kurt Galling, *Die fünf Megilloth*, HAT, erste Reihe 18 (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1940), 113.

stances. The throne of Yahweh is referred to here as the anchor by which hope can be held. In other words, the throne of God in the present text functions as the sign and guarantee of the permanence and stability of His dominion. As R. K. Harrison epitomizes this function, it serves as "the ground of appeal and the prospect of future hope" for divine restoration of His people by His own purpose, power, and providence.

**Prophetic Writings**

There are ten passages in the Prophetic Writings in which either the throne of God is mentioned or the vision of it is described: two in Isaiah (6:1; 66:1); four in Jeremiah (3:17; 14:21; 17:12; 49:38); three in Ezekiel (1:26; 10:1; 43:7); and one in Zechariah (6:13). Each of these passages is studied in the order of their canonical position in the Hebrew Bible, which also appears to be

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1R. K. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 19 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 240. Cf. Löhr's comment on the present text, which is also a good summary:

"Und doch lebt und waltet Jahve jetzt wie vordem. Der Verf. wendet seinen Blick von der ver-gänglichen, irdischen Wohnung Jahves zu dessen ewigem, himmlischen Thron; er nimmt einen Anlauf zur Hoffnung. Denn die Ewigkeit Jahves bürgt ihm für seine nie aufhörende Gnade gegen sein Volk."

their chronological order: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.

The Eighth-Seventh Century Prophet

Isaiah 6:1

following questions: Is Isa 6 Isaiah's "self report" (Selbstbericht) and "memoir" (Denkschrift) or a fiction of a postexilic writer? Was the vision given to Isaiah at the beginning of his ministry or some time later during his ministry? In other words, was the vision really a call vision for Isaiah or not? Does the "temple" in vs. 1 refer

1The term Selbstbericht is used by Jenni ("Jesajas Berufung in der neueren Forschung," TZ 15 [1959]: 328): "Gattungsmässig gehört Jes. 6 zu den prophetischen Selbstberichten in Ich-Form, wie sie auch bei anderen Propheten bekannt sind." Knierim takes up this term as "self report" (Knierim, 47). Seierstad uses a similar designation, Ich-Stil, for this (Seierstad, 43).

2The term Denkschrift ("memoir") began to be used by Budde when he observed that Isa 6 is placed at the head of "die Denkschrift Jesajas für seine Jünger," which comprises 6:1-8:22 or most likely up to 9:6 (Karl Budde, "Über die Schranken, die Jesajas prophetischer Botschaft zu setzen sind," ZAW 41 [1923]: 165; cf. idem, Jesaja's Erleben, 1-5; Wildberger, Jesaja, 1:234). Love expresses the similar idea, as he states that the story of Isaiah's call is "the product of much reflection" (Love, 291). Cf. Hans-Peter Müller, "Glauben und Bleiben: Zur Denkschrift Jesajas Kapitel vi 1-viii 18," in Studies on Prophecy: A Collection of Twelve Papers, VTSup 26 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 25-54.
to the heavenly temple or to the earthly one? Is the trishagion\(^1\) of vs. 3 a borrowed cultic formula from the Egyptian \(\text{w·b w·b}\) (pure, pure)\(^2\) or an authentic Jerusalemite cultic formula? How is this vision related to the other visions of the heavenly temple such as that of Micaiah ben Imlah (1 Kgs 22:19-22; 2 Chr 18:18-21)?\(^3\) And, what function and intention does this vision have with regard to Isaiah's message?

This is not the place to launch into a lengthy treatment of all these questions, but it is necessary to elucidate some of them in the course of exegeting our text, because they are related to the main concern of this study in one way or another.

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\(^1\)Regarding the origin of the trishagion, Norman Walker and Burton M. Leiser represent two different proposals: the former suggests "a strong presumption that the 'Thrice-Holy' of Isa. vi. 3 was, in origin, a conflate reading, signifying 'HOLY, EXCEEDING HOLY'" (Norman Walker, "The Origin of the 'Thrice-Holy'," NTS 5 [1958-59]: 132-133; cf. idem, "Disagion Versus Trisagion: A Copyist Defended," NTS 7 [1960-61]: 170-171), and the latter attempts to show that the evidence for Walker's arguments is inconclusive and that the trishagion is the original reading (Burton M. Leiser, "The Trisagion of Isaiah's Vision," NTS 6 [1959-60]: 261-263).


Isa 6 is the first part of what has been called "the Book of Immanuel" (Isa 6:1-9:6). This chapter is generally regarded as Isaiah's own account of his call to the prophetic ministry. Despite such unanimity, however, Mordecai M. Kaplan suggests that "instead of being a description of Isaiah's call to prophecy, that chapter merely pictures the sense of despair which came over Isaiah in the course of his career." But most scholars acknowledge this as Isaiah's own call narrative and the evidences


2Kaplan, 251-253. This view is also held by Klaus Koch who asserts that there is "nothing in the chapter which necessarily points to an initial call" (Klaus Koch, The Prophets, vol. 1, The Assyrian Period, trans. Margaret Kohl [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983], 113) and John D. W. Watts who states, "The chapter is not a 'call narrative'" (John D. Watts, Isaiah 1–33, WBC 24 [Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1985], 70, italics his).

for the autobiographical nature of this call narrative are manifest in the text. For instance, the consistent and frequent use of the first-person singular pronouns is one of the strong evidences.  


On the other hand, Whitley claims that Isa 6 was written by a postexilic writer. According to him, syntactical, word statistical, and historical (vss. 11-13) comparisons prove that Isa 6 cannot have been written by the prophet Isaiah, but must stem from a postexilic writer (Whitley, "The Call and Mission of Isaiah," JNES 18 [1959]: 38-48). But this idea has been refuted by many scholars. Cf. Jenni, "Jesajas Berufung in der neueren Forschung," TZ 15 (1959): 321, n. 1; Hasel, The Remnant, 226, n. 56, and 227-230; Knierim, 47, n. 1.

1In English translations, "I" is used nine times, and "my" and "me" twice each (Isa 6:1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11).
With regard to the time of this call vision, we are told that the vision was given "in the year that King Uzziah died" (vs. 1).¹ The date of Uzziah's death cannot be fixed absolutely. Scholars disagree about this particular date, and their opinions range from 758 to 734 B.C.²

¹A gravestone, which was found by E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, reads: "Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah, king of Judah—not to be opened!" This carved inscription was found in the Russian archaeological museum on the Mount of Olives. It is written in Aramaic script of the type which was used about the time of Christ. In all probability the bones of the king had been removed and this stone erected over their new resting place. It shows the reverence which the Jews of Christ's time paid to the kings of their nation of old. Cf. G. Ernest Wright, "A Gravestone of Uzziah, King of Judah," BA 1 (1938): 8-9.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that for some reason Isaiah wished to locate his vision in time. The reason for this is not readily apparent. As Helmer Ringgren and Ivan Engnell have suggested, an enthronement ceremony may have been the occasion for this special experience.\textsuperscript{1} If so, the enthronement ceremony at the beginning of Jotham's reign might have been the occasion.\textsuperscript{2} However, it was significantly "in the year that King Uzziah died" that Isaiah saw

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\textsuperscript{1} Helmer Ringgren, \textit{The Prophetical Conception of Holiness}, UUA 12 (Uppsala: Lundsqueistka Bokhandeln, 1948), 26; Engnell, \textit{The Call of Isaiah}, 25.

the vision, not the time when Jotham his son was enthroned. This is why John N. Oswalt proposes a "more compelling reason [which] is the theological one."\(^1\) He observes:

Judah had known no king like Uzziah since the time of Solomon. He had been an efficient administrator and an able military leader. Under his leadership Judah had grown in every way (2 Chr. 26:1-15). He had been a true king. How easy it must have been to focus one's hopes and trust upon a king like that. What will happen, then, when such a king dies, and coupled with that death there comes the recognition that a resurgent Assyria is pushing nearer and nearer? In moments like that it is easy to see the futility of any hope but an ultimate one. No earthly king could help Judah in that hour. In the context of such a crisis, God can more easily make himself known to us than when times are good and we are self-confidently complacent. "In the year of King Uzziah's death . . . mine eyes have seen the king."\(^2\)

Oswalt's observation is cogent and pertinent in that he presents a contrast between the death of an earthly king and the immortality of the heavenly King, between the futility of the human throne and the perpetuity of the divine throne.

Isaiah testifies, "I saw the Lord" (\(\text{wā'er'ēh 'et-'ādōnāy}\)). The \(\text{wāw}\) in front of 'er'ēh ("I saw") is a \(\text{wāw}\)

\(^1\)Oswalt, \textit{The Book of Isaiah}, 176-177.

\(^2\)Ibid., 177 (emphasis supplied). Young is with Oswalt when he observes as follows: "The important point is that the year in which Isaiah saw God was that of the king's death. In the year in which the old order ended God appeared to the prophet. The great glory and national pride of Judah were now facing an end, never to rise again." (Young, \textit{The Book of Isaiah}, 1:235).
consecutive and emphasizes the verb which follows. Since the range of meanings of the verb ראה is very broad, it is difficult to answer the question, What type of view did Isaiah see? In any case, the emphatic form, ורא'eh, is emphasized once more by the prophet's additional testimony: 

"... for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" (vs. 5, RSV). The same verb ראה is used here again as in

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1Cf. A. B. Davidson, Hebrew Syntax, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), sec. 50 (b). The section reads, "Vav impf. may naturally follow anything which forms a starting-point for a development, though not a verb, such as a statement of time, a casus pendens, or the like."

2The DSSISA omits וָא, but the use of וָא consecutive after a temporal phrase is sound Masoretic grammar. (C. Brockelmann, Hebräische Syntax [Neukirchen: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1956], secs. 123-124). Keel, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, 56, compares the Hebrew וָא to the German "da": "Im Deutschen kann die Funktion von וָא etwa das Wortlein 'da' übernehmen"; Watts, Isaiah 1-33, 68.


4Wildberger's remark, "Mit r'h meint Jesaja ein visionäres Schauen" (Jesaia, 1:243, emphasis his), is concise but still equivocal. For a detailed discussion, see ibid., 1:243-244; Keel, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, 56-57, esp. 57, n. 50. The following remarks by Holladay serve as an answer to this question:

"Biblical Hebrew lacks any ability to specify a distinction between inner 'seeing' and the seeing of outer, photographable objects: both are 'seen,' both are perceived. The Israelites hardly ever seem to have asked whether a given instance of seeing was 'subjective' or 'objective'; instead, they simply asked, Is God communicating through this perception? That was the important thing." (Holladay, Isaiah, Scroll of a Prophetic Heritage, 26).
vs. 1. The Hebrews normally believed that to see God was to die,1 but it was also true that some individuals were permitted to see Him.2 The purposes of these theophanies were various, but an element of encouragement and confirmation was frequently involved.3 Because the person had seen God, he was enabled to perform the task which God entrusted to him in the way required. Seeing God meant receiving both a special mission and the power to accomplish it from Him. The same was true with the prophet Isaiah.4 By being permitted to see Yahweh, especially as sitting on His divine throne which is the emblem of His absolute authority and dominion over all the peoples and nations, Isaiah was given the assurance for his lifetime vocation and the confirmation for his ultimate commission.

Then, with impressive brevity the prophet describes the vision of God. It was extraordinary and tremendous even for Israelite sensibilities: "I saw the Lord." In contrast to Ezekiel (Ezek 1:26-28), Isaiah did not make any attempt to delineate the form of the enthroned deity. All

1E.g., Exod 19:21; 20:19; 33:20; Deut 18:16; Judg 13:22; also Gen 32:31 (ET 32:30).

2Frequently in contexts with the references just cited (see n. 1 above).


4For a further discussion of Isaiah's seeing God, see Knierim, 50.
he did was to assert that he saw the Lord enthroned, thus affirming His authority (cf. Isa 40:22). His words were bold enough to frighten off the ancient Aramaic translator and make him soften the phrase in his translation to "I saw the glory of the Lord." ¹

The title of the One he saw is 'adônêy,² which is "only used of God" and is "an older form of pluralis excellentiae."³ The root of this word is dûn or din,⁴ which means "to rule, to judge, to command, to domineer." Thus the term 'adônêy means "the Sovereign Ruler"⁵ or "the Lord of All" ("der Allherr")⁶ and "the Supreme Judge." This Lord is seated "on a throne, high and lifted up, and the


²Many MSS read YHWH (Yahweh) for 'dny (Lord). Wildberger remarks: "Die Tendenz, YHWH durch 'dny zu ersetzen, lässt sich an manchen Stellen im Jesajabuch beobachten" (Jesaja, 1:232). However, that the name is used in vs. 5 ("Yahweh of hosts") argues in favor of the originality of the term. The use of 'adônêy appears to have a special intention in this vision. Cf. the distinctive use of 'dny by Amos in vision texts combined with YHWH (Amos 7:1, 2, 4, 5; 8:1, 3, 11; 9:5, 8) and alone (Amos 7:3; 9:1).

³GHCL, 12.

⁴Cf. BDB, 10-11; KBL, 10-11; HAL, 12-13; GHCL, 12 ('âdôn), 14 ('âdan [2]).


train of His robe filled the temple." Both "throne" (kisse) and "temple" (hēkāl, "great house, palace") are royal and majestic terminology. Here again the absolute sovereignty of God is being stressed. He alone is King.

By hēkāl in our text is to be meant the temple where Yahweh Himself is enthroned, or "die himmlische Wohnstätte der Gottheit." The prophet stood in the temple, the Jerusalem Temple, while the vision was given to him. But the temple he saw in the vision was the heavenly temple, of which the earthly was a reflection. In other words, the prophet saw the heavenly temple through the earthly.

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1The word here used for "temple," hēkāl, contributes to the concept of God's kingship. It is a loanword whose ultimate origin is in the Sumerian language of the third millennium B.C.: E.GAL (literally, "big house"), a term used for the house of the god who was considered to be the king of the city-state. Its essential meaning was "palace" as in 1 Kgs 21:1; 2 Kgs 20:18; Prov 30:28. Cf. Friedrich Delitzsch, Ṣumerisches Glossar (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1914), 29 (ē-gal: literally, "grosses Haus," and essentially, "Palast").


3Cf. White, The Story of Prophets and Kings, 307, who remarks as follows:
"... he [Isaiah] stood under the portico of the temple. Suddenly the gate and the inner veil of the temple seemed to be uplifted or withdrawn, and he was permitted to gaze within, upon the holy of holies, where even the prophet's feet might not enter. There rose up before him a vision of Jehovah sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, while the train of His glory filled the temple."
According to the position of the two attributives (רַמִּיִּ֨ים נִֽיָּ֖א) in the sentence, one understands that they should modify קִסְּ֣סֶה'. However, the Masoretic punctuation separates the two words from קִסְּסֶה', making them modify 'אָדֹנָ֖י. This is in accord with other usages of this combination in the book of Isaiah (cf. 52:13; 57:15) where the phrase modifies persons rather than things. So here, as Oswalt remarks, "it is saying that God was lifted up, exalted, by means of the throne." "High and lifted up" is "a reference both to the majesty of the nature and to the physical elevation of Yahweh." The emphasis upon God's exaltation is entirely in keeping with the messages of the book. Isaiah's call came from the holy God on the heavenly throne, high and lifted up. Hence, his was, in the fullest sense of the words, "a holy calling" (? Tim 1:9, RSV, NASB); "the heavenly calling" (Heb 3:1, KJV, NIV); and "the high calling of God" (Phil 3:14, KJV).

It was "the train of His robe" (שֻׁלְּנֵי) that filled the temple; not God Himself, but His שֻלֶּל ("skirt, of robe") filled (מֶלְּכִים) the temple. This also is an indication of God's greatness and magnificence. Whether

2Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah, 178.
3Newsome, 72.
4BDB, 1002.
šûl denotes "the train of the throne," because "kings usually have their thrones covered with drapery,"\(^1\) or, as generally believed, refers to the train of God's royal robe, is not a serious problem. The LXX,\(^2\) Targum,\(^3\) and Vulgate\(^4\) have dropped the figure of the robe and train as too anthropomorphic.\(^5\) But the important fact is that the divine King Yahweh is infinitely great and tremendously majestic! The following remark by Martin Luther serves as a résumé of this idea: "Deus supra templum, sola fimbria replebat templum, et templum fimbriam non capiebat, quanto-minus ipsum deum."\(^6\)

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\(^1\)Ibn Ezra (Friedländer, ed., The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah, 1:34).

\(^2\)The LXX reads, kai plérēs ho oikos tēs doxēs autou ("The house [was] full of His glory"). This translation avoids reference to וּסֻלַּי ("His skirts" or "His train"). This is usually seen as the tendency of the LXX translator to correct what he considers flagrant anthropomorphism. The LXX translator of Isaiah had a special love for doxa (cf. L. H. Brockington, "The Greek Translator of Isaiah and His Interest in DOXA," VT 1 [1951]: 23-32). Cf. Watts, Isaiah 1-33, 68, n. 1.c.

\(^3\)The Targum reads, וַמְּזוֹזָיו יְצַרְיָה "תּוֹלֶם הִכְלוֹ" ("and the temple was filled with the brightness of His glory"). Cf. Stenning, ed., The Targum of Isaiah, 20-21.

\(^4\)The Vulgate version reads, "et ea quae sub eo (or, ipso) erant implebant templum" ("and the things which were under Him filled the temple").


\(^6\)The German translation reads: "Gott ist höher als der Tempel, allein der Saum seines Gewandes erfüllte den Tempel, und der Tempel fasste nicht einmal den Saum, wieviel weniger Gott selbst" (cited from Herrntrich, Der Prophet Jesaja, 95).
M. Metzger's observation, "Das Heiligtum ist der Ort, an dem der Unterschied zwischen Himmel und Erde, zwischen 'Diesseits' und 'Jenseits' aufgehoben ist,"¹ is an overstatement which does not find any support from the Bible. 

Vs. 2 of Isa 6 describes the surroundings of the divine throne: "Above him stood the seraphim: each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew" (RSV). The seraphim (σεραφίμ),² meaning "burning ones"³ in the transitive


²Regarding the origin, identity, and number of the seraphim, various opinions have been aired. Cf. Alexander, 1:146-147; Keel, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, 70-115; Edmond Jacob, Esaié 1-12, CAT VIII/a (Geneva: Éditions Labor et Fides, 1987), 99-100; Alomía, 463-471. Since they are called σεραφίμ, a term elsewhere applied to serpents (Num 21:6; Deut 8:15; Isa 14:29; 30:6), some scholars believe that they were serpentine or dragonlike in appearance (e.g., George Buchanan Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, vol. 1, I-XXXIX, ICC [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912], 104-106; Duhm, 65-66). Karen Randolph Joines maintains that they were similar to the protective uraeus-deities of Egypt ("Winged Serpents in Isaiah's Inaugural Vision," JBL 86 [1967]: 410-415; so J. de Savignac, "Les 'seraphim',' VT 22 [1972]: 320-325; cf. Keel, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, 83-85). But these conclusions are either illogical or assumptive (cf. Scott, "The Book of Isaiah," IB, 5:208). The seraphim "have nothing in common with serpents except the name" (Kissane, 1:74). Actually, like the cherubim and "living creatures" in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek 1), they belong to the category of unearthly beings, which in the art and literature of the ancient world are commonly represented as attendants upon the gods and their sanctuaries (cf. ANEP, 649-655; T. H. Gaster, "Angel," IDB, 1:131). Since the primary meaning of the term is "burning, fiery," the use of the term for the ministering beings would indicate that they were "fiery ones" (cf. E. Lacheman, "The
sense, are mentioned only here in the OT, and they suggest the luminous and awesome nature of God's throne.¹

The chant of the seraphim in vs. 3 is among the greatest of hymnology:

qādōš qādōš qādōš YHWH šeḇā'ōt mēlō' kol-hā'āres kēḇōdō:

Seraphim of Isaiah 6," JOR 59 [1968]: 71-72, where he asserts that what Isaiah saw was the cherubim glinting in the sunlight). Fire is frequently associated with God's holiness (Exod 3:1-6; and passim) so that it would be entirely appropriate for those who declare that holiness (Isa 6:3) to be "fiery" in their appearance (cf. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah, 179). The Targum has "holy ministers" in lieu of "seraphim" (Stenning, ed., The Targum of Isaiah, 20).

¹KBL, 932.

¹For the function of the seraphim, see Manfred Görg, "Die Funktion der Serafen bei Jesaja," BN 5 (1978): 28-39. The following observations by Julian Price Love are peculiar and interesting but lack textual support:

"The humility of even the burning ones before the kingly God is stressed by the six wings of each seraph, two covering his face, two his feet, and two enabling him to fly--humility, reverence, readiness to serve. Such was the trinity of graces the prophet needed with which to meet the three-folded echoing of God's character. Reverence is dutiful, humility in a time like Isaiah's is a rare and beauteous gift, but service is needed if the reverence is not to end in formal gesture and the humility turn to mockery." (Love, 291). The Targum explains the meaning of Isa 6:2 as follows:

"Holy ministers stood in the height before him: each one had six wings; with twain he was covering his face that he might not see, and with twain he was covering his body that it might not be seen, and with twain he was ministering." (Stenning, ed., The Targum of Isaiah, 20). Cf. Albert Barnes, Notes on the Old Testament: Isaiah, 2 vols. BN (London: Blackie & Son, 1851; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 1:139.

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Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, 
the whole earth is full of His glory. 
(NASB).

Holiness\(^1\) is the essential quality of deity, and 
glory\(^2\) the manifestation of deity in the natural world. In 
other words, holiness exists in the upper region, whereas 
all that is earthly is His kāḇōḏ.\(^3\) Otto Procksch also 
notes: "Ist so Jahve Zebaoth als qāḏōš seiner innersten 
Natur nach bezeichnet, so enthält seine 'Herrlichkeit' 
(kāḇōḏ) die Erscheinungsseite seines Wesens."\(^4\)

Thus the first line of the hymn of the seraphim 
declares the divine exaltation amid the hosts of heavenly 
beings like the seraphim; the second line proclaims "that 
the world has become the world of God, as when He created

\(^1\)Cf. H.-P. Müller, "qāḏōš heilig," THAT, 2:589-609; 
E. F. Harrison, "Holiness; Holy," ISBE, 2:725-729; Snaith, 
The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, 21-50 (chap. 2: 
"The Holiness of God"); Reinhard Fey, Amos und Jesaja: 
Abhängigkeit und Eigenständigkeit, WMANT 12 (Neukirchen-
Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1963), 
105-143; Bo Reicke, "Heilig ist der Herr Zebaoth," TZ 28 
(1972): 24-31; Israel Efros, "Holiness and Glory in the 

Westermann, "kbd schwer sein," THAT, 1:794-812; E. F. 
Harrison, "Glory," ISBE, 2:477-483; G. von Rad, "kāḇōḏ im 
AT," TWNT, 2:240-245 (ET: "kāḇōḏ in the OT," TDNT, 2:238-
242); L. H. Brockington, "The Presence of God (A Study of 
the Use of the Term 'Glory of Yahweh')," ExpTim 57 (1945-

\(^3\)Koch, The Prophets, 1:109.

\(^4\)Procksch, Jesaia I, 55.
it and made Himself its king."\(^1\) Or, whereas the first line "speaks of God's nature as such, the second refers to God's relationship to the world."\(^2\) Therefore, what Isaiah experiences is not merely a transcendent God, but a God who also dwells completely within the world, even though innerworldliness only represents one of His manifestations, that is to say, His kābôd.\(^3\)

The praise is directed to Him as "Yahweh of Hosts."\(^4\) This is the cult name of God which was widely known and often used in Jerusalem in Isaiah's time.\(^5\) As a compound of YHWH, which is the covenant name and the only truly personal name of God, and šêbî'ôt, which means "hosts,"\(^6\) this divine title is used "to exalt Yahweh as

\(^1\)Aage Bentzen, Jesaia I (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1944), 47 (ET by Ivan Engnell in his The Call of Isaiah, 36).

\(^2\)Newsome, 73.

\(^3\)Koch, The Prophets, 1:109.


\(^5\)Watts, Isaiah 1-33, 74; Wildberger, Königsherrschaft Gottes, 1:83.

\(^6\)Scholars hold various views concerning the identification of these "hosts." In the earlier passages the title occurs in connection with the ark of the covenant (2 Sam 6:2, 18; 7:2, 8, 26-27; cf. 1 Chr 17:7), and the ark was used sometimes as a kind of war shrine (cf. Num 10:35), and thus it is thought that the "hosts" were originally the armies of Israel (cf. 1 Sam 17:45, "But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts [Yahweh of Hosts], the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" [emphasis supplied]). This meaning, however, is not found in the prophets, where the title is used in nonmilitary contexts (e.g., Isa 47:4; Jer 5:14; Hos 12:5; Amos 3:13;
all-powerful sovereign and controller of all human and superhuman forces."\(^1\) This majestic title is repeated in Isaiah's own utterances in vs. 5.

The trishagion\(^2\) or threefold sanctus praises Yahweh for the revelation of His essential being. Since the Hebrew language has no way to express the superlative except by repetition, the threefold repetition of "holy" is for great emphasis.\(^3\) God is by definition "holy." Holiness is not one of many attributes of God; to the Hebrew mind it expressed the very nature of God Himself—His real essence. He is "the Holy One of Israel" (qôdôš yisrâ'êl).\(^4\)

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1Wright, "God, Names of," ISBE, 2:507.

2For a discussion of the origin of the trishagion, see Norman Walker, "The Origin of the 'Thrice-Holy'," NTS 5 (1958-59): 132-133. Scholars have suggested different reasons for the threefold repetition of "holy": (1) a means of the highest emphasis; (2) a secret meaning; (3) an objective expression of the seraphim; (4) plural persons in the subject, i.e., Holy Trinity; etc. For a further discussion, see Eduard König, Das Buch Jesaja (Gütersloh: Verlag C. Bertelsmann, 1926), 90-91; Keel, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, 116-121.

3Cf. Newsome, 72.

4This is Isaiah's favorite designation of God and may have been coined by the prophet himself (Wildberger, Jesaja, 3:1636; cf. idem, Königsherrschaft Gottes, 1:78-79). He uses this designation thirty times (including "Holy," "the Holy One," and "the Holy One of Jacob") in his book: thirteen times in chaps. 1-39 (1:4; 5:19; 10:17 ["the Holy One"], 20: 12:6; 17:7; 29:19, 23 ["the Holy One of Jacob"]; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23) and seventeen times
This concept forms "the center of Isaianic theology." He reveals His "holiness" by His decisions and His acts. And glory, which is "the effulgence of the fullness of His attributes," shines out in creation (cf. Pss 19:1; 29:1-2, 9), but much more splendidly in His acts of redemption and judgment (cf. Isa 40:5; 60:1; Num 14:21; Ezek 39:21; Hab 2:14; etc.). The seraphim testify to the glory of God that will be revealed when He comes for judgment—to punish the ungodly and to redeem the godly.

The phenomena which followed the chant of the seraphim (vs. 4) and the prophet's reaction to the vision (vss. 5-8) are additional indications that the theophany which the prophet witnessed was of the utmost sublimity and fearful awesomeness. However, the prophet's call vision in chaps. 40-66 (40:25 ["the Holy One"]; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14, 15 ["your Holy One"]; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7 [twice: "their Holy One" and "the Holy One of Israel"]; 54:5; 55:5; 57:15 ["Holy"]; 60:9, 14). It occurs only six times elsewhere (2 Kgs 19:22 [= Isa 37:23]; Pss 71:22; 78:41; 89:19 [ET 89:18]; Jer 50:29; 51:5). Cf. Rachel Margaliot, The Indivisible Isaiah: Evidence for the Single Authorship of the Prophetic Book (Jerusalem: Sura Institute for Research, 1964), 43-49. Delitzsch notes that "all the prophecies of Isaiah carry this name of God as their stamp. . . . It forms an essential part of Isaiah's distinctive prophetic signature" (KD:COT, 7:1:193). Cf. Eichrodt, Der Heilige in Israel: Jesaia 1-12.


reaches its climax when he utters, "... for my eyes have seen the King [ḥammelek], the LORD of hosts!" (vs. 5, RSV, emphasis supplied). He saw the King, not of Israel alone, but of "the whole earth" (vs. 3). As Julian Price Love notes, "Not a king, just any king, but the King, the universal ruler, is Isaiah's mentor for the days to come."¹

Another significant aspect in this throne vision is the purpose of Isaiah's commission, which is described in vss. 9-10—the so-called Verstockung or hardening effect of his preaching.² As J. Ridderbos points out, "This outcome of the divine Word is also a part of God's plan and a just judgment on the sin of the people."³ The prophet can hardly believe that this word of hardening and ruin is God's last word concerning His people, and, full of dismay, he asks, "How long, 0 Lord?" (vs. 11, RSV). The answer is that the judgment and the hardening will not cease until an end has been made with these people and they have been sent into exile (vss. 11-12). In other words, "although the people have been decimated, judgment will not cease."⁴ Thus, after the judgment, only "the holy seed" of Israel

¹Love, 292 (italics his).
³Ridderbos, Isaiah, 78 (emphasis supplied).
⁴Ibid., 79 (emphasis supplied).
will be left (vs. 13), from which a new Israel will sprout (cf. Isa 4:3; 7:3). Here again it becomes clear that the throne of God is the place from whence the divine judgment is issued.

This oracle of God to Isaiah (vss. 9-10) is quoted by each Gospel writer (Matt 13:14-15; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:10; John 12:39-41) and twice by Paul (Acts 28:26-27; Rom 11:8). Whenever it is cited, it refers to the rejection of God's word in Christ. The Synoptic references are of particular interest because

they all occur in connection with the parable of the sower, which, like this present passage, anticipates widespread failure to make proper response to the words but which also, as here (vs. 13), shows cause for hope.3

At the very center of the vision in which God inaugurated Isaiah as the prophet to announce His judgment against (and for) the people, was the throne of God which represents the source of all powers and the universal


rulership of the divine King. This means that the divine throne is the headquarters of the great Commander who commissions and dispatches His messengers to deliver His messages of judgment to the world. This is much in evidence in God's challenge and Isaiah's response which follow:

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"
Then I said,
"Here am I! Send me."
(Isa 6:8, RSV, emphasis supplied).

As James D. Newsome, Jr., points out, many of the elements of Christian devotion are embodied in this vision which reveals the throne of God as its center: the majesty and "otherness" of God; God's moral purity in contrast to the sinfulness of the prophet and his people; the gracious act of God which nullifies the destructive nature of human sin and which calls the prophet into a new relationship with God; and so forth.¹

In summary, the throne of Yahweh in Isaiah's call vision meant the following for the prophet: (1) It was a continual reminder of the fact that Yahweh is always ruling on His throne; (2) it affirmed that Yahweh is "the Lord" (Isa 6:1) and "the King, Yahweh of Hosts" (vs. 5); (3) it represented the authority of the One who called and sent

¹Cf. Newsome, 73. He concludes on the same page:
"It is little wonder that many individuals have found in this passage [Isa 6:1-8] words which describe their own spiritual pilgrimage: adoration, confession, forgiveness, and service."
the prophet to deliver the divine message to his people; (4) it symbolized the glory and greatness of Yahweh and His kingship; (5) it taught that Yahweh is the Judge and the message was that of judgment (reward and punishment); and (6) it impressed the prophet with a solemn responsibility for his prophetic ministry at such a critical moment of the nation's history.

Isaiah 66:1

The last chapter of the book of Isaiah (Isa 66) is a place where scholars express various kinds of opinions and conjectures. As James Muilenburg sums up, there are three main questions in the interpretation of this chapter: (1) What is its relation to the preceding chapter? (2) Is it a literary unit or a mosaic of disparate fragments? (3) To what historical situation does the writer address himself? The first and third questions seem to be more important for the right understanding and interpretation of the present text than the second one.2

Many scholars consider chap. 66 as the continuation of chap. 65.3 Affinities between the two are evidently

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2For a summary of the suggestions on the question of literary integrity, see ibid., 758.

3E.g., Robert Lowth, Isaiah: A New Translation: with a Preliminary Dissertation, and Notes, Critical, Philological, and Explanatory, 12th ed. (London: Printed for Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837), 401; Delitzsch, KD:COT,
present. The eschatological point of view, imagery, and mood persist through both chapters, and even the repetition of the same words can be noticed.\(^1\) These two chapters form not only the end but also the climax of the book. In them, eschatology reaches its zenith, for the promise of new heavens and a new earth (65:17; 66:22) goes beyond anything else in the book. Both chapters form "a thematic unity"\(^2\) and "are set in the great hall of the heavenly king with Jerusalem and its struggling parties visible alongside it."\(^3\)

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\(^1\)E.g., 66:4 and 65:12; 66:22 and 65:17. Muilenburg enumerates some more similarities between the two chapters: "The division of the community into the pious faithful and the rebellious apostates, the description of the syncretistic practices, and verbal affinities suggest a similar provenance and authorship." (Muilenburg, "The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66," IB, 5:758).

\(^2\)Watts, Isaiah 34-66, 338.

\(^3\)Ibid.
The common theme of both chapters is "Yahweh's Great Day"\(^1\) of "judgment,"\(^2\) when He punishes His opponents and rewards His faithful\(^3\) and then the new creation and the new age set in. Thus, the throne of Yahweh is, by its symbolism, linked with many eschatological concepts: judgment, punishment, rewarding, new creation, and new age. The One who sits on the throne is the One who judges this world in the present age and will rule over the new creation in the new age.

John D. W. Watts looks at this section as composed of three episodes: "Episode A: Yahweh Deals with His Opponents (65:1-16)"; "Episode B: Yahweh Moves to Finish His New Jerusalem (65:17-66:5)"; and "Episode C: Yahweh Confirms His Servants in His New City (66:6-24)."\(^4\) In the first two episodes, Yahweh's court is prominent and two groups are on the scene: Yahweh's adversaries on the stage and His servants in the background. In the second episode, the

\(^1\)Ibid., 337.


\(^3\)The idea of judgment flows through chap. 66: cf. vss. 4-6, 12, 14-16, 18.

\(^4\)Watts, Isaiah 34-66, 338. It is interesting that these three episodes have a parallel in Rev 20-22: Episode A/Rev 20; Episode B/Rev 22; Episode C/Rev 21.
Yahweh's throne in the court is at the center and "the skyline of the new city is clear in the background."\(^1\)

The text reads:

Thus says the LORD:

"Heaven is my throne
and the earth is my footstool;\(^2\)
what is the house which you would build for me,
and what is the place of my rest?
All these things my hand has made,
and so all these things are mine,
says the LORD."

(Isa 66:1-2a, RSV).

This passage forms the crux of the whole chapter. Yahweh's proclamation which is introduced by the asseverative "Thus says the LORD" (kōh 'āmar YHWH) and concluded by another asseverative "says the LORD" (ne‘ūm-YHWH) points us to the infinity and immensity of God.\(^3\) God is so great that even "the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain" Him (1 Kgs 8:27). Stephen's quotation of our text in his sermon (Acts 7:48-50) also stresses the same idea, i.e., God's greatness and transcendency. That great and mighty God speaks now.

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)This highly impressive opening phrase occurs several times elsewhere in Scripture in the same or similar forms: Matt 5:34-35; 23:22; Acts 7:48-50; Pss 11:4; 93:2; 103:19. The passages in the Psalms are researched later in this dissertation.

The reference to "the heavens" (haššāmāyim) and "the earth" (hā'āres) as God's throne and footstool leads us immediately to the Creation account in Genesis. These two creation terms are used in Gen 1:1 to refer to the totality of creation. This idea becomes self-evident as we read the last section of our text: "All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine" (Isa 66:2a, RSV). So in the book of Isaiah the two terms are applied with the same meaning, but this time for the "new creation" motif which forms the main theology of Isaiah in the last two chapters of his book (Isa 65-66).

Since "heaven" and "earth" in Gen 1:1 refer to the totality of creation, the "throne" and the "footstool" which are connected with "heaven" and "earth" may be seen to be the expressions of totality. Here totality may include the whole creation, new creation, all powers and authority. Thus, the divine throne and footstool as totality terms point to creatorship and ownership, in addition to kingship and judgeship of Yahweh over the entire world. The text asserts once again that God is Creator and King of all and rules over and fills the entire world. The whole creation is subject to Him not only in

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1For the term "footstool" (hā'dōm), see Heinz-Josef Fabry, "hā'dōm," TWAT, 2:347-357 (ET: "hā'dhōm," TDOT, 3:325-334). Cf. Isa 60:13; 1 Chr 28:2; Ps 132:7; Lam 2:1; Ezek 43:7. In 1 Chr 28:2 the ark of the covenant is the footstool of Yahweh, and in Isa 60:13; Lam 2:1; Ezek 43:7, the temple is called His footstool. Cf. pp. 132-133 above.
terms of government and judgment but also in terms of creation and possession.

In this figure, we notice some more significant facts which are unique in this particular passage. First, there is a picture of divine grandeur and immensity. Yahweh is too great and majestic: all of heaven is His throne and all of earth is His footstool! Second, there is very much a feeling of the vast spaces or boundless territories the Creator-King rules over. Here not only Yahweh's kingship is revealed but also the domain of His kingdom: the whole world is His territory.¹

"All these things" (kol-'éleh) in vs. 2 refers back to "the heavens" and "the earth" as the expressions of totality in the preceding verse.² Joseph A. Alexander's observation on this matter is worthy of notice: "By all these it is universally admitted that we are to understand the heavens and the earth, of which he claims to be not

¹Metzger understands "heaven" and "earth" in our text as meaning "den gesamten Bereich des Kosmos" (Metzger, "Himmlische und irdische Wohnstatt Jahwes," UF 2 [1970]: 154). However, this seems to be an overstated interpretation.

only the sovereign, as in the preceding verse, but the creator."\(^1\)

According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus cites our text (Isa 6:1) twice in His sermons (Matt 5:34-35; 23:22). In both cases, He relates it to oath-making or swearing. The point is that we should not make any oath by heaven or earth, because they are not our own possession but God's; in other words, they point to the ownership of God who created them.

The question about the historical situation arises from the allusion to the temple in this text. What does the temple refer to? Is the allusion historical or idealistic? Who are the people who contemplate building it? Various answers and suggestions have been provided to these questions.\(^2\) The most widely held view is that the passage means a complete rejection of the temple as such: many scholars hold this view because they understand that the

\(^1\)Alexander, 2:459. Bernhard Duhm interprets this phrase ("dies alles") to be referring to "den Bestand der neujüdischen Gemeinde, ihren Tempel, ihren Kultus" (Das Buch Jesaia, 482) in contrast to an opposition temple planned by the Samaritans. But this interpretation is unnatural both grammatically and chronologically (cf. McKenzie, Second Isaiah, 203; Westermann, Isaiah 40-66, 412).

prophet, standing in the great succession of his preexilic forebears, contends for a purely spiritual worship.¹

In order to find the real and full meaning of our text, one needs to grasp the precise meanings of the words used in it and to look at it in its context. First, a Hebrew expression in our passage deserves our attention. The MT of vs. 1b reads, 'ē-zeh bayit 'āšer tībnū-li wē-ē-zeh māqōm mēnūḥāti. The twice-occurring 'ē-zeh, which is a compound of the interrogative particle 'ē ("where?") and the demonstrative zeh ("this"), means "which? what manner? what kind?"² It also could be translated "where?" without an appreciable change in meaning. Thus, some versions read, "where . . . where . . .?"³ The LXX reads, poios ("what kind of?"), a rendering followed by most exegetes. The ASV provides a more distinct rendition than the other versions: "What manner of house will ye build unto me?"⁴


²Cf. BDB, 262; GHCL, 35; Pieper, 684.

³E.g., KJV, NIV, NASB, and NKJV. However, the NJV renders the same phrase 'ē-zeh in two different ways: "Where could you build a house for Me,/ What place could serve as My abode?" (Isa 66:1b, emphasis supplied).

⁴This translation (ASV) seems to be the combination of the LXX and the Vulgate renderings. Cf. Vulgate ("Quae est ista domus quam aedificabis mihi, et quis est iste locus quietis meae?"). Skinner translates this phrase in the same way: "What manner of house . . . what manner of place . . ." (Skinner, The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, 2:221). The idea is that whatever manner of house people may build for God, it cannot encompass Him. Therefore,
If we take the first meaning ("what manner?") for 'é-zeh, the idea of the sentence would be, "Whatever manner of building you may build for Me, it will never be able to house Me!" If we take the second meaning ("where?") for 'é-zeh, the sentence would mean, "There is no place at all where you can build a house big enough for Me!" In either case, the main thought remains the same: Yahweh is too great and grandiose to be contained in a house made by human hands or to be limited to a location. Although both are possible grammatically and semantically, the first meaning is more natural and better fit for the context, because it contrasts God's throne and footstool (heaven and earth) with the material earthly temple which men wish to build for Him.¹

On the other hand, as Edward J. Kissane points out, our passage expresses "the truth that the external symbols of themselves are of no avail."² In other words, "what


²Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, 2:316. He states as follows on the same page: "The true explanation of the passage is arrived at by comparison with the other poems in this section. The general theme is the exile, its cause and its purpose. It is part of Jahweh's plan for the chastisement of Israel, and it will end in the
Jahweh requires is obedience, and the external symbols are pleasing to Him only when they are accompanied by the proper dispositions.\textsuperscript{1} This idea is supported by the verse which follows immediately: "But to this one I will look, / To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isa 66:2b, NASB).

In short, our text stresses two concepts at the same time: (1) humans can by no means build any house which really can house God; and (2) in man's relationship to God, the state of heart, i.e., the attitude of obedience and humbleness, is no less important than the place of worship.

The last two words of vs. 1 (māqôm mēnūḥātî) show a rather unusual form: an absolute state (māqôm) -- not mēqôm (construct state) -- before another noun (mēnūḥātî, probably genitive). This implies that mēnūḥātî ("my resting place") is in apposition to māqôm ("place").\textsuperscript{2} So the more literal translation would be "a place, even my resting place." This makes a slight difference in meaning, but the general idea remains unchanged.\textsuperscript{3} All these things destruction of the wicked and the survival of a purified remnant."

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid. Cf. Isa 1:11-17; 58:2-9; Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-25; Hos 6:4-6; Mic 6:6-8; Jer 7:4-7, 21-26; Ps 50:8-15.

\textsuperscript{2} But the LXX renders this phrase as in the construct state: topos tēs katapausēs mou.

\textsuperscript{3} Cf. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 3:519; Pieper, 684.
considered, Isa 66:1b would be best translated as follows: "What manner of house will you build for Me, and what place shall be My rest?"  

In Ps 95:11 מֶנֶּהֶהַּ refers to Canaan, which was denied to the wilderness generation. This phrase presents the same tension between a rebellious generation and God's sovereign rule over heavens and earth. It is noteworthy that in Ps 132:8, 14 and 1 Chr 28:2 the term מֶנֶּהֶה is related to the temple or Zion to stress the permanency of God's presence there.

To sum up, in Isa 66:1 the figure of heaven and earth respectively as Yahweh's throne and footstool points to His creatorship and ownership as well as His kingship and judgeship over the whole world. It also points to the grandeur and majesty of God and to the domain of His kingdom. His territory is boundless and His administrative power reaches everywhere. So Yahweh can never be contained in the building made by human hands and His reign covers the whole world.

As we compare the two throne passages in the book of Isaiah, some aspects emerge as being common in both and other aspects are unique in each. In both passages, the divine throne is an indication of Yahweh's kingship and judgeship. He is revealed or declared as the sovereign King and the supreme Judge.

1 Cf. RSV, ASV, JB, and NJB.
Since these two passages are the only references to the throne of God in the book of Isaiah, and one passage (chap. 6) reports the beginning of the prophet's ministry, while the other (chap. 66) completes his prophetic ministry, they form a kind of inclusio around the book as well as around the prophet's ministry. The contrasts between the two passages could be summarized as follows:

**Isa 6:1**
- Throne—revealed in vision
- Throne—high and lifted up
- Throne—rises above human futility
- Throne—the headquarters of the great Commander or Sender
- God—holy and glorious
- God—the Commissioner
- God—the Ruler of all nations and peoples

**Isa 66:1**
- Throne—declared in oracle
- Throne—vast and immeasurable
- Throne—fills the totality of creation
- Throne—the pointer to the handiwork of the great Builder or Maker
- God—infinite and immense
- God—the Creator and Owner
- God—the Ruler of the whole world and macrocosm

**The Seventh-Sixth Century Prophets**

**Jeremiah 3:17**

The book of Jeremiah contains four references to the throne of Yahweh: two are in Yahweh oracles (Jer 3:17; 49:38) and the other two in the prophetic supplications (Jer 14:21; 17:12). In the former, the throne is called "the throne of Yahweh" (kissē' YHWH, 3:17) or "My throne"
(kis'i, 49:38), and in the latter, it is referred to as "the throne of Your glory" (kisse' kebôdekâ, 14:21), or "the throne of glory" (kisse' kâbôd, 17:12).

Jer 3:17 is, in a broader vista, a part of the long section which deals with "The Divine Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem" (2:1-25:38)\(^1\) and, in a closer look, it forms the central part of a shorter section which reports God's appeals to Israel and Judah to repent (3:1-4:4). In this shorter section, the key word is "turn" (šûb),\(^2\) which for Jeremiah means a redirection either toward God or away from Him. In its various forms the word occurs seventeen times in this section.\(^3\) Jer 3:22 captures the mood, which is one of God's earnest pleading, šûbû bânîm šôbâbîm 'erpâh

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\(^{3}\) Jer 3:1, 6, 7 (twice), 8, 10, 11, 12 (twice), 14 (twice), 19, 22 (thrice); 4:1 (twice). In the whole book of Jeremiah it is found ninety times.

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mešubôšekem ("Turn, ever-turning children, and I will heal your turnings-about").

After comparing the two sisters, apostate Israel and unfaithful Judah (Jer 3:6-10), Yahweh gives His first appeal to the apostate Israel (mešubôš yâšrē'êl, literally, "turnable or defecting Israel," vs. 11), which is recorded in vss. 11-13. In this appeal, the apostate Israel is persuaded to return to Yahweh by the argument that He is merciful, gracious (ḥesed). The term ḥesed, which is often used in covenant discussions, signifies covenant loyalty. Yahweh appeals to His covenant partner to repent and return to Him. Moreover, He promises not to retain anger against her (vs. 13).

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2For the comparison between the two sisters, see ibid., 54.

It is in the second appeal of Yahweh to the "ever-turning" Israel (vss. 14-22a) that the throne of Yahweh is referred to (vs. 17). In this appeal, the adjective which modifies the sons of Israel is Šôbâbîm ("ever-turning," vss. 14, 22), and here the reasons urged for Israel to repent are more elaborate than in the first appeal.1 Yahweh presents Himself in the more intimate relationship to His people: ki 'ānōki bā'alti bâkem (vs. 14).2

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1 Cf. Martens, Jeremiah, 55. He outlines all the benefits which God holds out—"all nudges toward repentance": (1) Return from exile, even if only by a decimated remnant (vs. 14); (2) Godly leaders, shepherds (vs. 15); (3) New experience of divine presence (vss. 16-17); (4) Transformed heart (vs. 17c); and (5) United people (vs. 18), already anticipated with the mention of Jerusalem and Zion in vss. 14-17.

2 The verb bā'al has two principal meanings: "to have dominion over, rule over, own" and "to take wife, take possession of a woman as bride or wife, marry" (cf. BDB, 127; GHCL, 130; KBL, 137). Hence, the translations of this clause are: "dioti egô katakurieuso humôn" (LXX); "for I am your master" (RSV); "for I am a master to you" (NASB); "for I am your Lord" (AB, italic original); "for I am married to you" (NKJV); "for I am your husband" (NIV).

On the other hand, Gesenius suggests the third meaning of ba'al (when it is used together with the preposition ba'): "to loathe, to reject." He translates Jer 3:14 (Šûbû bânîm Šôbâbîm . . . ki 'ānōki bā'alti bâkem) as "turn, O ye rebellious children . . . for I have rejected you" (GHCL, 130, italics original). He takes another example from Jer 31:32 (wē'ānōki bā'alti bâm) which he thinks means "and I rejected them" (LXX: kai egô émelēsa autôn, meaning "and I disregarded them" [LXX 38:32]; cf. Heb 8:9). However, Koehler and Baumgartner do not accept this meaning but interpret bā'al ba as "take possession of" on the basis of the renderings of LXX (katakurieusó) and Aquila (ekurieusa) (KBL, 137).

The more probable and reasonable translation of this clause would be "for I am your husband" (NIV) or "for I am married to you" (NKJV), because chap. 3 began already with the marriage metaphor which tells us a story about the relationship between a husband and his wife (vss. 1-5), and
The text reads:

"And it shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land," declares the LORD, "they shall say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' And it shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they miss it, nor shall it be made again. At that time they shall call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, for the name of the LORD in Jerusalem; nor shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart" (Jer 3:16, 17, NASB).

The text predicts that in that era of blessing no one will even mention the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. People would neither ask for it, nor call it to mind, nor fashion another. For an OT prophet to make such a statement was an unparalleled example of boldness. The text does not necessarily presuppose the disappearance of the ark,¹ and by no means presumes that when Jeremiah spoke or wrote this prophecy the ark was no longer in existence.²

¹William L. Holladay's comments on our passage, "God assures his people that the ark of the covenant will no longer be needed: it is thus God's intention that the ark disappear" (William L. Holladay, Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25, Herm [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986], 121), are obviously overstated. And Mowinckel's view that Jeremiah's ark-prophecy is an expression of sadness at the loss of the ark, the greatest misfortune that could have struck the nation, is out of place (cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, "A quel moment le culte de Yahvé à Jérusalem est-il officiellement devenu un culte sans images," RHPR 9 [1929]: 210).

²Keil, KD:COT, 8:1:94.
The idea is that the worship of God needs no symbolic aids, for God will dwell among His people, and all nations will be drawn to them. The passage introduces "the picture of true religion."¹

In the preexilic times, the ark of the covenant functioned variously for God's people: (1) as the embodiment of the presence of Yahweh or a portable throne and/or footstool for His invisible presence (cf. Lev 16:2, 13; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; Pss 80:2 [ET 80:1]; 99:1; 1 Chr 28:2); (2) as a container for the tables of the law (Exod 25:10-16; 40:20); and (3) as a war palladium of Israel's tribes (Num 10:35; 1 Sam 4:3; 2 Sam 11:11).² But now Jeremiah announces that the ark will neither be made again nor even receive mention in the postexilic time because Jerusalem itself, as God's throne, will guarantee the presence of God at least as much as the ark did formerly. Several ideas are implied in this prophecy.

First, the roles that the ark has hitherto played for Jerusalem and Israel, Jerusalem itself will play in relation to the restored Israel and other nations.³ In this particular passage, it is obviously indicated that the

¹Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 203.


ark has functioned so far as the throne of God on earth. Now, the throne of Yahweh is not limited to the ark but will be extended to the whole city of Jerusalem. This means that the concept of the divine throne has developed or expanded. According to Ben C. Ollenburger, this represents an exilic or postexilic development of the assertion in Ps 99:5, such as is found in Lam 2:1, where Zion is identified as Yahweh's crown (tp'rt) and Yahweh's footstool (hdm rglyw). Jeremiah points to the new age as one in which Jerusalem is the throne of God.

Second, our text intimates that the throne of God will be "openly accessible to all" who will be saved into His kingdom. This accessibility as a characteristic of the divine throne, which can be discerned also in other biblical texts, such as Pss 9:5 (ET 9:4); 11:4, is an indication of the closeness of God toward His people. "Therefore," following the exhortation of a NT writer, the people of God can "draw near with confidence to the throne


2Ollenburger, 50.

3Martens, Jeremiah, 55.

4Cf. pp. 323-333 below.

5Cf. pp. 334-339 below.
of grace," in order that they "may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16, NASB).

Third, an eschatological outlook is implied in the text. Jeremiah looks beyond the exile to a time when idolatry is no more in Palestine, and Jerusalem will be "holy unto Yahweh" (cf. Zech 14:20). Neither Israel nor the nations will then be misled into idolatry, and Israel, purged of idolatry, will be a witness and blessing to all the nations (cf. Ps 67). According to Marten H. Woudstra, this period is "that of unparalleled prosperity and expansion" or "shalom-situation." This period is, as Otto Eißfeldt and Artur Weiser have correctly stated, the future "Heilszeit." The prophet looks forward to the new earth where God will be enthroned among His people and all nations will be gathered before Him (Jer 3:17b).

1Harrison, Jeremiah and Lamentations, 66.
The mention of the ark of the covenant recalls the fortunes of the ark, first in the wilderness (Exod 25:10-22), then in Shiloh (1 Sam 4:3-4), then in Kiriath-Jearim (1 Sam 7:1-2), and finally in the Solomonic temple (1 Kgs 8:1-6).\(^1\) The last historical reference to the ark of the covenant is in 2 Chr 35:3.\(^2\) According to this text, the ark was still in existence in Josiah's day. Scholars believe that the ark disappeared at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.\(^3\) Some think that it was taken to

\(^1\)Martens, *Jeremiah*, 55.

\(^2\)The command in 2 Chr 35:3 ("Put the holy ark in the house . . .") poses some difficult questions because it seems to presuppose that the ark had been removed from the temple and is addressed to the Levites rather than the priests. For a detailed discussion on these questions, see H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 405; Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 284-285.

\(^3\)E.g., John Bright, *Jeremiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 27; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 120. The narrative of 2 Macc 2:1-18, by which Jeremiah was told to go up on Mount Nebo and take there the tent, the ark, and the altar of incense and seal them in a cave, is clearly a later legend. Cf. 2 Apoc. Bar. 6:7-10:

"And I [Baruch] saw him [an angel from heaven] descend into the Holy of Holies, and take from thence the veil, and the holy ark, and the mercy-seat, and the two tables, and the holy raiment of the priests, and the altar of incense, and the forty-eight precious stones, wherewith the priest was adorned and all the holy vessels of the tabernacle . . ."


"Once it happened that a certain priest who was busy [there] noticed that the pavement was different [there] from the others. He went and told [it] to his fellow, but before he had time to finish his
Babylon in 586 B.C.\footnote{E.g., Feinberg, Jeremiah, 46; Ernest W. Nicholson, \textit{The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah}, 2 vols. CBC (Cambridge: University Press, 1973, 1975), 1:46; Martens, \textit{Jeremiah}, 55; Robert P. Carroll, \textit{Jeremiah: A Commentary}, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 150. For the debates on this question among the rabbis, see b. \textit{Yoma} 53b-54a (\textit{The Babylonian Talmud}, Yoma, 253).} This can hardly be true because it is not mentioned among the spoils listed in Jer 52:17-23. Menahem Haran argues that the ark was destroyed during the reign of Manasseh.\footnote{Menahem Haran, "The Disappearance of the Ark," \textit{IEJ} 13 (1963): 46-58. He argues, in fact, that king Manasseh substituted an image of Asherah for the ark and cherubim in the temple (cf. idem, \textit{Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel}, 281-282).} Whatever may have been the case, the Bible is silent on the matter.\footnote{One possible allusion on this matter is 2 Chr 36:10: "And at the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him [Jehoiachin] to Babylon with the valuable articles of the house of the LORD . . ." (NASB). This cannot prove that the ark was taken to Babylon.}

On the other hand, Artur Weiser argues on the basis of 1 Kgs 12:25-33 that there was a competition between the ark cult in Jerusalem and the cult of the golden calves in the northern kingdom.\footnote{Weiser, \textit{Das Buch Jeremia: Kapitel 1-25}, 14, 31.} Then he explains Jer 3:16-18 as an evidence of "spiritualization of God's relationship [with His people]" ("\textit{Vergeistigung des Gottesverhältnisses}").\footnote{Ibid.} Nevertheless, this argument cannot stand for two reasons:

\begin{quote}
words his soul departed. Then it became known of a surety that the ark was hidden there." (\textit{The Babylonian Talmud}, Shekalim, 22).
\end{quote}
(1) There was not any competition between the cults during the time of Jeremiah's ministry (ca. 626-580 B.C.), since the northern kingdom had fallen about one century before (722 B.C.). (2) Our passage (Jer 3:16-18) is not the description of the situation during the prophet's own time but the prediction of the future state, as indicated twice by the expression "in those days" (bayyāmim hāhēmmāh, vss. 16, 18). There is no evidence that the throne of Yahweh or its symbol was dishonored at the time when Jeremiah made this prediction. What Jeremiah emphasizes in our passage is that when Israel is restored, the presence of God will no more be dependent on the cultic symbol, but His presence per se will be in Jerusalem. The concept of Jerusalem or Zion as the habitation where King Yahweh is enthroned is often expressed by the Psalmist (Pss 48:3 [ET 48:2]; 76:2-3 [ET 76:1-2]; cf. 29:10).  

As Lawrence Boadt points out, the imagery of the passage resembles the thought of Ezekiel, who describes his hoped-for restoration of the nation after exile in terms of new shepherds (Ezek 34) and a temple without the ark (Ezek 40-43). The prophecy that "all the nations shall be

1Patterson and Austel, 16.  
2Cf. Ollenburger, 186, n. 165.  
3For a further discussion, see Ollenburger, 51-52.  
4Lawrence Boadt, Jeremiah 1-25, OTM 9 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1982), 35.
gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem"\(^1\) (vs. 17b) reminds us of several texts in both Testaments.\(^2\)

Especially, the declaration in the present text that Jerusalem itself will be the throne of Yahweh is paralleled by the declaration of the Apocalypse that the New Jerusalem will be the tabernacle of God with men (Rev 21:3), as the earth was in the beginning (Gen 3).\(^3\) The correspondence of the Jerusalem of our text with the New Jerusalem is further intimated by what is said in Rev 21:22, 23, that the latter will have no temple, neither sun nor moon, "for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple" and "for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb" (NASB). The analogy between the two declarations concerning the absence of the ark and the temple is strikingly evident.

\(^1\)Keil interprets the Hebrew phrase "Lešem YHWH liruššalām not as "to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem" (KJV), but as "because of the name of Jahveh at Jerusalem," i.e., "because Yahweh reveals His glory there; for the name of Yahweh is Yahweh Himself in the making of His glorious being known in deeds of almighty power and grace" (KD:COT, 8:1:95-96). This may be an interpretation, but not the only possible one. Theo. Laetsch objects that one should not translate that way (cf. Theo. Laetsch, Bible Commentary Jeremiah [Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1965], 57). For the theological significance of the divine name of Yahweh, see Mettinger, The Dethronement of Sabaoth, 38-79 ("The Name Theology").

\(^2\)E.g., Jer 31:6; Isa 2:1-4; 60; Mic 4; Zech 2:15-17 (ET 2:11-13); 8:20-23; 14:16-21; Rev 21; etc.

Jeremiah 14:21

Jer 14:21 is a part of the prophet's lament and supplication in the time of drought and national defeat (Jer 14:1-15:9), which is, in return, part of a larger section (Jer 2:1-25:38, "The Divine Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem"). The background to the section seems to be a military defeat followed by a famine. The immediate context comprises the description of the plague and Jeremiah's grief over it (Jer 14:17-18); a collective national lament addressed to Yahweh (14:19-22), asking why He has brought such an affliction on His people (vs. 19), confessing sin (vs. 20), and appealing to Yahweh for help (vs. 21), for their trust is in Him and in no other (vs. 22). Then comes Yahweh's answer (15:1-4), written largely in prose but with four brief poetic phrases (vs. 2b).

The passage belongs to the second confessional prayer (14:19-22). The first confessional prayer occurs in vss. 7-9 of the same chapter. Both prayers are formal, terse, and finely phrased petitions that raise the question "Why?" without sincerely expecting an answer. In this

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1Cf. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 125-126.

sense, each prayer might well be called a "half-prayer." In spite of Yahweh's command, "Do not pray for this people" (vs. 11), nevertheless, Jeremiah does pray again for them.

The text reads:

Do not despise us, for Thine own name's sake;
Do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory;
Remember and do not annul Thy covenant with us.
( Jer 14:21, NASB).

As can be easily noticed, the text is an entreaty composed of three petitions. The first phrase, "Do not despise [n's, "spurn"]," as William L. Holladay observes, is based on Deut 32:19, "And the LORD saw this [the way by which the people forgot Him], and spurned them" (NASB). The Psalmist admits that in times past some Israelites had "spurned the counsel of the Most High" (Ps 107:11, RSV), but now they ask Yahweh to show mercy. Most translations and commentaries have shown the tendency to add "us" as the direct object of the transitive verb, which the MT does not have. A few scholars, however, object to this interpretation for grammatical or theological reasons. For instance, Mitchell Dahood argues that "the syntax of the


3 Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 438.

4 Thus Targum, Vulgate, Luther, KJV, RSV, NAB, NASB, NIV, JB, NJB, AB (John Bright), NKJV, NJV, etc.
first colon and the parallelism of the first two cola focus clearly when the lamedh is parsed as emphatic in Jer 14:21\(^1\) and reads the text as follows:

\[\text{'al-tin'as lim'e\-'on (MT le\-'ma\-'an) šim\-'ēkā}\\ \text{'al-tenabbēl kissē' ṭēbōdekā}\\ \text{Do not despise the very abode of your name,}\\ \text{Do not disgrace the throne of your glory.}^{2}\]

Holladay, on the other hand, remarks that "it is clear from the poetry that the verbs of both the first and second cola [tin'as and tenabbēl] carry as their object 'the throne of your glory,'" since the parallel verbs have a similar meaning.\(^3\) Thus his translation reads:

\[\text{Do not spurn, for your name's sake,}\\ \text{do not disdain your glorious throne.}^{4}\]

The main points of exegetical interest come from the words lm\-'n šmк and ks\-' kbwdк. Intertwined with the various interpretations is the question: What does the phrase lm\-'n šmк really mean? If the majority of versions are followed, the sense of the MT is "Do not spurn [us], for the sake of Your name," where the appeal is to Yahweh's honor or reputation: "Do not make us despicable, else You will make Yourself despicable" (cf. Jer 14:7). If Dahood


\(^{2}\text{Ibid. The NEB has the similar rendition: "Do not despise the place where thy name dwells/ nor bring contempt on the throne of thy glory . . ." (Jer 14:21).}\)

\(^{3}\text{Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 438.}\)

\(^{4}\text{Ibid., 420.}\)
and the NEB are followed, the text achieves a parallelism of ḫmn šmḵ and ḫs' ḳbdḵ. Then, ṣmr is not Yahweh's reputation, but is the Name of the so-called Deuteronomistic theology—the Name which Yahweh has caused to dwell in the Jerusalem temple.¹ If Holladay's arrangement is accepted, the parallelism is broken, but "Your name" can refer either to Yahweh's reputation or to the divine Name dwelling in the temple.² It would be more natural and safe if we interpret "Your name" as "Your honor" or "Your reputation" as in the previous confessional prayer (cf. vs. 7).

There is no exact parallel for the phrase "the throne of Your glory" (ḵissē’ ḫbōdeḵā) in the OT. As stated earlier,³ however, the expression "the throne of glory" (ḵissē’ ḫhōd) occurs four times: Jer 14:11; 17:12; Isa 22:23; 1 Sam 2:8. But, in the last two references, it refers to the human throne. A similar form is found in Ps 47:9 (ET 47:8), which affirms that ʾyahweh sits on "the throne of His holiness (ḵissē’ qōdšō)." In both instances the phrases mean "Your glorious throne," "His holy throne." Considered in view of its context as well as in the light of the previous passage (Jer 3:17), the reference to the

¹Cf. McKane, 333.

²Holladay is inclined to support the latter by stating, "the mention of Yahweh's name in the first line subtly reinforces this reference (the temple is the house which bears Yahweh's name, 7:10)" (Jeremiah 1, 438).

³See p. 141 above.
divine throne in our text is understood as indicating Jerusalem as the habitation of Yahweh.¹

The third colon of the text seems to be a rather impudent plea, because the people ask Yahweh not to break the covenant with them, whereas they have broken the covenant with Him (Jer 11:10).² One question in this final colon is, What covenant is referred to here? While William McKane expects the allusion to be to the Davidic covenant,³ Robert P. Carroll suggests that the covenant spoken of here is a protective one in which Yahweh has promised to defend the people.⁴ It is impossible to give a definite answer to the question because the setting of the lament is uncertain. The important point is that they believed that Yahweh would keep the covenant because it was concluded on the basis of His faithfulness and love to them.⁵

¹Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph, Jeremia, HAT, erste Reihe 12 (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1947), 87; L. Elliott Binns, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, WC (London: Methuen & Co., 1919), 125; McKane, 334. Some scholars understand the "glorious throne" in our text as, more specifically, indicating the Jerusalem Temple and its cult (cf. Feinberg, Jeremiah, 116; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 438; Carroll, 317).

²Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 386, calls this "a strange inconsistency," and Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 438, describes it as "fatuous."

³Cf. McKane, 334.

⁴Carroll, 318.

⁵Cf. Harrison, Jeremiah and Lamentations, 102.
In sum, the people plead in desperation and provide three reasons for Yahweh to help them in spite of their sins: (1) His name—reputation; (2) His throne—rulership; and (3) His covenant—faithfulness. Here again, the divine throne occupies the center not only in order but in importance and significance. Yahweh was thought of as sitting on His throne in the temple, and this was regarded as "a guarantee of the nation's safety" (cf. Jer 7:2-15). The appeal to His throne and the temple was "a kind of last redoubt of hope." The national entreaty is concluded when it is once more intensified by an ardent appeal to Yahweh's uniqueness and creative power in vs. 22:

Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can bring rain?
Or can the heavens give showers?
Art thou not he, O LORD our God?
We set our hope on thee,
for thou doest all these things.
(RSV).

Jeremiah 17:12

Jer 17 is composed of several sections which appear to vary in content and may represent "the contents of

1 Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 386; cf. Bright, Jeremiah, 102.

2 Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 439.

3 Cf. Rudolph, Jeremia, 87, who states, "... das Lied schliesst mit einem leidenschaftlichen Bekenntnis zu Jahwes Einzigkeit und Schöpfermacht ...

Jeremiah's 'miscellaneous file'. By no means, however, is this chapter a medley of disparate poems and disconnected oracles. Rather it is a purposeful collection of sources which are related to the diagnosis of Judah's sins, providing prescriptions for them.

The first section (Jer 17:1-4), poetic in style, is a severe accusation in the form of a judgment oracle toward Judah. "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of a diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars" (vs. 1, RSV). Because of their insincere and ineffective sacrifices, their sins were for all intents and purposes still stuck on the horns of the altar—the stone projections to which the animal would be bound and where the blood was sprinkled. Moreover, they worshiped false gods. Asherah, a fertility goddess and consort of the Canaanite Baal, was represented in wooden carvings depicting the female deity (vs. 2). Thus they kindled God's anger, and He was going to enslave them to their enemies (vs. 4).

1 Bright, Jeremiah, 119.

The second section (Jer 17:5-8), contrasting the righteous and the wicked, is strongly reminiscent of Ps 1. It, therefore, often has been explained as a piece of wisdom literature.\footnote{Cf. E. Henderson, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and That of the Lamentations, Translated from the Original Hebrew; with a Commentary, Critical, Philological, and Exegetical (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1851), 106; A. S. Peake, ed., Jeremiah, vol. 1, Jeremiah I-XXIV, NCB (New York: Henry Frowde, 1910), 221; Hyatt, "The Book of Jeremiah," IB, 5:950-951; Bright, Jeremiah, 119.} An alternative view is to regard the section as one of Jeremiah's confessions, a "personal affirmation."\footnote{William L. Holladay, Jeremiah: Spokesman Out of Time (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), 98-99; cf. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 419-420.} This position seems more convincing. The antithesis in this section is sharply defined, the two courses of human conduct making the men who practice them, respectively, to fade and to flourish.\footnote{A. W. Streane, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Together with the Lamentations, with Map Notes and Introduction, CBSC (Cambridge: University Press, 1891), 127.}

Two short poems follow the second section: one given to the topic of the heart, described as deceitful and very corrupt (Jer 17:9-10), and the other given to the folly and shame of those who turn from Yahweh (vss. 12-13). Thus they can be said to be expansions of the former poem in which the self-trusting person was described as one whose heart turns away from Yahweh (vs. 5). Sandwiched between these two poems one finds a proverb (vs. 11).\footnote{Cf. Martens, Jeremiah, 122.}
The two poems and one proverb in between have one common message: humanity’s heart condition is desperate and hopeless.¹ This message, as a general truth, is inevitably related to the sinful condition of Judah.

The two poems are followed by the prophet’s other lament (Jer 17:14-18), in which he asks Yahweh to heal his brokenness and to take vengeance on his enemies. Many scholars take Jer 17:12-18 as a unit and regard vss. 12-13 as an introductory invocation for the main lamentation which follows (vss. 14-18).² Others take vss. 12-13 as a separate unit³ or as forming another unit together with the preceding verses (vss. 9-11).⁴ The MT of Jer 17:12-13 reads:

{kissê' kābōd mārôm mērī'šôn meqôm miqdāšēnû:
miqweh yisrā'ēl YHWH kol-ōzēkā yēḇōṣî
yēsūray bā‘āreṣ yikkātēbû ki `ōzû meqôr mayîm-
hayyîm 'et-YHWH:

[O] Throne of Glory,
Exalted [One] from the Beginning,
Place of Our Sanctuary!
Hope of Israel, Yahweh!
All who forsake You shall be put to shame;

¹Cf. Feinberg, Jeremiah, 129-130.

²E.g., Streane, 129-130; Albert Condamin, Le livre de Jérémie: Traduction et commentaire, ÉB (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie Éditeurs, 1936), 144-147; Henning Graf Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), 229-240; Laetsch, 164-166; Weiser, Das Buch Jeremia: Kapitel 1-25, 14, 146-149.

³E.g., Carroll, 357-359; Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 500-503.

⁴E.g., Feinberg, Jeremiah, 120-131.
Those who turn away from Me shall be written in the dust,
For they have forsaken Yahweh, the fountain of living water.¹

First, one must admit that these two verses offer difficulty in interpretation. The three major questions in regard to this poem are: (1) How shall the six words of vs. 12 be grouped, and what relation do those groups bear to each other? (2) Which throne does kisse' kabôd refer to, heavenly or earthly? (3) What is the purpose of the words of vs. 12, or in other words, how is vs. 12 related to vs. 13?

Regarding the first question, several solutions have been suggested. The conventional interpretation, based on the Masoretic punctuation, is to take vs. 12 as a separate rhetorical unit, grouping the first four words together, and the last two together, making of it a nominal sentence: "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary" (KJV).² The whole verse is an indicative statement.³ We may designate this case as

¹My translation.

²RSV, NIV, NASB, AB, JB, and NJB translate similarly. Luther also has the same idea, but the word order is reversed: "Aber die Stätte unseres Heiligtums ist der Thron der Herrlichkeit, erhaben von Anbeginn" (cf. Die Bibel nach der Übersetzung Martin Luthers [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984]).

³So Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, 229-231. Targum has basically the same but somewhat redundant rendition: ". . . before the One whose Shekhina is upon the Throne of Glory in the heaven on high, higher than the beginning, corresponding to the place of
The difficulty with this is that it is not congruent with its own unit (Jer 17:12-13a) because the second half of the unit is divided into groups of two words.

The other possibility is to group the six words of vs. 12 in three pairs: "The throne of glory [is in] the height from the beginning, the place of our sanctuary"; [AB+CD+EF: Indicative]. In this case, the last pair echoes the subject of the nominal clause. Taking vs. 12 as a tricolon instead of a bicolon is quite natural. Interpreting the whole verse as an indicative may be possible, but it is unnatural, especially when this verse is considered in connection with vs. 13.

One can also take two groups of three words: "The throne of glory [is in] the height, from the beginning [is] the place of our sanctuary"; [ABC+DEF: Indicative]. W. L. Holladay regards this as "undoubtedly correct," for "one...

1So Paul Volz, Der Prophet Jeremia, KAT 10 (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Dr. Werner Scholl, 1922), 184; Rudolph, 100.

2So Condamin, 144. His translation clearly reveals two groups of three words, but he understands vocatives: "Trône élevé de gloire,/ notre lieu saint dès l'origine."
has a chiasmus of adverbial predicates in the central two words surrounded by nominal clause subjects." However, this interpretation also has a couple of weaknesses: (1) if vs. 12 is an indicative statement rather than a series of vocatives, it can hardly be congruous with the following verse poetically as well as logically; (2) even though one understands it as a bicolon and thus interprets mĕriʾšôn ("from the beginning") as modifying the following phrase, "[is] the place of our sanctuary," the meaning of the verse is not very different from that of the traditional interpretation. In that sense, this interpretation has no less weakness or difficulty than the previous ones.

The NJV provides another option of interpretation:
"O Throne of Glory exalted from of old,/ Our Sacred Shrine! [ABCD+EF: 2 Vocatives]/ O Hope of Israel! O LORD!" (vss. 12-13a).

Helmut Lamparter's translation is still another option: "Thron der Herrlichkeit, erhaben von Anbeginn,/ Stätte unseres Heiligtums! [AB+CD+EF: 2 Vocatives]/ Du Hoffnung Israels!" (vss. 12-13a). This is same as the

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1Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 501. His translation reads: "The throne of glory is on high,/ from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary" (p. 500).

versions of the NEB,¹ B. Duhm,² P. Volz,³ W. Rudolph,⁴ and A. Weiser.⁵ This is grammatically defensible. In this case, vs. 12 has only two vocatives, because the second phrase, mārôm mēri'šôn ("high from the beginning"), is understood as modifying the first phrase, kīssē' Kāḇôd ("throne of glory"). Albert Condamin⁶ stands on common ground with the NEB, Duhm, Volz, Rudolph, and Weiser in recognizing only two vocatives in vs. 12, but differs even from them in that he divides the verse into two cola, while they divide it into three.

The alternative which is poetically most dynamic and logically most appropriate is to interpret the verse as a tricolon and as a series of vocatives: "[O] Throne of

¹The NEB of Jer 17:12 reads, "O throne of glory, exalted from the beginning,/ the place of our sanctuary." The American Jewish Version (by Jewish Publication Society of America, 1917) reads, "Thou throne of glory, on high from the beginning, Thou place of our sanctuary, Thou hope of Israel, the Lord!" (Jer 17:12-13a). Following this interpretation, Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr., suggests the following literal translation: "Throne of glory, on high from beginning, place of our sanctuary, hope of Israel, Lord" (Commentary on Jeremiah [Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1977], 147.

²Bernhard Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia, Die poetischen und prophetischen Bücher des AT. Übersetzungen in den Versmassen der Urschrift 3 (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1903), 52.

³Volz, Der Prophet Jeremia, 184.

⁴Rudolph, Jeremia, 98.

⁵Weiser, Das Buch Jeremia: Kapitel 1-25, 14, 143.

⁶Cf. p. 225, n. 1 above.
Glory, Exalted (or, High) [One] from the Beginning, Place of Our Sanctuary!"; [AB+CD+EF: 3 Vocatives]. C. W. Eduard Naegelsbach analyzes this passage in the same way.¹ Unlike those cited above, this interpretation shows three vocatives by taking mārōm mēri'šōn as another independent vocative, which, together with the other vocatives, stands as one of the appositions to YHWH in vs. 13.

To take vs. 12 as "an apostrophe" and not as a simple statement "is more in keeping with the tension of feeling in the discourse."² This interpretation is more natural, for we find some other biblical texts in which mārōm serves as a divine title or at least as an epithet. It appears juxtaposed with YHWH or 'êlōhîm: "Yahweh Exalted (High Yahweh, mārōm YHWH)³ is mighty" (Ps 93:4c); "With what shall I come before Yahweh, and bow myself before the Exalted God (the High God, 'êlōhē mārōm)?" (Mic 6:6a). This stands in a better relationship with the poetic structure of the poem as a whole, since the first pair of the words of vs. 13 (miqweh yiśrā'ēl) is also a


²Keil, KD:COT, 8:1:284.

³This phrase can be rendered as "Yahweh on high," because mārōm also means "high" ("Höhe") as a noun indicating "the abode of God" or "heaven" (KBL, 565). Cf. Isa 33:5; 57:15; Jer 25:30; Pss 7:8 (ET 7:7); 102:20 (ET 102:19); Job 25:2; Keil, KD:COT, 8:1:284; Naegelsbach, "The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah," L:CHS, 12:1:166.
vocative. In this case four pairs of the words stand in apposition to YHWH, each contributing to a crescendo.

BHS supposes that the LXX hupsomenos (hupsoumenos) may represent mûrûm ("elevated, exalted") rather than mûrôm ("high, lofty"). If this supposition is correct, "Exalted [One]" remains a better rendition. But the deviation of the LXX from the MT in Jer 17:12, i.e., the absence of any representation of mēriʾšôn meqôm, reflects the difficulty that the LXX translators were faced with in our passage.

The second question is, in fact, already answered because the answer to the first question also includes that to the second question. The phrase kisseʾ kâbôd is used here as a metonymy and metaphor for Yahweh. It does not

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1 A few scholars disagree on this: e.g., Norbert Ittmann, Die Konfessionen Jeremias: Ihre Bedeutung für die Verkündigung des Propheten, WMANT 54 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1981), 50. But the majority of scholars agree.


cause any problem, whether it refers to the heavenly throne or to the earthly. The phrase in our text does not and need not refer to any particular throne or temple because it functions as a kind of appellation of God. God Himself is called "Throne of Glory." He is thus addressed with all the significances and symbolism of the term. A. W. Streane writes in the same vein:

These verses [Jer 17:12, 13] are probably to be taken as one sentence, the whole of ver. 12 being in form an invocation of the temple as the scene of God's visible glory, but in reality an address to Himself. A throne of glory, exalted from the beginning, the place of our sanctuary, hope of Israel, the Lord, all that forsake thee, etc.¹

By an accumulation of striking metaphors, Yahweh is represented as the only proper and unfailing object of confidence and source of enjoyment.² The initial words of vs. 13 being in apposition with those of vs. 12, the whole is to be regarded as descriptive of the Divine Being who alone is entitled to the trust and hope of His people. He is metonymically called a "Throne" because He is the universal Ruler and supreme Judge, the throne being used to denote the One who sits upon it.³ He is the "Sanctuary"

¹Streane, 129 (italics his).
(cf. Isa 8:14; Ezek 11:16) of His people inasmuch as He is their Refuge (cf. Pss 14:6; 46:1; 61:3; 62:7, 8; 91:2; 142:5; etc.).

The third question involves the relationship between the two verses (vss. 12 and 13). If, as noted above, the first part of the poem is composed of a series of vocatives, then the first four are in apposition to the last one, Yahweh. In this case, Yahweh is addressed as "Throne of Glory, Exalted One from the Beginning, Place of our Sanctuary, Hope of Israel,¹ Yahweh" (vss. 12-13a). After this, the poet or people² pronounce: "All who forsake thee shall be put to shame" (vs. 13b, RSV), and


²Regarding Jer 17:12-18, the commonly held view is that the passage relates to a personal experience in Jeremiah's life, in other words, it is "a pure lamentation of the individual" (John M. Berridge, Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh: An Examination of Form and Content in the Proclamation of the Prophet Jeremiah, BST 4 [Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970], 137, 142). However, Reventlow, Liturgie prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia, 239, has proposed the following:

"Von dieser Individualfunktion her, die der Form innewohnt, wird aber zugleich auch ihre allgemeinere Bedeutung sichtbar: Der exemplarisch Fromme, der hier spricht, ist zugleich Typos der Gemeinde als ganzer, er ist der Vorbeter, der in seinem Sein und seiner Anfechtung das Selbstverständnis der Gemeinschaft vor Gott verkörpert." Although the speaker may very well have been Jeremiah, he does not speak for himself alone but as a representative of the people.
proclaim the words as from the mouth of Yahweh: "They that depart from me\textsuperscript{1} shall be written in the earth,\textsuperscript{2} because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters" (vs. 13cd, KJV).

Despite textual difficulties or uncertainties the main thrust of the poem is clear: Covenant-breakers who reject the Lordship of Yahweh are guilty and will be brought to judgment.\textsuperscript{3} The reason why Yahweh is invoked with the titles used in the first part of the poem is that each of them is closely related to the idea of judgment:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{1}Cf. BHS apparatus (p. 816); Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 500. For the consonantal text ye\textsuperscript{sûray}, a substantive with suffix, meaning "my departers," the Qere reading of the Masoretes is w\textsuperscript{sûray}, a participle in the construct state with suffix, meaning "and those who turn away from me." The RSV and the NIV (cf. also Rudolph, Jeremia, 106) have accepted the form w\textsuperscript{sûrêkû}, "and those who turn away from you," thereby paralleling the preceding participle in the verse, "all who forsake you" (A. R. Hulst, Old Testament Translation Problems, Helps for Translators 1 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960], 167).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{2}The MT reads ye\textsuperscript{sûray bâ'âres yikkatēbûl. Two meanings are possible in this phrase: "Those who turn away on earth will be written down" (NASB) and "those who turn away from thee [MT, me] shall be written in the earth" (RSV; so AB). The latter interpretation may mean that the apostates will be recorded in the dust and their record will soon be erased and forgotten (cf. Bright, Jeremiah, 118; Keil, KD:COT, 8:1:285). On the basis of Ugaritic evidence, Dahood takes bâ'âres to denote "in hell" (Mitchell Dahood, "The Value of Ugaritic for Textual Criticism," Bib 40 [1959]: 164-165) or "in the nether world" (idem, "The Metaphor in Jeremiah 17.13," Bib 48 [1967]: 109-110; cf. Frank M. Cross, Jr., and David Noel Freedman, "The Song of Miriam," JNES 14 [1955]: 247, n. 39). But McKane refutes this interpretation (McKane, 407). BHS makes two other proposals: yikkarētû ("they will be cut off") and yikkalēmû ("they shall be ashamed").
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{3}Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 424.
\end{quote}
"Throne of Glory" indicates the authority and majesty of the divine Judge; "Exalted (High) One from the Beginning" points to His position and origin; "Place of Our Sanctuary" reveals the court and procedure of His judgment; and "Hope of Israel" tells us to whom we should turn and in whom we should put confidence in order to pass through His judgment. In sum, vs. 12 is, as Lamparter puts it, "nur der Auftakt zur eigentlichen Anrufung in [vs.] 13," and this connotes that "nicht an den Tempel heftet sich der Glaube; zu dem lebendigen Gott, von dessen Hoheit und Herrlichkeit der Tempel zeugt, ist das Herz des Beters emporgewandt."³

In conclusion, "Throne of Glory" serves here as the first of a series of epithets for Yahweh which extol the majesty of God, introducing Him as the great and glorious Ruler and Judge. The idea of Yahweh as Judge is apparently presented in the whole chapter (Jer 17), especially in the three verses which immediately precede our passage.⁴

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²Lamparter, *Prophet wider Willen*, 165.

³Ibid.

⁴Jer 17:9-11 reads:
"The heart is more deceitful than all else/ And is desperately sick;/ Who can understand it?/ I, the LORD, search the heart;/ I test the mind;/ Even to give to each man according to his ways;/ According to the results of his deeds;/ As a partridge that hatches eggs which it has not laid;/ So is he who
the throne of God presents a striking contrast to riches which will be soon lost (vs. 11) in terms of duration, so does God Himself who sits upon it. As the throne demands both reward and punishment, so does God who is called by that name. As the center of the divine authority and an endless source of comfort to the believer, the throne represents the One who occupies it.

To sum up, the throne of God in our passage serves a threefold function: (1) as an indicator of the authority and majesty of God as the great and glorious Ruler and Judge; (2) as pointing to the trustworthiness and faithfulness of God as our Protector; and (3) as a reminder of the comfort, confidence, and hope that the hopeless can enjoy in Him who is "Hope of Israel."

Jeremiah 49:38

Around the time of the fall of Jerusalem, Yahweh pronounced through the prophet Jeremiah a series of divine oracles against all nations surrounding the declining kingdom of Judah (Jer 46:1-51:64). The present text is a

makes a fortune, but unjustly;/ In the midst of his days it will forsake him;/ And in the end he will be a fool" (NASB).

1Feinberg, Jeremiah, 130.

part of the oracle addressed to Elam, a state in the area of Mesopotamia (Jer 49:34-38).1

Why the oracle against Elam should be identified with "the accession year2 of Zedekiah, king of Judah" (Jer 49:34, AB), 597 B.C., is uncertain.3 But, as Bright has argued, there is no reason to question the accuracy of this date.4 This oracle, on the other hand, is like all the others in Jer 46-51 in that "it contains no specific

1Elam was a state lying to the east of Babylon and its capital city was Susa (Shushan in Dan 8:2). Contact between Sumer and Elam in the "heroic age" of Sumer is attested by a Sumerian text (cf. ANET, 265). The Elamites appeared as a tribal unit during the time of Abraham (Gen 14:1). Elam was conquered by Ashurbanipal ca. 645 B.C. It is mentioned in Isa 22:6 as serving in the Assyrian army, and in Isa 21:1-9 as one of the executors of judgment against Babylon. Ezra 4:9 says that Elam still belonged to the Assyrian kingdom in the time of Esarhaddon. Elam seems to have regained its independence around 626/25 as Assyria weakened (cf. D. J. Wiseman, Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum [London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956], 8-10, 50-51). For a brief history of the Elamites, see A. R. Millard, "Elam: Elamites," ISBE, 2:49-52; M. J. Dresden, "Elam (Country)," IDB, 2:70-71.

2"The accession year" (rēʾšit malkūt) does not mean vaguely "the beginning of the reign" (KJV, RSV, etc.), but corresponds to Akkadian res sarruti, a technical term for the period between a king's accession and the following New Year, from which his first regnal year was counted. Cf. Bright, Jeremiah, 169; Rudolph, Jeremiah, 143, 255; Hyatt, "The Book of Jeremiah," IB, 5:1005-1006.

3Cf. Hans Bardtke, "Jeremia der Fremdvolkerprophet," ZAW 54 (1936): 257. He deletes this element of the notice in vs. 34.

4Bright, Jeremiah, 338.
historical information and its vague, stereotypical phrases are capable of an a-historical explanation.  

Yahweh announces that He will break the bow of Elam, which is "the mainstay of their might" (vs. 35, NIV), since the Elamites were famous as archers (Isa 22:6). This means that Elam's martial power is to be destroyed. Yahweh is summoning the four winds from the four quarters of heaven to scatter its population (Jer 49:36), and the sword to consume them (vs. 37). Then He utters the prophecy in the present text: "I will set my throne in Elam (w^amti kis'i be-'el5m), and destroy their king and princes" (vs. 38, RSV). No human agent or reason for Elam's destruction is given.

Two motifs are noticeable in this oracle. One is the motif of Yahweh's sword of judgment commissioned to consume Elam. This is in keeping with the personification of Yahweh's sword in the oracle against Philistia (Jer 47:6-7). The other is the motif of Yahweh's throne established in Elam. The picture of a conquering king setting up his throne in the land he has defeated has been used already in Jer 1:15 and 43:10. The setting up of

1Carroll, 812 (emphasis supplied).

thrones at the gates of Jerusalem (Jer 1:15) was "a symbol of conquest and subsequent rule over the land." Nebuchadnezzar's setting up of his throne and royal canopy at the entrance of Pharaoh's palace (Jer 43:10) meant the same thing. But the reference to the divine throne established in the heathen country introduces a new element, not only within the oracles of Jeremiah but in the spectrum of its biblical thought.

We may summarize the interpretations of the throne of Yahweh in Jer 49:38 as follows: First, it is referred to, as in the two cases of the human kings cited above, as "the symbol of conquest and subjugation." Second, it is supposed to function as "a tribunal" or, more specifically, "a tribunal of punishment" for

1Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 154.

Cf. Artur Weiser, Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia: Kapitel 25.15-52.34, ATD 21 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955), 374:
"Denn an diesem Ort wird . . . Nebukadnezar bei seinem siegreichen Einmarsch in Ägypten als Zeichen seiner Oberherrschaft seinen mit einem Baldachin überdeckten Thronsitz aufschlagen (vgl. 1,15)."


Elam. The following comment by Paul Volz on the Elam oracle reveals this idea more plainly: "Dem grossen Weltreich Elam gegenüber tritt Jahwe nachdruckvoll als der Gerichtsherr auf, neunmal steht das 'Ich' der Gottheit, ein einfaches, höchst künstlerisches Mittel."\(^1\)

Third, the divine throne established in the Gentile nation indicates the biblical view that Yahweh is not merely the God of Israel but is the Lord over all the nations of the world, whose destiny lies in God's hands.\(^2\) This theme is evident and important in the overall theology of the OT.

Fourth, the reference to Yahweh setting up His throne in distant Elam leads us to a different realm of history, which is said to border on the "eschatological."\(^3\) The portrait of Yahweh presented in the context of our passage is that of a terrifying conqueror: He says, "I will break the bow of Elam" (Jer 49:35, RSV); "I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven; and I will scatter them to all those winds" (vs. 36, RSV); "I will terrify Elam before their enemies, . . . I will send the sword after them" (vs. 37, RSV); and "I

\(^1\)Volz, Der Prophet Jeremia, 418 (emphasis supplied).

\(^2\)Cf. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, 687.

\(^3\)Cf. Christensen, 223.
will . . . destroy their king and princes" (vs. 38, RSV). The point is that in due time Yahweh will destroy the earthly pagan powers and set up His own throne over them and thus His universal rulership will be affirmed, even over Elam. This eschatological connotation becomes more obvious from its concluding remark, in which Yahweh promises, "But it will come about in the last days/ That I shall restore the fortunes of Elam" (vs. 39, NASB, emphasis supplied). The prophetic phrase, "in the last days" or "in the latter days" (RSV) (bē'āḥārit hayyāmim, literally, "in the end of the days"), is "an eschatological term" and may denote "the final period of the history" or "the Messianic age," when God will restore everything and make all things new (cf. Rev 21:5).

1Christensen misses the mark, as he remarks on our passage that "the prophet is projecting his message into the future where he sees a new day on the horizon, a day when pagan world powers will submit themselves to Yahweh, the suzerain of the nations" (ibid.). Jer 49:38 does not say that the earthly powers will submit themselves to Yahweh, but that He will destroy and conquer them.

2Cf. Gen 49:1; Num 24:14; Deut 4:30; 31:29; Isa 2:1; Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; Ezek 38:16; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1; Dan 10:14.

3KBL, 33.

4BDB, 31.

5Harrison, Jeremiah and Lamentations, 183. It is significant that Elamites were in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was given to the primitive Christian church at the time of Pentecost (Acts 2:9; cf. Isa 11:11).
Ezekiel 1:26

The book of the exilic\(^1\) prophet Ezekiel has been regarded as the most difficult book to understand and interpret in the Hebrew Bible. The rabbis expressed their difficulty in expounding Ezekiel's vision,\(^2\) and they regulated absolute secrecy in the interpreting of the merkabah,\(^3\) the throne-chariot of God, with the following regulations:

MISHNAH. The [subject of] forbidden relations may not be expounded in the presence of three, nor the work of creation in the presence of two, nor [the

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\(^2\)Cf. b. Meg. 24b (*The Babylonian Talmud*, Megillah, 146).

work of] the chariot in the presence of one, unless
he is a sage and understands his own knowledge.\textsuperscript{1}

The first reference to the throne of God in Ezekiel
is found, as in the case of Isaiah (Isa 6), in the report
of the prophet's own call vision (Ezek 1). Because of its
"famous and indecipherable vision of the cherubim,"\textsuperscript{2} Ezek 1
has called forth many fanciful and confusing interpreta-
tions. In his dissertation, Alvin A. K. Low has surveyed
and evaluated various hermeneutical approaches to the
interpretation of this chapter.\textsuperscript{3} He enumerates as many as
ten different approaches.\textsuperscript{4} After examining each one of
these, he concludes that the only valid approach is the
literal approach\textsuperscript{5} and explains it as follows:

\textsuperscript{1}B. Hag. 11b (The Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah, 59).
Cf. b. Hag. 11b (ibid., Hagigah, 60 [Gemara, which has the
same regulations as the Mishnah]).

\textsuperscript{2}Francis Thompson, The Academy, January 29, 1898,
115-116, quoted in The Hebrew Bible in Literary Criticism,
ed. Alex Preminger and Edward L. Greenstein (New York:

\textsuperscript{3}Alvin A. K. Low, Interpretive Problems in Ezekiel
1, Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1985
(Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International), 23-77.

\textsuperscript{4}They are: (1) mythological approach; (2) poetic
approach; (3) psychological-dream approach; (4) Jewish mys-
tical approach; (5) Jewish allegorical approach; (6) cosmo-
logical approach; (7) meteorological approach; (8) UFO
approach; (9) symbolic approach; and (10) literal approach.

\textsuperscript{5}Low, 76-77. Against Moshe Eisemann, who says:
"Ma'aseh Merkavah: In this vision, supernatural
concepts are described in human terms . . . they
cannot be understood literally nor, in our spirit-
ual poverty, are we equipped even to glimpse at
their inner meaning."
Literalists believe that because of the literary genre of the visions, the details of the vision are visual representations of realities.\(^1\)

Later on he continues to explain:

... seeing and interpreting the symbols of Ezekiel's vision does not in any way minimize the literalness of the account. ... Literal interpretation allows for the inclusion of symbols and figurative language. In interpreting symbols, the interpreter must seek to determine the reality behind the symbols.\(^2\)

As the majority of the scholars agree and Walther Zimmerli emphatically states, Ezek 1:1-3:15 "must undoubtedly be understood in its present form as a complete unit."\(^3\) This section can be divided into two subsections: Ezekiel's call vision (1:1-28) and Ezekiel's commission (2:1-3:15). The first subsection is composed of two parts: datings and locale of the vision (1:1-3) and the vision proper (1:4-28). In the second part (descriptions of the vision), (1) vss. 4-14 delineate the four living creatures; (2) vss. 15-21 speak of the wheels; (3) vss. 22-25 concern the ṭāqīyā' ("firmament" [KJV, RSV], or better, "expanse"

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\(^1\)Low, 65.

\(^2\)Ibid., 76.

Ezek 1:26-28a reads:

And above the firmament [expanses] over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form. And upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze, like the appearance of fire enclosed round about; and downward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him. Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD (RSV).

Since this passage appears in the very last section of the call vision, it may be a hint that the throne is not only physically positioned at the apex of the scene, but, in significance, it forms the climax or consummation of the whole vision. The preceding portions are like a prelude and provide a setting or background against which the throne will be revealed.

Before we enter into the exegesis of the text, we take a brief look at each of the preceding portions of the vision in Ezek 1. For the introductory remark, "the thirtieth year" (vs. 1), some twenty different explanations
have been suggested.\textsuperscript{1} The view, proposed by Origen, that "the thirtieth year" refers to the age of Ezekiel when he was called to the prophetic ministry, is more widely advocated\textsuperscript{2} than any other view. This view is the only one that would seem to hold water, while many of the suggestions by modern scholars assume a corruption of the text.\textsuperscript{3} Ezekiel labels what he saw as \textit{mar’ōt ‘ēlōhim} ("visions of God," 1:1).\textsuperscript{4} This expression is used also for the other two of his many visions and oracles (cf. Ezek 8:3; 40:2).


\textsuperscript{3}Ellison, \textit{Ezekiel: The Man and His Message}, 16, 17; Low, 122-124.

The first portion of the vision proper (vss. 4-14), delineating the four living creatures which are identified as cherubim in Ezek 10, has been interpreted in many different ways. After examining all the interpretations suggested so far, Low concludes:

The meteorological phenomena of Ezekiel 1:4 allude to the coming judgment of God. The living creatures are cherubim which supported the throne of God. The detailed descriptions of the living creatures are symbolic of the character of the cherubim. The four cherubim formed a complete unit, being controlled by the Spirit. . . . The mobility of the throne testifies to God's easy access to all parts of the universe.

I believe Low's conclusion is reasonable, and his remarks, though sometimes not pinpointed, are well-founded. On the other hand, Lorenz Dürr's dissertation on Ezekiel's vision in connection with the ancient Near Eastern religious conceptions is illuminating. Othmar Keel discusses Ezekiel's visions in terms of their "Grundstruktur" and

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1 One of the remarkable studies on the cherubim in connection with the glory of Yahweh is the work by a pseudonymous writer: Philalethes [William Bramley Moore], "The Cherubim of Glory," and Their Manifestation in the Church of Christ, as Foreshadowed in the Visions of Ezekiel (Printed privately, n.p., 1917).

2 Cf. Low, 125-194. Low has dealt with nine interpretations of the four living creatures and eleven interpretations of the four faces, which have been suggested so far.

3 Low, 193-194 (emphasis supplied).

4 Lorenz Dürr, Ezechiel's Vision von der Erscheinung Gottes (Ez. c. 1 u. 10) im Lichte der vorderasiatischen Altertumskunde (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1917).
"Vorbilder" and, like Dürr, tries to understand them from the viewpoint of the ancient Near Eastern culture and art. In a similar way, Ernst Höhne tries to trace the genuineness and origin of the vision and to locate each aspect and characteristic of the throne-chariot in the ancient religious and cultural settings. It is interesting that Otto Procksch connects Ezekiel's vision of God's image on the throne which was carried by four living pillars with Ezekiel's cosmology or Weltanschauung.

Regarding the storm which functioned as "Träger der gewaltigen Theophanie," Dürr notes that "Jahwe kommt als Beherrscher der Elemente, der Sturm ist sein Trabant" and

2Cf. ibid., 191-273.
3Ernst Höhne, "Die Thronwagenvision Hesekiels: Echtheit und Herkunft der Vision Hes. 1,4-28 und ihrer einzelnen Züge" (Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangen der Doktorwürde der hohen Theologischen Fakultät der Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen, 1953).
4Otto Procksch, "Die Berufungsvision Hesekiels," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft*, Karl Budde zum siebzigsten Geburtstag am 13. April 1920, BZAW 34, ed. Karl Marti (Gießen: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1920), 141-149, states:

"Das Gottesbild auf dem Throne über der Kuppel, die von vier lebendigen Säulen betragen wird, spiegelt nun deutlich Hesekiels Anschauung von Gott und Welt ab" (p. 147);
"Die Berufungsvision Hesekiels zeigt uns demnach ein Bild, in dem sowohl die Gottesanschauung als die Weltanschauung des Propheten enthalten ist" (p. 148; cf. the illustration on p. 149).
5Dürr, 8.
6Ibid. (emphasis supplied).
"das Erscheinen Jahwes auf dem Sturme ist die imposante Offenbarung seiner göttlichen Macht und Majestät." The faces of the living creatures are the face of a man, speaking of intelligence; that of a lion, standing for majesty and power; that of an ox, displaying patient service; and that of an eagle, depicting swiftness in meting out judgment, and discernment from afar. The question of the four faces of the cherubim have received various answers. The rabbis said of them as follows:

The most exalted of all living creatures is man; of birds, the eagle; of cattle, the ox; and of wild beasts, the lion. All of these received royalty and had greatness bestowed upon them, and they are under the chariot of God, as it says, [Ezek 1:10 quoted].

The church fathers interpreted the four faces as symbols of the four Evangelists. On the other hand, Low,

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1Ibid., 12 (emphasis supplied).
5Irenaeus seems to have been the first to apply this interpretation. He wrote: "The winged man signifies the human nature of our Lord Jesus. The winged lion represents His royal character, since the lion is the king of beasts. The winged calf testifies as to His sacerdotal nature, for the calf is the emblem of sacrifice. The flying eagle represents the grace of the Holy Spirit which was ever upon the Saviour." (Frederick Roth Webber, Church Symbolism [Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1971], 186). Irenaeus then identified the
following William Greenhill,\(^1\) takes them as symbolic of the angelic attributes\(^2\) or the character of the cherubim.

The second portion of the vision (Ezek 1:15-22) which speaks of the wheels has also caused a variety of interpretations in terms of their construction, their appearance, their eyes, their size, and especially their symbolisms.\(^3\) The very first idea that the wheels signify for the throne of God is that it moves. The text can never be construed as meaning that the throne in this vision is the only one that God has. But, as far as the throne as revealed in this vision is concerned, it is a moving throne and its movability implies that God is also mobile and moving. This means that God is not confined in one place but He can move in all directions without any limitations to have access to His people. The glory of Yahweh appeared to Ezekiel, not in God's heavenly court (1 Kgs 22), or even in Yahweh's heavenly/earthly temple (Isa 6), but "among the


\(^2\)Low, 190-192.

\(^3\)Cf. Low, 195-225, who examines nine different explanations about the construction of the wheels and ten different interpretations of the symbolisms of the wheels.
exiles by the river Chebar" (Ezek 1:1, 3). As Ralph W. Klein remarks,

The throne appropriately was quite mobile: the animals that bore it had wings, legs, and even wheels! The spirit was its driving force (vs. 20). Because of the four animals, with their four heads and their wheels within wheels, the conveyance could take off in a new or different direction without turning (1:9, 12, 17). In short, a cascade of images declares Yahweh's mobility and his ability to be present in Babylon.¹

As for the construction of the wheels, according to C. H. Toy,² Sam Whittemore Fowler,³ and Low,⁴ the description furnished by Ezekiel (hā'ōpan bētōk hā'ōpān, vs. 16) was not of one wheel inside or within (RSV) the other,⁵ but of the rim of one wheel being smoothly level with the rim

¹Klein, Israel in Exile, 73-74 (emphasis supplied). Höhne, 37, says, "Das Interesse an der Beweglichkeit und der Allgegenwart Jahwes weisen [sic] die Vision örtlich und zeitlich ins Exil" (emphasis supplied).


⁴Low, 204, 225.

⁵Cf. Moshe Greenberg, Ezekiel, 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, AB 22 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1983), 47, who states: "Mechanically simpler is the interpretation that concentric circles are meant. Two possibilities come to mind: (1) an archaic type of disk wheel with a protuberance around its axle that looked like an inner wheel (ANEP², #689, from a third-millennium cylinder seal) . . . ; (b) alternatively, the concentric rims of the spoked wheel on Sargon's throne chariot . . . may be compared."
of the wheel it crosses at right angles. This idea is supported by the NIV ("a wheel intersecting a wheel"). This construction allows movement to any of the four directions without turning (cf. vs. 17). Klein remarks that "the wheels in the present form of the call vision add a feeling of mobility to the whole account." Dürr's observation is also remarkable:


The appearance of the wheels is described as ke'én taršiš, but its mineralogical identity and color are far from certain. Whatever the identification of taršiš ("beryl" [KJV, NASB], "chrysolite" [RSV, NIV]) may be, the

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1Against Keel and Klein, who think that the wheels within wheels may come from a misunderstanding of thick, layered rims on certain depictions of wheels. Cf. Keel, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, 263-267, and figs. 191, 192; Klein, Israel in Exile, 73, n. 7.

2C. L. Feinberg and I. G. Matthews also advocate a similar idea, as they observe, "A second wheel was inserted in each wheel at right angles" (Charles Lee Feinberg, The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord [Chicago: Moody Press, 1969], 19) and "They were at right angles one to the other" (I. G. Matthews, Ezekiel, ACOT [Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1939], 7), respectively.


4Dürr, 14 (emphasis supplied).

5Cf. Low, 206-208. KBL, 1042, provides a simple and dull explanation for this word: "a precious stone (kind unknown)."
dazzling color of the wheels captured the attention of the prophet. Since Ezekiel was a priest, the appearance of taršiš must have easily reminded him of the first stone of the fourth row of the breastplate that the high priest put upon his breast (cf. Exod 28:20; 39:13). The wheels were "full of eyes all around" (vs. 18, NIV; cf. Rev 4:6), and this also has always been a puzzle to the commentators.¹ However, there is a definite symbolism involved in the prophet's description of "eyes" in the wheels. Since an eye represents a sense of perception, "the plentitude of eyes in the vision symbolizes God's omniscience"² and "the all-seeingness or omnipresence of God,"³ or His infinite intelligence and "constant divine watchfulness."⁴ Feinberg advocates this interpretation by saying,

The rings or fellies are the circumferences of the wheels. The eyes in the rings are symbolic of divine omniscience in the workings of nature and history (see Zech. 3:9; 4:10; Rev. 4:6; II Chron. 16:9; Prov. 15:3). Though the workings are all intricate, yet they are under the control of divine power, "spirit." When the cherubim stood, they let


²Low, 210 (emphasis supplied). So Toy, 95.

³Klein, Israel in Exile, 73 (emphasis supplied).

⁴Greenberg, Ezekiel, 1-20, 58 (emphasis supplied); cf. Low, 225.
down their wings in reverence to listen to God's commands.\(^1\)

What Ezekiel saw is a movable throne. Its wheels, which mean "primarily and naturally the revolution of time," "connect the chariot with the earth."\(^2\) Nothing is stationary in God's universe; all is in motion and progressing. They all are moving not by themselves but by the control of the spirit (Ezek 1:20-21). These wheels are the most concrete evidence that the throne of Yahweh is movable and moving. They proclaim that the One who sits upon this movable throne-chariot is in control of and sovereign over the whole world.

The third portion of the vision (Ezek 1:22-25) concerns itself mainly with the rāqīa', which was spread out above (\'al\(^3\)) the heads of the living creatures. Whereas the wheels connected the vision with the earth, the

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\(^1\)Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, 20 (emphasis supplied). Against Keel, who understands them as theological interpretations of nails driven into the rims of the wheels (*Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelmusik*, 267-269).


\(^3\)The preposition \'al is correctly rendered "above" (NIV, NKJV) or "over" (RSV, NASB). The KJV rendering ("upon") is misleading. Ernst Vogt holds that "die Präposition in 1,22b \'al ro'sē hahayyōt [MT: hahayyah] rāqīa'" bedeutet nicht «auf» (epi), sondern «über» (huper), denn nichts in Ez 1 deutet auch nur an, dass das Gewölbe auf den Häuptern der Lebewesen ruhte und von ihnen getragen wurde." (Ernst Vogt, *Untersuchungen zum Buch Ezechiel*, AnBib 95 [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981], 8, emphasis his).
rāqia`1 connected the vision with heaven. Therefore, the rāqia` ("expanse") is complementary to the wheels.2 This term is used elsewhere of the sky nine times in Genesis (1:6-8, 14, 15, 17, 20), twice in the Psalms (19:2 [ET 19:1]; 150:1), and once in Daniel (12:3), but always in the context of creation. Thus, as Eichrodt observes, the rāqia` which the cherubim or living creatures carry is the copy (Abbild) of the expanse,

which the Creator, according to Gen. 1.6, set up to separate the earthly from the heavenly waters, and above which he is enthroned. The four living creatures are thus shown to be the representatives of the four corners of the earth, and therefore of the world-embracing sovereignty of him who is enthroned upon them, as is also suggested by their fourfold faces and wings.3

Now we come to the fourth and last portion of the vision (Ezek 1:26-28) that describes the throne and the One

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1rāqia` is translated variously: "firmament" (KJV, RSV), "vault" (NEB, JB), "solid surface" (NJB), "expanse" (NIV, NASB, AB, NJV), and "extended surface, (solid) expanse" (BDB, 956), and "das Breitgeschlagene, (Eisen-) Platte, Firmament, die feste Himmelswölbung" (KBL, 909). The LXX renders it as stereom. suggesting some firm, solid structure. This Greek concept was then reflected by the Vulgate firmamentum, which in turn is followed by the KJV and the RSV ("firmament"). However, since its root (rāqa`) means "stamp, beat (out), spread out" (KBL, 910; BDB, 955), the better rendition of this word is "expanse" rather than "firmament" or "vault." Cf. J. Barton Payne, "rāqa`; rāqia`; riqqda`," TWOT, 2:861-862; N. H. Tur-Sinai [H. Torczyner], "The Firmament and the Clouds, Rāqi` and Shehāqim," ST 1 (1948): 188-196.


3Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 57-58 (emphasis supplied).
who is sitting upon it. We find that Ezekiel's descriptions in these verses are literary and artistic, on the one hand, and cautious and reverential, on the other. First, we need to take a close look at vs. 26. The MT of vs. 26 may be rearranged as follows:

\[ \text{umima' al lārāqīa'} \ 'aṣer 'al-rō'ēm \ kēmar'ēh 'eben-sappir} \\
\text{dēmūt kisse'} \\
\text{we'al dēmūt hakkisse'} \\
\text{dēmūt kēmar'ēh 'ādam 'alayw milmē'ēlāh:1} \]

As far as the construction, especially the numbers of the syllables are concerned, this verse is unmistakably chiasitic: 13:7:4:7:13 = A:B:C:B:A. The two different words of similar meaning are arranged to form another chiasmus:

\[ \text{kēmar'ēh : dēmūt : dēmūt : (dēmūt :) kēmar'ēh} \]
\[ \text{= A:B:B:A (or A:B:B:B:A).} \]

It deserves our attention that in each case "the likeness of a (the) throne" (dēmūt [hak]kisse') occupies the focal point of the chiasmus.

The word dēmūt, which is derived from the verb dāmāh (gal: "gleichen, be like, resemble"; piel: "vergleichen, gleichstellen, liken, compare"), occurs twenty-five

\[ \text{1The literal translation of the MT may read as follows (arranged to demonstrate chiasmus more clearly):} \]
\[ \text{"Above the expanse which [was] over their heads, like the appearance of the sapphire stone, [was] the likeness of a throne, and upon the likeness of the throne, [was] a likeness as an appearance of man on it, high up."} \]

times in the OT.1 The LXX usually renders demüt by homoiōma ("likeness, form, appearance" [14 times]) or homoiōsis ("likeness, resemblance" [5 times]). It is also translated as eikon ("image, likeness" [Gen 5:1]), and idea ("appearance, aspect, form" [Gen 5:3]). The Vulgate predominantly renders it by similitudo ("likeness, similitude" [19 times]). According to 2 Kgs 16:10, it means "image" or "copy, reproduction." It occurs most frequently in the book of Ezekiel (16 times), and its exilic usage suggests the translation "form, appearance," or more weakly "something like, something similar to" ("etwas wie").2

In describing the climactic part of his vision, Ezekiel seems to proceed with utmost caution and reverence, or "with the reticence of a holy fear."3 He begins with the more distant features before venturing to the holiest figure, the One who sits on the throne. It looks as though he draws near God Himself by only one trembling step after another, as if treading on holy ground (cf. Exod 3:5), for fear of infringing on the second commandment (Exod 20:4).

1Gen 1:26; 5:1, 3; 2 Kgs 16:10; Isa 13:4; 40:18; Ezek 1:5 (twice), 10, 13, 16, 22, 26 (3 times), 28; 8:2; 10:1, 10, 21, 22; 23:15; Ps 58:5 (ET 58:4); Dan 10:16; 2 Chr 4:3.


As Low has pointed out, in describing the appearance of the living creatures, Ezekiel used the expression demut 'ādām (Ezek 1:5), but here he employs a more distant and reverential expression, demut kēmarēh 'ādām (vs. 26). In the description of his vision, Ezekiel uses these expressions "to create the impression that God's glory actually defied description in spite of the vague resemblance to a human form."³

The scene, in which God sits enthroned high up (vs. 26), and particularly the two wings of the cherubim covering their bodies (vs. 11), remind the readers of the call vision of Isaiah.⁴ There Isaiah described only that he had seen "Yahweh sitting on a throne" (Isa 6:1), but here Ezekiel is a little more bold to say that he saw "a likeness as an appearance of man." We may state with John B. Taylor that "Ezekiel opens the door a little further and lets God be seen in a human outline but with so dazzling a

1Low, 237.


3J. M. Miller, "In the 'Image' and 'Likeness' of God," JBL 91 (1972): 303.

splendour that nothing more could be seen or said."¹ Even in Ezekiel's case, we can notice that he is extremely cautious in expressing what he saw. Here he uses a double circumlocution, דְּמֻתְּ בָּהַמָּה תָּהָדַם ("a likeness [or an image] as an appearance of man").

Ezekiel reports that the throne was "like the appearance of the sapphire stone" (כְּמַרְּתֵּבָּה אִבֵּן-סָפַרְר). The term sappir, usually rendered "sapphire" (KJV, RSV, NIV) or "lapis lazuli" (NASB, RSV margin, NIV margin), means "a pure variety of corundum in transparent or translucent crystals used as gems," and the name is used "for corundum of any color except red, which is called ruby,"² but it is usually thought of as blue or rich-blue in color. Ruth V. Wright and Robert L. Chadbourne hold that "when the Scriptures mention sapphire, the deep-blue, opaque lapis lazuli is meant."³ The biblical contexts generally seem to suggest brilliance and preciousness,⁴ but sometimes color

¹Taylor, Ezekiel, 59.


³Ibid., 113. Against E. Henderson, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Translated from the Original Hebrew; with a Commentary, Critical, Philological, and Exegetical (Andover, [MA]: Warren F. Draper, Publisher, 1870), 20.

⁴Cf. W. E. Staples, "Sapphire," IDB, 4:219. Some other biblical references are as follows:
"It is one of the marvels derived from the earth (Job 28:6, 16). The New Jerusalem is laid in sapphire (Isa. 54:11). It is a stone in the breast-piece of judgment and the ephod (Exod. 28:18;
or hardness, as Gustav Hölscher notes, "Der Sapphirstein [Ezek] 1:26, der an die Bläue des Himmels erinnert und schlecht zur Wetterwolke paßt, stammt aus Ex 24:10." Exod 24:10 says that Moses saw under God's feet "something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the heaven itself" (NIV). According to this text, the sapphire is the basis, not the material or appearance of the throne. It seems that the LXX altered the description in Ezek 1:26 to make it agree with Exod 24:10, as it reads, "... ἡ λήκνη ἡρασίς λιθου sappheirou, homoióma thronou ep' autou, ..." (emphasis supplied). Ezekiel's description, however, favors the appearance and/or material rather than the basis of the throne.

In regard to the symbolism of the sapphire in our text, E. W. Hengstenberg offers the following remarks:

39:11), a stone in the covering of the king of Tyre (Ezek. 28:13). It is used of the girdle worn by the scribe (Ezek. 9:2 LXX). The beauty of the form of the princes of Jerusalem had been like sapphire (Lam. 4:7). The body of the lover is a column of ivory adorned with sapphire (Song of S. 5:14)"

1Hölscher, Hesekiel: Der Dichter und das Buch, 49.

2So Alexander, "Ezekiel," EBC, 6:759, where he remarks, "The likeness of a throne made from precious lapis lazuli (NIV 'sapphire') was above this expanse."

3Alfred Bertholet also has the same idea, as he renders this verse as "... war etwas was wie Saphirstein aussah, 'darauf' ein thronähnliches Gebilde ..." (Alfred Bertholet and Kurt Galling, Hesekiel, HAT, erste Reihe 13 [Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1936], 6, emphasis supplied).
That the sapphire is brought forward on account of its heaven-like colour is shown by Ex. xxiv.10, where the whiteness, or the clear shining of the sapphire, stands in connection with the purity of heaven. The heaven-like colour of the throne indicates the infinite eminence of God's dominion over the earth, with its impotence, sin, and unrighteousness.1

High above on the throne of sapphire was "a likeness with the appearance of a man." This is an allusion to the holy God. When saying this, Ezekiel "surely implies that while God is totally devoid of form, he nonetheless employs the term 'form' ['likeness'] to help make the image intelligible to the listener."2

In vs. 27, Ezekiel reports that he noticed something like "glowing metal" (ןַֹּחַםל).3 There have been various suggestions and speculations regarding the meaning and significance of this term,4 which is a trislegomenon.5

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2Eisemann, 1:86.

3The English renditions of חָסֵמַל vary: "amber" (KJV), "gleaming bronze" (RSV), "glowing metal" (NIV, NASB), and "shining alloy of gold and silver; electrum [from the LXX ἕλεκτρον]" (KBL, 342). G. R. Driver suggests "the sparkle of brass" as the meaning of the phrase 'וְחָסֵמַל from a simple survey of Semitic philology ("Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision," VT 1 [1951]: 60-62). William A. Irwin thinks that "it is possible that וְחָסֵמַל should be translated, not 'the cluster (or color) of amber (or brass, electrum, or whatever else)', but 'a piece of metal inlay'" ("חָסֵמַל," VT 2 [1952]: 169).

4For the Rabbinic and esoteric interpretations, see Eisemann, 1:77. For detailed explanations of the meaning and kinds of חָסֵמַל, see Greenhill, 26, 62.
Moshe Eisemann observes that "the mysterious significance of this word is laden with esoteric connotation."\(^1\) He continues:

> It is the purest form of smokeless fire that the human senses can perceive. . . . The word is a compound of הָשָׁמַל [lit. silent; speak] for it is proper to be silent about its implications which defy human description (Metzudas David).\(^2\)

Metzudas David is quoted once again: "The word Chashmal indicates that the Essence of God cannot be anthropomorphically perceived . . ."\(^3\) A Jewish fifteenth-century savant, Hoter ben Shelomo, offered a fanciful interpretation of הָשָׁמַל: הָשָׁ means "speed" and 말, "cutting-off."\(^4\)

\(^5\) All of the three occurrences of the word hasmal are in the book of Ezekiel: 1:4, 27; 8:2.

\(^1\) Eisemann, 1:76-77.

\(^2\) Eisemann, 1:77 (italics his). A similar remark was given by Rabbi Judah who interpreted הָשָׁמַל as an abbreviation of הַיָּוְט הָשָׁמַל ([lit. "living creatures, speaking fire"]). Concerning this, a baraita (a teaching outside the Mishnah) states:

> "At times they are silent, at times they speak. When the utterance goes forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, they are silent, and when the utterance goes not forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, they speak." (B. Hag. 13b [The Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah, 78]). "At times they are silent, at times they speak," explains הָשָׁמַל as an abbreviation of הַיָּוְט הָשָׁמַל ("silent, speaking"). Cf. Brownlee, Ezekiel 1-12, 16.

\(^3\) Eisemann, 1:87.

\(^4\) Cf. David R. Blumenthal, "Ezekiel's Vision Seen through the Eyes of a Philosphic Mystic," JAAR 47 (1979): 417-427. According to Blumenthal's abstract, "Hoter began [interpreting Ezekiel's visions] by rejecting the anthropomorphisms of the vision. This forced him into a symbolic interpretation in
Hengstenberg maintains that the shining brass [hašmal] indicates the invariable character of God's personality—His holiness in the scriptural sense, i.e., His nature separated from everything creaturely—His absoluteness, through which He has His measure in Himself, alone, and never can be meted by a human standard.1

Regarding "the fire all around within it" (ēš bêt-lāh sābir), E. Henderson states that it indicates the intrinsic purity and terrible rectitude of the divine judgments, [and] the appearance of the Divine Man being wholly invested with fire, likewise denoted his readiness to punish the wicked with awful destruction.2

Ernst Vogt is of the same opinion as he remarks,

Die Menschengestalt auf dem Thron ist evident Symbol des im Himmel thronenden Gottes. Das helle Leuchten des Oberteils der Gestalt wie Weissgold weist auf die strahlende Majestät und Heiligkeit Gottes hin, die eine zentrale Idee Ezechials sind.3

Vs. 28 speaks of the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds which gives radiance around Him who is sitting on the throne. The Hebrew word qešet, meaning "bow," occurs seventy-seven times in the Hebrew Bible,4 but as the meaning of "rainbow" it is used only four times (Gen 9:13, which he construed the text as a revelation of the structure of the cosmos . . ." (ibid., 417).

1Hengstenberg, The Prophecies of the Prophet Ezekiel Elucidated, 25.
3Vogt, Untersuchungen zum Buch Ezechiel, 11.
14, 16; Ezek 1:28). In the rest of the references it is used as the bow of war. Since the rainbow was given as the sign of "the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature" (Gen 9:16) after the destruction of the whole world, it signifies that Yahweh is the God of "every living creature" or the whole world, and that even in the midst of drastic judgment, God still remembers His promise of mercy and restoration. The following comments by Delitzsch on the first rainbow are pertinent:

Springing as it does from the effect of the sun upon the dark mass of clouds, it typifies the readiness of the heavenly to pervade the earthly; spread out as it is between heaven and earth, it proclaims peace between God and man; and whilst spanning the whole horizon, it teaches the all-embracing universality of the covenant of grace.

Thus, the rainbow around the throne of God in the vision of Ezekiel manifests itself as the symbol of the confirmation of God's covenant and the reassurance of His faithfulness to it.

Ezekiel rounds off his vision report with the following concluding remarks: "This was the appearance of the image of the glory of Yahweh. When I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice speaking" (vs. 28b). Here again

1In the NT, the word "rainbow" (iris) is used only in Rev 4:3 where it is seen around the divine throne, and in Rev 10:1 where it appears upon the head of the strong angel coming down from heaven.

2Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 58.

the prophet uses the double circumlocution as in vs. 26, but this time in the reverse word order: mar'ēh dēmūt kēpōd-YHWH ("the appearance of the image [or likeness] of the glory of Yahweh"). It is by no means accidental or insignificant that the prophet applies this type of expression only when he describes God Himself (vs. 26), His glory (vs. 28), and later His throne (10:1).\(^1\) This would be an indication that, in those cases, the prophet felt, to a greater degree than in the other cases, how inadequate his own language was for expressing what he saw. For what he saw was not "a replica" or "a miniature representation,"\(^2\) but something of heaven itself.

In the descriptions of his call vision (Ezek 1:4-28), Ezekiel uses three different words to express the similar idea: ʾēn (five times), dēmūt (ten times), and mar'ēh (fifteen times). It seems that these three words are used without any clear distinction in meaning. In the English versions they are rendered "likeness, appearance, image, form, figure, something like," etc. When two of these words are put together, the expression or reference becomes more remote and indirect. By using such double circumlocutions, two things become clear: first, the whole vision is ultimately concerning God Himself and His glory; second, it is impossible to properly describe them.

\(^1\)The MT reads kēmar'ēh dēmūt kissē'.

\(^2\)Brownlee, Ezekiel 1-19, 18.
Having expounded the vision itself, it is appropriate now to view it against the background of the purpose and message of the whole book.\(^1\) When Ezekiel wrote his book, his purpose was twofold: (1) to announce God's judgments on Israel (chaps. 1-24) and on the heathen nations (chaps. 25-32); and (2) to prophesy God's blessing on Israel (chaps. 33-39) and the final restoration of theocracy and temple (chaps. 40-48).\(^2\) Or, put in other words, the prophecies of Ezekiel may be condensed into two words: judgment (chaps. 1-32) and blessing (chaps. 33-48). These aspects of the prophet's message find expression in two of his most characteristic phrases: (1) "and they (or, ye) shall know that I am Yahweh";\(^3\) and (2) "the glory of

\(^1\)In regard to the purpose and message of the book, Taylor's epitome is outstanding. He puts five headings in the section "The Message of Ezekiel": (1) the otherness of God, (2) the sinfulness of Israel, (3) the fact of judgment, (4) individual responsibility, and (5) the promise of restoration (cf. Taylor, Ezekiel, 39-47).


\(^3\)This clause occurs sixty-six times in the book of Ezekiel and is most frequently attached to the announcement of a judgment, but sometimes it follows a promise of restoration. It strikes the keynote of the book. For a further discussion of the meaning and the Sitz im Leben of the form, "I am Yahweh," see Walther Zimmerli, I Am Yahweh, ed. Walter Brueggemann, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982); idem, "The Message of the Prophet Ezekiel," Int 23 (1969): 147-149. Zimmerli holds that "the formula 'and you shall know' or 'thus you will know' derives from the legal language of a process of proof" (ibid., 147), and continues on p. 148:

"Closer examination shows that the recognition formula always precedes a statement about Yahweh's
Yahweh (or, the God of Israel)."¹ From the beginning to the end of the book, one supreme message runs throughout, that of the sovereignty and glory of Yahweh.² The prophet saw that the glory of Yahweh departed from the temple (Ezek 9-11) and that it would return to the new temple and fill it (43:1-3). The departure of the glory³ allows for punishment and judgment and the return of the glory looks action; in our context, his judgmental action toward his people. . . .

"Here the real purpose of God's action and judgment is expressed. It is not ethical anger which moves the hand of the prophet in his writing and opens his mouth in speaking. Rather, he knows that through everything that he proclaims, Yahweh, the God of Israel, is underway to reveal himself to his people."

¹This expression occurs fifteen times ("the glory of Yahweh," ten times; "the glory of the God of Israel," five times) in the book of Ezekiel and forms the theme of the book.


²Mettinger says that kābōd is used in Ezekiel "as a central theological term in texts where visual contact with God is important" (Mettinger, The Dethronement of Sabaoth, 106).

forward to restoration and blessing. These two aspects of Ezekiel's prophecies—judgment and blessing—are intricately tied to the glory of Yahweh, the vision of which constitutes the opening chapter of the book.

As Simon J. De Vries adequately observed, Ezekiel's primary concern is "the vindication of Yahweh's honor." He continues:

>This involved the upholding of his holiness and justice over against Israel's sin . . . . Thus Ezekiel's view of history and of the Covenant is decidedly theocentric. Yahweh does not punish first of all out of wrath and does not pardon first of all out of pity, but to vindicate his integrity in purifying and yet upholding his covenant people.2

Therefore, with Zimmerli, we may acknowledge that "all of Ezekiel's reporting is full of Yahweh's action, and seeks to point to the deeds of the God of Israel and to lead men to submission to this God and his majesty."3 The expression, "and they (or, ye) shall know that I am Yahweh," could be understood as a "demonstration of the divine nature in history."4 Then we learn that the highest concern of Ezekiel is


2Ibid.


neither the restoration of a healthy people nor the reestablishment of social balance within the people; rather it is above all else the adoration that kneels because of divinely inspired recognition, an orientation toward the one who himself says "I am Yahweh."¹

Within the frame of this overall purpose of his book, Ezekiel reports his call vision at the outset of the book to draw the nation's attention to the sovereignty of God. As Low concludes, "The purpose of Ezekiel 1, standing as a deliberate introduction to the book, reveals that God is in control."² It is intended that the readers of this chapter, whether Israelites or Gentiles, should acknowledge the supremacy and sovereignty of Yahweh who has the right to judge and bless the nations.

When the Israelites were taken into captivity and their faith was threatened, it must have occurred to many of them to wonder whether Yahweh, their patron God, was really the supreme, almighty, and only God after all.³ In such a critical time, when "to the unbelieving mass of the people, as to the heathen, it must have seemed that in the fall of Jerusalem, Jehovah had proved Himself unable to cope with the enemies of His people,"⁴ Ezekiel reassures his people that the fall of Jerusalem does not mean the

¹Zimmerli, I Am Yahweh, 88.
²Low, 22.
³Bright, A History of Israel, 348.
⁴Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, 295.
fall of Yahweh and that Yahweh remains sovereign. God is still seated on the throne, fully in control of the affairs and events of the world. He is sovereign not only in Israel but in all nations of the world, though the loud and boisterous claims of men seem to have drowned out this truth. That He rules and judges the entire universe is shown by the meteorological phenomena in the vision of chap. 1. Thus it is evident that the prophet's call vision, in which various phenomena are seen and many things and beings come on the scene, stands as a purposeful prelude to the whole book.

"The glory of Yahweh" is, as noted earlier, the overriding theme which shines not only in the first chapter but through the entire book of Ezekiel.1 To what he has seen, the prophet applies the widely used term kabôd,2 i.e., the glorious form assumed by the divine presence. This was thought to dwell only in the tabernacle, or in

1Cf. Feinberg, The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord; R. S. Joyce and Leslie Hardinge, eds., The Glory of God: The Message of Ezekiel for the Men of To-day (N.p.: South England Conference, 1939); Philalethes, "The Cherubim of Glory," and Their Manifestation in the Church of Christ, as Foreshadowed in the Visions of Ezekiel. These studies treat the book of Ezekiel with "the glory of Yahweh (or God)" as its overriding theme. For a brief look at this subject within the frame of Ezek 1, see Low, 243-258.

2For a study on the theology of kabôd, esp. in the book of Ezekiel, see Mettinger, The Dethronement of Saba-oth, 97-115 ("The Kabod Theology in the Book of Ezekiel").
the holy of holies of the temple at Zion. ¹ But now, as Eichrodt says, he [Ezekiel] sees that it is not indissolubly tied to those places, but is manifesting itself, by preference, to a lost and banished one like himself. Yet this reflected image of the heavenly glory of Yahweh . . . imparts, not the national God of Zion to whom Israel lays an exclusive claim, but the Lord, free from all earthly limitations, and able to command the whole universe.² Therefore, "the import of the vision . . . is that the cosmic Lord of the universe is intervening in history to judge Israel and to warn them through one man, Ezekiel."³ The effect of this vision on the prophet was one of utter awe, as he fell on his face in obeisance to God who had revealed Himself (Ezek 1:28b). Yet the prophet's feeling of distance between what he has seen and heard and the ultimate reality, makes him say, "And I heard a voice speaking" (wā'ešma‘ qōl mēdabbēr), without an explicit identification of this voice. This same contrast exists, even if one translates Ezekiel's language in agreement with the LXX (kai έκουσα φόνην λαλουντος, Ezek 2:1) as "and I heard a voice of someone speaking."⁴ The fact that Ezekiel

¹Cf. Exod 40:34; Lev 9:6, 23; Num 14:10; 16:19; 1 Kgs 8:11; 2 Chr 7:1.

²Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 58-59.

³Brownlee, Ezekiel 1-19, 18.

⁴This would be the clear meaning, if the MT read wā'ešma‘ qōl hammēdabbēr. As Brownlee points out, however, the absense of the article with the construct form makes this problematic. Cf. Brownlee, Ezekiel 1-19, 19.
fell down upon his face means that he could not see and identify the speaker. It was enough for the prophet to identify him as a voice.¹

We may summarize our study of the present text as follows: The vision of Yahweh riding upon His chariot-throne signifies that the divine throne is unutterably splendid, mysteriously intricate, and infinitely mobile,² and that the One who sits upon it is all-seeing and all-knowing and is not restricted to any locality, even to the Jerusalem temple.³ Yahweh sitting on His throne is the never-failing, majestic Ruler over the entire macrocosm and the supreme Judge of the whole creation. In other words, He has the sovereign right to bless and judge His creation. Taken as a whole, this throne vision is a revelation of God's existence and action, His power and character, and His way of dealing with nations and individuals.

Ezekiel 10:1

Exactly one year and two months after his inaugural vision, Ezekiel had another similar experience which

¹Ibid.


³Cf. Taylor, Ezekiel, 41.
constitutes the second cycle (Ezek 8-11). The vision here is far more comprehensive than in the first cycle. It gives a complete representation of the sins of the people. Common to both visions is the delineation of the theophany itself and, in particular, the description of the cherubim-throne.

After showing the sins of Jerusalem in chap. 8, Yahweh gives the visions of His judgment against Jerusalem in chaps. 9-11. Chap. 9 reveals the six (or seven) executioners and the punishment by slaughter in the city, and chap. 11 shows God's judgment on the leaders (vss. 1-13). Between these two scenes of judgment the prophet sees another dazzling vision of the throne of God (chap. 10). Chap. 10 includes the vision of the fiery coals, viz., another vision of judgment, and parallels the description of divine glory in chap. 1, with the living creatures of chap. 1 referred to here as cherubim.

1The things that were shown to Ezekiel in the vision are the new image of jealousy (vss. 1-6), the hidden idolatry of the elders (vss. 7-13), the women wailing for Tammuz at the inner gate (vss. 14-15), and sun worship in the inner court (vss. 16-18).

2Depending on how one interprets the phrase וּמֶּשֶׁכֶת בֵּיתְךָ (Ezek 9:2), the number of the executioners may be either six or seven. If one translates it as "and one man among them" (KJV) or "and one of them" (Korean, RHV) they are six; but if one renders it as "and with them was a man" (RSV, NIV) or "and among them was a certain man" (NASB), they are seven. The majority of scholars think that they are seven (e.g., Kraetzschmar, 99; Feinberg, The Prophecy of Ezekiel, 54 ["the six men and one man"]; Ellison, 44; Peter C. Craigie, Ezekiel, DSB [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983], 66, 69-70).
As is widely known, the problem of the composition of the book of Ezekiel is a difficult one. The visions of the second cycle provide an instructive sample of these difficulties. As Eichrodt observes, it is in chap. 10 that "the doubtfulness of the traditional text is most obvious to the eye."\(^1\) The scenes of visionary occurrence have been developed in successive events, but they are suddenly interrupted by an allegedly chaotic and lengthy description of the throne of God in chap. 10.\(^2\) Here a series of questions arises: What is the reason for the repetition of what has been revealed before? Why is it repeated here? Why is the description so wordy and vague? What is the purpose of it all?

In order to be able to answer these questions, one needs to look at the picture in a broader scope. Chap. 9 ended with the angelic scribe clothed with linen and having the inkhorn at his side. He reported the completion of one task to his heavenly Commander (vs. 11). In 10:2 he is entrusted with another task, i.e., the task of scattering the burning coals\(^3\) over the city. Just between these two


\(^3\)"The burning coals" (gahāla‘ēš, literally, "the coals of fire") is used to describe the living creatures in Ezek 1:13. In Isa 6:6, however, a different term, rispah ("live coal"), is employed for a similar idea, the purging
incidents, 10:1 gives us a view of the throne, which is now empty (cf. 9:3) but which Yahweh must shortly mount (cf. 10:18, 19). Because of this seemingly abrupt interruption, some scholars think that 10:1 is "a scribal effort to attach this chapter to the preceding."\(^1\) It is also seen as an editorial gloss which is "out of place."\(^2\)

Contrary to these suggestions, Peter C. Craigie states that there are two new perspectives which emerge in this scene of the vision: (1) the judgment of God cannot be distinguished from the glory of God; (2) the judgment of God marked the departure of God.\(^3\) By revealing the divine throne to the prophet once again, God impresses upon him that the judgment which is pronounced against the city is from the sovereign Ruler and supreme Judge, deriving from His throne. Therefore, although 10:1 seems to interrupt the natural flow of the vision which runs from 9:11 to 10:2, it cannot simply be deleted as a repetitive gloss.\(^4\) Ezek 10:1 thus seems to highlight the divine origin of the judgment and its place of origin.

\(^1\)E.g., Matthews, 35.
\(^2\)E.g., Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 113.
\(^3\)Craigie, Ezekiel, 70, 71.
\(^4\)Taylor, Ezekiel, 106.
Ezek 10:1 reads:

wá'ēr'eh wé'hinnēh 'ēl-hārāqia' 'āser 'ēl-rō'š
hakkērubim kē'ešben sappir kē'marēh demūt kisse'  
nir'āh 'ēlēhem:

Then I looked, and behold, in the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim something like a sapphire stone, in appearance resembling a throne, appeared above them (NASB).

Ezek 10:1 is the central point of the second cycle of Ezekiel (chs. 8-11). In chap. 10, God punishes the city with fire from between the cherubim. Throughout the chapter, the throne of God is closely related to the process of judgment: the man clothed with linen is commanded to go among the wheels and to take the fiery coals from among the cherubim (vss. 2, 6); the glory of Yahweh goes up from the cherubim and pauses over the temple (vs. 4); and it departs from the threshold of the temple and stands over the cherubim (vs. 18). It is explicit that the whole picture of God's judgment in vision is taking place from and in connection with the throne of God.

The text places great emphasis upon the connection of the visions of chap. 10 and chap. 1.¹ The cherubim are expressly the same as the living creatures Ezekiel had seen by the River Chebar (10:15), as are also their faces (10:22). Their identity, according to Brownlee, means that the heavenly vision seen on the fifth day of the month Tammuz (1:1-2) cannot possibly be a theophany of Tammuz, for on that occasion this vegetation

¹For a synopsis of the two visions of Ezek 1 and 10, see Keel, Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst, 126-138.
deity is supposed to have withered away and
descended into the netherworld. If then, this same
God manifests himself again at the time and the
place of the expected epiphany of the revived
Tammuz, he is in no way to be identified with that
fictitious deity.¹

The repetition of the same vision has additional
implications. First, it may indicate "the dreadful charac­
ter of the approaching catastrophe to be effected by the
Chaldean power."²  Second, by presenting another manifesta­
tion of the same glorious throne of Yahweh, the Lord must
have intended that His people have a strong faith in His
kingship and an unwavering assurance in His sovereignty
over the entire universe. In other words, it is a clear
indication that whatever inferior agents might be employed
in the punishment of Israel, they were under God's supreme
direction.³ Third, as mentioned above, the repetition of
the revelation of the divine throne stresses the fact that
the throne is the seat from which God pronounces His judg­
ments. Fourth, the identity of both descriptions adds
emphasis to what has been symbolized and signified by the
first vision:  God's "divine might and majesty,"⁴ movabil­
ity and mobility—"God's easy access to all parts of the

¹Brownlee, Ezekiel 1-19, 152.
²Henderson, The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, 56.
³Ibid.
⁴Dürr, 12. Cf. Vogt, Untersuchungen zum Buch
Ezechiel, 11 ("die strahlende Majestät und Heiligkeit
Gottes").
universe,"1 His omnipresence, omnipotence,2 omniscience,3 infinite intelligence and "divine watchfulness,"4 "the infinite eminence of God's dominion,"5 etc.

Ezek 1-10 as a unit evidently reveals the process of Yahweh's judgment of His people. As William H. Shea points out, it represents a case of the "investigative judgment"6 and this vision "mirrors in microcosm what is foreseen as happening on the macrocosmic scale in the later judgment session to be convened in the temple in heaven [as seen in Dan 7]."7 In Ezek 1 Yahweh came to His temple for a work of judgment, and in the following chapters He investigated and pronounced the sins of His people. Now in Ezek 9-11, the execution of His judgment against His people takes place. After completing the work of judgment, He departs from His temple (Ezek 10:19; 11:23).

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1Low, 194.
2Dürr, 14.
4Low, 225.
More specifically speaking, therefore, while the throne in Ezek 1 is the throne for the investigative judgment, the throne in Ezek 10 is the throne for the executive judgment. In sum, the visions of Yahweh's throne in Ezek 1 and 10 affirm that the throne is the seat from which both the pronouncement and the execution of the divine judgment are commanded.

Ezekiel 43:7

Nineteen years have passed (cf. Ezek 8:1; 40:1) since Ezekiel saw the vision of the Shekinah or the glory of Yahweh leaving His temple (Ezek 10:18-22; 11:22-24). After the two merkāḇāh visions of chaps. 1 and 8-10, the prophet now in chap. 43 has a third encounter with the merkāḇāh which is to crown the earlier two. The glory of Yahweh is returning to occupy and consecrate the new building to be His holy sanctuary. Nothing was more heartbreaking for Ezekiel than to watch the departure of the Shekinah from the temple, for he realized that such withdrawal symbolized Yahweh's abandonment of His house and His people to their foes and ultimate destruction. In a real sense, the nation was in an "Ichabod" ('i-ḵāḇōd, cf. 1 Sam 4:21) state or a "Lo-ammi" (lo'-'āmmī, cf. Hos 1:9) relationship.

But God never meant for this condition to be permanent. At the end of the chastisement there was to be restoration and with it the return of the visible presence,
viz., the glory of Yahweh to His temple. As Moshe Eisemann appropriately remarks, "The book [of Ezekiel] began with the tragedy of the Shechinah's withdrawal from the Temple, leaving it an empty shell; and concludes by reversing the process."¹

Ezek 43 belongs to the last of the four main parts of the book.² In the last part (chaps. 40-48) Ezekiel prophesies the final restoration of theocracy and the temple.³ They form an inseparable unit with three subsections: (1) architectural features of the reconstructed temple (chaps. 40-43); (2) priestly functions in the reconstructed temple (chaps. 44-46); and (3) the division of the land among the restored tribes (chaps. 47-48).⁴ These nine chapters constitute an area where the two methods of interpreting Scripture—the literal and the spiritualizing or allegorizing methods—diverge widely. Thus they form "a kind of continental divide in the area of

¹Eisemann, 3:667.

²The four main parts of the book are: (1) God's judgment on Israel (chaps. 1-24); (2) God's judgment on the heathen nations (chaps. 25-32); (3) God's blessing on Israel (chaps. 33-39); and (4) the final restoration of theocracy and temple (chaps. 40-48). Cf. pp. 264-265 above.


biblical interpretation."¹ This section has also provided a case study in literary-critical and traditio-historical research.²

Chaps. 40-48 culminate in two main thoughts: Yahweh's return to the temple (43:1-12) and His abiding presence there (48:35). In this sense, chap. 43 forms the climax of the concluding part,³ where "to maintain, on the one hand the sanctity of the Temple, and on the other the holiness of the people, is the aim of the entire system of regulations."⁴ Right after receiving the vision of the new temple (chaps. 40-42), Ezekiel is brought back to the east gate where he sees and hears the glory of Yahweh returning from the east, from the Babylonian Exile.

This is the same glory that appeared at his inaugural vision (chap. 1) and at his vision of Jerusalem's destruction (chaps. 8-11). This glory reenters through the east gate and fills the temple (Ezek 43:1-5). The east gate, through which this divine glory has passed, is now

¹Ibid., 233. For further discussions of various approaches for Ezek 40-48, see ibid., 233-239.


³Cf. Levenson, 10, who says that the return of the glory of Yahweh is "the climax of the restoration vision of [chaps.] 40-48."

⁴Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, 292.
permanently closed, and no one will ever again step on the holy path by which Yahweh has returned (Ezek 44:1-2). "With the gate permanently closed," as Ralph W. Klein notes, "Yahweh's presence could also be considered permanent."¹

Around the middle point of these incidents and in the inner court of the temple (Ezek 43:5), Ezekiel hears One speaking (middabbêr)² to him from inside the temple (vs. 6). The speech of Yahweh on this special occasion (43:7-12) falls into two parts: (1) vss. 7-9 (the holiness of the temple is not to be violated in the future); and

¹Klein, Israel in Exile, 94.

²The construction middabbêr is equivalent to mitdabbêr, the hitpael reflexive meaning "He spoke to Himself." Quoting Rashi, Eisemann comments, "This reflexive mood is used to minimize the apparent anthropomorphism inherent in God's addressing himself directly to man" (Eisemann, 1:89). According to his observation, throughout Scripture, the direct piel form (wayydabbêr) is used. The exceptions are Ezek 2:2; 43:6; and Num 7:89. On the same page (1:89, n. 1), he says:

"Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that in all the three instances there is an element of wonder that God had deigned to speak to man. In Numbers the verse refers to the initial address from the Tabernacle which had just been dedicated. Israel's repentance of the sin of the Golden Calf had been accepted and God was actually revealing Himself to them from the Tabernacle which was their own handiwork! In [2:2] it is the first communication to a prophet in exile. And in Ch. 43 it heralds God's return to the future Temple. The reflexive voice in all these cases sets the tone of awe and wonder with which these manifestations of God's love were perceived."

(2) vss. 10-12 (the regulations of the temple are to be announced to Israel). The first part forms a kind of conclusion to chaps. 40-42, and the second leads up to chap. 44 and the following.\(^1\) Having described the larger context, we can turn our attention to Ezek 43:7:

\begin{quote}
wayyō'mer 'ēlay ben-'āḏām 'et-mēqôm kis'i ve'et-mēqôm kappōt rašlay 'ašer 'eškān-shām bētōk bēnē-yišrā'ēl 1ē-ōlām wēlo yēťammū 'ōd bēt-yišrā'ēl šēm qoḏši hēmāh ēm Malkēhem biznūtam ṭēḇēpigē Malkēhem bāmōtām:
\end{quote}

And He said to me, "Son of man, this is\(^2\) the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever. And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their harlotry and by the corpses of their kings when they die" (NASB).

The address commences with an explanation that the temple into which the glory of Yahweh has entered is the place of His throne, where He will dwell forever among the sons of Israel.

Yahweh calls the temple "the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet." This unusual Hebrew construction emphasizes the idea of "place" (māqôm). As Andrew W. Blackwood, Jr., remarks on this point,

Ezekiel has told us, with every symbolic device he could command, that God is not bound to this place. He could agree with the thoughts expressed in Isaiah 66:1:

\(^1\) Cooke, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel, 463-464.

\(^2\) The phrase "this is" (italics in NASB) is the rendition of the Hebrew particle 'et in front of mēqôm. For the discussion of the meaning of this particle, see below.
Heaven is my throne
and the earth is my footstool.

And he could echo the spirit of Solomon's prayer (I Kings 8:27). Yet, in a particular place, a hilltop in Jerusalem, man is uniquely conscious of God's universal presence. In the Temple area structures of wood and stone sing aloud the message that the Lord who is sovereign over all the world has chosen Israel to be His redemptive agent on earth.1

Regarding the particle 'et in front of meqôm in the text, C. K. Keil understands that it is nota accusativi,2 so we have to supply in thought either r'eh or hinnâh: "behold the place."3 This is grammatically feasible but contextually and syntactically unlikely. Since the first sentence ("[This is] the place of My throne . . .") is to be the reason for the second sentence ("And the house of Israel will not again defile My holy name . . ."), the particle 'et in the first sentence should be understood as used for the purpose of emphasis.4 This idea is well

1Blackwood, Ezekiel, 248.
2Cf. GHG, 362-363 (§ 117, a and b).
3KD:COT, 9:2:279. Cf. LXX: ho̔ôrâkas ton topon tou thronou mou. This "seems at first sight to presuppose a hr'yt, which might then have fallen out by homoioteleuton alongside 't" (Walther Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48, Herm, trans. James D. Martin [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983], 408; so Bertholet and Galling, Hesekiel, 150). It is interesting that Eichrodt takes the sentence as interrogative: "Do you see the place of my throne . . .?" (Eichrodt, Ezekiel, 551). For a further discussion of this, see Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 408-409.
4Cf. GHG, 365-366 (§ 117, m); Cooke, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel, 464.

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expressed when some English versions render it as "This is the place of My throne." ¹

"The place of the soles of My feet" (mēqōm kappōt raglay) seems to be a more detailed expression of "the place of My feet" (mēqōm raglay, Isa 60:13). The term māqōm ("standing-place, place"),² deriving from the verb qūm ("arise, stand up, stand"),³ occurs 401 times in the OT⁴ and is used with many different shades of meaning.⁵ When it is used in connection with Yahweh's presence, it points to the specific heavenly place, where He dwells (1 Kgs 8:30; Hos 5:15). Especially when māqōm is applied in the cultic contexts, it indicates the holy place or the sanctuary/temple, which He chose to make His name dwell.⁶

Another point which should be observed here is that Yahweh says, "This is . . . the place . . . , where I will

¹E.g., NASB, NIV, RSV, etc. [R.] Radak comments that 'et in our text is to be rendered "this," as though it were written: zeh (Eisemann, 3:670; so Kraetzschmar, 277). Henderson also notes that "the particle 'et here possesses a peculiarly demonstrative and emphatic power, and requires the substantive verb is" (The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, 211).

²BDB, 879. Cf. KBL, 559; HAL, 592 ("Standort, Ort, Stelle, Platz, Raum, Gegend, Ortschaft, Wohnort").

³BDB, 877. Cf. KBL, 831; HAL, 1015 ("aufstehen").


⁶E.g., Exod 29:31; Lev 6:9, 19-20 [ET 6:16, 26-27]; Deut 12:5; 14:23-25; 1 Kgs 8:29; Ezra 9:8; Ps 24:3; Isa 60:13; Jer 7:12.
dwell in the midst of the people of Israel for ever (RSV). The theme of His dwelling among His people by means of dwelling in the sanctuary is not new. When Yahweh commanded Moses to build the sanctuary, He said, "And let them ['the people of Israel,' Exod 25:2] make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Exod 25:8). This was stated within the context of the Sinai covenant. The covenant was renewed in Ezek 37:26-28, where Yahweh says, "I will . . . set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My dwelling place shall be with them." Yahweh calls this "a covenant of peace" and "an everlasting covenant" (vss. 26-27).

Yahweh's dwelling among the people of Israel by means of dwelling in His sanctuary is by no means a natural phenomenon. It is, as Zimmerli notes, "summons and obligation." God's presence requires that the people should leave off the previously practiced atrocities. The demand made in our text indicates that neither the temple nor even Yahweh's dwelling in it can be contemplated by the people as independent facts. Rather they must be connected with

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2Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 416.
the whole direction of the people's lives.¹ The two verbs in the future and the jussive—lo' yëṯamm'ū ("not defile," vs. 7b) and yëraḥaqqū ("put away," vs. 9a)—well summarize that summons and obligation. God's requirement is specified as part of the renewal of the covenant relationship. The presence of Yahweh in the temple necessitates and emphasizes the distinction between the sacredness of the temple area and the profaneness of the territory outside; the palace can no longer be essentially a part of the temple complex, and the surroundings of the temple should no longer be contaminated by their harlotry (zënuṭ)² and the corpses (peger)³ of the kings as in the preexilic period.⁴ The MT reading bāmōtām ("their high places")


²This refers to "licentious pagan rites" (May, "The Book of Ezekiel," IB, 6:302) or "religious prostitution" (Cooke, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel, 464), "by the idol worship which was occasionally practiced (Metzudos)" (Eisemann, 3:670).

³pegr may be rendered "monument" or "stela" as in Ugaritic (cf. David Neiman, "pegr: A Canaanite Cult-Object in the Old Testament," JBL 67 [1948]: 55-60). Hence, we can translate the phrase, ûhēpigré malḵēhem, as "and by the stelae (or monuments, RSV and NASB margins) of their kings" (Ezek 43:7). See also Lev 26:30, and read, "the monuments of your idols," i.e., "your idolatrous monuments." Cf. Hulst, 217; Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, 417.

⁴See 1 Kgs 6:1-10; 7:1-12; cf. 2 Kgs 12:20; 20:8. For the suggested reconstruction of palace and temple, see Kurt Galling, ed., Biblisches Reallexikon. HAT, erste Reihe 1 (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1977), 159. Cooke notes: "We are told that fourteen kings of Judah were
could make sense in this context of religious pollution of
the temple area, but the other reading behotam ("in their
death," i.e., "after their death"\(^1\) or "when they died"\(^2\))
sounds better fit for the preceding phrase.

This great scene, though described so simply, is
seen as "the culmination of Ezekiel's prophecy."\(^3\) The
previous vision report (chaps. 8-10) and this one stand in
clear and conscious parallelism with each other. On the
former occasion, the prophet witnessed the departure of
Yahweh from a temple polluted by heathen abominations and
profaned by the presence of men who disowned the knowledge
of the Holy One of Israel. Now he is privileged to see the
return of Yahweh to a new temple, corresponding in all
respects to the requirements of His holiness. These two
scenes represent in dramatic form the sum of Ezekiel's

buried in the royal sepulchres at Jerusalem, i.e.,
on the S.E. hill, 'the city of David,' where the
temple and palace stood; here it is implied that
the kings were buried within the temple precincts,
no doubt as being holy ground and near to their
palace [cf. 1 Sam 25:1; 1 Kgs 2:34; 2 Kgs 21:18,
26]."
(Cooke, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of
Ezekiel, 464).

\(^1\)Hulst, 217.

\(^2\)Some twenty MSS together with Theodotion and
Targum read behotam, though it seems to be the result of
corrupt dittography of the following word (betittam, Ezek

message: judgment (chaps. 1-32) and blessing (chaps. 33-48). The whole vision is one of hope and promise. Central to all Ezekiel's promises is Yahweh's permanent dwelling with His people. The throne of Yahweh which has been shown on both occasions is the surety of divine judgment and blessing and it serves as the center around which Israel's hope in God's promise clusters. The One who occupies it will remain there in the city among His people for eternity and thus "the name of the city henceforth shall be, YHWH Šāmāh ['Yahweh Is There']" (Ezek 48:35).

Zechariah 6:13

The present text is the only passage in the Minor Prophets that makes reference to the divine throne. There are two other kisse'—passages in the Minor Prophets: one refers to the throne of the king of Nineveh (Jonah 3:6); and the other to that of the earthly kingdoms (Hag 3:22). The book of Zechariah, which is normally divided into two sections (chaps. 1-8 and 9-14) or sometimes into three sections (chaps. 1-8 and 9-14 or 9-12 and 13-14). The majority of the commentaries divide the book like this, and some authors not only divide but treat one part separately from the other: e.g., Paul Lamarche, Zacharie IX-XIV: Structure littéraire et messianisme, EB (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie Éditeurs, 1961); W. Neil, "Zechariah, Book of," IDB, 4:943-947; Benedikt Otzen, Studien über Deuterosacharia, Acta Theologica Danica 6, trans. (from the Danish) Hanns Leisterer (Copenhagen: Prostant Apud Munksgaard, 1964); W. A. M. Beuken, Haggai—Sacharia 1-8: Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der frühnach-exilischen Prophetie, Studia Semitica Neerlandica 10 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Comp. N. V., 1967), 84-
sections (chs. 1-8, 9-11, and 12-14), is preeminent among the major messages of the Minor Prophets, and its author, Zechariah, is understood as one of the great prophets during the time of return from the Captivity.

There have been various studies which attempt to prove or disprove the unity of the book. To sum up, as


Ralph L. Smith remarks, "Most modern scholars agree that there is 'unity' in the whole book of Zechariah but there is little agreement about what constitutes the 'unity' and how that 'unity' came about." We may assume the unity of the book.

Following the superscription and the first oracle (Zech 1:1-6) are the eight night visions and accompanying oracles (1:7-6:8), which constitute the substance of the first part of the book. The present text belongs to the subsequent pericope (6:9-15) which is concerned with the symbolic crowning of the high priest Joshua.


Smith, Micah—Malachi, 173.
The MT of Zech 6:12-13 reads:

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We hahmirta 'alayw le'mor koh 'amar YHWH seb'ot
le'mor
hinneh-'is semah se'mo umittahtayw yismah
ubanah 'et-hékal YHWH:
weh' yihneh 'et-hékal YHWH weh'-yiísá' hód
weyásab umāšal 'al-kis'ô
weh'ayáh kohen 'al-kis'ô wa'ášat šalóm tihe'yeh
bén se'néhem:
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And say to him, "Thus says Yahweh of Hosts,
'Behold, a Man whose name is Branch, and He
will branch out of His place,
And He will build the temple of Yahweh.
Yes, He will build the temple of Yahweh, and He
will bear the honor and sit and rule on
His' throne.
And He will be a Priest on His throne and the
counsel of peace will be between them
both."'

Many contemporary commentators do not take the
"throne" in this passage to refer to the divine throne,
because they do not recognize this passage as a Messianic
prophecy. While many scholars use the historical-critical
method in interpreting Zechariah, one can still find other
examples of interpretation of this book. As in many other

1The antecedent of the personal pronoun "His" may
be either "He" ("Branch") or "Yahweh." According to the
general usage of the personal pronoun, the latter is more
appropriate because its position is closer to "His" than
the former. However, taking the former ("He" ["Branch"]) as the antecedent of "His" seems to be more adequate for
the meaning of the whole passage. Therefore, "His throne"
here indicates the throne of the "Branch."

2My translation.

3E.g., D. Winston Thomas, "The Book of Zechariah,"
IB, 6:1080-1081; Petersen, Haggai and Zechariah 1-8, 275-
278; Beuken, 270-271; Smith, Micah--Malachi, 218.

4Cf. Smith, Micah--Malachi, 176.
passages of Zechariah, our text with its immediate context (6:9-15) has explicit Messianic anticipations.1 In order to properly understand this pericope, one needs to look at it from a wider angle.

As Karl Marti recognizes, the eight visions (Zech 1:7-6:8) "bilden ein nach Anlage und Reihenfolge gut geordnetes und wohl abgerundetes Ganze."2 They were not delivered as addresses but were written in "literary form."3 When we view our passage in this perspective, the position of the symbolic crowning of Joshua becomes very meaningful. Kenneth L. Barker’s observation on this is pertinent:


2Karl Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, KHCAT 13 (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1904), 400. For a detailed explanation, see ibid., 400-401.

The position of this actual ceremony after the eight visions is significant. The fourth and fifth visions, at the center of the series, were concerned with the high priest and the civil governor in the Davidic line. Zechariah here linked the message of those two visions to the messianic King-Priest. In the fourth vision (ch. 3), Joshua was priest; here [6:13] the Branch was to officiate as priest. In the fifth vision (ch. 4), Zerubbabel was the governing civil official; here [6:13] the Branch was to rule the government. In 4:9 Zerubbabel was to complete the rebuilding of the temple; here [6:12] the Branch would build the temple. In 4:14 Zerubbabel and Joshua represented two separate offices; here the Branch was to hold both offices [6:13]. Thus restored Israel is seen in the future under the glorious reign of the messianic King-Priest. The passage is typical-prophetic.1

Merrill F. Unger also emphasizes the importance of the context of our passage:

Immediately following the overthrow of Gentile world power by the earth judgments symbolized by the horse chariots (Zech. 6:1-8) occurs the manifestation of Christ in His kingdom glory (Zech. 6:9-15) typified by the crowning of Joshua the high priest. This is the usual prophetic order: first, the judgments of the day of the Lord; then full kingdom blessing (Ps. 2:5, cf. Ps. 2:6; Isa. 3:24-26, cf. 4:2-6; 10:33, 34, cf. 11:1-10; Rev. 19:19-21, cf. 20:4-6).

The eight night visions have ended, but the coronation of Joshua is closely connected with these revelations which extend in scope from Zechariah's day to the full establishment of Israel in blessing. The crowning of King-Priest Messiah is thus set forth symbolically by the coronation of Joshua . . . .2

It seems that we can interpret the passage of Zech 6:12-13 legitimately only when we approach it against this

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background. The divine oracle of which our passage is a part starts in vs. 10 and ends in vs. 15. Vs. 12 reads:

    And say to him [Joshua], "Thus says Yahweh of Hosts, 'Behold, a Man whose name is Branch, and He will branch out of His place, And He will build the temple of Yahweh.'"

This typically brief and cryptic oracle contains the words which Yahweh has spoken to Joshua, not about Joshua. Although the oracle explains the coronation of Joshua, it does not directly point to the office he fills. It is true that Joshua the high priest in Israel prefigured in his person and office the Man, the Branch, known to us from the revelation given in Zech 3. But the oracle itself directs Joshua's attention to the Man ('iš) whose name is "Branch" and "whom the crown really fits." "Behold, the Man!" (in popular Latin, Ecce Homo, John 19:5)—these words are the very words uttered of Christ by Pontius Pilate centuries later in those tragic hours of redemption history. The

1In Hebrew, the first line of this section of the oracle is a cryptic four-word phrase without articles: "Behold, a Man, Branch, by Name." Cf. Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 134.

2Eichrodt has analyzed of the figure of the high priest in Zechariah as it progresses from a symbol to a typological representation of the coming Messiah (cf. Walther Eichrodt, "Vom Symbol zum Typos: Ein Beitrag zur Sacharja-Exegese," Tz 13 [1957]: 509-522).


4Charles Lee Feinberg, The Minor Prophets (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 301. For a further discussion of the theological implications of hinneh-′iš, see David Baron, The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah: "The Prophet of
"Branch" (šemāḥ, "Sprout" or "Shoot") is primarily a clear reference to Zerubbabel (cf. Zech 3:8), whose name in the Akkadian language (zerubabili) means "Sprout (zeru: 'seed, descendant, shoot')" of Babylon (babili)," and without question he was the temple builder (Zech 4:9). But, ultimately, Zerubbabel is not the Branch; he, as a typical "sprout," effectively prefigures and points to the Sprout.2 The term šemāḥ, together with the other terms of similar meaning (ḥoṭer ["Spross, twig, shoot"],3 Isa 11:1; nēšer ["Spross, Schoss (v. Pflanze), sprout, shoot (of plant)"]4 Isa 11:1), is loaded with Messianic significance.5 Joyce G. Baldwin has already demonstrated that šemāḥ is a technical term in the writings of the prophets when the offices of both priest and king are to be brought together.6


3KBL, 291. Cf. BDB, 310; HAL, 295.

4KBL, 631. Cf. BDB, 666; HAL, 678.


Jeremiah uses this term twice in connection with the coming Davidic Messiah-King (Jer 23:5 [שֶׁמַּה שַׁדַּדְיָק]; 33:15 [שֶׁמַּה שֵּׁדָּגָּה]),1 whose name will be "Yahweh Our Righteousness" (23:6; 33:16). It is remarkable that in both Jer 33:15 and Zech 6:12 the cognate verb שָׁמַה is used in juxtaposition to the noun שֶׁמַּה. Jer 33:15 reads:

bayyāmīm hāhēm ʿūbāʾēt hahi' 'aslīmāh leʾdāwīd šēmāh ʿāšāh mišpāt ūšēdāqāh bāʾtransparent:āres:

In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to branch for (or, from) David, and He will execute justice and righteousness on the earth.2

Given this statement, the phrase "for/from David" in Jer 33:15 is syntactically parallel to "out of/from His place" in Zech 6:12.3

The MT for "from his place," mittaḥṭāʾyw, means literally "from under him." In the LXX it is rendered hupokatōthen autōn ("from beneath him"). This, according to Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, "serves to indicate the future setting of the dynastic hope. That is to say, from his loins ('under him') or 'after him,' later on, another Davidide will arise or 'shoot up,' yismāh."4 This interpretation emphasizes the pedigree of the Branch. Feinberg notes that it points to the growth of the Messiah.

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1Cf. Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 135.
2My translation.
3Cf. Petersen, 276.
4Meyers and Meyers, 355.
"from lowliness and obscurity to note and eminence from His own nation and country."¹ This interpretation stresses two ideas at the same time: (1) "from lowliness and obscurity" and (2) "from His own nation and country." Feinberg probably reads too much into the text for the first idea. But the second idea seems more natural and is advocated by the majority of commentators. Talbot W. Chambers summarizes this position as follows:

Better is the view (Cocceius, Hengstenberg, Baumgarten, Keil, etc.), that the Branch will grow up from his place (cf. Ex. x.23), i.e., from his own land and nation, not an exotic, but a genuine root-shoot from the native stock to which the promises had been made.²

This understanding is more reasonable and congruous with other biblical texts, for it indicates the pedigree and the place from which the Branch will come. It denotes that the Branch will be from the seed of promise in the land of promise.³

³W. Rudolph, Haqqai--Sacharia 1-8--Sacharia 9-14--Maleachi, 130, supports this idea with the following observations:

"Man hat mit Recht immer wieder festgestellt, daß in den beiden Worten wmtthyw yšmh eine Anspielung an den Namen Serubbabels »Sproß Babels« liegt, aber man hat sie in der falschen Richtung gedeutet, als ob hier positiv auf ihn hingewiesen würde. Das Gegenteil ist der Fall: Serubbabel war zwar Davidide, war aber in der Fremde geboren, offenbar..."
The oracle stresses the role of the Branch: He will build the temple (hēḵāl) of Yahweh. Being derived from the Sumerian word é-gal, meaning "large house," "palace," "temple," the term hēḵāl means both "palace" and "temple": for a god it is a temple and for a king a palace. Thus the word hēḵāl in our text denotes Yahweh's palatial dwelling and provides the association of royal residence.

On the other hand, since this "temple" is said to be built by the prophetic Figure, named "Branch," it will not be the literal or material temple but the "temple" in the spiritual or symbolic sense, i.e., the community or people of Yahweh. The oracle continues in vs. 13:

Yes, He will build the temple of Yahweh, and He will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne.

wollte Yahwe jedoch einen Nachkommen Davids, der »an Ort und Stelle aufsproßte«, d. h. im Heiligen Lande selbst geboren war.

1The prophecy of building the temple in the present passage has a Vorgeschichte: cf. 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 5:19 (ET 5:5); 1 Kgs 8:19-20=2 Chr 6:9-10; 1 Chr 22:10; 28:5-7 (Beuken, 278; see a synopsis and explanations on 279-280).


3RDB, 228; cf. KBL, 230-231; HAL, 234-235.


5Cf. John D. Davis, "The Reclothing and Coronation of Joshua," PTR 18 (1920): 257, n. 2. Note that the "house" (bayit) of Yahweh had already been used in this higher spiritual sense: Num 12:7; Jer 12:7; Hos 8:1; etc.
And He will be a Priest on His throne and the counsel of peace will be between them both.

The repetition of the statement "He will build the temple of Yahweh" is troublesome to many commentators, some of whom regard it as representing a scribal error. Albert Petitjean notes that "plusieurs arguments plaident pour la distinction des deux pièces littéraires VI, 10-12 et VI, 13-14."¹ It is noticeable that the Syriac version omits the last clause of vs. 12, and the LXX the first clause of vs. 13. However, Joyce G. Baldwin rightly maintains that insufficient weight has been given to the possibility that the repetition was deliberate, a device to distinguish between 'he' Joshua and 'he' the Branch, as well as between the contemporary Temple and one to come.²

The following argument by Meyers is admitted:

The repetition of "build" in verses 12 and 13, and the presence of the independent pronoun "he" together form a sequence remarkably similar to and in chiastic arrangement with the repetition of the verb "come" and the use of the independent pronoun "you" in verse 10.³

Feinberg sees the full import of the repetition of the personal pronoun (hā') as he observes that it "points to (1) the certainty of the fact, (2) the importance of the Person, and (3) the greatness of the tasks set forth."⁴

¹Petitjean, 289. For a detailed discussion, see ibid., 286-291.
²Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 135-136.
³Meyers and Meyers, 358.
The second clause of vs. 13 says, "He [emphatic hû'] will bear the honor." The "honor" (hôd, meaning "Hoheit, Majestät,"1 "splendor, majesty, glory, honor")2 is a word often signifying the splendor of the king (Pss 21:6 [ET 21:5]; 45:4 [ET 45:3]; Jer 22:18) and the majesty of God (1 Chr 16:27; Pss 8:1; 96:6; 104:1; 145:5; 148:13; Isa 30:30; Hab 3:3).3 Then arises the most important and most difficult question in the present passage: Who is "He"?

A suggestion, which originated with Lars Gösta Rignell4 and has been adopted by P. R. Ackroyd,5 Douglas R. Jones,6 and John D. W. Watts,7 is that Zechariah was speaking to Zerubbabel and Joshua alternately in vs. 13:


2BDB, 217; cf. KBL, 227; HAL, 231.

3For a further discussion of the usage of hôd and its synonym hadar, see Meyers and Meyers, 358-359.

4Cf. Lars Gösta Rignell, Die Nachtgeschichte des Sacharia: Eine exegetische Studie (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1950), 231-232. Rignell takes the two wêhû' as meaning zeh ... zeh ("this ... that" or "the one ... the other"): the first points to Zerubbabel and the second to Joshua.


And he [Zerubbabel] shall build the Temple of Yahweh,
And he [Joshua] shall put on splendor,
And he [Zerubbabel] shall sit and rule on his throne,
And he [Joshua] shall be priest on his throne,
And a counsel of peace shall be between them.

Théophane Chary rejects this by saying, "Cette lecture fait violence au texte hébreu,"¹ and W. A. M. Beuken does not follow it either. He remarks: "Von der Syntax her ist dies unverständlich."² For "la juxtaposition de hû'... hû' exprime toujours une coordination, jamais une opposition. Celle-ci aurait été rendue par zeh... zeh ou bien par zeh... hû'."³ Baldwin also does not agree with Rignell; she states:

Attractive as Rignell's suggestion is, it does not find support in the text. The symbolic coronation and the enigmatic term 'Branch' referred to a future leader, who would fulfil to perfection the offices of priest and king, and build the future Temple with all appropriate splendour (Hag. 2:6-9). In this way the priestly and royal offices will be unified.⁴

Baldwin continues: "The old interpretation that Messiah is meant has not been displaced. Nowhere else in the Old Testament is it made so plain that the coming

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²Beuken, 277, n. 3.
³Chary, 112.
⁴Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 136-137 (emphasis supplied).
Davidic king will be a priest."¹ One possible exception is Ps 110:4. The interpretation of our text by "two offices" has been maintained by many expositors through the centuries.² One of them is Hengstenberg, writing in the early nineteenth century.³ His argument is that the coming Messiah should be both the true High Priest and the true King, and thus the last words (bēn ṣēnēhem, "between them

¹Baldwin, Haggai. Zechariah. Malachi, 137. The Targum translates the word "Branch" (ṣemāḥ) by "Messiah" (mešiḥā'). For a comparison of various versions, see Petitjean, 282-283.

²E.g., Henderson, The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets, 390: "... but the kohen, priesthood, and the mīmṣāl, regal dignity, which [are] mentioned as unitedly exercised by the Branch"; Charles A. Briggs, Messianic Prophecy: The Prediction of the Fulfillment of Redemption through the Messiah (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 448; Baron, 201; Davis, "The Reclothing and Coronation of Joshua," PTR 18 (1920): 257, n. 3; Leupold, Exposition of Zechariah, 124; Unger, Zechariah, 114; Hailey, 353; Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, 136-137; Achtemeier, Nahum--Malachi, 132; Feinberg, The Minor Prophets, 302; Laubach, 75. Cf. Keil, KD:COT, 10:2:300, who argues that "šēnēhem cannot be taken as a neuter in the sense of 'between the regal dignity of the Messiah and His priesthood,' ... but to the Mōshēl and Kōbēn, who sit upon the throne, united in one person, in the Tzemach."

However, there is no serious difference between the two arguments, as far as both hold that the two offices are united in one person. Cf. NASB: "Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices" (Zech 6:13, emphasis supplied).

both") mean "between the two offices or persons of High Priest and King united in the Messiah."\(^1\) This implies that the Messiah will be both King and High Priest on one and the same throne. These two offices had been combined in the historical Melchizedek, for he was "king of Salem [peace]" and "priest of God Most High" (Gen 14:18).\(^2\) As a corollary, this precludes the necessity of polemic on the identities of those who are referred to in vs. 13 and of debate on whether the textual alteration took place or not.\(^3\)

\(^1\)Ibid., 295 (italics his). Cf. Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, 448, who remarks:
"The Messiah, named Branch, is to be the builder of that temple of Jahveh of which the temple of Zerubbabel was the preparation. He will be crowned, and will be enthroned. He will unite in his crown the royal and the priestly offices, for he will sit on his royal throne as a priest, and the two offices will combine in him in a ministry of peace."

\(^2\)Cf. Hailey, 353.

\(^3\)To some commentators, the clause, "he shall be priest on his throne," is "the most difficult part of the oracle" (Achtemeier, *Nahum—Malachi*, 131). Much discussion and emendation exist in the scholarly literature dealing with this clause. Since it appears to place a priest on a par with a dynastic scion, its originality in the MT has been held as unacceptable by many modern commentators. Some of them argue that the second occurrence of the phrase "on his throne," in reference to priest, is a deliberate alteration of the original text (e.g., Beuken, 281). The LXX reading, ek dexiōn autou, which omits "throne," offers support to exegetical views that doubt the authenticity of the MT (cf. Meyers and Meyers, 361-362). The LXX seems to derive from a different Vorlage, or it reflects some sectarian tendencies (e.g., "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" in the Pseudepigrapha and the writings of the Qumran sect, which was priestly: for them, the priestly Messiah was elevated over the kingly Messiah and both Messiahs were to be God's instruments in the end time; cf.
It is apparent and true that the two individuals, Zerubbabel and Joshua, played indispensable roles in this significant oracle. Their roles were as tupoi or types, or to put it another way, they were the instruments which Yahweh used for pointing to the great Antitype or Reality by means of their offices and names.\(^1\) The relationship between these two OT types (tupoi) and the NT Antitype (antitupos) represents a case of what Richard M. Davidson calls "Christological-soteriological structure,"\(^2\) for both Zerubbabel and Joshua are "salvific realities, and they find their fulfillment in the soteriological work of Christ."\(^3\)

The coming Messiah "will sit and rule [or reign] on His throne." H. C. Leupold notes that the first verb "sit"

\(^1\)Their names, Joshua ("Redeemer") and Zerubbabel ("Sprout of Babylon"), also point to the names or epithets of the Messiah, "Jesus" and "Branch," respectively.

\(^2\)Cf. Richard M. Davidson, Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical tupos Structures, AUSDDS 2 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 282-283, 417-418. Davidson finds five tupos structures from his analysis of the NT hermeneutical tupos passages: (1) the historical structure; (2) the eschatological structure; (3) the Christological-soteriological structure; (4) the ecclesiological structure; and (5) the prophetic structure (cf. ibid., 416-420).

\(^3\)Ibid., 418 (emphasis his).
(yāšāb)\(^1\) refers to "the new dignity that shall be His in occupying the royal throne" and the second verb "rule" (māšal)\(^2\) implies "the successful administration of His office."\(^3\) Hengstenberg understands that the expression "he sits" denotes "the possession of the honour and dignity of a king," and the expression "he rules" signifies "the actual exercise of the royal authority."\(^4\) According to a word study by Meyers, "in reference to the reign of the Davidic kings, the verb māšal is used only of David, Solomon, and Hezekiah, monarchs whose realms extended beyond the borders of Judah," and "God's rule over all kingdoms is often denoted by māšal."\(^5\) Meyers also notes that "this verb signifies the imperial domination of other nations over


\(^4\)Hengstenberg, Christology of the Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions, 3:319 (emphasis supplied). Beuken, 277, notes that "diese zwei Zeitworte bilden ein hendiadys [hendiadys]," and "zusammen aber umschreiben sie nur einen einzigen Begriff, und daher steht hw' allein vor dem ersten Zeitwort (whw' yē' hwd)." But this argument cannot be accepted for two reasons: (1) it weakens the force of the sentence, and (2) it is syntactically improper to take only two out of the three verbs (yiśṣā', yāšāb, māšal) which the pronoun hw' leads and regard them as a hendiadys.

\(^5\)Meyers and Meyers, 360 (emphasis theirs).
Israel or Judah," therefore, "not surprisingly, in his vision of the future Zechariah foresees a Davidide representing on earth the universal sovereignty of Yahweh and utilizes the word מֶלֶךְ for 'rule.'"¹ The Messiah will be, in the fullest sense of the words, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev 19:16; cf. 17:14; 1 Tim 6:15).

One important element in our passage is that the term קיסֶה' is used to denote the "throne" of a nonroyal, priestly official.² A priest occupying a royal throne in the text has puzzled many scholars, even the authors of the LXX who translated the clause, "And He will be a Priest on His throne" (whyh קַהֲנָה 'ל-קֶסֶף), as "And he shall be a priest on his right hand" (καὶ εσται θυρεύς εκ δεξίων αὐτου).³ Petitjean attempts to prove that the LXX represents the correct rendering and that the MT should be emended accordingly.⁴ On the other hand, B. A. Mastin has shown how the LXX reading arose from the Hebrew text and should not be used, therefore, to emend the text.⁵

¹Ibid.  
⁴Cf. Petitjean, 292-293.  
However, this usage is not new or unique to the present text. It is recorded that in the days when Eli the priest was ministering to Yahweh during the premonarchic period at the Shiloh sanctuary, he was sitting on the kissē' (1 Sam 1:9; 4:13, 18). The first reference, in 1 Sam 1:9, indicates that Eli's kissē' was positioned at the doorpost of the temple---"a significant location in terms of Eli's priestly and judicial responsibilities."\(^1\) And these references to Eli's chair (kissē') seem to demonstrate "that the chair was his judicial and sacramental seat and that its location in the temple precinct was quite intentional."\(^2\) It is evident in these references and Zech 6:13 that, in the biblical usage, the term kissē' is applied for priesthood as well as for kingship.\(^3\) The chair for both regal and sacerdotal offices could be called kissē'.

Now, one more important question is left: What functions will the throne of the Messiah have? The Messiah shall be the King-Priest,\(^4\) and as such He shall sit and

\(^1\)Meyers and Meyers, 361 (emphasis supplied).

\(^2\)Ibid. (emphasis supplied). Against W. H. Lowe, who says, "... it is accidental that it was a High-Priest who is mentioned as sitting on it [Eli's kissē']" (W. H. Lowe, The Hebrew Student's Commentary on Zechariah: Hebrew and LXX [London: Macmillan and Co., 1882], 63).

\(^3\)Even in the extrabiblical texts in OT times, the same word "throne" is used for both kingship and priesthood. See p. 65 above.

\(^4\)Cf. 1 Pet 2:9: "But you are . . . a royal priesthood [basileion hierateuma]."
reign upon His throne. Feinberg appropriately remarks, "Permanence, security, and a finished redemption are all here in this replete word concerning the Messiah."\(^1\) Through the union and harmony between the two offices of the Messiah who deserves and occupies the throne, the "counsel of peace" (אָשָׁת שָׁלוֹם) will be fulfilled. This means that "they would not only work together harmoniously, but they would execute the counsel of God which would be peace (שלום) indeed."\(^2\) In other words, by the collaboration of the two offices, the "counsel which produces peace, that is, the highest in temporal and spiritual blessings"\(^3\) will be accomplished. The counsel of peace has existed between the Father and the Son from all eternity, but here we see the reference as made to the two offices residing in the Messiah in such a way as never before and in such a manner as fully to realize שָׁלוֹם—the perfect peace, the real good, and the perpetual welfare—of His people.\(^4\) Significantly enough, the counsel for this שָׁלוֹם would be upon "His throne"—the throne of the Branch-Messiah who is both King and Priest.

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\(^2\)Smith, Micah—Malachi, 218.

\(^3\)Feinberg, The Minor Prophets, 302.

In summary: The throne in Zech 6:13 is the one which the Messiah, symbolically called "Branch," would occupy as both King and Priest. It is a throne in the future that would exist beyond the time of Zechariah and his contemporaries. The two salvific offices, kingship and priesthood, were associated with this throne and functioned as the symbol of possessing the regal dignity/honor/authority and the power to exercise it. The divine oracle of this Messianic throne would be an assurance as well as a prophecy for the sure accomplishment of the "counsel of peace" or the work of salvation, for which both kingship and priesthood were to be united in one Person.

Wisdom and Hymnic Literature

Wisdom Literature

The book of Job has two possible references to the throne of God (23:3; 26:9). They belong to the third cycle of speeches (Job 22-26) between Job and his three friends.  

1Cf. Rev 3:21: "He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne" (RSV). According to this NT text, Christ sat down on the divine throne when He ascended to heaven.  

2There is a general agreement among scholars in taking three cycles of speeches or debates in the book of Job, but they are not unanimous on whether chap. 28 is part of the third cycle (so E. J. Kissane, R. Gordis, G. L. Archer, Jr.) or an independent section (so H. Lamparter, N. H. Snaith, N. C. Habel, F. I. Andersen, L. Alonso Schökel and J. L. Sicre Diaz, J. G. Janzen, J. C. L. Gibson). For Kissane and Archer, the third cycle extends to chap. 31. Cf. Claus Westermann, Der Aufbau des Buches Hiob, BHT 23 (Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1956), 5-7.
The first text appears in Job 23:3 and comes from Job's reply to Eliphaz (Job 23-24). In his speech to Job (chap. 22), Eliphaz enumerates a long list of sins allegedly committed by Job (vss. 3-11), of which we have previously heard nothing. Eliphaz explains these alleged actions of Job on the grounds that he expected to be safe from punishment because God is so far away from man (vss. 12-15). Then he counsels Job to "yield now and be at peace with Him" (vs. 21, NASB). He also makes a final appeal to Job to "return to the Almighty" and "remove unrighteousness far from your [Job's] tent" (vs. 23, NASB). Eliphaz is a good man in whose words there appears no trace of malice. The irony of his speech lies "in his failure to see Job's problem with Job's eyes, or more, to feel it with Job's feelings."¹

In his reply to Eliphaz (Job 23-24), however, Job does not dignify Eliphaz's accusations with a direct denial. Instead, he tells of his efforts to find God, hoping to be vindicated through this confrontation. It is at this juncture that he mentions the seat (tᵉḵᵘⁿᵃḥ) upon which God is seated.

'e`erkāh lēpānāyw mišpāt
ūpi `āmallē' tōkāhōt:
'ed`āh millim ya`ānēni
we`ābināh mah-yyō'mar li:
habberab-kōah yārib `immādī
lō' `ak-hū' yāṣim bī:
šām yāṣār nōkāh `immō
wa`āpalleṭāh lāneṣāh mišṣōpī:
(Job 23:3-7).

Oh, that I knew where I might find him,
that I might come even to his seat!
I would lay my case before him
and fill my mouth with arguments.
I would learn what he would answer me,
and understand what he would say to me.
Would he contend with me in the greatness of
his power?
No; he would give heed to me.
There an upright man could reason with him,
and I should be acquitted for ever by my
judge.
(RSV, emphasis supplied).

This first part of Job's speech is superb. Even in
his extremity Job still believes that if he could meet his
"divine Adversary,"\(^1\) God would recognize his essential
integrity and deliver him. Job has tried, therefore, to
find Him, but God has eluded him. God is present but
invisible. Thus His presence for Job seems to be unreal.\(^2\)
Job is plagued with a sense of the inaccessibility and
remoteness of God (cf. Job 23:8-9). For him, God is deus
absconditus. Nevertheless, Job's acknowledgment of this
fact is more admiring than complaining.

\(^1\)Robert Gordis, The Book of Job: Commentary, New
Translation, and Special Studies, Moreshet 2 (New York: The
Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 253.

\(^2\)Cf. Jean Lévéque, Job et son Dieu: Essai d'exégèse
et de théologie biblique, 2 vols., EB (Paris: J. Gabalda et
Before entering into the exegesis of the passage, it is necessary to know what the term tekûnâh really means. The LXX rendition of Job 23:3 reflects the difficulty in finding the right meaning of tekûnâh.

Tis d' ara gnoié, hoti heuroimi auton, kai elthoimi cis telos;
Who would then know that I might find Him, and come to an end [of the matter]?
(emphasis supplied).

Two points may deserve special remarks. First, as in the case of the whole book of Job in the Greek, the translator of this passage wants to avoid the thought that one may come to God's dwelling or that God has a physical dwelling or tribunal. Second, accordingly, the translator treats tekûnâh "as if it were from the root tkn (piel, 'to determine, mete out'; tikKSn 'fixed quantity, measure') instead of from kwn 'to dwell,' and renders it freely as telos 'end, accomplishment'."

On the other hand, the rest of the ancient versions favor the other meaning for tekûnâh, i.e., "dwelling-place" or "throne": the Syriac, 'dm' lmwtbh ("to His dwelling-place"); the Targum, 'd mdwr byt mwqdpydh ("to the place where His sanctuary lies"); Symmachus, heôs tês hedras

2Ibid., 52.
3Ibid.
autou; Jerome and the Vulgate, usque ad solium ejus. Among modern translations, some have also "throne" for tekūnah in Job 23:3.¹

The same form tekūnah occurs two more times in the Hebrew Bible (Ezek 43:11; Nah 2:10 [ET 2:9]), but its meaning is quite different in each case. This is why William Gesenius takes two different verbs for the root of tekūnah: kūn for Job 23:3 and takān for Ezek 43:11; Nah 2:10 (ET 2:9).² He finds a pair of homonyms deriving from two different roots but having the same form. Other scholars do not regard any of those three occurrences as a hapax legomenon.³ Rather they find here one and the same word occurring in three different texts with different nuances of meaning. Thus they regard it as a trislegomenon.


²GHCL, 863.

Since the meanings of the two verbs (kūn and tākan) partly overlap each other, and both are similarly related to tēkūnāh morphologically as well as semantically, it is rather difficult to take one and discard the other for the root of tēkūnāh. N. H. Tur-Sinai favors tākan, 1 and F. Delitzsch takes kūn, 2 for the etymon of tēkūnāh in all three occurrences. Édouard Dhorme, while acknowledging that the tēkūnāh in our passage is derived from kūn, notes that the abstract tēkūnāh will mean the installation and, by extension, the residence (cf. Syr.), which, however, does not exclude the connotations accepted in Ezk and Nah. The idea common to these various passages is that of a special organisation or disposition, whether with reference to a building or to precious objects, or to a dwelling place.3

However, as noted earlier,4 the Hebrew word for "seat" in Job 23:3, tēkūnāh, is most probably derived from the verb kūn and has the noun preformative tāw (t) and the

1Tur-Sinai renders the tēkūnāh in Job 23:3 as "measurement," i.e., 'character, definition' and states that its meaning "is apparent from the use of this noun and the verb tkn in Ezekiel; there, XLIII, 11, the tkwnh of a house is its measurements, in accordance with the sense of the verb tkn in the Bible: 'to measure' [Ezek 33:17, 20]" (N. H. Tur-Sinai [H. Torczyner], The Book of Job: A New Commentary, rev. ed. [Jerusalem: "Kiryat Sefer" Publishing House, 1967], 352-353).

2Delitzsch, KD:CUt, 4:2:4.


4See pp. 127-129 above.
feminine ending (-āh). Thus, its literal meaning is "established place" or "fixed place." In the present passage, therefore, it seems to indicate the throne of God. This becomes more obvious when one notices that the verb kūn is quite often used in connection with the "sanctuary," "seat," and especially with God's "throne."4

Thus, it is evident that the term tekūnāh refers to a kind of seat or a place where God is seated as the supreme and final Judge (cf. Job 23:7). The whole speech of Job is his ultimate appeal to God and His fair dealing with himself. He wants to present his "case" (miśpāṭ) before Him and fill his mouth with "arguments" (tōkāhōt) (vs. 4). The term miśpāṭ, usually rendered "judgment" or "justice,"5 has the meaning "decision" ("Entscheidung") as its primary and important aspect.6 Although the word has experienced considerable development in its meaning in OT

3Hartley, 338, n. 8.
4E.g., Exod 15:17, "Your [Yahweh's] hands established the sanctuary (miqqēgāš kōnōnā)"; 2 Sam 7:13, "I [Yahweh] will establish the throne of his kingdom (kōnānti 'et-kissē' mamlāktō)"; 2 Sam 7:16, "Your [David's] throne shall be established (kis'ākā yihyeh nākōn)"; Job 29:7, "I took my seat ('ākin mōsābī)"; Ps 9:8 (ET 9:7), "Yahweh has established His throne (kōnēn kis'ō)"; Ps 103:19, "Yahweh has established His throne (neḳōn kis'ō)."
5GHCL, 519-520. Cf. KBL, 579-580; HAL, 615-616 ("Schiedsspruch, Rechtsentscheid, Rechtssache, -streit").
times, its basic concept as a legal or forensic term has always remained.\(^1\) It is noticeable that this term has been used to mean "a forensic cause\(^2\) elsewhere in the OT: e.g., Num 27:5 and Job 13:18. The other term tōkāḥōt (plural of tōkāḥat), which is derived from the verb yākāh (hifil, "argue, prove, confute, reprove"),\(^3\) also has a judicial flavor in its basic meaning.\(^4\) Accordingly, the seat (tekūnāh) of God which Job sought to find was a seat of judgment or vindication. John E. Hartley's remarks on Job 23:3-5 are particularly to the point:

If he only knew where to find God, he would enter the hall leading to God's throne (tekūnāh), if that were possible. There justice would be fully rendered in his regard. . . .

Before the heavenly court, Job would persuasively present his case before God. Out of his mouth would pour an array of convincing arguments. After resting his case, he would anxiously await God's response. Whatever the judgment might be, he would accept it, confident that justice had been done.\(^5\)


\(^2\) GHCL, 519.


\(^4\) Cf. KBL, 1021; GHCL, 858-859; BDB, 407.

\(^5\) Hartley, 338 (italics his).
In sum, tekûnâh is the place or seat of God where His people wish to come to utter their complaints and arguments so that they may defend themselves against any unfair charges and false accusations leveled at them. In other words, it is God's tribunal (or courtroom) or judgment seat where the righteous can get the divine vindication and deliverance.

Job 26:9

There are divisions of opinions among scholars as to who the speaker is in the section to which the present passage belongs (Job 26:5-14). While some interpreters take it as a continuation of Job's reply to Bildad which begins at 26:1, others argue that the order of this section is not that of the original writer and thus it is a


2Elmer B. Smick, "Job," EBC, 4:961.


continuation of Bildad's speech which starts in 25:1.¹ In the present study, the section is taken as part of Job's reply, not only because it appears so in the MT but because the words in this section seem to have been as well spoken by Job himself.²

One crucial question that the passage exposes is that of textual ambiguity. The MT of Job 26:9 reads:

m'ahēz pēnē-kissēh
paršēz 'ālāy w'ānānō:

He shuts off the view of His throne,
Spreading His cloud over it.
(NJV).

The question is whether the MT-pointing of kissēh is the best pointing of ksh. The Hebrew consonants ksh can be pointed with the Masoretes as kissēh (equivalent with kissē') as in 1 Kgs 10:19, or they can be pointed as keseh (equivalent with kēseh, meaning "[the day of] the full moon")³ as in Ps 81:4 (ET 81:3) and Prov 7:20. Hence, two


³KBL, 446, 447; HAL, 463, 465; GHCL, 406.
entirely different translations have been given.\footnote{LXX, Theodotion, Targum, Vulgate, KJV, NJV, etc., read ksh as kisseh ("throne"), whereas RSV, NIV, NASB, AB, JB, NJB, etc., read it as keseh ("full moon" or "moon").} A third possible way of reading ksh is to take it as a verb and not as a noun: e.g., the Syriac tksyt' which connects ksh with the verb kāsāh.\footnote{Thus Tur-Sinai, 382. His translation reads: "He concealed its face from view,/ and spread his cloud upon it" (p. 380, emphasis supplied).}

For several reasons, the noun kissēh is considered as a variant spelling of the noun kissē'. First of all, this reading is particularly appropriate in connection with šāpôn (Job 26:7, "the dwelling-place of God").\footnote{Gordis, The Book of Job, 279. Cf. Andersen, Job, 217-218.} There is no need to vocalize ksh with a pronominal suffix (kis'ōh or kis'ō)\footnote{Cf. Karl Budde, Das Buch Hiob, HKAT II/1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896), 145; Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Book of Job, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), 2:179.} for the throne of God needs no particularizing.\footnote{Cf. Gordis, The Book of Job, 279, who takes Ps 2:7 as an example: 'āsaphērāh 'el bōq ("I shall proclaim the decree of God"). Cf. Hartley, 364, n. 4.} Second, ksh (or ks') is not the (full) moon itself, but the day of the full moon, the fifteenth of the month (cf. 1 Kgs 12:32), as in Ps 81:4 (ET 81:3) and Prov 7:20.\footnote{Cf. Tur-Sinai, The Book of Job, 382.} That being the case, ksh should mean something else in the passage.
under discussion. Third, the eclipses of the moon (in case that "He covers the face of the full moon") have no relevance in the context. While the reading "keseh" is possible, it cannot be followed because no other heavenly bodies are mentioned in the context. Fourth, as Norman C. Habel appropriately observes, the relevance of "kissēh" in relation to Job's earlier speeches is immediately evident when we recall Job's desire to find God's dwelling-place (cf. Job 23:3) and his obsession with presenting his suit before God's "face" (pānim, Job 23:4; cf. 13:15, 24), even though that "face" terrified him (Job 23:15; cf. 13:20-21). Job sought to behold God's "face," but God hides even the "face" of His throne (pēne-kissēh). Fifth, God's presence and His dwelling-place, when revealed to human beings, are always accompanied by clouds. Habel's remarks follow:

Clouds have various functions in the design of the cosmos. They may serve as God's celestial chariots in his movements across the heavens (Ps. 104:3). Yahweh even usurped the title "Rider of the Clouds," a title once proudly borne by the Canaanite storm god Baal (Ps. 68:5, 34 [ET 68:4, 33]). Clouds, however, not only signaled God's operations but they also veiled his presence at Sinai (Ex. 19:16; 24:15-16), in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-38), and in the Solomonic temple (I Kings

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2Hartley, 364, n. 4.


4Ibid.; Smick, 967.
8:10-11). The cloud functioned as the "mask of
God" both identifying his manifest operations and
veiling his essential being, that is, his glory or
face (Ex. 33:17-23; . . .). Thus the traditional
motif of the cloud ('ānān) covering the ark, where
Yahweh is enthroned above the cherubim (I Sam.
4:4), to hide God's glory or face is here asso­
ciated with the realm of God's celestial abode.
The "face of his throne" is covered quite explic­
itly by "his cloud" ('ānānō, v. 9b), that is, by
God's own cloud, not clouds in general.1

God's throne seems to be both invisible and inac­
cessible for Job. Since the glory of God is too brilliant
and awesome, the cloud protects His creatures from being
consumed by divine glory.2 His throne stands there as the
center from which God's creating power is generated and His
controlling authority is exercised over the entire universe
and all creatures (cf. Job 26:5-14). By this throne is
presented a striking contrast between man's frailty and
God's majesty, even between man's creatureliness and God's
creatorship.

To recapitulate the significance of the throne of
God in both Job passages: the throne of God is the place
where His people who are unfairly treated and unjustly
accused come to seek the ultimate protection and the final

1Habel, The Book of Job, 372. Cf. George E. Men­
denhall, The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical
Tradition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press,
1973), 56-66; Leopold Sabourin, "The Biblical Cloud:

2Cf. Hartley, 366. The God who sits upon His
throne is, as Paul describes, the One "who alone has immor­
tality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has
ever seen or can see" (1 Tim 6:16, RSV).
vindication from God. It is covered with a cloud to hide God's glory, which is too brilliant to be seen by human eyes. It is the divine Supreme Court for the righteous who are persecuted, suffering, and agonizing. It is established in heaven as the administrative chair upon which God rules over the universe. It also functions as the tribunal upon which He as the supreme Judge hears the arguments and cases that His people present and thus vindicates and delivers the righteous.

Hymnic Literature

The book of Psalms contains a number of references to the throne of God. The term kisser', referring to or related to the divine throne, occurs nine times in eight different psalms: Pss 9:5, 8 (ET 9:4, 7); 11:4; 45:7 (ET 45:6); 47:9 (ET 47:8); 89:15 (ET 89:14); 93:2; 97:2; 103:19. Each of these passages is investigated in its own context and historical background in order to determine the place, role, and meaning of the "throne of God" motif in this type of OT literature.

Psalm 9:5, 8 (ET 9:4, 7)

As one considers the first two references in the Psalter (Ps 9:5, 8 [ET 9:4, 7]), one needs to look at both Pss 9 and 10. They are usually taken together as a single

1The term kisser' occurs nine more times in the book of Psalms, mainly referring to the throne of David: 89:5, 30, 37, 45 (MT); 94:20; 122:5 (twice); 132:11, 12.

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literary unit. The two psalms have much in common, while their moods are quite different: Ps 9 is a song of thanksgiving and Ps 10 a psalm of lament.

In this pair of psalms, the Psalmist watches the great conflict between good and evil being waged in the two fields: in the world, between Israel and the heathen nations (gōyim) (Ps 9); in the nation of Israel, between


2This term is used five times in Ps 9 (vss. 6, 16, 18, 20, 21, MT) and once in Ps 10 (vs. 16). In all of these occurrences it is used as an "enemy-designation" ("Feindesbezeichnung"). For a detailed discussion of this, see Harris Birkeland, Die Feinde des Individuums in der israelitischen Psalmenliteratur: Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der semitischen Literatur- und Religionsgeschichte (Oslo: Grøndahl & Søns Forlag, 1933), 152-160.

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godless oppressors of the weak and their innocent victims (Ps 10). In Ps 9, usually regarded as a song of thanksgiving (Danklied), ¹ the Psalmist begins with expressing his intention of praising Yahweh for victory won by His help (vss. 2-3, MT). Then he contrasts the transitoriness of the nations in their wickedness with the eternal sovereignty of the righteous Judge (vss. 4-9, MT) who never fails to defend the godly (vss. 10-11, MT). The metaphor changes from that of God as Judge to that of God as "refuge" (mišgāh), ² literally meaning "secure height" (cf. Isa 33:16) or "towering, protecting walls" (cf. Isa 25:12). ³ Yet both metaphors are intimately related, for the same God who appears as awesome Judge to the wicked offers refuge to the oppressed in their times of trouble. Then the Psalmist offers a renewed invitation to praise (vss. 12-13, MT), which is succeeded by a prayer for help in the hour of need (vss. 14-15, MT). He proclaims once more the judicial righteousness of Yahweh which is revealed in the discomfiture of the heathen (vss. 16-17, MT). After an interlude of music (selāh), the psalm concludes with a


²This term as a metaphor of God occurs very often in the OT, especially in the book of Psalms: e.g., 2 Sam 22:3; Pss 18:3 (ET 18:2); 46:8, 12 (ET 46:7, 11); 48:4 (ET 48:3); 59:10, 17, 18 (ET 59:9, 16, 17); 62:3, 7 (ET 62:2, 6); 94:22; 144:2.

³KBL, 570.
confident anticipation of the certainty of judgment and deliverance (vss. 18-19, MT) and a prayer that the nations may be taught to know their human impotence (vss. 20-21, MT). The psalm as a whole testifies to the enduring existence and unchanging dominion of Yahweh, which are firm foundations of our joy.¹

In Ps 10, the Psalmist turns from the conflict between Israel and the nations, in which God's sovereignty has been victoriously manifested, to the triumph of might over Israel itself. He remonstrates with Yahweh for His apparent indifference (vss. 1-2) and draws a graphic picture of the atheistic self-complacency and pitiless tyranny of the wicked (vss. 3-11). An urgent appeal to Yahweh to intervene and right these crying wrongs is followed by a confident expression of assurance that they are not unobserved or disregarded (vss. 12-14). The prayer for the extirpation of evil finds a pledge for its fulfillment in the eternal sovereignty of Yahweh and the extermination of the heathen from His land (vss. 15-16). The prayer of faith cannot remain unanswered, and heaven-protected right will finally be triumphant over earthly might (vss. 17-18).

Against this background the Psalmist celebrates the name of Yahweh `elyôn (9:3, MT), the righteous Judge of the

¹For the summaries of both Pss 9 and 10, I am indebted to Kirkpatrick and Craigie: cf. Kirkpatrick, 43; Craigie, Psalms 1-50, 117-120, 123-126.
world and the upright Ruler of all nations (vs. 9, MT), who
is "the Enthroned in Zion" (yōsēḥ šiyōn, vs. 12, MT) and
"the eternal King" (melek 'olām, 10:16). He extols this
God who also rebukes the nations and destroys the wicked
(9:6, MT) and is "the Avenger of Blood" (dōrēš dāmîm, vs.
13, MT) and the Defender of the weak, never forsaking those
who trust in Him (Ps 9 passim). At all events, the theme
is well calculated to appeal to God as King and Judge.¹ As
É. Beaucamp remarks, "on ne distingue pas le trône du juge
de celui du roi; car c'est pour l'établissement de la
justice (Ps 89,15 [MT]; 122,5) qu'est dressé le trône
royal."²

The one thing that is notable in the first part of
Ps 9 (vss. 2-13, MT) is that "le psalmiste évoque, avec
enthousiasme, le Jugement eschatologique, auquel le fait
aspirer l'hostilité persistante des païens ([especially,

¹J. H. Eaton, Kingship and the Psalms, SBT, 2nd
series 32 (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, n.d.), 32-33;
cf. 135, 186, 191. Cf. Arnold Gamper, Gott als Richter in
Mesopotamien und im Alten Testament: Zum Verständnis einer
Gebetsbitte (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner, 1966),
101-241 ("II. Teil: Rechtsstreit und Gottesgericht im Alten
Testament"); Marion Frank Meador, The Motif of God as
Judge in the Old Testament, Ph.D. dissertation, South­
western Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986 (Ann Arbor, MI:
University Microfilms International), 130-163; Allen Eugene
Combs, The Creation Motif in the "Enthronement Psalms,"
Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1963 (Ann Arbor,
MI: University Microfilms International), 167-189 (chap. 4:
"God's Judgement").

²É. Beaucamp, Le Psautier, 2 vols., SB (Paris: J.
Then the Psalmist's prayer mounts in urgency: "Arise, Yahweh! O God, lift up Your hand! . . . Break the arm of the wicked and evil man! Seek out his wickedness until You find none!" (10:12a, 15). From the beginning to the end, he appeals to Yahweh's kingship and judgeship. Within this larger context the Psalmist states in Ps 9:5 (ET 9:4):

![Image]

Later on it is stated in vss. 7-9 (ET 6-8):

![Image]

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2My translation. The participial phrase, Šōpēt šeḏeq, may also be rendered "a judge of righteousness" (Qimhi), "righteous judge" (NJV) or "the righteous Judge" (A. Cohen, The Psalms: Hebrew Text & English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary, SBB [London: Soncino Press, 1945], 20).

But the LORD sits enthroned\(^1\) for ever,\(^2\) he has established his throne for judgment; and he judges the world with righteousness, he judges the peoples with equity. (RSV).

In these two passages it can be observed that the Psalmist starts his praise to God for His favorable judgment over his own case ("my right" and "my case") and moves from the individual to a universal sphere: "He judges the world . . . and the peoples . . ." This shows that the throne of God is regarded as the judgment seat for both the individual and the universal cases.

Two words deserve special attention in relation to the divine throne in the passages under discussion: ṣeđeq ("righteousness") and kočēn ("establish"). The root of ṣeđeq basically connotes conformity to a moral or ethical

\(^1\)The Hebrew verbal form yēšāb may seem to say only that Yahweh "will sit" or "is seated," but the meaning "sit enthroned" is well established from Ps 29:10 and Exod 18:14, where the same verb is obviously used in this higher sense. Ps 29:10 reads: YHWH lammabbōl yēšāb wayyēšāb YHWH melek lē'ōlām. Cf. H. C. Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1959), 111.

\(^2\)Dahood translates lē'ōlām as "from eternity" and remarks that there is a clear counterpart to this in Ps 29:10b ("And Yahweh has sat enthroned, the king from eternity"); cf. n. 3 above) (Mitchell Dahood, Psalms I (1-50): A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, AB 16 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1965], 56). This has been recognized also by Siegfried Kirst ("Sin, Yerah und Jahwe: Eine Bemerkung zum vorderasiatischen Mondkult," FF 32 [1958]: 216, n. 46, where a number of biblical texts with lē ["von, seit, from"] are listed [Gen 41:57; Josh 3:12; 2 Kgs 4:24; 14:28; Ps 84:2; Isa 59:20]). Cf. Pss 45:3 (ET 45:2); 78:69; 119:152 (qēdēm yāda'ī mē'ēdōtekā ki lē'ōlām yēsadātām, "Of old I have learned from Your testimonies, since You have established them from eternity").
standard.\(^1\) The original significance of the root ṣdq is "to be straight or stiff."\(^2\) This word and its derivatives\(^3\) have many different shades of meaning in the OT. The masculine ṣedeq occurs 119 times and the feminine ṣeḏaqah occurs 157 times.\(^4\) Alfred Jepson's distinction between the meanings and usages of ṣdq and ṣdqh seems appropriate.\(^5\) After examining the various usages of both terms, Jepson concludes:

So scheint ṣdq zunächst angewandt zu werden, wenn es sich um Richtigkeit und Ordnung handelt, um einen Zustand also, der so ist, wie er sein soll oder muß. . . . Jedenfalls liegt bei ṣdqh in sehr viel stärkerem Maße der Ton auf dem Handeln und Tun, nicht auf einem Zustand. . . . ṣdq und ṣdqh sind zunächst zu unterscheiden:


\(^{3}\)The four derivatives of ṣdq are ṣāḏeq (verb), ṣedeq (masculine noun), ṣeḏaqah (feminine noun), and ṣaddiq (adjective). For the occurrences of these words, see K. Koch, "Ṣdq gemeinschaftstreu/heilvoll sein," THAT, 2:511.

\(^{4}\)Koch, "Ṣdq gemeinschaftstreu/heilvoll sein," THAT, 2:511.

Hans Heinrich Schmid expresses the similar idea when he maintains that "sedeq" is "Weltordnung" and Yahweh is the "Wahrer des Rechts." Thus the administration of Yahweh is accomplished beσedeq, i.e., "ordnungsgemäß" or "richtig." However, the significance of σedeq is not limited in "Weltordnung" but it also involves ethical and forensic aspects. As Stigers notes, σedeq is used attributively when applied to God Himself as to His character: Yahweh is the just Judge (2 Chr 12:6; Ps 11:7; Jer 12:1; Lam 1:18) even to the utmost degree as the Judge


4Cf. Stigers, 753.

5Ibid., 754.
of all the earth (Deut 32:4; Ps 119:137; Isa 5:16). Hence, His standards and His judgments set out in His word are righteous (Ps 119:144, 160, 172). God's hatred of sin and love of righteousness (Ps 45:8 [ET 45:7]) express His essential righteousness.\(^1\) Thus, righteousness and judgment are the habitation or foundation of God's throne; i.e., they always characterize His action (Pss 89:15 [ET 89:14]; 97:2). Therefore, Yahweh's judging the world "with righteousness" (bēṣedeq) is a way of His directing and sustaining the world in the divine order which is morally straight and right in nature.

The term kōnēn is a polel form of kūn which means "hinstellen, bereiten, set up, establish."\(^2\) It has been remarked that this word is frequently connected with the throne (e.g., Pss 93:2; 103:19) and many of its usages have "royal overtones."\(^3\) Since it is said that "Yahweh sits enthroned for ever" in the same verse (Ps 9:8a [ET 9:7a]), the location where Yahweh set up His throne is heaven. This means that the heavenly throne of God functions as the judgment seat for the individual and universal cases.


\(^2\)KBL, 427; BDB, 466. According to the word study by John N. Oswalt, five different connotations can be found in the usages of this word: "These connotations move from provision through preparation and establishment to fixity and rightness" ("kūn," TWOT, 1:433).

\(^3\)Oswalt, "kūn," TWOT, 1:433.
In summary, the divine throne is the symbol of the judicial power\(^1\) as well as the regal authority of Yahweh. In the present passage, it is primarily the throne "for judgment" (lammir̄spāt).\(^2\) Especially, Ps 9:7-9 (ET 9:6-8) specifies the following: (1) the duration of Yahweh's enthronement—"for ever"; (2) the purpose of establishing His throne—"for judgment"; (3) the scope of His rule and judgment—"the world"; (4) the nature of His judgment—"with righteousness" (ḵomešedeq)\(^3\) and "with equity"; and (5) the object of His rule and judgment—"the peoples." This means that "all the peoples of the earth are under the jurisdiction of the eternal Judge" and "He pronounces judgment equitably."\(^4\) All these things are executed by Yahweh from His throne. It is by this throne that the eternity and universality of Yahweh's sovereignty is contrasted with the annihilation of all His enemies, and the righteousness of His judgment with the injustice of the wicked.\(^5\)

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\(^{2}\)Cf. Prov 20:8 (ḵissē'-dīn); Ps 122:5; Dan 7:9; Matt 19:28; Rev 20:4.

\(^{3}\)Schmid, Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung, 148-149.


\(^{5}\)Kirkpatrick, 45.
Psalm 11:4

Ps 11 is classified as a "psalm of confidence" (Vertrauenspsalm)\(^1\) or a "psalm of petition,"\(^2\) or a "Klage-lied des Einzelnen."\(^3\) The psalm consists of two equal stanzas of three verses each, with a concluding verse: (1) the sense of despair (vss. 1–3); (2) the restoration of confidence (vss. 4–6); (3) the outlook of faith (vs. 7).\(^4\)

The setting of this psalm is a time of danger for the Psalmist. His life is threatened by his enemies, and the faint-hearted friends advise him to "flee like a bird to the mountains" (Ps 11:1, RSV) where, from a human perspective, security might be found. But he stands his ground because he has confidence in divine protection. The psalm seems to fit in best with what is recorded in 1 Sam 18ff. and seems to supplement this historical narrative. When Saul's obsession became apparent, it is natural to suppose that David received advice to flee.

\(^1\)Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, 991.


\(^3\)Ridderbos, Die Psalmen, 146.

\(^4\)Isaiah Sonne, on the contrary, thinks that vs. 1 is merely a superscription which indicates the theme of the psalm by stating the two opposite positions, i.e., that of the poet on the one hand, and that of his adversaries on the other, and that the psalm proper then unfolds the theme in two symmetrical portions: (1) vss. 2–4 expound the contention of the adversaries; (2) vss. 5–7 stress the Psalmist's convictions (cf. Isaiah Sonne, "Psalm Eleven," JBL 68 [1949]: 241–245).
At such a critical moment, the Psalmist evaluates in the second stanza who Yahweh is and what He does. He finds his own right attitude toward Him. He begins with a consideration of the exalted nature of the God who sits enthroned in His sanctuary.

The MT of Ps 11:4-6 reads:

YHWH be' hêkal qodô
YHWH baššâmayim kis'ô
'énâyw yehêzû ap appâyw yibhâ'nû
bê'nê 'ādêm:
YHWH saddiq yibhân wêrâsâ'
'ê'ôhêb hâmâs sân'ân napšô:
yamûr 'al-rê'sâ'îm pahîm 'âs wêgâprît
wê'rdâh zîl 'âpôt mênât kôsâm:

The LORD is in his holy temple,
the LORD's throne is in heaven;
his eyes behold,

1It is noteworthy that Ps 11:4, which has the reference to the temple and the throne, occupies the center of the chiastic structure of Ps 11 (cf. Robert L. Alden, "Chiastic Psalms: A Study in the Mechanics of Semitic Poetry in Psalms 1-50," JETS 17 [1974]: 16-17).


3Since the object of the verb "behold" (yehêzû) is absent in this clause, some commentaries insert laabeled (e.g.: Friedrich Baethgen, Die Psalmen, zweite neubearbeitete Auflage, HKAT II/2 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897], 30, 31 ["auf die Welt"]; Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 40, 42 ["auf die Welt"]; Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms, 2 vols., ICC [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906], 1:88 ["the world"]: they think that this is "most appropriate to the context" [ibid., 1:90]; Jacquet, 1:350 ["le monde"]). But Leveen suggests that "this is effectively supplied by têbêl, 'the inhabited world'" (Leveen, 50-51). Both correspond to eis tên oikoumenên found in one
The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, and his soul hates him that loves violence. 
On the wicked he will rain coals of fire and brimstone; a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup. (RSV).

Apostolos Makrakis observes that Yahweh's temple and throne signify His local and sovereign relationship and superiority to His creatures ruled by Him. The first two clauses of Ps 11:4 indicate "His absolute and universal sovereignty and lordship" and "an eternal and stable king, administering justice justly."3

The remarks by Peter C. Craigie that "his holy temple" in the text may refer to the earthly temple and the papyrus. The LXX reads: hoi ophthalmoi autou eis ton penēta apoblepousi ("His eyes look upon the poor"). As for this rendering, Kirkpatrick's explanation seems right: "The consonants of the word for poor (\(\text{ny}\)) resemble those of the word for his eyes (\(\text{ynyw}\)), and this word appears to have been doubly read and translated by the LXX" (Kirkpatrick, 59, n. 1, italics his).

1Following H. L. Ginsberg, and on the basis of the meaning of the Ugaritic \(\text{p} \text{p}\), Dahood holds that the Hebrew \(\text{ap} \text{appayim} \) should be rendered "pupils" rather than "eye-lids" (Mitchell Dahood, "Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography VII," Bib 50 [1969]: 351-352: [\(\text{ap} \text{appayim} \) "pupils, eyes"; Ugar. \(\text{p} \text{p}\)]. Anderson says that this is "possible but not certain" (Anderson, The Book of Psalms, 1:122).

2Apostolos Makrakis, Commentary on the Psalms of David, trans. (from the Greek) D. Cummings (Chicago: Orthodox Christian Educational Society, 1950), 80.

3Ibid.

4Craigie intimates that "His holy temple" in our text refers to His earthly temple (Craigie, Psalms 1-50, 133).
Psalmist, too, was in the temple can hardly be accepted. First, the immediate context makes it clear that "Yahweh's throne is in heaven" (Ps 11:4b). Second, the temple as such did not exist yet during the time of David and even David could not enter the temple because he was not a priest. Therefore, the temple referred to in the text is the heavenly temple in which the divine throne is located.\(^1\) While "heaven" indicates the general location of Yahweh's throne, "his holy temple" indicates the specific location where the throne is established. Yahweh is enthroned in the temple of heaven. He is the transcendent God. The concept of the high and holy God does not imply remoteness on His part or unfamiliarity and indifference toward what is going on upon earth. On the contrary, just because He is so high, nothing can escape Him and no one can be out of His surveillance. To put it another way, He is always available and accessible for the people who put their trust in Him. He is aware of everything that happens in the world and thus can help His people in any case of danger or persecution. This kind of accessibility or availability of God for His people is not only an aspect of God's nature but a practical fulfillment of His covenant.

\(^1\)Thus Briggs and Briggs, 1:90; Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms, 126; Derek Kidner, Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary, TOTC 14a (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 73.
The rest of our passage (Ps 11:4b-7) is replete with the expressions connected with evaluation or judgment: His eyes "behold" (ḥẓh; "observe" [NIV]); His eyelids "test"¹ (ḇḥn; "scrutinize" or "examine" [NIV]) the sons of men. In the majority of its occurrences in the OT, bḥn expresses the concept of divine examination and divine knowledge.² This "examination" or "testing" is a judicial investigation which safeguards the righteous and destroys the wicked. This is necessary because God "hates him that loves violence" (vs. 5) and "loves righteous deeds" (vs. 7). The result of this testing is that God rains "coals of fire and brimstone" upon the wicked and "a scorching wind" is "the portion of their cup," while the upright behold His face (vss. 6, 7). Fire can be both a purifying element and a symbol of judgment,³ and brimstone reminds us of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24) which was the divine judgment for them. Both the wicked and the righteous experience God's judgment, but only the righteous are saved to "behold [His] face in righteousness" (Ps 17:15).

¹In the ancient Near East, the testing of metals was done by fire, which is a symbol of judgment as well as a purifying element. For an illustration of this, see Othmar Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985), 183-186. Cf. Delitzsch, KD:COT, 1:189.


³Craigie, Psalms 1-50, 134.
It is the task of the righteous and almighty God to regard and protect the indigent man who trusts in Him. His all-seeing eyes examine for purity the works of all mankind to distinguish the righteous from the impious. Each man's deeds are under His continual scrutiny, so that His justice and righteousness may be administered and His character may be vindicated.

After all, the dominant theme of Ps 11 is faith in God, absolute and unshakable, faith in God's just administration of the world and all its creatures, His regard for and protection of the righteous and His antagonism to and proper punishment of the wicked.¹

This faith can hold fast because its possessor looks up to the throne of God who is the Ruler and Judge of the universe.² A twofold thought enables the Psalmist to enjoy the peace of mind and the assurance which are the result of trust, the thought, namely, that with God are equity and righteousness which are the sum and substance of His throne.³

Psalm 45:7 (ET 45:6)

Ps 45 has been classified into at least four different genres. First, it is one of the forty-two "Elohim" psalms (Pss 42-83) in which the term 'lhym predominates as


³Weiser, The Psalms, 156.
the divine name.¹ Second, it is said to belong to a group of some ten "royal psalms" ("Königspsalmen") in which the king is the central figure.² S. Mowinckel thinks that "Ps. 45 is the only example in the whole of Israelite psalm poetry of a true hymn to the king."³ Third, it is claimed to be one of the "Messianic psalms" which sing of the coming Messiah.⁴ In determining the Messianic character of


Ps 45, vs. 7 must be given special consideration, especially the use of the title "Elohim" in this verse. And fourth, it is suggested that it is a "love song" (sir yedidôt, Ps 45:1 [ET superscription]; Liebeslied) or even an epithalamium (wedding song) that was written for a royal marriage.

1In this regard, John L. McKenzie states: "The Ps (45) contributes to our understanding of the Hebrew conception of the monarch; but the messianic interpretation of the Ps rests chiefly, if not entirely, upon v. 7, in which the king possibly is addressed as Elohim." (John L. McKenzie, "Royal Messianism," CBO 19 [1957]: 40).


3Dahl, 11-12. Cf. Charles Foster Kent, The Songs, Hymns, and Prayers of the Old Testament, The Student's OT 5 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 87-88; J. H. Darby, "Psalm XLIV (XLV): The King and His Bride," IER 91 (1959): 248-255; Hans-Joachim Kraus, Psalmen, 2 vols., BKAT XV/1-2, zweite, durchgesehene Auflage (Neukirchen-Kreis Moers: Neukirchener Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1961), 1:332; Joachim Becker, Israel deutet seine Psalmen: Urform und Neuinterpretation in den Psalmen, SBS 18 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1966), 80 ("ein Hochzeitslied, ein Brautgesang"). With regard to the identity of the king and queen, several proposals have been made: David and Maacah (Ibn Ezra); Solomon and the daughter of Pharaoh (Kirkpatrick); Joram of Judah and Athaliah of Israel (Delitzsch); Ahab and Jezebel (Hitzig); Jeroboam II (Ewald); Jehu (Briggs);
Ps 45:7-8 reads:

kis'āka ʾelōhim ʿolām wā`ed
šēbet mīsōr šēbet malkūtekā:
ʿāḥaptā ʿṣedeq wattišnā' rešā
ʿal-κēn ṭesḥākā ʾelōhim ʾelōhekā
šemen šašōn meḥāberēkā:

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of joy above Your fellows.1

Ps 45:7 (ET 45:6) is "one of the most celebrated cruces interpretum in the OT."2 It has caused a great number of serious studies and heated discussions for more than a millennium, starting with Jewish scholars like Saadija, Ibn Ezra, Qimhi, and Rashi. The primary question in this verse is, How are the two Hebrew words ks'k ʾlhyhm to be understood? Or, more directly to the main concern of etc. For the summary of proposals, see Jacquet, 2:42; Kraus, Psalmen, 1:333; Murray J. Harris, "The Translation of Elohim in Psalm 45:7-8," TynB 35 (1984): 65, n. 3.

After a thorough examination of the literary background of the psalm, J. S. M. Mulder concludes: "Ps. 45 was all but certainly written before the exile under the influence of the court style of the later Neo-Assyrian empire. It originated probably in the seventh century B.C. in the Southern kingdom, with a good chance that Josiah is the king who is celebrated in the psalm" (Johannes Stephanus Maria Mulder, Studies on Psalm 45 [Oslo: Offsetdrukkerij Witsiers-OSS, 1972], 158). T. H. Gaster, however, suggests in light of the common Near Eastern practice of treating a bridal couple as royalty, that the psalm describes a conventional wedding ceremony, with a comparison between the characteristics of a bridegroom and the qualities of a king (Theodor H. Gaster, "Psalm 45," JBL 74 [1955]: 239-251).

1My translation.

2Harris, 69.
the present study, Whose throne is meant by κσ'κ? The answer to this question relies upon how one translates 'lhym.

Syntactically, three possibilities of translating 'lhym in the present passage exist: (1) as a vocative, (2) as the subject or part of it, and (3) as the predicate or part of it. The LXX rendition, ho thronos sou ho theos eis aiōna aiōnos (ho theos [= 'lhym] as a vocative2), is followed by the other classic versions such as Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, the Peshitta, the Vulgate, and Luther. This translation ("Your throne, O God, is forever and ever") is also sustained by the majority of English versions3 and by a considerable number of modern scholars.4


2The ho theos as cited in Heb 1:8 is correctly understood by Raymond E. Brown as a vocative (Raymond E. Brown, "Does the New Testament Call Jesus God?" TS 26 [1965]: 562). Vincent Taylor admits that in Heb 1:8 the expression ho theos is a vocative spoken of Jesus, but he says that the author of Hebrews was merely citing the psalm and using its terminology without any deliberate intention of suggesting that Jesus is God (Vincent Taylor, "Does the New Testament Call Jesus God?" ExpTim 73 [1961-62]: 117).

3E.g., KJV, RV, RSV margin, NASB, NAB, JB, NIV.


When 'lhyw is considered to be the subject or part of it, then three possible translations have been suggested.
for ks'k 'lhym: (1) "God is your throne"\(^1\); (2) "your divine throne"\(^2\) or literally, "your throne of God"\(^3\) or "your God-throne"\(^4\); and (3) "God has enthroned you."\(^5\)

If 'lhym is regarded as the predicate or part of it, ks'k 'lhym has been rendered four different ways: (1) "your throne is God"\(^6\); (2) "your throne is God's throne"\(^7\)

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\(^1\)For further discussions of this, see Mulder, 49-51; Harris, 72.

\(^2\)RSV; NJV. Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 220, n. 1, remarks that "In Ps. xlv.7 the word ' Elohim is not to be connected with the king himself but with the throne." Martin Noth translates Ps 45:7 as "Dein Thron ist (wie) der (Thron) Gottes, nämlich bestehend für immer und ewig" ("Gott, König, Volk im Alten Testament: Eine methodologische Auseinandersetzung mit einer gegenwärtigen Forschungsrichtung," ZTK 47 [1950]: 188). For further discussion of this, see Mulder, 51-54; Harris, 71-72.

\(^3\)On this view 'lhym is genitival: "Your throne of God" means "your throne established and protected by God" or "the throne that God has given you" (TEV).


\(^6\)G. R. Driver, "The Modern Study of the Hebrew Language," in *The People and the Book*, ed. Arthur S. Peake (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 115-116, observes: "'Thy throne is God' is an archaic form of *comparatio compendiaria* which has survived unaltered in an early poem; its genuineness is attested by a passage in the Babylonian *Epic of Creation*, which itself comes down from a very early period; there it is said of Marduk: *segarka (il)Anum 'thy word is the heaven-god'* (iv.4 and 6), viz. like that of the heaven-god. In fact, the phrases 'thy throne is God' and 'thy word is the heaven-god' are precisely parallel expressions, each in its
or "your throne will be a divine throne"\(^1\); (3) "your throne is like God's throne"\(^2\); and (4) "your throne is God's."\(^3\)

While scholars have resorted to so many different solutions and made various attempts to solve the enigma of own language a rare relic of a primitive syntax."

For further discussions of this, see King, 74-75; Mulder, 54-56; Harris, 72.


\(^1\)Cf. GHCL, 50, where Gesenius paraphrases "divine" as "guarded and made prosperous by God." But Moses Buttenwieser prefers to render it in the optative mood: "May thy throne be a throne divine forever" (Moses Buttenwieser, *The Psalms Chronologically Treated with a New Translation* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938], 82, 91).

\(^2\)NEB; cf. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 452. For further discussions of this, see King, 75-76; Mulder, 57-62; Harris, 75-77.

\(^3\)Mulder, 73-80.
The attempts of interpretation include textual corrections which have been proposed since the times of Saadija, Qimhi (cf. Sidney I. Esterson, "The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi [Qimhi] on Psalms 42-72," HUCA 10 [1935]: 331), and Ibn Ezra. The following are the two most radical cases of proposed textual correction:


2. Briggs and Briggs, 1:387, dispose of the whole vs. 7 (and vs. 8a), with the following argument: "There is nothing in the context that has any relation whatsoever to the thought of these lines. When they are removed they are not missed!"

For the various proposed textual emendations and the discussions of them, see Allis, 236-264; Mulder, 65-72.

Among them Charles Bruston's conjecture is most well-known. He suggests that an original yhyh was read YHWH which was then subject to an "Elohistic" alteration to 'lhym. The text, therefore, should be rendered: "Your throne will be eternal" (Charles Bruston, Du texte primitif des Psalmes [Paris: Sandoz & Fischbacher, 1873], 91-92). Bruston was followed by Julius Wellhausen and Bernhard Duhm (J. Wellhausen, The Book of Psalms: A New English Translation, SBONT 14, trans. Horace Howard Furness [New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1898], 45, 183; Bernhard Duhm, Die Psalmen, KHCAT 14 [Freiburg: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1899], 129). In 1887 F. Giesebrecht independently proposed the same theory as Bruston's (cf. F. Giesebrecht, "Zwei cruces interpretum Ps. 45,7 und Deut. 33,21," ZAW 7 [1887]: 290-291). Giesebrecht explains the change in the following way:

"Doch irrt er [the redactor] sich in seinem Eifer, dem nicht auszusprechenden Gottesnamen zu entfernen, und corrigirte ein yhyh statt YHWH in 'lhym./ Hieß demnach der Text ursprünglich kis'akâ yihâyeh 'ôlâm wâ'ed, so ist nicht nur 'lhym beseitigt, sondern auch das Verbum gewonnen" (p. 291). Cf. J. C. Matthes, "Noch einmal Ps. 45,7," ZAW 8 (1888): 264. Cf. 2 Sam 7:13, 16; Pss 21:5 (ET 21:4); 72:5; 89:5, 30, 37-38 (ET 89:4, 29, 36-37). Moffat's version follows this line: "Your throne shall stand for evermore." For further discussions on Bruston's suggestion, see Allis,
problem of the Hebrew syntax in this verse, because it seems that, while the pronominal suffix of the second person in kis'ākā ("your throne") refers to a human king, that king is called 'lhym. There are other factors which intrude upon any consideration of this difficulty, such as one's view of the OT Scriptures, the place of predictive Messianic prophecies in the OT, and the normative character of NT interpretation for our understanding of OT passages. Thus scholars will doubtless continue to disagree about the meaning of our text.

Various suggestions and explanations have been provided to solve this crux interpres. P. van Imschoot

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and R. de Vaux, along with many others, assert that "Elohim" designates not only the supreme Being in the metaphysical sense, but it may also be used metaphorically in reference to such charismatic figures as judges or kings in their capacity as representatives of God. Mowinckel notes that the Israelites "could use the word 'god' ('\text{\textit{El\textit{ohim}}}') of many kinds of subordinate supernatural beings." The title "Elohim" is applied to human judges (Ps 82:1, 6). As a \textit{titre protocolaire} it is also applied to Moses (Exod 4:16; 7:1) and to the House of David (Isa 9:6 [ET 9:7]; Zech 12:8). In a similar manner "Elohim" in our passage can designate an earthly king, not by reason of any divine character on his part but in view of his regal dignity and in his role as the anointed of God (cf. Pss 45:8 [ET 45:7]; 89:21 [ET 89:20]), as the son of God (cf. 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:27-28 [ET 89:26-27]), or as the leader for Yahweh (laYHWH l\textsuperscript{e} \textit{n\textit{a}gid}, 1 Chr 29:22).

H. Greßmann explains that Ps 45:7 has an earthly king in mind and this passage is unique in that it is the only place in the OT where the king is addressed directly


2Mowinckel, \textit{He That Cometh}, 76.

3Cf. Neuwirth, 207.

by the title "Elohim." ¹ This idea has been maintained by
H. Gunkel.² More recently it is claimed that this par-
ticular usage of "Elohim" may reflect the influence of the
ancient oriental "court style" ("Hofstil") in which the
kings were accorded divine titles.³ H.-J. Kraus under-
stands this usage as an exaggeration of the court style:

The bold hyperbole is unmistakable when the ruler
is then described as "the fairest among the sons of
men" (v. 2 [MT 3]), and when the epithet "divine"
is added (v. 6 [MT 7]). In the exaggerated praise
of a wedding song the term 'lhym ("god") is not
reliable indication of apotheosis, but a bold
stroke of the court style in praise of the
"divine." The context makes this clear.⁴

¹Greßmann, Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen
Eschatologie, 256-257.

²Gunkel, Einleitung in die Psalmen, 166, states:
"Israel, von Anfang an monotheistisch gestimmt, hat
die Vergötterung der Könige, wie sie ihm aus den
Weltreichen zugekommen war, im ganzen abgelehnt.
Die Benennung des Königs als 'Gott' findet sich nur
ganz selten . . ."

³Cf. Bernhardt, Das Problem des altorientalischen
Königsideologie im Alten Testament, 255, n. 6:
"In Ps. xlv 7 wird der König allerdings 'lhym
genannt. Dabei ist aber nicht zu verkennen, daß es
eben nicht heißt: 'Der König ist Elohim', sondern
'Elohim' nur vom höfischen Dichter in der über-
schwänglichen Anrede gebraucht wird" (italics his).

⁴Hans-Joachim Kraus, Theology of the Psalms, trans.
Keith Crim (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986),
110. Kraus notes that "thus 'lhym in Ps. 45:7 is under-
stood as a reference to the deity of the ruler" (p. 182).
The meaning of this statement by itself is ambiguous
because the word "deity" can be understood as deification
of the ruler. But in its context, it seems evident that it
does not mean that. Cf. Michael D. Goulder, The Psalms of
the Sons of Korah, JSOTS 20 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, The
University of Sheffield, 1982), 130.
Martin Noth's argument is cogent as he states:

Es wird also daran festzuhalten sein, daß nicht einmal dem Jerusalmer Königttum, geschweige denn den Königttümern in den Staaten Israel und Juda, jemals Gottlichkeit beigemessen worden ist. Wenn das behauptet wird, so ist damit zugleich ausgesprochen, daß auch in Ps. 45,7 nicht damit zu rechnen ist, daß der König hier als "Gott" ange- redet werde. . . . 1

All things considered, two suggestions deserve serious attention. The first concerns J. S. M. Mulder's comparison of the text with other expressions in parallel verses. He concludes that Ps 45:7a should be rendered: "Your throne is God's for ever and ever." 2 The second is provided by Murray J. Harris. After considering the


2Mulder, 80. In his conclusion, Mulder summarizes the reasons for this translation as follows:

"Because of the generic character of the expressions brk ['bless,' Ps 45:3, MT] and mšh ['anoint,' Ps 45:8, MT] in the parallel verses and due to the multiple references and the allusions in Ps. 45,7a to the relation between God and the king, such a translation should be chosen as admitting the widest range of possible implications. The most literal translation, using the same brachylogy as the Hebrew original does, is most probably the best one here, too" (ibid.).
various objections (grammatical, structural, contextual and theological) raised against the traditional interpretation, he concludes:

The traditional rendering, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever," ... remains the most satisfactory solution to the exegetical problems posed by the verse. In addition, we have proposed that in this verse it is a king of the Davidic dynasty who is addressed as 'Elhym.1

In Mulder's interpretation, the relation between the king and God and between the king's throne and God's is stressed. In Harris' interpretation, however, kingship or royal ideology is elevated. If the traditional translation is the correct reading and the word 'Elhym is addressed to the king, royal ideology reaches its highest point in this passage.2 Even in this case, however, the full meaning of the text can be realized only when one looks on the king as a king of the Davidic dynasty through which the Messiah would come. In this sense, the king was, so to speak, a

1Harris, 87. Neuwirth, 226, offers the same conclusions in his dissertation on the present passage:
(a) Der Elohim-Titel [ist] nicht ausschließlich Gott vorbehalten;
(b) Der biblische Sprachgebrauch wendet ihn auch an andere Geschöpfe an;
(c) V. 7 [ist] kein Beleg für das Vorhandensein der Idee des göttlichen Königs in Israel;
(d) V. 7 berechtigt nicht eine Hieros-Gamos-Zeremonie für Israel zu postulieren.

2Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, 236-237. Jacob notes further:
"Even in admitting that the king is treated as Elohim ... it must be borne in mind that the term 'Elhym has a variety of shades of meaning which forbid our speaking of a real deification" (p. 237, n. 1)."
"divine king." Gösta W. Ahlström offers an appropriate remark on this question:

Wenn der König mit 'lḥym angeredet wird, bedeutet das, daß er dem divinen Kreis zugehört, jedoch nicht, daß er notwendigerweise als identisch mit Jahwe angesehen werden muß.¹

In the case of Mulder's translation, the king's throne is God's throne forever. This implies that the king's throne belongs to God and that it is as eternal as the throne of God is. As John H. Eaton notes, this expresses "the theology of the Davidic ruler as organ of God's own kingship; he reigns on Zion from God's own throne (I Chron. 29.23; 28.5; Pss. 2.6; 110.1)."² On the other hand, in the case of Harris' rendering, the throne of God or of the One who is addressed as "God" is eternal. In both cases, the throne is inseparably related to God, and thus it is a "divine throne."

The Messianic import of this passage is its citation in the letter to the Hebrews (1:8-9) as part of a catena of OT quotations. The words are taken over with but minor modification from the LXX and are used to prove Jesus' superiority over the angels. The LXX rendering can hardly bear any other translation than "Your throne, O God, ¹Gösta W. Ahlström, "Die Königsideologie in Israel: Ein Diskussionsbeitrag," TZ 18 (1962): 207; cf. idem, Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 6, n. 36.

²Eaton, Psalms, 125.
is for ever and ever." The point is that the words quoted are expressly said to be words addressed by God to the Son of God. Since the NT writer quotes and interprets the text as a Messianic reference, his understanding of the text must remain normative for us.⁰ Accordingly, the king who is addressed as 'λῦμ or theos is none other than the theocratic Messiah-King, identified as Jesus Christ in the NT, and the throne which is hailed as eternal refers to no one else's throne but that of the Messiah-King. The quotation from Ps 45:7-8 (MT) in Heb 1:8-9 forms part of the total NT witness to the kingship of Christ with the reminder that deity and royalty were predicted of Him from of old, and that His everlasting reign--both government and judgment--is characterized by absolute righteousness.

Despite all kinds of difficulties in interpreting the passage in question, one item of certainty is the concept that the throne will endure for eternity. This will be truly so, because the One who occupies it is "divine" and "eternal." Together with "the scepter (Sebet)

⁰Cf. Allen, "Psalm 45:7-8 (6-7) in Old and New Testament Settings," in Christ the Lord, ed. Rowdon, 231-241; Harman, 346-347. When the NT writers quote the OT texts, their interpretations may not always correspond with the precise historical meaning which the texts have in their contexts. In other words, the argument of the NT writers may not be founded upon the primary literal and historical meaning of the OT texts, but upon the secondary significance--prophetic, typical, Messianic, spiritual, or even allegorical--of the texts. Therefore, the interpretations of the NT writers as scriptural authors can and should remain normative, although they may not be the only possible interpretations.
of justice\textsuperscript{1} [which is] the scepter of Your kingdom" (Ps 45:7b, MT), throne (kisse'\textsuperscript{2}) symbolizes the eternal kingdom (malk\textsuperscript{2}ūt) of the Messiah-King\textsuperscript{2} who has the eternal kingship and will rule and judge with justice (mišōr) and righteousness (šedeq) (cf. vss. 7-8 [ET 6-7]).

Psalm 47:9 (ET 47:8)

As one of the so-called "enthronement psalms"\textsuperscript{3} and the second of the "trilogy of praise [Pss 46-48], in which

\textsuperscript{1}Zeev W. Falk points out the two symbols of royal justice: one is the royal throne and the other the rod in the judge's hand (cf. Isa 11:4; Mic 4:14) or the royal scepter (Ps 45:7, MT). This concept of the "scepter of justice" is paralleled in the ancient Near East. (Cf. Zeev W. Falk, "Two Symbols of Justice," VT 10 [1960]: 72-74). The Babylonian king Hammurabi, in the epilogue to his laws, says: "The great gods called me,/ so I became the beneficent shepherd whose scepter is righteous" (ANET, 178).

Also in the inscription of Ahiram of Byblos one reads:
"If there be a king among kings and a governor among governors and an army commander up in Byblos who shall uncover this sarcophagus, let his judicial staff be broken, let his royal throne be upset!" (ANET, 661).

\textsuperscript{2}Cf. Gunkel, Ausgewählte Psalmen, 75, who notes: "Wenn der Thron an die Ewigkeit des Königtums erinnert, so das Zepter an die Gerechtigkeit des Herrschers."

some signal deliverance of Jerusalem from foreign enemies is celebrated."¹ Ps 47 has a many-sided interest. Especially since the publication of Mowinckel's influential monograph,² it has been considered, together with other members of this group, related to the cultic celebrations of the Babylonian New Year (Sumerian zagmuk, Akkadian akitu)³ festival. Henri Frankfort calls this festival "the great rite de passage which would lead nature and society to a new period of fruitfulness."⁴

It is Mowinckel's hypothesis that originally a part of Israel's Feast of Tabernacles had a previously unnoticed enthronement festival in which Yahweh newly "ascended his royal throne to wield his royal power."⁵ The arguments


³Henri Frankfort remarks: "The New Year's festival could be held in the autumn as well as in the spring. We translate Sumerian zagmuk, which means 'beginning of the year,' and the Akkadian akitu, which has an uncertain meaning, 'New Year's festival,' because these feasts are essentially what the modern term indicates--festive celebrations of a new beginning in the annual cycle." (Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948], 313-314).

⁴Ibid., 315.

⁵Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, 1:106.
by Kraus against an annual enthronement of Yahweh are penetrating:

Anyone who posits an annual enthronement of Yahweh in the worship of Israel must assume—even regard as fundamental—the possibility that Yahweh could lose his lordship for a period of time, that is, that the God of Israel "functioned" in a manner analogous to the dying and rising deities. There is no basis for such an assumption in the psalms of Yahweh's kingship, indeed in the entire Old Testament. Moreover, to assume that the enthronement concept was adapted to the situation found in the worship of Yahweh is a last resort which ends in abstractions and lacks any relationship to the facts. . . . Thus, in the light of the data, the assumption of an "enthronement of Yahweh" is an impossibility.1

After a detailed discussion on the theories of Mowinckel and his followers, James Edwin Allman concludes:

Certainly the hymns to Yahweh's Kingship demand no interpretation along the lines developed by Mowinckel. There is nothing in them of the death or renascence of Yahweh, of His captivity in the underworld, of mock battles or sacred marriages. All of this is impossible in the Old Testament. Yahweh the king is neither a new chief god, nor a god who must periodically overcome the opposition of chaos. Myth, as represented, for example in the Enuma elis, has no value as a device to unlock the Hebrew Scriptures, . . . .2

1Kraus, Theology of the Psalms, 88.

2James Edwin Allman, A Biblical Theology of the Hymns in the Book of Psalms, Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1984 (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International), 151. W. Stewart McCullough also concluded "that there is no evidence that Yahweh was annually 'enthroned' at such a celebration, and that it is highly improbable that the theology of Israel's religious leaders would have countenanced any such 'enthronement' ceremony, particularly if its tenor was similar to that of Marduk's enthronement in Babylon."

(W. Stewart McCullough, "The 'Enthronement of Yahweh'"
No clear evidence is found in Scripture to posit an annual enthronement of Yahweh or a ceremony to celebrate any event like that.

Some similarities exist between the Hebrew poems and Babylonian rituals, as suggested some time ago by Hugo Greßmann\(^1\) and others.\(^2\) It is alleged that, in addition, certain affinities are found between the Hebrew poems and ancient Egyptian texts, especially the dramatic Ramesseum papyrus.\(^3\) However, these phenomena do not provide the evidence for the existence of the annual enthronement of Yahweh in Israel.\(^4\)

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Mowinckel suggests that "Jewish tradition affirms the enthronement psalm (Ps. 47), to be a new year psalm."\(^1\) This statement seems to be based upon the Talmud,\(^2\) but whatever tradition there may be, it began only in later Judaism.\(^3\) In the Christian Church, however, the reference to God's ascension (Ps 47:6 [ET 47:5]) has been the basis for the use of Ps 47 as one of the proper psalms for Ascension Day.\(^4\)

A. Weiser interprets the "enthronement psalms" in the context of the Covenant Festival.\(^5\) This also cannot be clearly established in the history of Hebrew worship. It has been subjected to thoroughgoing criticisms, which call into question the viability of the Covenant Festival as a setting for the so-called "enthronement psalms." Another proposal for the setting of those psalms, particularly of

\(^1\text{Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, 1:121.}\)

\(^2\text{Cf. Sop. 19:2. It is in the Synagogue, not the Temple, that Ps 47 has been recited before the sounding of the shofar on the Rosh ha-Shanah or the New Year, a day "when the liturgy dwells upon the thought of God's universal Sovereignty" (Cohen, The Psalms, 147). Cf. Kirkpatrick, 259; Leslie, The Psalms, 65.}\)

\(^3\text{Weiser, The Psalms, 374; Craige, Psalms 1-50, 348.}\)


\(^5\text{Weiser, The Psalms, 23-52.}\)
Ps 47, has been made by J. J. M. Roberts.\(^1\) He posits the setting for the psalm "in a cultic celebration of Yahweh's imperial accession, based on the relatively recent victories of David's age, which raised Israel from provincial obscurity to an empire of the first rank."\(^2\) P. C. Craigie looks at the "enthronement psalms" from a historical viewpoint of Israelite traditions. He states that they should probably be interpreted as the culmination of an ancient tradition, beginning with particular victory hymns (Exod 15:1-18), developing into general victory hymns (Ps 29), and being represented eventually by the general praise of God's kingship (Pss 47, 93, 96-99).\(^3\)

A very recent monograph on the "enthronement psalms" authored by Jörg Jeremias tries to comprehend the kingship of Yahweh against the background of Canaanite myth.\(^4\) With regard to Ps 47 in particular, he puts a special importance on the difference between the nominal state-sentences and the verbal action-sentences in the psalm. He states:

Dabei wird recht bald erkennbar, daß die zuständlichen Aussagen in den Nominalsätzen, mit denen der

\(^2\)Ibid., 132.
\(^3\)Craigie, Psalms 1-50, 348 (italics his); cf. idem, "Psalm XXIX in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition," VT 22 (1972): 143-151.
Psalm beginnt . . . (Glied B, V. 3. 8. 10ba), tief in mythischen Vorstellungen verwurzelt sind, die imperfektischen Verbalsätze (Glied C, V. 3f.) dagegen Ereignisse der Geschichte Jahwes mit seinem Volk benennen, während die perfektischen Verbalsätze (Glied D, V. 6. 9. 10bβ) gegenwärtig vor der Gemeinde sich vollziehendes kultisches Geschehen darstellen und deuten.¹

Thus, with Jeremias, "die entscheidende Differenz zwischen dem Königstum Jahwes und dem Els und Baals zeigt sich aber erst in den imperfektischen Verbalsätzen von V. 4f."² The historical events through which the Israelites have experienced God as their Ruler, Protector, and Provider (vss. 3-5, MT) are here emphasized and especially the idea of "our King" (vs. 7, MT) who "is seated on His holy throne" (vs. 9, MT) is stressed.

André Caquot summarizes the various interpretations which have been proposed for Ps 47 in five groups.³ But

¹Ibid., 52. Jeremias restates his idea as follows: "Das hier besungene Königstum Jahwes ist also 1) ein von Urzeit her gesetztes und universales Königstum, das sich aber 2) in der Geschichte verwirklicht und 3) im gegenwärtigen Kult neu als Realität erfahren wird. Im Unterschied zu Ps 93 wird das Königstum Jahwes in Ps 47 somit nicht nur zuständig beschrieben, sondern auch als Ereignis geschildert, und zwar als Ereignis der Vergangenheit und der im Gottesdienst erfahrenen Gegenwart." (Ibid., p. 53, italics his; cf. the whole section dealing with Ps 47 [pp. 50-69]).

²Ibid., 55 (italics his).

³Cf. Caquot, 312-314. The five groups are: (1) a hymn composed to commemorate a historical event—e.g., the dedication of the Second Temple (Baethgen), the deliverance of Jerusalem besieged by Sennacherib in 701 B.C., like Pss 46 and 48 (Kirkpatrick, Kissane), the conquest of Palestine by David or his successors (Podechard); (2) an eschatological hymn (Briggs, Kittel, Stärk, Buttenwieser, Tournay,
none of these can be explicitly affirmed as the setting or occasion of this psalm. It is not certain whether it was occasioned by a historical event or a cult in Jerusalem. However, the tenor of the psalm seems to favor the idea that it is a prophetical and eschatological hymn.\(^1\) First, acclaming God as "the Great King over all the earth" (vs. 3 [ET 2]) and "the King of all the earth" (vs. 8 [ET 7]) points to the end-time. Second, God's reigning "over the nations" (vs. 9 [ET 8]) and the gathering of "the princes of the peoples" (vs. 10 [ET 9]) also have an eschatological overtone.

Ps 47 is a finely structured literary unit and can be viewed as a hymn which has two "stanzas" with an interlude, each stanza starting with the call to praise:\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Cf. Craigie, Psalms 1-50, 347. I modified and slightly rearranged Craigie's diagram, which has only two "stanzas" (or as Craigie says, "verses"): vss. 2-6 and vss. 7-10. But it seems that Craigie did not pay attention to the "Selah" at the end of vs. 5 which most probably
The hymn opens with the characteristic exordium of the Hebrew hymn. An imperative appeal is addressed to "all peoples" (vs. 2, MT). All the peoples and nations of the earth are clearly meant: three different words (ʼam̄mīm [vss. 2a, 4a, 10a, MT], lēʼumm̄im [vs. 4b, MT], gōyīm [vs. 9a], MT) are used to give emphasis to this address, and the poet sings in the three pivotal points of the hymn that the whole earth (kol-hāʾāreṣ or ʼereṣ) is the range of his vision (vss. 3b, 8a, 10c, MT).1 Thus the whole world is called to praise the God of Israel and to celebrate His kingship.

This idea is once more stressed by the use of the divine name "Yahweh Elyon" (YHWH ʾelyōn, vs. 3a, MT): "Yahweh" is the personal name of the deity and "Elyon" ("Most High") is the title which "sets God in an international context . . . where foreign peoples, in addition to

marks the end of the first stanza. Vs. 6 can stand as an independent interlude and vs. 7 starts the second stanza with a call to praise as vs. 2 does in the first.

the Hebrews, are present"1 and "emphasizes God's sovereignty and authority over all nations."2

God is described as nôrâ' ("terrible" [KJV, RSV] or "awesome" [NIV, NKJV], vs. 3a, MT), which is the nifal participle of yârē' meaning "fürchten, in Ehren halten, fear, stand in awe of."3 This form (nôrâ') occurs some 45 times in the OT and in most of those occurrences it is used in connection with God's appearance, name, works, place, countenance, majesty, and Yahweh's great day of judgment.4 All these usages indicate Yahweh's overwhelming sublimity and "tremendous majesty."5

He is also called "Great King" (melek gâdôl, vs. 3b, MT) which is in parallel with Yahweh Elyon. "Great

1Craigie, Psalms 1-50, 349.


"King" as a title evokes specifically the covenant-treaty context of Israel's faith. Just as a Hittite suzerain was addressed as "great king" in the introductory sections of vassal treaties,¹ so too God is here the "Great King" in relation to all His vassals, both Israel and the "peoples" (vs. 2, MT) who had become Israel's immediate vassals.² In the full sense of the word, He is the "Great King over the whole earth" (vs. 3b, MT) who subdues and conquers all the world (cf. vs. 4, MT). For all the victories He won, God is to be applauded and praised.

The interlude (vs. 6 [ET 5]), with its poetic language, describes how "God has ascended" (ʾālāḥ ʾelōhîm). This means that He had previously "come down." God is said to "come down" when He manifests His presence by active interposition in the affairs of the world (Gen 11:5, 7; Isa 31:4; 64:1, 3; Ps 18:10 [ET 18:9]). He is said to "go up" or "ascend" when His work is finished and He, as it were, returns to His throne in heaven (Ps 68:18). This ascension brings to mind the triumphal procession in which the Israelites carried the ark of Yahweh to the temple and celebrated the victory which He had won for them with shouts and blowing of trumpets (cf. 2 Sam 6:1-17, esp. 15).


²Craigie, Psalms 1-50, 349.
Prophetically, this refers to His intervention and triumph in the person of the Messiah.¹

The second stanza of Ps 47 begins also with the call to praise God, but this time not only for His victories but for His kingship.

*zammērû 'ĕlōhim zammērû
zammērû 1ēmalkēnū zammērû:
ki melek kol-hā'āres 'ĕlōhim
zammērû maśkil:
(Ps 47:7-8).

Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
For God is the king of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm!
(ET 47:6-7, RSV).

A jubilant fivefold imperative, *zammērû* ("sing praises" or "make melody"), binds the lines into a firm unity.² In the first stanza, Yahweh Elyon is the King over all the earth, but here in the second stanza it is Elohim about whom practically the same words are used: Elohim is "our King" and "the King of all the earth." God's kingship, and that over the whole world, is greatly stressed.

The last two verses of the second stanza (Ps 47:9-10, MT) form the climax of the hymn.

*mālak 'ĕlōhim 'al-gōyim
ĕlōhim yāšāb al-kisse' qodĕō:
neḏîbê 'ammim ne'ēsāpû
'âm 'ĕlōhē 'abrāhām


God reigns over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.
The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted!
(ET vss. 8-9, RSV).

The Psalmist sings of a universal God as Sovereign of the
nations: "God reigns (mālāk 'ēlōhîm)¹ over the nations;
God sits on His holy throne." There He sits as the victorious
universal Monarch that He really is. So this part of
the psalm comes to an effective conclusion by emphasizing
in a new and colorful manner the truth of God's kingship,
which is taught so abundantly in many other passages of
Scripture.²

The throne is called "His holy throne" (kīsē' gōḏēō, literally "the throne of His holiness"). The divine
throne is holy, because it is set up and set apart for the
holy One. Since the throne is the foundation of His gov-
ernment, it is to reflect the nature and attributes of the
One who reigns sitting upon it. Thus "the throne of His
holiness" implies that all the divine activities, govern-
ment and judgment, will be characterized by holiness, which
is God's own nature and character.

¹For a discussion of the phrase mālāk 'ēlōhîm, see
pp. 383-393 below, where an analogous phrase YHWH mālāk is
discussed.

²Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms, 372.
Vs. 9 (ET 8) shows a sort of "parallelism"\(^1\) in its poetic form. Since there is a great variety of parallelistic lines in the biblical poetry,\(^2\) it cannot be expected that each half of the pair of parallelistic lines should parallel the other in meaning.\(^3\) In the case of Ps 47:9, the parallelistic lines have an A:B // A':C formation. In other words, whereas the first halves of the two lines parallel each other ("God reigns" [A] // "God sits" [A']), the second halves of the two lines do not parallel in meaning ("over the nations" [B] and "on his holy throne" [C]).


\(^2\)Lowth, _Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews_, 259, remarks:

"This parallelism has much variety and many gradations; it is sometimes more accurate and manifest, sometimes more vague and obscure; it may however, on the whole, be said to consist of three species. [The synonymous parallelism, the antithetic parallelism, and the synthetic or constructive parallelism]."


\(^3\)Cf. Kugel, 2. Here Kugel points out that, in many cases of the so-called "parallelism," the name "parallelism" is not adequate, because it misleads the students of the phenomenon to expect that each half must parallel the other in meaning, or indeed that each word of the first must be matched by a word in the second.

\(^4\)The MT of Ps 47:9 has, in addition to "parallelism," a chiastic form in word order: mālāk 'ĕlōhim . . . 'ĕlōhim yāṣāb . . . [A:B=B:A'].
The tenor of the psalm is explicitly eschatological. His being "highly exalted" (vs. 10b, MT) together with the holiness of His throne (vs. 9b, MT) and His ascending (vs. 6a, MT) allude to the transcendency and supremacy of God's government which ultimately will be established. Accordingly, the throne mentioned in our passage must be the one in heaven.

When we take Ps 47 as a whole, there is no passage of more genuine universalism in the whole of the Hebrew Bible, not even Mal 1:11. Kraus epitomizes the content of the entire psalm in one simple but significant sentence: "Der große und herrliche Gott Israels ist jetzt König aller Welt geworden. . . ." This is the meaning symbolized by "His holy throne" and His sitting upon it.

Psalm 89:15 (ET 89:14)

Ps 89, the last psalm of the third book of the Psalter, has posed many questions with regard to (1) its relation to the preceding psalms, i.e., the psalms of Asaph (Pss 73-83) and the psalms of the Korahites (Pss 84; 85; 87).  


3Kraus, Königsherrschafft Gottes im Alten Testament, 125. To this remark Kraus adds, "und hat ein neues Reich heraufgeführt." But this additional remark is both overstated and misleading, because the concept of "bringing about a new kingdom" is not found in the text.
especially Ps 88, (2) its provenance, (3) its composition, and (4) its Gattung and type.\footnote{For the many suggestions on these questions and detailed discussions of them, see G. W. Ahlström, Psalm 89: Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs, trans. (from the Swedish) Hans-Karl Hacker and Rudolf Zeitler (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1959), 16-20; Anderson, The Book of Psalms, 2:631; James M. Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," VT 11 (1961): 321-322.}

Mowinckel has assigned Ps 89 as "a lament, attributed to the king on a day of penance and prayer after lost battles."\footnote{Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, 1:70.} Ahlström classifies the psalm as a ma'askil, a psalm belonging to the annual renewal-of-life ritual.\footnote{Ahlström, Psalm 89, 21-26. Joseph J. DeVault has properly summarized Ahlström's views: "As a ma'askil, the Psalm belongs to those rites in which joy over the renewal of life is expressed, but to which are to be added also rites which represent suffering and death, dramatizing the (temporary) victory of the forces of chaos and the humiliation of the king" (Joseph J. DeVault, Review of Psalm 89: Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs, by G. W. Ahlström, TS 21 [1960]: 281).} Belonging to the "divine-kingship school,"\footnote{Ward, "Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," VT 11 (1961): 327.} which asserts that the king represented the dying and rising nature deity in the cultic renewal ceremony,\footnote{E.g., Ivan Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (Uppsala: n.p., 1943; reprint, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 170-210; Geo Widengren, Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1955), 62-65.} Ahlström follows this tendency in his study on Ps 89. However, many other
scholars reject this position. As "the most interesting and important of the royal psalms," Ps 89 treats at length the Davidic covenant and the king's humiliation. The foundation of this psalm is the great prophecy of 2 Sam 7:4-17, at the heart of which is the promise of a throne for David's dynasty forever, and of unique honors for its occupant. The whole poem is "a commentary on Nathan's prophecy to David" in 2 Sam 7:12-16 and summarized here in vss. 3-4.

This psalm consists of three main sections: the first section (vss. 2-19, MT) can be described as a hymn


2Ward, ibid., 321. According to John H. Eaton, Ps 89 is "explicitly royal" (Kingship and the Psalms, 56). Weiser, Kraus, and many others have no hesitation in accepting it as a royal psalm (cf. Weiser, The Psalms, 590-591; Kraus, Psalmen, 2:615-616). But Gunkel places the psalm in his royal group with some reservation because he understood vss. 39-46 to describe the cessation of the Davidic dynasty from 586 B.C. (cf. Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 386-396; Gunkel, Einleitung in die Psalmen, 140-142). Waldo S. Pratt says that "in [Ps] 89 it is certain that two-thirds of the poem are concerned with topics in the 'royal' circle" ("Studies in the Diction of the Psalter," JBL 33 [1914]: 137). Lipiński deals with only vss. 1-5 and 20-38 as a royal poem in his study on Ps 89 (E. Lipiński, Le poème royal du psaume lxxxix 1-5.20-38, CRB 6 [Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie Editeurs, 1967]). Stärk, Lyrik, 122-123, excludes vss. 6-19 in his treatment of Ps 89. Gunkel and Kraus treat vss. 4, 5, 20-38 only (Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 392-394; Kraus, Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament, 75-77).

praising Yahweh's covenant loyalty, His faithfulness and power; the second section (vss. 20-38, MT) is a review of the Davidic covenant and its promises in the form of an oracle (cf. 2 Sam 7; Ps 132); and the third section (vss. 39-53, MT) contains a lament over the misfortunes of the Davidic king (vss. 39-46, MT), a prayer for Yahweh's intervention and deliverance (vss. 47-52, MT), and a doxology to the third book as a unit (vs. 53, MT).1

The first section with the passage of the divine throne motif can be divided into two subsections: the first subsection (vss. 2-5, MT) is an introductory avowal which includes the Psalmist's vow for the perpetual praise to Yahweh (vss. 2-3, MT) and the divine covenant (vss. 4-5, MT). The second subsection (vss. 6-19, MT) sings of Yahweh as the incomparable Creator. The heavens and the celestial beings praise Him (vss. 6-8, MT) and the earth and the terrestrial beings give glory to Him (vss. 16-19, MT) and between these two is described His power in nature and history (vss. 9-15, MT). Yahweh is the Creator par excellence, with whom no one can compare (vs. 7, MT), and the God of Hosts (ʼêlōhē šēbā'ōt), who is greatly feared (naʿāraš), awesome (môrā'ı), and mighty (ḥāsin) (vss. 8-9, MT). The Psalmist continues to praise Him for His power revealed in nature and history:

Thou dost rule the raging of the sea;  
when its waves rise, thou stillest them.
Thou didst crush Rahab like a carcass,  
thou didst scatter thy enemies with thy  
mighty arm.
The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine;  
the world and all that is in it, thou hast  
founded them.
The north and the south, thou hast created  
them;  
Tabor and Hermon joyously praise thy name.  
Thou hast a mighty arm;  
strong is thy hand, high thy right hand. 
(Ps 89:10-14 [ET 89:9-13, RSV]).

Yahweh God is honored and praised with a series of  
great titles in a crescendo: He is the Ruler of nature  
(vs. 10, MT), the Conqueror of the enemies (vs. 11, MT),  
the Owner of everything (vs. 12a, MT), the Founder of the  
universe (vs. 12b, MT), the Creator of directions (vs. 13a,  
MT), the Establisher of the mountains (vs. 13b, MT), and  
the Possessor of might and power (vs. 14, MT). In sum, He  
is "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through  
all and in all" (Eph 4:6, NIV). The crescendo reaches the  
climax in vs. 15 which contains the divine throne motif:

ṣedeq ūmišpāt meqōn kis'ekā  
ḥesed we'emet yeqaddēmu pānēkā:  
(Ps 89:15).

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of  
thy throne;  
steadfast love and faithfulness go before  
thee.  
(ET 89:14, RSV).

The throne of Yahweh stands for all the relation­ships and titles which He holds toward all kinds of His  
counterparts. It is the symbol of Yahweh's dominion--  
supremacy and superiority, by way of His creatorship and
rulership—over the entire universe. He is the King and Creator who is peerless in power and authority.

His throne is not founded on the arbitrary and whimsical sway of dictatorial power. To the contrary, its māḵōn ("foundation") is ṣedeq ūmiṣpāṭ ("righteousness and justice").

The Hebrew noun māḵōn needs careful attention. It is a derivative of the verb kūn ("be firm, be firmly established"). The noun occurs seventeen times in the Hebrew Bible. All but one of its usages (Ps 104:5) refer either to God's dwelling-place in heaven or to the temple place. According to the word study by John N. Oswalt, the verb kūn is used with five somewhat different connotations, all having basic theological significance, and "these connotations move from provision through preparation and establishment to fixity and rightness." Oswalt points out that some references have "royal overtones" and

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1KBL, 426-427; cf. HAL, 442-443. The polel form of kūn means "set up, erect, found, direct, create, form" and its hifil form also means "set up, erect, constitute, appoint, found, direct" (GHCL, 386-387).

2Twelve times it refers to the dwelling-place of Yahweh: Exod 15:17; 1 Kgs 8:13, 39, 43, 49; 2 Chr 6:2, 30, 33, 39; Isa 4:5; 18:4; Ps 33:14; cf. Dan 8:11. In Ezra 2:68 it indicates the temple place and in Pss 89:15 (ET 89:14) and 97:2 the foundation of the throne. In Ps 104:5 it refers to the foundation of the earth. Cf. John N. Oswalt, "kūn," TWOT, 1:434; Ahlström, Psalm 89, 78.

some twenty-five times the word [kûn] is used with reference to the establishment of a dynasty. . . .

The culmination of this thought is found in Isa 9:6 [MT 9:7] where the kingdom of the Messiah is established by God.¹

The feminine form mēkônāh is also used for a kind of holy place (Zech 5:11) and the place of the altar (Ezra 3:3), or more frequently for the undercarriage or stand (for cauldron).² A brief survey of the usages of mākôn, mēkônāh, and their root verb kūn, reveals that the throne of God is set up in the heavenly temple/sanctuary and the mākôn is that which is specially prepared for the throne to be established on. This mākôn is best called "foundation," especially when it is related to "righteousness and justice," because these are not physical terms but belong to the conceptual language which expresses the principles of divine government.

The usage and meaning of the term ṣedeq have been discussed above.³ With regard to the origin of the concept of righteousness as the foundation of the throne, Hellmut Brunner claims that


³See pp. 329-332 above.
It is true that in many descriptions of the ancient Egyptian thrones the pedestal (Sockel) under the throne has a sign reading "righteousness, truth, right divine order." But it is not at all certain that the Israelites imported this idea from Egypt. Zeev W. Falk has claimed that the conception of the king's throne resting on justice can be explained without reference to foreign influence. Since the chief function of the king was the administration of justice, and the royal throne was used primarily for this purpose, it was only natural that the king's throne became the sign of judicial office. It is noteworthy that three or four other biblical texts (Ps 97:2; Prov 16:12; 25:5; cf. Prov 20:28) speak of šeđeq as the foundation or

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2 Ibid., 426.
3 Thus Mitchell Dahood, Psalms II (51-100): A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, AB 17 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1968), 315: "Hence it is difficult to accept the view of Hellmut Brunner... that we must seek in Egypt the direct ancestry of this motif."
6 The MT reads bahesed, but the LXX reads en dikaiosunē. Cf. BHS apparatus on Prov 20:28.
establishment of the throne. The ethical quality or moral principle is stressed in rulership and judgeship.

The term mišpāt "represents what is doubtless the most important idea for correct understanding of government—whether of man by man or of the whole creation by God." An analysis of all uses of mišpāt in the Bible reveals at least thirteen related but distinct aspects of the central idea, which may be rendered in English by a word with a similar range of meaning, namely "justice." From these various aspects of the meaning of the term mišpāt emerge two main ideas: One idea is "litigation" or judgment and the other is "sovereignty, the legal foundation of government in the sense of ultimate authority or right" (cf. Deut 1:17; Prov 16:33; Ps 72:1-2). It also designates "an ordinance of law—often used co-ordinately with ḫōq 'ordinance' (Exod 15:25) and tōrah 'law' (Isa 42:4)."

wenn vom mišpāt Jahwes gesprochen wird, ist an Urteilsspruch (Jes 3,14; 30,18; Ez 39,21; Zeph

1Robert D. Calver, "šāpaṭ," TWOT, 2:948.

2Ibid., 948-949. For the origin and meaning of mišpāt, see Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, 74-77.

3Calver, "šāpaṭ," TWOT, 2:948.


5Calver, "šāpaṭ," TWOT, 2:949.

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The present text indicates that the concepts of ᵖᵉᵈᵉḵ and ᵐⁱˢᵖᵃᵗ are parallel with those of ᶨᵉˢᵉḏ and 'ᵉᵐᵉᵗ. Yahweh's ᶨᵉˢᵉḏ, upon which He chose David and made the covenant with him, is praised and promised as His perpetual gift to His people in the present psalm (vss. 2-3, 34, MT). Therefore, as Schmid remarks, those concepts "qualifizieren die Erwählung Davids bzw. des Volkes und betonen die Beständigkeit, mit der Jahwe an ihr festhält."²

The two concepts, ᵖᵉᵈᵉḵ and ᵐⁱˢᵖᵃᵗ, characterize Yahweh's rule—His government and judgment: they form the foundation on which His throne and thus His kingship are established.

Some scholars point out that there are various Near Eastern texts in which righteousness and justice appear as divine beings.³ Ahlström, for example, regards them as

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¹G. Liedke, "Ṡpt richten," THAT, 2:1008-1009. On the other hand, Kirkpatrick, 535, remarks that "righteousness [is] the principle of justice, and judgment [is] the application of it in act" (italics his) and Cohen, The Psalms, 291, notes that "justice is righteousness in practice" (italics his). These remarks sound likely but have no biblical support.

²Schmid, Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung, 80.

³E.g., In one of the Old Sumerian hymns, one reads: "möge 'Recht' zu deiner Rechten stehen, möge 'Gerechtigkeit' zu deiner Linken stehen!" (SAHG, 222); one of the Akkadian hymns for Shamash refers to "truth" and "righteousness" even as divine powers:
hypostases, which, in his view, may be identified with the cherubim and seraphim.\(^1\) The latter point does not seem likely.\(^2\) There is no hint at all in Scripture that the cherubim or seraphim are the hypostases. They appear as real living beings not as personified virtues.

The other two concepts,  hešed  and  'emet, reveal Yahweh's nature—His attributes and character: they are "personified as attendants to do God's bidding rather than as couriers to run before."\(^3\)

Here in Ps 89:15 [MT], as in Pss 85:11-14 (ET 85:10-13) and 96:6, one has a tetrads of virtues which are inseparably related to Yahweh's throne and His presence. It is true that this reminds us of the four living creatures or the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision which bear and carry the chariot-throne of Yahweh (Ezek 1; 10). But

\begin{quote}
"Göttin «Wahrheit» (Kittu) | möge zu meiner Rechten hintreten, 
Gott «Gerechtigkeit» (Mischaru) | zu meiner Linken hintreten!"
\end{quote}

(SAHG, 320); in one of the Akkadian hymns for Ishtar, "righteousness" functions as a tutelary god (Schutzgeist): "Vor dir steht der Schutzgeist, | hinter dir die Schutzgöttin; 
zu deiner Rechten ist die Gerechtigkeit, | zu deiner Linken das, was (uns) gut ist."


\(^1\)Ahlström, Psalm 89, 78.


\(^3\)Clarke, 226. Cf. Kirkpatrick, 535, who notes: "Lovingkindness and truth are represented as angels attending in God's Presence ([Ps] xcv. 2), ready to do His bidding (xliii. 3), rather than as couriers preceding Him" (italics his).
Michael D. Goulder's idea that these virtues are "four extensions of Yahweh's presence which . . . were . . . at least in part domesticated Canaanite gods"\(^1\) has no biblical support in this text. According to Goulder's study, the three psalms had three different origins: Ps 89 was a Tabor psalm, Ps 85 a Dan psalm, and Ps 96 a Jerusalem psalm.\(^2\) The following is a synopsis of those tetrads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Tetrad</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ps 89:15</td>
<td>šēdeq, mishpāt, ḫesed, 'ēmet</td>
<td>Tabor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 85:11</td>
<td>ḫesed, 'ēmet, šēdeq, šālôm</td>
<td>Dan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 96:6</td>
<td>hōd, hāḏār, 'ōz, tip'eret</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ps 45:5 (ET 45:4) has another tetrad of virtues (hāḏār, 'ēmet, 'anwāḥ, and šēdeq), but there is some irregularity in enumerating them. We have a duo (hōd and hāḏār) in Ps 45:4 (ET 45:3), another duo (ḡē'ūt and 'ōz) in Ps 93:1, and still another duo (šēdeq and mishpāt) in Ps 97:2, which is identical with the first half of Ps 89:15 (ET 89:14).

There is no consistency among the various tetrads of virtues. They are listed purely as the virtues, i.e., qualitative concepts which delineate the divine presence and the holy place of Yahweh. Thus it does not seem that

\(^1\)Goulder, 225.

\(^2\)Ibid., 112-125, 225.
they were regarded as "attendant angels,"\(^1\) "dienende Engel,"\(^2\) or "göttliche Genien, Schutzgötter, die Gottes Throne umgeben."\(^3\) If they should be somehow designated, I would call them the **divine virtues** by which God reigns and judges, i.e., by which He rules His kingdom and deals with people.\(^4\)

One other point that should not be overlooked in Ps 89 is the connection between the throne of God and that of the Davidic dynasty. While Yahweh's throne is mentioned only once, David's throne is mentioned four times in this psalm (vss. 5, 30, 37, 45, MT). The celebration of the thrones of Yahweh and David as symbols of their respective cosmic and terrestrial sovereignty is an important dual theme in the psalm. Both thrones are supported by hesed and 'emet or 'emunah (vss. 15, 31-34; cf. Ps 61:8, MT).

\(^1\)Engnell, *The Call of Isaiah*, 34.

\(^2\)Duhm, *Die Psalmen*, 222.


\(^4\)Ellen G. White considers these divine virtues as "the attributes" of God's throne: "There is a day just about to burst upon us when God's mysteries will be seen, and all His ways vindicated; when justice, mercy, and love will be the attributes of His throne." (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* [Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1923], 433, emphasis supplied).

Dahood calls them the "personified attributes of God" (Psalms II, 361).
The psalm is a covenant psalm from the beginning to the end. The covenant terms הֵֽמְּשֶׁד and 'וֹמֵט or 'מְנַעֹן comprise the central theme that runs through each of its major sections (vss. 2, 3, 9, 15, 25, 34, 50, MT). The solidity and durability of the Davidic throne depend upon the moral principles of God—righteousness and justice upon which His throne is established, and lovingkindness and faithfulness by which His dealings are characterized. The covenant by which the throne of David will endure for eternity (vss. 5, 30, 37, MT) is sure and will be fully fulfilled because the throne of God, on which the Davidic throne depends and of which it is a type or shadow, is eternal.

Here again the throne of God is spoken of as the firm foundation upon which His people can put their trust in Him and endure the present misfortunes. The throne of God which is supported by righteousness and justice is the surety for His children that He is always in control of all affairs and events in the universe. It is a reminder of the fact that the seemingly most undeserved calamities are the results of the right and just judgment of God who is the summum bonum, and even the best treatment for the eternal benefit of God's children.

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Psalm 93:2

Ps 93 is a sort of prelude to the remarkable group of the so-called "theocratic psalms" (Pss 95-100). The kinship between these related psalms is scarcely so close as to allow for combining them into one unit psalm.

Yahweh has been the original King of Israel (Exod 15:18; Num 23:21; Deut 33:5; Judg 8:23; 1 Sam 8:7; 12:12), and He will forever be the King of the universe (Ps 47:2, 6-9).

The theme of God's kingship and the proclamation and/or acclamation of it (YHWH mlk) belong to the most

1Kirkpatrick, 563.
2Briggs and Briggs, 2:296-303, note that "Pss. 93, 96-100 were originally a song of praise, celebrating the advent of Yahweh, the universal King, for judgment"; Julius Boehmer, Der alttestamentliche Unterbau des Reiches Gottes (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1902), 150-159. On the relations with other psalms and on the arguments for an early date of composition, see Helen Genevieve Jefferson, "Psalm 93," JBL 71 (1952): 155-160; James Donald Shenkel, "An Interpretation of Psalm 93.5," Bib 46 (1965): 401-416; Lipiński, La royauté de Yahvé, 163-172.
4Cf. p. 13, n. 1 above.
frequently and most hotly discussed arena of the OT. Especially in the study of the Psalter, one of the most debated questions is whether there was in the religious life of Israel a special "Enthronement Festival" for which the royal psalms and perhaps others were prepared or adapted. Many scholars have given much thought to this question.\(^1\) Although B. Duhm\(^2\) and P. Volz\(^3\) had suggested this idea, it is S. Mowinckel who has brought it to a wider


\(^2\)Cf. Duhm, Die Psalmen, 133, 134.

attention in biblical scholarship. In his book, Psalmen-
studien, vol. 2, Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwás und der
Ursprung der Eschatologie (1922), the extraneous influ-
ences of both Babylonian and Egyptian worship have been
confidently detected. In particular, it is claimed that
the Israelite festival was modeled upon the Babylonian
pattern of the New Year celebration of the victory of
Marduk over Tiamat.1 It is held that at the New Year Feast
of Tabernacles in Israel an annual celebration of the
annual revival of Israel as a social unit was held, and the
principal feature was a ceremony of Yahweh's accession to
His throne.2

With this hypothetical background, Mowinckel holds
that the characteristic phrase in the "enthronement
psalms," YHWH mlk3 (Pss 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; cf. 47:9
[ET 47:8]), should be interpreted as "Yahweh has become

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1Cf. Svend Aage Pallis, The Babylonian Akitu Festi-
val, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-
filologiske Meddelelser XII/1 (Copenhagen: Andr. Fred. Host
& Son, 1926).

2Cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, Zum israelitischen Neujahr
und zur Deutung der Thronbesteigungspsalmen, zwei Aufsätze,
in Avhandlinger utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i
Oslo, 1952 (Oslo: I Kommisjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1952), 5-
39.

3The translations of this expression vary: "The
LORD reigneth" (KJV); "The LORD reigns" (RSV, NIV, NASB,
NKJV); "The LORD is king" (NAB, TEV, NJV); "Yahweh reigns" (AB);
"The Lord has begun His reign" (Hirsch);
"Yahweh is king" (NJB); "Der HERR ist König" (Luther,
1897); "Jahve ward König" (Gunkel); "Jahwe ist König!"
(Eißfeldt, Kraus); "Le Seigneur est Roi" (Beaucamp);
"Yahvé est le Roi" (Jacquet).
According to him, "the older translation 'The Lord reigneth' is misleading" because "it is not a lasting condition that the poet describes with this expression." He understands the verb of this state-sentence in the ingressive sense rather than in the durative sense. He supports his argument with the following explanations and illustrations:

The poet's vision is of something new and important which has just taken place: Yahweh has now become king; hence the new song of joy and praise to be sung. What the poets have seen in their imagination, and describe or allude to, is an event and an act which was linked with an enthronement, Yahweh's ascent of the throne.

"Yahweh has become King" is just such a cry of acclamation as "Absalom has become king!"; "Jehu has become king!" (2 Sam 15:10; 2 Kgs 9:13).

Mowinckel's interpretation, however, has caused a lot of reconsideration and counterarguments in terms of grammatical, syntactical, and cultic problems.

Otto Eißfeldt pointed out that the verb mlk does not need to be rendered "has become king" or "is become king" because the verb mlk is a stative perfect.

A. Gelston's understanding is just the opposite to that of Mowinckel. He notes:

1Mowinckel, Psalmenstudien, 2:3; idem, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, 1:107.
3Ibid. (emphasis supplied).
The verb mlk is best translated "is king" or "reigns" rather than "has become king"; where this nuance is present, it is indicated by the context. When the verb precedes, there is a presumption in favour of the statement being emphatic, and being modelled on the proclamation/acclamation formula: "Yahweh, and no other deity, is king/reigns." ... When the noun precedes, we probably have generally a straightforward statement of fact: "Yahweh is king/reigns"; certain implications of this fact are then drawn out.¹

Allman has the same idea; he says:

Since there is no mention in the psalms of an enthronement festival; no place or time for Yahweh to ascend a throne; no powers by which Yahweh might be overwhelmed, the conclusion is compelling: the formula is to be understood as a description of the condition or state of affairs. Yahweh reigns.²

And he proceeds:

The hymns to Yahweh's kingship, then, do not testify to an annual enthronement festival. They do not tell how Yahweh became king; rather they tell what His kingship means. So they are celebrations, not of His enthronement, but of His royal rule.³

Ludwig Koehler raises a question on Mowinckel's translation of YHWH mlk in Ps 93:1 because he holds that the phrase YHWH mlk has an unusual word order in which "das vorangestellte Subjekt betont ist"; thus its meaning is different from that of mlk YHWH which is "ein einfacher Aussagesatz."⁴ Koehler's own translation of YHWH mlk is

¹Gelston, 512.
²Allman, 155-156.
³Ibid., 156-157.
"Es ist Jahwa, der König (geworden) ist," in the sense that "Es ist Jahwa und nicht ein anderer Gott (Baal, Marduk, Schamasch, usw.), der König ist."¹

J. Ridderbos suggests "dass die Anfangsworte von Ps. xciii 1 nicht zu übersetzen sind als 'J. ist König geworden', sondern 'J. ist König' und dass der Psalm ein allgemeiner Hymnus auf Jahwähs Königsherrschaft ist."²

H.-J. Kraus maintains that the Hebrew perfect³ mālak, in its meaning, is close to the Akkadian permsansive, which is "das prädikativ gebrauchte participium perfecti, das wie das lat. part. perf. meist Passivbedeutung hat."⁴ Based on this alleged analogy, the translation of YHWH mlk should be "Yahweh has become King (and still reigns as King)."⁵ Kraus's own rendition is "Jahwe ist König."⁶

Diethelm Michel understands YHWH mlk as a nominal sentence, describing not an event but a quality of the subject. He suggests:

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¹Ibid., 188-189.


³For a detailed discussion of the perfect tense of mlk, see Kraus, Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament, 3-8.


⁶Kraus, Psalmen, 2:646.
Wenn wir die Sätze vom Typ YHWH mlk als zusammengesetzte Nominalsätze verstehen, können wir die Ansichten von KOHLER und RIDDERBOS vereinigen: Als Prädikat eines zusammengesetzten Nominalsatzes berichtet mlk keine neue Handlung, sondern einen Aspekt des Subjektes, ja fast schon eine Eigenschaft. "Mit Jahwe verhält es sich so, dass er Königsherrschaft ausübt" oder "Jahwe ist einer, der Königsherrschaft ausübt."  

However, Jarl H. Ulrichsen does not agree with Michel. After investigating various usages of the word mlk, he concludes:

Die vorhergehende Darstellung hat gezeigt, dass das Verb mâlîk sowohl "König sein" als "König werden" bedeuten kann, und dass die Wortfolge keine Hilfe gibt, wenn man nach der richtigen Übersetzung sucht. Um das Problem zu lösen, haben wir immer wieder auf die Kontexte verwiesen. Leider zeigt es sich, dass es unmöglich ist, die Kontexte der umstrittenen Psalmen mit Sicherheit festzustellen.  

According to Ulrichsen, however, "der Sitz im Leben dieses Kultrufes ist das Neujahrsfest, wo die Königsherrschaft Jahwes gefeiert wurde,"  

and "der Königsantritt Jahwes bezeichnet lieber den Beginn des neuen Jahres, wo Jahwe herrscht wie im vergangenen." Therefore, "das wesentliche ist also nicht, dass er den Titel König führt, sondern dass er die Königsherrschaft ausübt und sich dadurch als König zeigt."  

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2 Ulrichsen, 372.
3 Ibid., 373.
4 Ibid., 374.
5 Ibid.
Arvid S. Kapelrud is also inclined to understand the verb in the sense of activity and says, "Die lebendige Aktivität, ingressiv sowohl als durativ, ist der Kern und die eigentliche Meinung des Verbums,"\(^1\) and thus his translation is "Jahwe herrscht jetzt aktiv als König."\(^2\)

Claus Westermann contends that the perfect of the verb in \textit{YHWH mlk} and other perfects in the "enthronement psalms" are prophetic perfects referring to the future in an eschatological prospect.\(^3\)

John Gray has surveyed the debate on the "enthronement psalms" from the viewpoint of Mowinckel's side,\(^4\) and then translated—or paraphrased—the formulaic clause \textit{YHWH mlk} as "Yahweh has proved Himself King!"\(^5\)

Allen Eugene Combs maintains that "the most satisfactory translation of \textit{YHWH mlk} is 'Yahweh reigns'"\(^6\) and "the expression denotes a qualitative aspect of God's relation to the universe and refers more to the manner of his rule (i.e., with complete authority and power) than to the


\(^2\)Ibid.


\(^5\)Ibid., 45.

\(^6\)Combs, 219.
condition of his rule (i.e., recently acquired)."¹ There are some additional suggestions for interpreting YHWH mlk,² but it may be wise to limit our discussion to major views.

It is E. Lipinski who has undertaken the most extensive research on the formulaic clause YHWH mlk and the "enthronement" of Yahweh.³ He maintains that the shout YHWH mlk was not a formula of investiture, nor an acclamation, nor a formula of homage to the divine king, but, at least in its origin, an announcement, i.e., a proclamation of Yahweh's accession to the kingship.⁴ One of his viewpoints for the "enthronement" of Yahweh is eschatological.⁵ Yahweh's eschatological enthronement is, according to Lipinski, connected with the apocalyptic vision of the NT.⁶

The key question to the problem is, Does YHWH mlk mean König-Werden or König-Sein?⁷ Or, how should we interpret mlk? Is it a noun (melek) or a verb (mālāq)? If a verb, how should we understand the perfect tense of the

¹Ibid., 219-220.

²For more discussions of various suggestions, see Michel, 40-68; Kraus, Psalmen, 2:648-649.

³Cf. Lipiński, La royauté de Yahvé, 336-456.

⁴Ibid., 391.

⁵Cf. ibid., 451-455.


verb mlk? One of the best ways to solve the problem is to take the perfect tense as performing a dual duty: first, it "represent[s] actions, events, or states, which, although completed in the past, nevertheless extend their influence into the present"; second, it also "express future actions, when the speaker intends by an express assurance to represent them as finished, or as equivalent to accomplished facts." In other words, the phrase YHWH mlk initially refers to the past event, i.e., the fact that Yahweh was and has been King; and it also points to the future action of His becoming King. The proclamation/acclamation is both historical and prophetic. Its perfect tense denotes not merely a fact but an act. Since the subject of the verb is Yahweh and the "enthronement" is that of Yahweh, the picture is obviously eschatological. On this point, Artur Weiser offers a remarkable observation as follows:

... the psalm with its hymnic style exhibits those typical features which are the hallmark of the Old Testament faith. The hope of the Kingdom of God, the coming of which is linked up with the Enthronement of Yahweh, and the emphatic linking of creation and eschatology within the idea of the eternal reign of God, have sprung from Old

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3Cf. Stärk, Lyrik, 57-58.
Testament soil and are the ripe fruit of its belief in God.¹

Thus it becomes evident that Yahweh's kingship symbolized by His throne points to the end or eschaton of the world as well as to the beginning or proton of the world. Accordingly the phrase YHWH mlk is better interpreted if we understand the perfect tense of mlk both as indicating an established fact that Yahweh was and has been (and is) King and as a perfectum propheticum or perfectum confidentiae,² meaning "Yahweh will surely become King!" or "Yahweh will really reign!" As Kraus notes, "In the eschaton God's kingship will finally be established."³

The whole psalm, which is "mighty in utterance, colorful in language, and a strong incentive to faith,"⁴ sings of the sovereignty of Yahweh: the first two verses declare its certainty; the next two demonstrate its manifestation; and the last one describes its administration.⁵

¹Weiser, The Psalms, 618 (emphasis supplied).

²Cf. GHG, 312-313 (§ 106 n). Here Gesenius notes: "To express facts which are undoubtedly imminent, and, therefore, in the imagination of the speaker, already accomplished (perfectum confidentiae) ... This use of the perfect occurs frequently in prophetic language (perfectum propheticum)" (p. 312).

³Kraus, Theology of the Psalms, 195.

⁴Leupold, Exposition of the Psalms, 663.

⁵But Jörg Jeremias divides the psalm into two strophes: vss. 1-2 and vss. 3-5 (Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen, 16).
The first two verses read:

YHWH mālak gē'ūt lābēš
lābēš YHWH 'oz hit'azzār
'ap-tikkon tēḇēl bal-timmōt:
nākōn kis'āḵā me'āz
mē'ōlām ŏttāh:
(Ps 93:1-2).

The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty;
The LORD has clothed and girded Himself
with strength;
Indeed, the world is firmly established, it
will not be moved.
Thy throne is established from of old;
Thou art from everlasting.
(NASB).

Arthur G. Clarke comments that this passage speaks
of God's "self-coronation in self-created and self-
manifested power."¹ Yahweh is robed in majesty (gē'ūt) and
armed with strength (ʿōz)—another duo of the "virtues"
with which the Psalmist delineates the divine presence. It
is noteworthy that vs. 1 praises Yahweh not only for His
kingship but also for His creatorship.

Vs. 2 forms a synonymous parallelism in the frame
of a chiastic arrangement; i.e.,

nākōn kis'āḵā me'āz

\/

mē'ōlām ŏttāh

In this literary form Yahweh's throne is in parallel with
Yahweh Himself and both are eternal (mē'āz and mē'ōlām) in
their existence. Thus, in the first two verses, the throne
of Yahweh symbolizes Yahweh's identity; in other words, it

¹Clarke, 237.
signifies both that Yahweh is the King and the Creator in relation to His creation and that He is the Eternal One by nature.

It is noteworthy that in vss. 1-2 the verb kūn is used twice: once in the nifal imperfect form (tikkōn) as the verb of tēḇēl ("world") and once in the nifal participial form (nākōn) in connection with kis'āḵā ("thy throne"). This indicates that both the world and the throne of God were "established" or "founded" as products of the divine power and act of Yahweh, the Creator. It is also noteworthy that the verb nākōn in Ps 93:2 and the noun mākōn ("foundation") in Pss 89:15 (ET 89:14) and 97:2 come from the same verb kūn. While mākōn in Pss 89:15 (ET 89:14) and 97:2 specifies the nature or quality of the work which is done from the throne ("righteousness and justice"), nākōn in Ps 93:2 connects the throne with the time element ("from of old").

In vss. 3-4 are described the "enemies of Yahweh" ("Jahves Feinde")\(^1\): nēḥārōt and mayīm rabbīm, which are "simile[s] for powerful nations that swell with pride and work destruction"\(^2\) (cf. Isa 8:7-8). But Yahweh on high (bammārōm YHWH) is mightier than these (vs. 4c). He is far higher and stronger than any earthly ruler or power. As Westermann points out, Yahweh is "the Creator in vss. 1b-2,

\(^{1}\)Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 411.

and the Lord of history in vss. 3-4.\textsuperscript{1} Yahweh is "on high" (bammārōm) and His throne is "high and exalted" (rām wēniśēā', Isa 6:1). Vss. 3-4, therefore, show that Yahweh is supreme and sovereign, and His throne is the symbol of this supremacy and sovereignty of Yahweh as the Lord of history.

The last verse, vs. 5, describes the Sovereign's "statutes" (ʾēdōt), i.e., "the law regarded as bearing witness to Jehovah's will and man's duty,"\textsuperscript{2} and His "house" (bayit), i.e., the place of His government. On the basis of the Ugaritic comparative material, James Donald Shenkel explains ʾdt of ʾdtk (vs. 5a) as a lexical variant of ʾd ("seat, throne"), which derives from ʾdd.\textsuperscript{3} His translation of vs. 5 reads:

\begin{quote}
Your throne has been firmly established; in your temple the holy ones glorify you, Yahweh, for length of days.\textsuperscript{4}
\end{quote}

According to one view, this may be "ein reizvolles Beispiel frömmiger Neuinterpretation,"\textsuperscript{5} and especially the new interpretation "throne" instead of "statutes" is

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Westermann, \textit{Praise and Lament in the Psalms}, 150.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Clarke, 237.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Shenkel, 408-409.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 416.
\item \textsuperscript{5}Becker, \textit{Israel deutet seine Psalmen}, 73.
\end{enumerate}
"besonders tiefgreifend und interessant," but it is "auch besonders fragwürdig."\(^1\)

On the other hand, M. Dahood argues that since `dtk contains the root of Ugaritic `d//ksu in UT 127:22-24 (the Keret cycle)\(^2\) and `dt is an infinitive construct from y’d or w’d ("to appoint, assemble") which connotes jurisdiction, derivatives from this root denote "seat, throne."\(^3\) Hence, he vocalizes infinitive construct `idtēkā for MT `ēdōtēkā ("your statutes" or "your decrees") and translates the first colon of vs. 5 as "Your enthronement was confirmed of old."\(^4\) This argument is also open to debate.

Jörg Jeremias epitomizes the psalm: "Die Festigkeit der Königsherrschaft Gottes, der Ort ihrer Ausübung und ihre unendliche Dauer sind also die entscheidenden Themen des Psalms."\(^5\) More specifically, he states:

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)The text reads:
(22) wtn . ytb . krt . l’dh
(23) ytb . lksi . mlk
(24) lngh . lkht . drkt

Ch. Virolleaud explained `d of line 22 as follows: "C'est un équivalent de hkl (ou de bt), ou bien une partie du hkl, et, à en juger par la présente locution, celle où se dresse le trône" ("Le roi Kéret et son fils," Syria 23 [1942-43]: 9-10). Cyrus H. Gordon has accepted the meaning given by Virolleaud to the word `d in the text cited above and gives the meaning "throne room" for `d in the same text (cf. UT, 453 [No. 1814]: "Krt returns to his throne room").

\(^3\)Dahood, Psalms II, 342.

\(^4\)Ibid., 339.

\(^5\)Jeremias, Das Königstum Gottes in den Psalmen, 17.
Ps 93 erzählt also nicht, wie Jahwe sein Königttum über die Welt errungen hat, sondern er stellt dar, wie sich Jahwes Königttum über die Welt gegenwärtig wie schon seit Urzeit und für alle Zukunft stets gleichartig auswirkt.¹

In sum, the throne of God, which has been "established of old" (93:2), is the heavenly throne and points to the fact that Yahweh has been, is, and will surely be the King. It also indicates that Yahweh is the Creator of the world. In short, the throne of God signifies both the eternal kingship and creatorship of Yahweh. Thus, the formulaic proclamation/acclamation YHWH mlk points to both directions of time. In other words, it is both historical and prophetic, or protological and eschatological.²

¹Ibid., 19.

²It is remarkable that in the LXX (Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus), Ps 93 has the inscription, Eis tê ten hemeran tou prosabbitou, hote katô û kistai he gê, ainos õîdês tôi Davuid (Codex Alexandrianius erroneously has tou sabbatou for tou prosabbitou). The first part is corroborated by the Jewish tradition. Cf. Tamid 7:4: "On the sixth day they [the Levites] did sing, The Lord is king and has put on glorious apparel (Ps 93)" (The Mishnah: A New Translation, trans. Jacob Neusner [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988], 873; cf. The Mishnah Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes, trans. Herbert Danby [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933], 589). In other words, Ps 93 was the Friday Psalm, as is said in the Talmud: "On the sixth day they said, The Lord reigneth. He is clothed in majesty, because He completed His work and reigned over His creatures" (b. Ros Has. 31a [The Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah, 146]). Perhaps this is what is meant also by the second part of the inscription: "when the earth was peopled [with living creatures]" (cf. Delitzsch, KD:COT, 5:3:74; Perowne, 2:182).
Psalm 97:2

Ps 97 is an eschatological hymn of three parts portraying the coming of Yahweh as universal Judge. The first part (vss. 1-6) describes the theophany in terms reminiscent of Pss 18:9, 13-14 (ET 18:8, 12-13); 50:3; 77:19 (ET 77:18); Hab 3:10; etc.; the next part (vss. 7-9) speaks of Israel's joy at paganism's defeat; and the last part (vss. 10-12) betrays kinship to Ps 36:10-11 (ET 36:9-10) in depicting what God holds in store for those who worship Him.

As one of the so-called "Yahweh-King-hymns," Ps 97 celebrates Yahweh's kingship. It starts with the same formulaic "Inthronisationsruf" or Huldigungsformel, YHWH mlk (vs. 1a). The whole world is exhorted to rejoice (vs. 1b-c). Then, with the description of the theophanic phenomena of Sinai (cf. Exod 19:16-20; 20:18-19; Judg 5:5) which supply the symbolism, the Psalmist recites that famous throne hymn which was cited in Ps 89:15 (ET 89:14):

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1Gunkel, Ausgewählte Psalmen, 134, says, "Der Psalm [Ps 97] besingt das Ende der Welt, da Jahve als König der ganzen Erde erscheint, da er die Herrschaft der Götter in den Staub wirft und Zion erlöst."


5Kraus, Psalmen, 2:672.
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. (NASB).

Yahweh who occupies this throne is "the Lord of all the earth" (אֲדֹנָי kol-bā'ārēṣ, vs. 5b) and "the Most High over all the earth" (אֱלֹיִון al-kol-bā'ārēṣ, vs. 9a). He is "exalted far above all gods" (vs. 9b) and His holy name is praised and thanked for by the righteous ones (vs. 12). That throne is established upon ṣedeq and mēšpāt, which are the divine virtues. "Righteousness and justice" are what "Yahweh works for all the oppressed" (Ps 103:6). This affirms that the throne of God is founded upon the divine principles (cf. 2 Sam 3:10) which are characterized by righteousness and justice.¹

On the other hand, Yahweh who sits on the throne is surrounded by clouds and darkness (vs. 2a),² but fire goes before Him (vs. 3) and lightning lights up the world (vs. 4). The important idea that these phenomena reveal is that


²Weiser, The Psalms, 632, comments on this: "God appears as one who is veiled. Whereas in other religions the unveiling of the image of a god, the εποπτεία (the vision of God), represented the solemn climax of the cultic ceremony, the Old Testament idea of God as one who is surrounded by the impenetrable darkness of clouds reverently maintains the mystery of his nature and impressively indicates the threateningly serious character of his appearing."
the place or location of the throne may be elsewhere than the earthly temple (cf. Pss 11:4; 103:19). Here we have another tetrad or a pair of duos which delineates the environment of the divine presence. This time, however, the duos are not virtues but physical manifestations of God's glory (vs. 6b). Between those two duos we have another duo, righteousness (ṣedeq) and justice (or judgment, mishpāṭ), which form the foundation of Yahweh's throne (vs. 2b). Significantly enough, each member of this duo is mentioned in the following verses (vss. 6, 8) of the hymn:

The heavens declare His righteousness (ṣedeq),
And all the peoples have seen His glory:

Zion heard this and was glad,
And the daughters of Judah have rejoiced
Because of Thy judgments (mišpāṭim), O LORD.
(NASB, emphasis supplied).

This means that nature and creature alike praise and rejoice at the throne of Yahweh who is their Creator, King, and Judge. As Jeremias points out,

Es sind somit zwei Begriffspaare, die alle drei Strophen durchziehen und gliedern: Jubel/Freude (V. 1. 8. 11f.) einerseits, Gerechtigkeit/Gericht (V. 2. 6. 8. 11f.) andererseits.¹

In other words, God's throne is the reason and source of joy for His creation.²

¹Jeremias, Das Königtum Gottes in den Psalmen, 139.

²Kraus, Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament, 133, summarizes the content of Ps 97 as follows: "Der König Jahwe erscheint zur Freude and zum Gericht aller Welt; Zion jauchzt über die Offenbarung Gottes."
Psalm 103:19

Ps 103, which opens a group of psalms of praise (Pss 103-107),\(^1\) falls into five approximately equal stanzas, the first (vss. 1-5) and the last (vss. 19-22) forming the introduction and the conclusion, and the other three (vss. 6-10, 11-14, 15-18) the main body of the psalm.\(^2\) The psalm ends as it begins, with "Bless (or Praise) Yahweh, O my soul!" (vss. 1a, 22b). Thus it represents a case of **inclusio**.\(^3\) Thomas Boys and E. W. Bullinger have shown that in form the psalm is a chiastic or inverted parallelism:\(^4\)

A—Exhortation to Bless (1-5)

B—Yahweh's Kingdom: Israel (6-7)

C—Merciful Goodness (8)

D—Sparing Goodness (9)

E—Pardoning Goodness (10)

E—Pardoning Goodness (11-13)

D—Sparing Goodness (14-16)

C—Merciful Goodness (17-18)

B—Yahweh's Kingdom: Universe (19)

A—Exhortation to Bless (20-22)

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\(^2\)Kirkpatrick, 600.

\(^3\)Cf. Beaucamp, 2:146.

It is noticeable that vss. 1-5 are personal; vss. 6-18 are national; and vss. 19-22 are universal. These three divisions have five stanzas, all telling of God: His benefits (vss. 1-5), righteousness (vss. 6-10), lovingkindness (vss. 11-14), eternity (vss. 15-18), and sovereignty (vss. 19-22).

It is significant that the Psalmist refers to the throne of God after mentioning a long list of divine attributes and acts that have been shown to His people. In fact, our text (vs. 19) forms the climax of the song and thus also the conclusion of the psalm. Thus it embraces and rounds off what has been enumerated in the preceding verses. In other words, the throne of God represents the power and character of the One who has provided all the benefits such as forgiveness (vs. 3a), healing (vs. 3b), redemption (vs. 4a), lovingkindness (hesed, vss. 4b, 8b, 169. Briggs and Briggs, 2:323-324, remark: "Ps. 103 is a summons to Israel to bless Yahweh for all that He had done for them (v. 1-2), His pardon and redemption (v. 3-4a, 5a), His deeds of righteousness and justice (v. 6-7), His long suffering (v. 9-10), His kindness in removing sin (v. 11-12), His fatherly compassion (v. 13-14), His everlasting kindness and righteousness to frail man (v. 15, 17)."

1Scroggie, 3:23; Westermann, Ausgewählte Psalmen, 169. Briggs and Briggs, 2:323-324, remark: "Ps. 103 is a summons to Israel to bless Yahweh for all that He had done for them (v. 1-2), His pardon and redemption (v. 3-4a, 5a), His deeds of righteousness and justice (v. 6-7), His long suffering (v. 9-10), His kindness in removing sin (v. 11-12), His fatherly compassion (v. 13-14), His everlasting kindness and righteousness to frail man (v. 15, 17)."


mercy and compassion (vss. 4b, 8a), satisfaction (vs. 5), righteousness and justice (vs. 6), etc.

As for the type of the psalm, Gunkel and many other scholars classify it as an individual hymn. For its Sitz im Leben, Kraus, Weiser, and Anderson suggest the cultic setting or congregational recital. Klaus Seybold maintains that the theme of this thanksgiving psalm is sickness and healing (vss. 3-5). At any rate, the psalm is the praise of God's abundant grace.


3Gunkel, Die Psalmen, 442; Gunkel and Begrich, 66; Kittel, Die Psalmen, 330; Anderson, The Book of Psalms, 2:712; etc.

4Kraus, Psalmen, 2:871-872.

5Weiser, The Psalms, 558.


7Against Becker, Israel deutet seine Psalmen, 74-77. Cf. Schmidt, Die Psalmen, 186.

8Seybold, Das Gebet des Kranken im Alten Testament, 142-143.

9Westermann, Praise and Lament in the Psalms, 135.
The motif of the divine throne appears in vs. 19:

\[\text{YHWH baššāmayim hēkin kis'ō āmalkūtō bakkōl māšālāh:}\]

The LORD [Yahweh] has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. (RSV).

The first thing to note is the peculiarity of Yahweh's authority: it is Yahweh Himself that established (hēkin) His throne. The word hēkin is the hifil form of kūn. It is to be noted that here again the verb kūn is used to indicate the "establishment" of God's throne. Setting up of the throne is Yahweh's divine action for His own government and kingdom. Yahweh is not a delegated Sovereign for whom a throne is set up by someone else. His ruling and judging authority originates from within Himself. He is an Autocrat, but not a despot, and His dominion arises from Himself and is sustained by His own innate power. His dominion is one that originally resides in His nature, not derived from any by birth or commission. He is the sole cause of His own kingship and kingdom. This matchless sovereignty, symbolized by the throne which Yahweh Himself set up, is the pledge of our security, the pillar upon which our confidence may safely lean.

Second, here again the Psalmist proclaims the universality of Yahweh's kingship (kissē') and His kingdom (malkūt): His throne is established in the heavens (cf. Ps

\[\text{1Cf. Koch, "kūn," TWAT, 4:107.}\]
11:4) and His kingdom rules over all (cf. Ps 47:9 [ET 47:8]): all places and all peoples. As in Ps 11:4, the phrase "in the heavens" indicates the general location of the throne of God, while the sanctuary/temple in heaven means the specific location of it. The One who has set up the throne and sits upon it is the Lord of All.2 His is the only universal monarchy and He is the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords. The psalm starts with a personal praise and develops to a national hymn and now reaches its climax as a universal jubilate.

Makrakis interprets "heaven" (Šāmayim) as meaning "the spiritual world of angels" and "throne" (kissê) as meaning "the angelic battalion of Cherubim on which God sits."3 This interpretation seems arbitrary and can hardly be maintained, both syntactically and contextually (cf. vss. 19-21).

Third, Yahweh's kingdom and kingship are eternal. "His kingdom rules over all": all time and everywhere. Everything under the sun dies and disappears, "but from everlasting to everlasting Yahweh's ḫesed is with those who fear Him, and His ṣeḏaqāh with their children's children" (vs. 17). Yahweh is our God from everlasting to

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1See p. 336 above.

2Gunkel, *Die Psalmen*, 443.

3Makrakis, 587.
everlasting (Ps 90:2) and shall reign for ever and ever (Rev 11:15).

Fourth, the phrase "His throne in the heavens" denotes the glory of His dominion and the vastness of His realm. The heavens are the most stately and comely pieces of the creation: God's majesty and greatness are there most visible, and His glory and power most splendid (cf. Ps 19:1).

The Psalmist has depicted the varied attributes of Yahweh as seen in his personal experiences, in the nation's history, and in nature. He has proclaimed the majesty and greatness of Yahweh's universal sovereignty. Now he gathers up all his energies for one final outburst of adoration, in which he would have all unite, since all are subjects of the Great King:

Bless the LORD, O you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his word,
hearkening to the voice of his word!
Bless the LORD, all his hosts,
his ministers that do his will!
Bless the LORD, all his works,
in all places of his dominion.
Bless the LORD, O my soul!
(Ps 103:20-22, RSV, emphasis supplied).

Apocalyptic Literature

The Book of Daniel

Daniel 7:9

Dan 7:9 is the only passage where the Aramaic term korsē' is used for "thrones" in heaven, including the
throne of the "Ancient of Days."\(^1\) It is also the only text in the apocalyptic literature of the OT that has a refer­ence to the divine throne.

Containing "one of the most majestically conceived scenes in the entire Old Testament,"\(^2\) Dan 7 has been called "the heart of the Book of Daniel,"\(^3\) "the pivotal chapter of Daniel,"\(^4\) "das Zentrum des Danielbuches,"\(^5\) "a middle pivot or hinge which ties together the beginning and the end of the book,"\(^6\) and "the single most important chapter of the

\(^1\)As noted earlier (see pp. 129-131 above), the Aramaic korse occurring only three times in the OT: once in Dan 5:20 to refer to the throne of Nebuchadnezzar and twice in 7:9 to refer to the celestial thrones.


Book of Daniel,1 for the vision reported in this chapter is "the most important one" and "constitutes the veritable centre of the book."2

On the other hand, the vision of Dan 7 is "one of the great riddles in OT research."3 There are some important and hard issues in this chapter which many scholars have wrestled with: e.g., the identities of "ten horns" (vs. 7), "the little horn" (vs. 8; cf. 8:9), the "Ancient of Days" (vs. 9), "One like a son of man" (vs. 13), and "the saints of the Most High" (vss. 18, 22, 25, 27).4

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1W. Sibley Towner, Daniel, Int:BCTP (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 91. Towner continues on the same page: "Its position is pivotal, both in terms of the architecture of the book as a whole and in terms of the brilliance of the vision which it contains."


Besides these, there have also been questions concerning the unity of this chapter. These significant issues and difficulties involved make Dan 7 "fascinating, tantalizing, and challenging."


Dan 7 is generally divided into two major parts: the first part (vss. 1-14) contains the visions; the second (vss. 15-28) provides the interpretations. ¹ The visions are divided into three main sections by the long introductory formula  נָצָהֹן הֵעָט בֶּהְצָוָא ('im-)לֶלֶיְתא' ("I saw in the night visions" [or "I saw in my vision by night"], vss. 2, 7, 13).²

The whole chapter relates events which took place "in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon" (vs. 1),


²Cf. Zevit, 388; Raabe, 268. On the other hand, Arnold B. Rhodes, "The Kingdoms of Men and the Kingdom of God: A Study of Daniel 7:1-14," Int 15 (1961): 414-429, divides the visions into four scenes: Scene One—the four beasts (vss. 2-8); Scene Two—the convening of the heavenly court (vss. 9-10); Scene Three—the execution of the sentence (vss. 11-12); Scene Four—the one like a son of man (vss. 13-14). Cf. Helge S. Kvanvig, "Struktur und Geschichte in Dan. 7,1-14," ST 32 (1978): 95-117.
i.e., 550/49 B.C.¹ In that year Daniel had a dream in which he saw four great beasts, each different from the others, coming up out of the sea (vss. 2-3): the first was like a lion, with the wings of an eagle (vs. 4); the second looked like a bear raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth (vs. 5); the third resembled a leopard and had four wings of a bird and four heads (vs. 6); and the fourth was nondescript, compared to no animal, but it was "dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong" (vs. 7, NASB). Particular attention, however, was directed to this fourth beast and to the ten horns which were upon its head. There arose a little horn, which uprooted three of the horns and had eyes of a man and a mouth speaking boastfully (vs. 8).

At this juncture, from the earthly scenes of strife and contention for a political supremacy the attention of the prophet was drawn to heaven where he beheld the commencement of a great assize in the presence of God. The text, which has been in prose up to this point, changes over to poetry:²


²The same thing also happens in vss. 13-14 (the section about the Son of Man) and 23-27 (the interpretation of the whole vision). James A. Montgomery calls this kind of free use of metrical forms "a poetical rhapsody" (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel, ICC [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927], 311). It is fitting
The MT of Dan 7:9-10 reads:

hāzēh hāwēt
‘ad di korsāwān rēmiw
we’attiq yōmin yētib
lebūšēh kitlay hiwwār
ūsē’ar rē’šēh ka’āmar nēqē’
korsē’yēh šēbihin di-nūr
galgillōhi nūr dāliq:
nēhār di-nūr nāged
wēnāpeq min-qōdāmōhi
‘elep ‘alpīm yēsammešūnēh
wēribbō ribwān qōdāmōhi yēqūmūn
dīnā’ yētib
wēsiprin pēṭihū:

I kept looking
Until thrones were set up,
And the Ancient of Days took His seat;
His vesture was like white snow,
And the hair of His head like pure wool.
His throne was ablaze with flames,
Its wheels were a burning fire.
A river of fire was flowing
And coming out from before Him;
Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,
And myriads upon myriads were standing
before Him;
The court sat,
And the books were opened.
(NASB).

to turn to rhythmical style to describe the royal court of
the Ancient of Days. With regard to the literary structure
of Dan 7, the following observation by Jacques B. Doukhan
is noteworthy:

"Three times, we shift alternatively from prose to
poetry and from poetry to prose, following the pro­
phet's gaze as it looks to earth or to heaven.

vss. 2-8 on earth, in prose
9, 10 in heaven, in poetry
11, 12 on earth, in prose
13, 14 in heaven, in poetry
15-22 on earth, in prose
23-27 in heaven, in poetry

In that way, a bond of mysterious dependence is
suggested between the destiny of the earthly world
and 'history' in heaven, thereby opening a perspec­
tive of hope for this world."

(Jacques B. Doukhan, Daniel: The Vision of the End [Berrien
This "well-known judgment scene" ("die bekannte Gerichtsszene")\textsuperscript{1} is followed by the descriptions of the loquacity of the little horn (vs. 11a), the fate of the fourth beast (vs. 11b), the fate of the first three beasts (vs. 12), and the glorious triumph of "One like the son of man" (vss. 13-14). Thus the first part of Dan 7 (especially the details of vision, vss. 4-14) forms a chiastic mold, as Ferch has pointed out:\textsuperscript{2}

I. Preliminary view of the earthly kingdom (vss. 2b-3).
II. Details of vision (vss. 4-14).
   A. First three beasts (4-6).
   B. Fourth beast (7).
   C. Description of little horn with loquacity (8).
   D. The JUDGMENT (9-10; supplemented by its second half, 13-14).
   C\textsuperscript{1}. [Fate of] little horn with its loquacity (11a).
   B\textsuperscript{1}. Fate of the fourth beast (11b).
   A\textsuperscript{1}. Fate of the first three beasts (12).
   D\textsuperscript{1}. The JUDGMENT and the Son of Man: A GLORIOUS TRIUMPH (13-14).

\textsuperscript{1}Gamper, \textit{Gott als Richter in Mesopotamien und im Alten Testament}, 219. The judgment is described three times in Dan 7: vss. 9-10/13-14, 21-22, and 25-26.

\textsuperscript{2}Cf. Ferch, \textit{The Son of Man in Daniel Seven}, 136-137; idem, \textit{Daniel on Solid Ground}, 27. Raabe, 270, finds a similar chiastic structure in Dan 7:2b-14 as follows:

\begin{tabular}{ll}
A & vv. 2b-7 - - - - - - Four beasts \\
B & v. 8 - - - - - - Little horn \\
C & vv. 9-10 - - Throne scene \\
B' & v. 11a - - - - Little horn \\
A' & vv. 11b-12 - - - - Four beasts \\
C' & vv. 13-14 - - Throne scene."
\end{tabular}

The difference between Ferch and Raabe is that while the former separates the fourth beast (vss. 7, 11b) from the first three (vss. 4-6, 12), the latter considers that the four beasts form one unit.
This chiastic structure of vss. 4-14, with the judgment at its center, first describes the measured rise of the earthly powers before it traces their fate in exact inverse order in the second half.\footnote{Ferch, *The Son of Man in Daniel Seven*, 137.} According to Erik W. Heaton, the whole judgment scene (vss. 9-14) in this vision forms the climax of both the vision and the whole book of Daniel:

We now come to the climax, alike of the vision and the whole book. All that goes before leads up to this passage and all that comes after flows from it. Set over against the destructive beasts is the power and purpose of God, who, as in the beginning, will in the end subdue all things to himself (cf. I Cor. 15:28).\footnote{Erik W. Heaton, *The Book of Daniel*, TBC (London: SCM Press, 1956), 178.}

Considerable speculation has been devoted to the plural "thrones" (korsäwān) in the description of the judgment scene. "Thrones" were set up, one of which is first occupied by the "Ancient of Days" ('attiq yômīn).\footnote{LaCocque's translation of this portion is "The One Who Endures."} The term 'attiq yômīn, literally meaning "one advanced in days," is a unique expression in the OT, although corresponding titles can be found in 1 Enoch 46:1-2; 47:3; 98:2 ("Head of Days"). This term ('attiq yômīn), which LaCocque renders as "The-One-Who-Endures," apparently refers to God (LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 142). This particular name for God seems to be based on the concept of longevity and eternal existence of God (cf. Pss 9:8 [ET 9:7]; 29:10; 90:2). Cf. Walter Baumgartner, *Das Buch Daniel*, Aus der Welt der Religion, AT 1 (Gießen: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1926), 20; Heaton, *The Book of Daniel*, 178; Maier, *Der Prophet Daniel*, 275. For a brief summary of views, see Harry Bultema, *Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1988), 218-219.
Now the question is, how many thrones are left and who will occupy them (or it)?

Some commentators, both Jewish and Christian, understand that there were two thrones. R. Johanan's dictum is that "one [throne] was for Himself and one for David."¹ R. Akiba was of the same opinion.² But R. Jose, the Galilean, reproached R. Akiba for this view: "Akiba, how long wilt thou profane the Shechinah? Rather, [it must mean] one [throne] for justice, and the other for mercy."³ Rashi understood that one throne was for judgment and the other for justice.⁴ One author in the last century even noted that "these thrones are the thrones of the four kingdoms of the metallic image."⁵ Some other scholars hold that the Son of Man occupied one throne alongside the Ancient of Days, since they argue that in an alleged pre-Danielic Son of Man tradition (so-called Danielvorlage) the manlike figure was a judge who took his seat alongside

¹B. Sanh. 38b (The Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 245).

²B. Sanh. 38b (ibid., Sanhedrin, 245). Cf. b. Ḥag. 14a (ibid., Ḥagigah, 83-84).

³B. Sanh. 38b (ibid., Sanhedrin, 245). Cf. b. Ḥag. 14a (ibid., Ḥagigah, 83).

⁴LaCocque, The Book of Daniel, 142, n. 96.

God.¹ Ferch represents several reasons why this view cannot be accepted.² It is true that nothing in the text suggests that the figure who appears in vs. 13, the Son of Man, has any judicial function.³ However, since it is evident that vs. 13 describes a royal investiture and vs. 14 states, "And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him" (RSV), it is not impossible that the Son of Man was seated on the throne alongside God.⁴ For the throne is not only the seat of a judge, but more basically the seat of a sovereign ruler or king.

The explanation that the plural of "thrones" in the passage is a "majestic plural"⁵ or plural of majesty seems to be inappropriate. The interpretation that two or more


²Cf. Ferch, The Son of Man in Daniel Seven, 148-149.


thrones indicate "a duality of functions"\(^1\) has no basis in the context of the passage. Another opinion that Dan 7:9-12 presents "more than one judgment"\(^2\) lacks support in the text. According to this view, one judgment is represented by the "thrones" (plural) and the other by the "throne" (singular), and the latter points to the "great white throne" judgment depicted in Rev 20:11-15.\(^3\) This view does not recommend itself for the following reasons: First, it is artificial and arbitrary to divide the one judgment scene with the thrones, upon one of which the Ancient of Days sat, into two different judgment scenes: even though the thrones are plural, the judgment involved is only one. Second, although there are some similarities between the descriptions of the two throne scenes (Dan 7:9-10, 13-14 and Rev 20:11-15), the similarities by themselves cannot be the evidence that they indicate one and the same judgment—all throne scenes have some elements or descriptions in common. Third, the throne scene in Dan 7 presents a phase of the heavenly assize which is convened while the "little horn" blasphemes God and persecutes His saints on earth (Dan 7:8, 11, 21-22). This means that the judgment was

\(^1\) André LaCocque, *Daniel in His Time, Studies on Personalities of the OT* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 155.


\(^3\) Ibid.
given in behalf of the saints, before the Son of Man receives the eternal kingdom (vss. 13-14), i.e., before the Second Coming of Christ. In other words, the judgment scene in Dan 7:9-10 is a prophetic vision of the pre-Advent or investigative judgment because of the timing indicated and the nature of the judgment with "books" being opened (vs. 10). On the contrary, the other throne scene in Rev 20 reveals the final judgment of "the dead" (Rev 20:12, 13) after the Second Coming of Christ, even after the millennium (vss. 4-7). The latter may be designated the executive judgment.

Many exegetes maintain that the thrones were for "the assessors" 1 or "das Richterkollegium," 2 i.e., "the angelic associate judges who constitute the celestial 'court [Aramaic dinā', short for bêt dinā'] that sat in judgment' (vss. [Dan 7:]10, 26)." 3 This view would suggest


2Jürgen-Christian Lebram, Das Buch Daniel, ZBK, AT 23 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1984), 90.

that the Ancient of Days is enthroned as the presiding Judge in the assembly of the angels, a conception which is echoed in such OT passages as 1 Kgs 22:19; Pss 50; 72; 82:1; Joel 3:2-17. But the context of the present text does not say anything about the identity of the ones who will take the thrones. Vs. 10b says, "Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,/ And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him" (NASB). This means that these numberless celestial beings are not described as sitting on the thrones but standing before the Ancient of Days. Therefore, Norman W. Porteous' cautious assessment seems to do the greatest justice to the text:

If there were assessors there is no specific mention of them . . . . Nor is there any definite suggestion in the text that the thrones were intended to be occupied later on by the one like a son of man or by representatives of the saints of the Most High, though the reader may have been expected to draw that inference for himself. It is true that in later thought about the judgment it was believed that the saints would have a part in it, but that is not conclusive for the intention of the author of Daniel.¹

It is remarkable that in the passage under discussion the judgment commences when the Ancient of Days sits


¹Porteous, 108; cf. Ferch, The Son of Man in Daniel Seven, 149-150. Cf. John F. Walvoord, Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation: A Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 164: "Who sits on the thrones first mentioned is not indicated, but this may either refer to angelic authority or the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity may be intended."
down or takes His seat (yōṣêḇ). The verb "to sit" (Hebrew yōṣêḇ; Aramaic yōṭṭêḇ) is closely connected with the throne (cf. 1 Kgs 1:46; 2:12; Jer 22:4; Esth 1:2),¹ and in many cases sitting on the throne means starting to exercise kingship and/or judgeship (cf. Deut 17:18; 1 Kgs 16:11; 2 Kgs 13:13; Esth 1:2; 1 Chr 28:5; 2 Chr 6:10). The truly venerable appearance and nature of the King-Judge are heightened by the description of various aspects of God, as John G. Gammie notes:

The divine rule is indicated by His throne and by the ten thousands standing before Him; the divine wisdom by the title "Ancient of Days" and by His white hair; the divine purity by His white raiment; the divine majesty by the thousand servants; and the divine judgment by the throne of fire, the court, and the opened books.²

That Yahweh Himself might be seen sitting in the form of a man on His throne was an idea familiar to a Hebrew audience (Ezek 1:26; 43:6-7; Isa 6:1), and that He was the appellation "Ancient of Days" could not have seemed strange to people who were acquainted with Job 36:26; Ps 102:25-29 (ET 102:24-28); Isa 41:4; or Ps 90:1-12, which


²John G. Gammie, Daniel, Knox Preaching Guides (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), 75. Desmond Ford also has offered a remark similar to Gammie's:

"The holiness of God is emphasized by the symbols of white wool and burning fire. His eternal nature is hinted at by the expression 'Ancient of Days.' His absolute sovereignty is stressed by mention of the hosts of unnumbered millions who stand in His presence awaiting His bidding." (Desmond Ford, Daniel [Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1978], 146).
explicitly speaks about the eternal preexistence of Yahweh.

Hubert Junker remarks:

... das weiße Gewand und das reine (= helle) Haar sollen die Gestalt als eine himmlische Lichtgestalt kennzeichnen. Wir haben also keinen Anlaß, den "Hochbetagten" als altersschwachen Greis zu denken.\(^1\)

Since the One who is sitting on the throne is called the "Ancient of Days" (literally, "advanced in days") or "der Urewige"\(^2\) or "der Uralte,"\(^3\) it is only natural that the throne itself is also "advanced in days" or "urewig" or "uralt." This alludes to the fact that the throne of God points to the Urzeit by its long existence with its eternal Occupant while the judgment which started upon the session of the Ancient of Days takes place in the Endzeit.

The description of the throne in vss. 9b-10a recalls the merkābāh, the divine chariot of Ezekiel's vision with its flames and wheels (Ezek 1 and 10). Fire is the dominant motif, a sign of a theophany (Exod 24:17; Deut 4:24; 9:3; 33:2; Ezek 1:13-14; 10:6-7) and of divine judgment (Lev 10:2; Num 16:35; Ps 50:3-4; 97:3-5; Isa 30:27-28; Mal 3:2). Quite clearly, in this passage at least, the

\(^1\)Hubert Junker, Untersuchungen über literarische und exegetische Probleme des Buches Daniel (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1932), 52.

\(^2\)Plöger, Das Buch Daniel, 110.

fire not only represents the blindingly brilliant manifestation of God's splendor but also the fierce heat of His judgment on sin and on all those opposed to His supreme authority.\(^1\) The wheels of the divine throne, as in Ezekiel's vision, indicate that the throne is movable and the One who occupies it may move or drive/ride it.\(^2\)

One important fact in the present passage is that thrones "were set up" (\(\text{re'ma'}\)). This is the peal form of the verb \(\text{re'ma'}\) which means "cast, throw, place, set."\(^3\) This Aramaic verb occurs twelve times in the Aramaic section of the book of Daniel.\(^4\) The same form of this verb, \(\text{re'mi'w}\), is used in Dan 3:21b, where it says, "They were cast into the burning fiery furnace" (RSV, emphasis supplied). These usages reveal that \(\text{re'ma'}\) indicates an action of casting or placing an object in a place where it has not been. This means that the "thrones" which "were set up" are not the abiding thrones which have been functioning for their ordinary purpose but the special

\(^1\)Archer, "Daniel," EBC, 7:89.

\(^2\)That Yahweh Himself is thought of as riding in a chariot is seen from Hab 3:8, 15. The throne of Yahweh in the vision of Ezekiel is, in fact, a throne wagon or chariot, and it runs on four wheels and is able to move in all four directions because there is ru\(\text{a}\) hunger in them. Cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, "Drive and/or Ride in O. T.," VT 12 (1962): 296-299.

\(^3\)BDB, 1113; KBL, 1124.

\(^4\)The 12 occurrences of \(\text{re'ma'}\) are Dan 3:6, 11, 15, 20, 21, 24; 6:8, 13, 17, 25 (ET 6:7, 12, 16, 24); 7:9, 24. Cf. Even-Shoshan, 1077-1078.
thrones which are newly placed for a unique purpose. Setting these thrones means at least two things: (1) the thrones are not fixed in one location but movable and moving; and (2) their purpose is beginning to be carried out. The purpose of setting these thrones is to judge by examining the records of the people.

Besides the judicial throne and the supreme Judge, integral to judgment was the opening of "the books" (vs. 10b) which would provide "evidences" ("Beweismittel"). Several references to the "books" appear in the OT and other Jewish literature. In Pss 56:9 (ET 56:8); 139:16; Isa 65:6; and Mal 3:16 ("book of remembrance") we read of a book of man's activities available for scrutiny (cf. Rev 5:1-9; 20:12b), and in Exod 32:32; Ps 69:28; Isa 4:3; and Dan 12:1 we find another book often referred to as the "book of life" (cf. Luke 10:20; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12a, 15; 21:27). These books seem to be used as the evidences for the judgment and redemption of people.

Dan 7:13-14 says a number of things of "One like a son of man" (kÈbar 'Ènãš) and His royal investiture: He

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1Maier, Der Prophet Daniel, 277.
2Cf. Jub. 30:22; 1 Enoch 81:4; 89:61-64; 98:7-8; 104:7; As. Isa. 9:22; T. Levi 5:5; b. 'Abot 2:1 (The Babylonian Talmud, Aboth, 11-12).
came "with the clouds of heaven"; He was presented before the "Ancient of Days"; He received everlasting "dominion and glory and kingdom" as well as the obeisance of "all peoples, nations, and languages." These things imply the following: (1) the kingdom of the Son of Man originates from heaven; (2) its authority comes from God; (3) it is eternal in duration; and (4) it is universal in scope.

Thus, together with the other descriptions of the judgment (vss. 21-22 and 25-26), Dan 7 reveals the sweep of history from the time of Daniel to the establishment of the everlasting kingdom at the transition of the present historical reality to the future reality of the new age at the time of the end [Endzeit].

The significance of this "symbolic dream vision" is great, especially because it tells us the place, time, and object of the judgment: (1) the judgment takes place in heaven; (2) it is in progress during the end-time between the termination of the little horn's dominion over "the saints

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1The reference to the clouds is frequently connected with the presence of Yahweh (e.g., Exod 16:10; 19:9). Cf. Leopold Sabourin, "The Biblical Cloud: Terminology and Traditions," BTB 4 (1974): 290-311. For the significance of the cloud imagery, see Ferch, The Son of Man in Daniel Seven, 162-166.


4Collins, Daniel, 78.
of the Most High\textsuperscript{1} and the beginning of the everlasting kingdom which is given to the saints (vss. 21-22, 25-26); and (3) it involves "an examination of the cases of the professed people of God" as well as "a decision in the case of the little horn," because "the little horn represents a religious communion, especially its leadership, that professes to be Christian in nature" and thus it has "followers represented by this corporate symbol."\textsuperscript{2}

Therefore, the divine throne in the book of Daniel appears first of all as the symbol of the supreme judgeship of the Ancient of Days who examines the records in the celestial "books" as a process prior to the change of the aeons in the end-time. It also symbolizes the absolute and sovereign authority of God who invests the Son of Man with universal kingship and entrusts Him with the everlasting kingdom. The title of the One who takes the throne, "the Ancient of Days," points to one side of time, the Urzeit, whence He has been sitting on the throne. But the throne

\textsuperscript{1}Cf. Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Identity of 'The Saints of the Most High' in Daniel 7," \textit{Bib} 56 (1975): 173-192. Hasel concludes that "the saints of the Most High" are to be identified with "... God's faithful followers who constitute His remnant people, who are His chosen ones, set apart from the rest of the nations, persecuted by the power opposing God, but keeping the covenant faith and maintaining their trust and confidence in God from whom they finally receive an everlasting kingdom" (p. 192).

\textsuperscript{2}Shea, \textit{Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation}, 130-131.
itself points to the other side of time, the Endzeit, when God sitting upon the throne will investigate and judge people on the basis of the records in the celestial books. With all these implications, God and His throne occupy the central position of the eschatological heavenly judgment scene depicted in the apocalyptic vision of Dan 7.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present dissertation has explored the biblical significance and theological implications of the "throne of God" motif through an exegetical investigation of the twenty-seven passages of the Hebrew Bible which have direct reference to the divine throne.

In the first chapter the problems which the "throne of God" motif poses were stated and the importance and necessity of the research of this motif were presented. Since the symbolism and significance of the "throne of God" motif is presented only partially and incompletely in the individual vision or oracle, it is desirable that we should grasp an overall view of the theology of the throne of God as presented in the Hebrew Bible.

In the second chapter I attempted to provide a substantial survey of pertinent literature since the turn of the century. This survey reveals the current status of investigation on our topic to be only fragmentary and thus unsatisfactory. During the last nine decades (1897-1988), some twenty-five scholars have contributed substantially to the study of the subject. Some studies deal with the
"enthronement psalms" and two are investigations of the kingship or reign of God that touch on the "throne of God" motif. The majority of works surveyed are concerned mainly with another question, Which item of the sanctuary represented the throne of God on earth, the ark of the covenant, the cherubim, or the mercy-seat? While scholars such as Wolfgang Reichel, Johannes Meinhold, Martin Dibelius, Hermann Gunkel, and Jan Dus maintain that the ark of the covenant functioned as the throne of God,\(^1\) others such as Wilhelm Lotz, Menahem Haran, R. E. Clements, Rainer Schmitt, and Tryggve N. D. Mettinger argue that the cherubim were regarded as the throne of God.\(^2\) Roland de Vaux suggests that the ark of the covenant and the cherubim represented respectively the footstool and the throne of God.\(^3\) Hans Schmidt holds that the mercy-seat functioned as the throne of God.\(^4\) In contrast to the above scholars, Johann Maier and Martin Metzger treated a part of the significance of the "throne of God" motif itself. In his book *Vom Kultus zur Gnosis*, Johann Maier dealt with but five "throne of God" passages (1 Kgs 22:19 [//2 Chr 18:18]; Isa 6; Ezek 1; Dan 7:9) which are parts of vision reports.

\(^1\)See pp. 15-17, 17-18, 21-22, 28-30, 44-45 above.


\(^3\)See pp. 37-39 above.

\(^4\)See pp. 30-31 above.
He did not pay any attention to the other twenty-two "throne of God" passages which are found in various other parts of the OT. Nevertheless, there are three notable observations in his conclusions: (1) The throne of God stands in the foreground as the "place of revelation" ("Ort der Offenbarung"\(^1\) or "Offenbarungsstätte"\(^2\)). (2) The throne became a "goal of ascending exercise which is accomplished ritualistically-magically by meditative contemplation and is felt as real."\(^3\) (3) "In Israelite-Jewish religion, the concept of the throne of God was very much an illustration of the power of the Creator-God both in the world and in history . . ."\(^4\)

Martin Metzger's works are the most important studies in the field of our subject.\(^5\) His most recent article entitled "Der Thron als Manifestation der Herrschermacht in der Ikonographie des Vorderen Orients und im Alten Testament" (1985) deals more directly with a single

\(^1\)J. Maier, *Vom Kultus zur Gnosis*, 126.

\(^2\)Ibid., 147.

\(^3\)In German: "Der 'Thron der Herrlichkeit' [wurde] auch Ziel einer in meditativer Versenkung ritualistisch-magisch bewerkstelligten und als real empfundenen Aufstiegspraxis" (ibid.).

\(^4\)In German: "Die Vorstellung vom Gottessthron war in der israelitisch-jüdischen Religion so sehr Veranschaulichung der Welt- und Geschichtsmächtigkeit des Schöpfergottes . . ." (ibid.).

\(^5\)See pp. 49-55 above and bibliography.
aspect of our subject than any other work. His concern in this article is limited to three basic concepts: (1) the throne represents the domain or ruling territory of the one who occupies it; (2) it represents the ruler himself; and (3) it represents the palace or temple as the place of the power, holiness, and presence of the king or deity.

The following emerged from the literature survey: First, the majority of pertinent studies did not deal with the "throne of God" motif per se. Even the few studies which treated the motif directly limited themselves to a few biblical passages or to a part of the significance of the throne motif. Second, contradictory conclusions have been reached regarding the earthly representation of the throne of God. Third, many important questions and issues have not been considered, such as the origin of the "throne of God" motif, the location of the throne in heaven and/or on earth, the nature of the throne as God's seat, other various functions and significance of the throne of God, and the development of the throne motif over the centuries.

1See pp. 53-54 above.

during OT time. Thus, the "throne of God" motif calls for a comprehensive investigation of all specific and direct references in various parts and literatures of the Hebrew Bible.

The third chapter of this dissertation is devoted to the investigation of the divine throne motif in ancient Near Eastern literature. The material examined consists of representative Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Egyptian literary texts. The outcome of this investigation is of considerable consequence for both comparison and contrast between the "throne of God" motif in the OT and the "divine throne" motif in the extrabiblical traditions of other cultures.

One of the few authors who touched extensively on the throne motif in the ancient Near Eastern materials is M. Metzger. He limited his investigation to iconographies and did not consider literary sources. Many years ago, E. A. Willis Budge allotted but the briefest space to the motif of the throne of Osiris in his 844-page work on that god. Other scholars are not known to have dealt with this subject.

Sumerian has two different words for "throne": one is gi₃gu-za and the other a₅-te. But the latter is not so

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1Ibid., 250-296.

2E. A. W. Budge, Osiris, 2:262-264 (sec. 34: "The Throne").
frequently used as the former.\(^1\)\(^\text{gīzgu-za}\) may mean either "throne" (of a king or god) or "chair" (of common people). However, ancient Sumerians considered the throne essential to royalty or kingship. Thus, in Sumerian literature, the divine throne is, first of all, the symbol of king(queen)ship/royalty/sovereignty and reign of deity. At least once the term "throne" (gu-za) is used for the seat of Gudea who was not only a king but also a high priest.\(^2\) In this particular case, therefore, the throne is the emblem of priesthood and possibly of kingship.\(^3\)

In Sumerian texts, both sitting place and seating arrangement were so important that the gods were given specific seats and a specific order for sitting in relation to one another. This is in contrast to Israelite monotheism in which the one God sits upon His throne and all the host of heaven stand beside Him.\(^4\) According to one

\(^1\)Cf. p. 63, n. 1 above.


\(^3\)Note that although Gudea is both king and high priest, only the latter is mentioned in connection with the "throne" (see p. 65 above).

\(^4\)One possible exception may be Dan 7:9 which says, "Thrones [plural] were set up" (NASB). Even in this text, however, who will occupy those thrones is not mentioned, whereas the next verse (vs. 10) says that "thousands upon thousands were attending" God and "myriads upon myriads were standing before Him" (NASB, emphasis supplied).
Sumerian myth, one of the hundred-odd me's or divine principles which regulate the cosmic orders and human institutions is "the throne of kingship." The items of the me's consist of various institutions, priestly offices, ritualistic paraphernalia, and mental and emotional attitudes, as well as sundry beliefs and dogmas. This seems to indicate that the Sumerians regarded the throne as one of the divine principles by which the universe is operated.

The "throne" was also connected with the concept of judgment and destiny-making. In one of the temple hymns of Gudea, his throne is called "der Thron der Schicksalsentscheidung" or "le trône du destin." Here, the throne represents the one who sits upon it as deciding destiny or fate, and thus it is a symbol of the power of determining fate or deciding destiny.

Some of the tablets from Drehem refer to the throne of a god as a cult object. In other words, the throne not only represented the god who occupied it, but the throne per se was deified and worshiped. This cultic practice has

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4A. Nesbit, 44 (No. XX). See p. 70 above.
been found for the thrones of at least six gods.¹ In these cases, so to speak, god and throne are merged.

For the Sumerians the construction of thrones for deities was so important and significant that it became one of the time indicators in their history and chronology. This is reflected in the fact that many of their "year-names" or "year-formulae" are dated by or from the time of the construction of the thrones of their gods.²

In Akkadian literature the term kussû ("throne") is most commonly used as the insignia of kingship or of ruling power. This idea is found in the references both to human thrones and to divine thrones. However, compared with the enormous number of references to the human thrones, the occurrences of divine thrones are relatively rare.

One Akkadian hymn, entitled "Hymn to the Sun-God," mentions a divine throne.³ Although the exact meaning of the line which has this reference is uncertain, its context tells us that the throne symbolizes the authority of investigation or the power of judgment. The sun-god Shamash was sitting on the throne of judgment in this case.

Some of the Akkadian economic texts found at Ugarit describe how the worshipers brought sacrifices and


³ANET, 389. See p. 81 above.
offerings for the thrones. These Akkadian economic texts manifest the same phenomenon as the Sumerian tablets from Drehem, in which sacrifices were provided for thrones, suggesting the close identification of deity and throne.

Hittite texts from Boghazköy provide the term dag for "throne," primarily as the emblem of kingship. A throne may represent the king himself. One of the characteristic expressions in the Hittite texts, i.e., "to sit on the throne of one's father," indicates that the succession of the throne meant the succession of kingship.

Unique in Hittite literature is the personification of the "throne" (gišdag) which is engaged in a mock quarrel with the king. The personified Throne not only talked with the king but later provided him with the will of the gods. In contrast to the throne in both Sumerian and Akkadian texts, in Hittite texts no sacrifices are offered for a throne.

Ugaritic texts from Ras Shamra use two main and distinct terms for "throne": ks' and kht. They seem to be

1Schaeffer and Nougayrol, 184 (16.146, lines 12-15), 186 (16.161, lines 40-44). See p. 83 above.

2E. Akurgal, 53; ANET, 120 ("Kingship in Heaven"); NERTOT, 154 ("The Kingship in Heaven"). See pp. 85-86 above.

3Cf. ANET, 358 ("The Festival of the Warrior-God"). See pp. 86-87 above.

interchangeable in their meaning and usage. These two words are quite frequently juxtaposed to the words "kingdom" or "kingship" (mlk) and "dominion" or "rule" (drkt). The concept of the "throne" as a symbol of kingship or dominion prevails in Ugaritic literature.

As in Sumerian texts, so also in Ugaritic texts the position of the seat and the order of seating are very important. The gods are described as taking their specific thrones prearranged according to their status and the relationship to those who are present.1 Israelite monotheism is devoid of this idea since there is but one God.

The connection between throne and the concept of judgment is alluded to by way of parallelism between the two verbs ytb and tpt.2 A metaphorical usage of the "throne" (ks') is found in one of the Ugaritic texts: "Kaphtor is the chair [ks'u, throne] he [Ilu] sits on."3 Analogous to some biblical passages (Jer 3:17; 49:38), this clause means that Kaphtor is the area of Ilu's direct administration or rulership.

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2J. C. de Moor, New Year with Canaanites and Israelites, 2:24 ("The prayer U 5 V," Obverse 1-4). See pp. 102-103 above.

One text from Mari refers to the "House of the Thrones" as a ritual building for sacrificing animals.\(^1\) It seems that the thrones in this building were not those of human kings but those of gods. Whereas this is not related to the deification of thrones which is found in both Sumerian and Akkadian texts, it is striking that the divine thrones were in the building where animals were sacrificed.

Egyptian literature employs a great variety of hieroglyphs for "throne." Ancient Egyptians began to use the seating furniture from the very early period of their history, even from the predynastic era. For them the idea of the "throne" was, first and foremost, that it represented the godship. It seems that almost every one of the Egyptian gods, goddesses, and mythical beings had his or her own throne.\(^2\)

The second concept connected with the divine throne in Egyptian texts is, as in the other ancient Near Eastern literatures, that it was symbolic of kingship and its power. As H. Frankfort observes, "The throne 'makes' the king--the term occurs in Egyptian texts . . . ."\(^3\) One of the most frequently occurring phrases in Egyptian texts,


\(^2\)See pp. 105-108 above.

\(^3\)H. Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, 6. See p. 109 above.
"Amon-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands,"¹ not only expresses the king's status (kingship) but also, by way of metaphorical usage, specifies his domain or territory (kingdom).

The third concept of the deity's throne is that of judgment. Thoth's "throne" was in "his judgment hall."² Another divine throne was called "the seat of right and truth."³ This evidently indicates that the throne was sometimes considered a kind of judicial chair or seat.

A characteristic phenomenon of ancient Egyptian texts is that all kinds of explanatory adjectives are used to describe the divine thrones. Another characteristic point is that the throne of Osiris was inherited by his son Horus⁴ and later the Pharaohs themselves succeeded to this throne.⁵ This indicates the divine aspects of the Egyptian

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⁵ Cf. Budge, Osiris, 2:262. See p. 115 above.
kings. It was a prominent source of divine authority and the symbol of divine and royal sovereignty. As in Sumerian and Akkadian texts, the personification or divinization or the throne is present also in one of the Egyptian texts.¹

The investigation of the "throne of God/gods" motif in ancient Near Eastern literary texts thus shows that the "throne" signifies and/or is used as the following:

1. The throne is the seat of government; it is the emblem of kingship or ruling power (Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Egyptian).

2. It is the seat of judgment; it is the symbol of judgeship (Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian).

3. The throne is the place of the decision of fate (Sumerian).

4. It is the seat of priesthood (Sumerian).

5. The throne is used as a metaphor for dominion/territory or kingdom (Ugaritic and Egyptian).

6. It is the seat of godship or deity (Egyptian).

7. The "throne" is one of the divine principles which regulate the whole world (Sumerian).

8. The position of the throne or seat and the order of seating represent the position and relationship among deities (Sumerian and Ugaritic).

(9) The throne receives sacrifices or is located in the building of sacrifices; it is deified and worshiped as a cult object (Sumerian, Akkadian, and Ugaritic).

(10) It is personified or divinized (Hittite and Egyptian).

(11) The construction of the thrones for deities provides "year-formulae" or "year-names" (Sumerian).

The first two ideas in the above list (Nos. 1 and 2) have very much in common with the biblical throne motif and the next three concepts (Nos. 3-5) are also found in the Hebrew Bible. But the rest of the list (Nos. 6-11) is totally absent in the literature of the ancient Hebrews.

As a result of the investigation of ancient Near Eastern texts, it is recognized that the appearance of the "divine throne" motif in these texts antedates that of the "throne of God" motif in the Hebrew Bible. This recognition leads to the question of the origin of the biblical "throne of God" motif. There are some points of contact of the "divine throne" motif in biblical texts as compared to extrabiblical literature. However, distinctly dissimilar and contrastive aspects and some unique ones are part of the biblical "throne of God" motif that point in the direction that the "throne of God" motif in the Hebrew Bible has not been borrowed or taken over from the neighboring cultures. Its origin lies elsewhere.
have not treated the subjects of the cherubim, the mercy-seat, and the ark of the covenant in the present dissertation. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate at this juncture to take a brief look at those items of the sanctuary in connection with the origin of the "throne of God" motif. The "divine throne" motif is already implied in the early part of the Hebrew Bible. When God commanded Moses to build the sanctuary as His dwelling-place, the first things to be made were the ark, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim (Exod 25:10-22), i.e., the items which would be placed in the holy of holies. The entire building of the sanctuary was built "that I [God] may dwell among them" (vs. 8), and the holy of holies was the room where God would sit enthroned. Yahweh said, "There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you . . ." (Exod 25:22, RSV, emphasis supplied). Here two facts become evident: (1) all three items—the mercy-seat, the cherubim, and the ark of the covenant—worked together to bear, carry, and escort the presence of God; and (2) the location of God's presence and thus of His throne in the sanctuary was the space above the mercy-seat and between the two cherubim. This means that, while each item could indicate God's presence and/or His throne, the three as a unit fully represented the presence and throne of God on earth. It is evident that the idea of a
"throne of God" and its place was given to Moses and the Israelites through the divine oracle, in other words, it was provided by revelation. In Exod 25:9, 40 it is explicitly affirmed that the sanctuary and its content are to be built according to the "pattern" (tabnîh) as shown or revealed (mar'eh) to Moses on the mountain.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation is devoted to a concise investigation of the throne terminology of the Hebrew Bible. Four Hebrew terms (kîssê', kîssêh, mîsâb, and têkûnâh), one Aramaic word (korsê'), and some other related expressions are studied here. The major Hebrew term for "throne" is kîssê', occurring 135 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is a cognate of the Common Semitic root ks' which seems to be linked to the Sumerian term gišgu-za ("seat, chair"). The Hebrew term kîssêh is a variant of kîssê' and occurs only three times (twice in 1 Kgs 10:19; once in Job 26:9). The two forms are used without any difference in meaning. The term mîsâb is a derivative of the verb yâšâb ("to sit, dwell, inhabit") and occurs forty-four times in the OT. In most cases this word refers to the usual dwelling-place or a habitation, but in two texts (Ezek 28:2; Ps 132:13) it seems to indicate the place where the seat of God is located. The noun têkûnâh is used three times (Job 23:3; Ezek 43:11; Nah 2:10 [ET 2:9]), but only in Job 23:3 it refers to the seat or throne of God. The

1Cf. H.-J. Fabry, "kîssê'," TWAT, 4:270.
Aramaic term korsē', which is the equivalent of the Hebrew kissē', is used only three times in the Aramaic portion of the book of Daniel (once in 5:2; twice in 7:9) and only in 7:9 it refers to the divine throne. Chapter IV concludes with a brief overview of other expressions related to "throne" and the thrones of human beings in the Hebrew Bible.

The fifth chapter represents the heart of the present dissertation. It presents an exegetical investigation of all passages referring to the "throne" of God in the Hebrew Bible. As a general overview, it is noticeable that the "throne of God" motif is found in all major parts or divisions of the Hebrew Bible: Pentateuch (once in Exod), historical writings (once in 1 Kgs, three times in 1-2 Chr, and once in Lam), prophetic writings (twice in Isa, four times in Jer, three times in Ezek, and once in Zech), wisdom and hymnic literature (twice in Job, eight times in Pss), and apocalyptic literature (once in Dan). The two major parts, i.e., prophetic writings and wisdom and hymnic literature, have ten "throne of God" passages each. The "throne of God" motif clusters heavily in the book of Psalms.

The first "throne of God" passage appears in Exod 17:16. Here the throne of Yahweh is referred to as the symbol of His sovereign power and invincibility. Whoever raises his hand against Yahweh's throne, as was done by
Amalek, will have war with Yahweh "from generation to generation" until He gets ultimate and complete victory over him. Two other early references to the throne of God are found in the book of Job. The divine seat (tèḵûnâh) is mentioned in Job 23:3 as the place where God's people come to utter their complaints and arguments. In other words, the throne of God is God's tribunal or judgment seat from which the righteous can get divine vindication and deliverance. In Job 26:9 the throne of God stands as the center from which God's creating power is generated and His controlling authority is exercised over the entire universe and all creatures (cf. Job 26:5-14). This throne motif presents a striking contrast between human frailty and divine majesty. Thus, these three early passages already reveal three different aspects of the significance of the divine throne: God's sovereign power, His authority as Judge, and His ability and majesty as Creator. These ideas of the "throne of God" motif are rooted in the Mosaic and premonarchical era.

During the early monarchical era, David, if the superscriptions of the Psalms have some historical significance, refers to the throne of God in at least three of the Davidic psalms (Pss 9:5, 8 [ET 9:4, 7]; 11:4; 103:19). In Ps 9, the author contrasts the transitory nature of the nations in their wickedness with the eternal sovereignty of the righteous Judge and Ruler who is sitting on His throne.
This psalm manifests the divine throne as the symbol of the judicial power as well as the regal authority of Yahweh. Ps 11 expresses the author's faith in God's just administration of the world and all creatures, His regard for and protection of the righteous and His antagonism to and proper punishment of the wicked. This faith can hold fast because its possessor looks up to the throne of God who is the Ruler and Judge of the universe. In Ps 103, praising God with a long list of divine attributes and acts, the author refers to the throne of God at its climax and conclusion. This means that the "throne" of God mentioned in vs. 19 represents the power and character of the One who has provided all benefits such as forgiveness and healing (vs. 3), redemption and lovingkindness (hēsed, vss. 4, 8, 17), mercy and compassion (vss. 4, 8), righteousness and justice (vs. 6), etc. The Psalmist sings that it is Yahweh Himself who established His throne (vs. 19). This affirms that Yahweh is the sole cause of His own kingship and kingdom. The universality and eternity of Yahweh's kingship (kisseg) and His kingdom (malkūt) are proclaimed. The phrase "His throne in the heavens" denotes the glory of His dominion and the vastness of His realm in cosmic terms. This matchless sovereignty symbolized by the throne which Yahweh Himself set up is the pledge of our security and the pillar upon which our confidence may safely lean. The divine Ruler rules from the realm beyond this world.
Five other psalms which have reference to the throne of God (Pss 45:47; 89; 93; 97) cannot be precisely dated. It is suggested that the setting for Ps 47 is to be found in the cultic celebration of Yahweh's imperial accession, "based on the relatively recent victories of David's age, which raised Israel from provincial obscurity to an empire of the first rank."¹ The language and conceptions of Ps 89 comport well with a dating in the post-Davidic monarchic period because the covenant with David is a matter of the past and dynastic considerations are uppermost.² Strong arguments for a tenth-century date have been suggested for Ps 93.³ On the basis of these and other observations, it seems safe to date the majority of the psalms which contain the "throne of God" passages as from the early or at least middle period of the monarchical era.

Ps 45:7 (ET 45:6), which is one of the most celebrated cruces interpretum in the OT because of the exegetical problems posed by the enigmatic phrase κρύπτων, connects the throne inseparably with God. Despite various possibilities of translating this passage, the main idea

²M. Dahood, Psalms II, 311.
remains the same, that the throne will endure for eternity, symbolizing the everlasting duration and stability of God's kingship and kingdom. In Ps 47:9 (ET 47:8), Yahweh sits on His throne as the victorious universal Monarch that He really is. The tenor of Ps 47 is explicitly eschatological and universalistic. The whole psalm alludes to the transcendency and supremacy of God's government which will be ultimately established.

Yahweh is praised with various titles in Ps 89: the Creator par excellence (vs. 7, MT), the God of Hosts who is awesome, mighty, and greatly feared (vss. 8-9), the Ruler of nature (vs. 10), the Conqueror of the enemies (vs. 11), the Owner of everything (vs. 12a), the Founder of the universe (vs. 12b), the Creator of directions (vs. 13a), the Establisher of mountains (vs. 13b), and the Possessor of might and power (vs. 14). This crescendo reaches the climax in vs. 15 (ET 14): "Righteousness [šēdeq] and justice [mišpāt] are the foundation of thy throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before thee" (RSV). Thus, Yahweh's throne stands for all the relationships and titles which He holds toward His creation.

The throne is the symbol of Yahweh's dominion over the entire universe. But this throne is not based on any arbitrary and whimsical sway of autocratic power; to the contrary, it is founded upon and supported by "righteousness and justice." These are the divine virtues or divine
principles\(^1\) by which God reigns and judges. This throne is the surety for His children that He is always in control of all affairs and events in the world. In Ps 93, the throne is the seat for the Person who is both Creator and Judge, because the \textit{mlk} (vs. 1) points to both directions: to the past or beginning (\textit{prōton}) and to the future or end (\textit{eschaton}). Therefore, the picture of the throne of God in this psalm is both protological and eschatological. Ps 97:2 recites the idea of Ps 89:15 (ET 89:14). While Ps 97 as a whole is an eschatological hymn portraying the coming of Yahweh as universal Judge, it also celebrates Yahweh's kingship. The divine throne is symbolic of both judgeship and kingship of Yahweh.

Thus, it is evident that in the Psalms the "throne of God" motif has developed in its meanings and its connections have been greatly expanded. The throne of God is not only the symbol of the judicial power and regal authority of Yahweh but also the emblem of the eternal duration, stability, and universality of Yahweh's kingship and kingdom. It is also symbolic of God's matchless sovereignty and of the transcendency and supremacy of His government. The throne of God points both to the beginning of time and to the end of time, presenting God as the Creator and the final Judge respectively. In addition to these, it stands

\(^1\)Against B. Duhm, I. Engnell, S. Mowinckel, G. W. Ahlström, and M. Dahood.
for all relationships and titles which Yahweh holds toward His creation, especially His people. Hence, the throne of God becomes the pledge of security for God's people.

The books of Kings and Chronicles have four references to the throne of Yahweh. 1 Chr 29:23 and 2 Chr 9:8 refer to the throne of Solomon as "the throne of Yahweh" or "His throne." This means that the true king of Israel is Yahweh and Solomon is only His deputy to rule over His kingdom as a prince of the King. The remaining passages (1 Kgs 22:19//2 Chr 18:18) describe the throne vision which the prophet Micaiah saw during the time of Ahab (874-853 B.C.). This vision presents the truth that Yahweh in heaven stands above all earthly thrones. He appoints and deposes kings and has power over all kingdoms. He also judges kings and punishes them according to their deeds. This throne vision signifies that Yahweh is the great One who operates and controls the entire macrocosm and His throne room is the control center for His universal administration.

In the present context, these "throne of God" passages of the historical writings suggest that during the tenth and ninth centuries B.C. the throne motif was used as an indicator pointing to the fact that the Davidic/Solomonic rulership originated from Yahweh and the real kingship over Israel still belonged to Yahweh Himself.

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During the eighth century B.C. when Isaiah was called in his throne vision to the prophetic ministry, the "throne of God" motif appeared with added meaning. The divine throne which Isaiah saw in his inaugural vision (Isa 6:1) impressed him with the unbearable holiness and overwhelming glory of Yahweh. Here is also a remarkable contrast between the death of the earthly king Uzziah, thus his transitoriness, and the immortality of the heavenly King, thus His intransitoriness. It is the contrast between the futility of the human throne and the perpetuity of the divine throne. This vision confirmed to the prophet that although King Uzziah died, Yahweh who is "the Lord" ('dônây, Isa 6:1) and "the King, Yahweh of Hosts" (vs. 5) is still ruling on His throne in heaven and from there continues to direct the affairs of humans. This King on His throne calls Isaiah and inaugurates him as prophet to announce His judgment against or for the people. Thus, the divine throne is the symbol of the divine headquarters of the great Commander who commissions and dispatches His messengers to deliver His messages of judgment and His invitation to salvation to the world.

Around the end of his prophetic ministry (early seventh century B.C.) within the longer eschatological context, Isaiah delivered a divine oracle in which Yahweh proclaimed the infinite and immense nature of His throne. As Yahweh declares that heaven and earth are respectively

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His throne and His footstool and both are His own handiwork (Isa 66:1), He refers to His throne as pointing to His creatorship. The immediate context of the passage (Isa 65-66) not only constitutes the end of the book but also describes the end of the world and a "new heaven and new earth." Here the eschatological message moves on toward its ultimate climax, for the promise of new heavens and a new earth (Isa 65:17; 66:22) goes beyond anything else in the message of the book. The common theme of these two chapters is Yahweh's great day of judgment, when He punishes His opponents and rewards His faithful. Then the new creation takes place and the new age sets in. Thus the throne of Yahweh is, by its symbolism, linked with all of these eschatological concepts: judgment, punishment, rewarding, new creation, and new age. The One who sits on the throne is the One who judges this world in the present age and will rule over the new world in the age to come. In both passages of Isaiah, the divine throne indicates Yahweh's kingship and judgeship: He is revealed or declared to be the sovereign King, the supreme Judge, and the Maker of all things, old and new.

Between the late seventh century and the late sixth century, four books (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah) contain visions or oracles relating to the throne of God. Jer 3:17 predicts that in the coming era of blessing no one will even mention the ark of the covenant
of Yahweh, and people will call Jerusalem "The Throne of Yahweh." At least three things are implied here: First, the function which the ark of the covenant as a representation of the throne of God has hitherto had for Israel, will be performed by Jerusalem for the renewed Israel and other nations. This means that the old covenant will come to an end and the era of the new covenant will set in (cf. Jer 31:31-34). Second, the text intimates that the throne of God will be openly accessible to all who will be saved in His kingdom. The theme of access stands at the foreground. Third, an eschatological outlook is implied in the text: Jeremiah looks beyond the exile to a time when Jerusalem will be holy unto Yahweh, even to the time of the renewed earth (cf. Rev 21:1-5).

Jer 14:21 contains three petitions as a part of the collective national lament addressed to Yahweh (Jer 14:19-22) in the time of drought and national defeat. In this text the people in desperation plead three reasons for Yahweh to help them in spite of their sins: (1) His name—reputation; (2) His throne—rulership; and (3) His covenant—faithfulness. The divine throne occupies the center not only in order but in importance and significance. Yahweh was thought of as sitting on His throne in the temple, and this was regarded as "a guarantee of the nation's safety."¹

The appeal to His throne and the temple was "a kind of last redoubt of hope." ¹

Jer 17:12 may be rendered in several different ways. The alternative which is poetically most dynamic and logically most appropriate is to interpret it as a tricolon and as a series of vocatives: "[O] Throne of Glory, Exalted [One] from the Beginning, Place of Our Sanctuary!" The three pairs of the Hebrew words in this verse make three vocatives, and the first pair of the words in vs. 13 makes another vocative ("Hope of Israel!"). Thus, four pairs of the Hebrew words, i.e., four vocatives, stand in apposition to "Yahweh" in vs. 13, each contributing to a crescendo. The whole is to be regarded as descriptive of the Divine Being who alone is entitled to the trust and hope of His people. He is metonymically called a "Throne" because He is the universal Ruler and supreme Judge, the throne being used to denote the One who sits upon it. To sum up, the throne of God in this passage serves a threefold function: (1) it indicates the authority and majesty of God as the supreme Judge; (2) it points to the trustworthiness and faithfulness of God as our Protector; and (3) it reminds us of the comfort, confidence, and hope that the hopeless can enjoy in Him who is the "Hope of Israel."

Jer 49:38 is a part of the divine oracle addressed to Elam (Jer 49:34-38) around the time of the fall of

¹W. L. Holladay, Jeremiah 1, 439.
Jerusalem. Yahweh announces that He will break the bow of Elam and scatter or consume its population (vss. 35-37). He then utters the prophecy: "I will set my throne in Elam, and destroy their king and princes" (vs. 38, RSV). The interpretations of the throne of Yahweh in this oracle can be summarized as follows: (1) it is used as the symbol of conquest and subjugation; (2) it functions as a tribunal of punishment for Elam; (3) it indicates that Yahweh is not merely the God of Israel but is Lord over all the nations of the world; and (4) it has eschatological connotations by promising that "in the last days" Yahweh will "restore the fortunes of Elam" (vs. 39, NASB). This oracle provides the idea that the throne of God is movable and can be set in various places, even in a Gentile city, Elam.

During the destruction of the temple and the suspension of the cultus, the throne of God is once mentioned in the lament over this national disaster (Lam 5:19). The reference to the throne of Yahweh at such a tragic moment indicates that He is still in control. Emphasis is not placed upon God's continual existence, but upon His uninterrupted sovereignty over His creatures and the perpetual stability of His kingdom. Against the changing fortunes of humans the poet sets the strength and stability of Yahweh's throne. The throne of Yahweh is referred to here as the anchor upon which His people can put their hope even at the most hopeless hour. It serves
as "the ground of appeal and the prospect of future hope"\textsuperscript{1} for divine restoration of His people by His own purpose, power, and providence.

The most extensive visions about the throne of God were given to the prophet Ezekiel in early years of the sixth century B.C. (Ezek 1:10). Ezek 1:26-28, which forms the climax of the call vision of the prophet, which is here again a throne vision, provides an extensive description of the throne and the One who sits upon it. When Ezekiel wrote his book, his purpose was twofold: (1) to announce God's judgments on Israel (chaps. 1-24) and on the heathen nations (chaps. 25-32) and (2) to prophesy God's blessing on Israel (chaps. 33-39) and the final restoration of theocracy and temple (chaps. 40-48). The whole book may be summed up with two words: judgment (chaps. 1-32) and blessing (chaps. 33-48). These two aspects of Ezekiel's prophecies are intricately tied to the glory of Yahweh who appears sitting upon the throne. Within the frame of this overall purpose of his book, Ezekiel reports his call vision which is a throne vision at the outset of the book, so that the readers may read the book with an acknowledgment of the supremacy and sovereignty of Yahweh, sitting upon His throne and having the right to judge and to bless Israel and the nations. Yahweh was revealed in Ezekiel's call vision as riding upon His chariot-throne which

\textsuperscript{1}R. K. Harrison, \textit{Jeremiah and Lamentations}, 240.
typified the "sense of otherness and majesty" and "was unutterably splendid, mysteriously intricate, superhuman and supernatural, infinitely mobile but never earth-bound, all-seeing and all-knowing."1 Taken as a whole, this throne vision is a revelation of God's existence and character, His power and action, and His way of dealing with the nations and the entire creation. By giving another vision of the glorious throne of Yahweh in chap. 10 several major points were indicated: (1) the dreadful character of the approaching catastrophe is to be effected by the Chaldean power; (2) the people need to have a strong faith in God's kingship and an unwavering assurance in His sovereignty over the entire world; and (3) the throne is the very seat from which God pronounces His judgments. The identical nature of the two throne visions adds emphasis to what has been symbolized by the first vision: God's divine might and majesty, movability and mobility, omnipresence and omnipotence, and readiness to punish the wicked with awful destruction.

The last reference to the throne of God in the book of Ezekiel (43:7) is found in the last main part (chaps. 40-48) of the book that prophesies the final restoration of theocracy and the temple. This great scene is the culmination of Ezekiel's prophecy. In the second throne vision (chaps. 8-10) the prophet witnessed the departure of Yahweh

1J. B. Taylor, Ezekiel, 41.
from a temple, but now he sees the return of Yahweh to a new temple. These two visions of the divine throne represent in dramatic form the sum of Ezekiel's message: judgment (chaps. 1-32) and blessing (chaps. 33-48). The throne of Yahweh which has been shown on both occasions is the very surety of divine judgment and blessing and serves as the center around which Israel's hope and trust in God's promise clusters. The One who occupies the throne is proclaimed to remain there in the city among His people for eternity and thus "the name of the city henceforth shall be, YHWH Šāmmāh ['Yahweh Is There']" (Ezek 48:35).

The latest reference to the divine throne in the Hebrew Bible seems to be found in Zech 6:13, a Messianic prophecy. Two figures, Zerubbabel (ruler) and Joshua (priest), play indispensable roles in this oracle. But they are the types or symbols which Yahweh used for pointing to the great Antitype or Reality by means of their offices and names. This implies that the coming Messiah will be both King and Priest. In biblical and extrabiblical texts, the word "throne" (kisse' and its equivalents) was used not only for kingship but also for priesthood. As King-Priest the Branch-Messiah "shall sit and rule on His throne." The "counsel of peace" would be made and fulfilled through the union and harmony between the two offices of the Messiah, which were prefigured by the offices of Zerubbabel and Joshua. The throne is the seat
upon which the Messiah sits, as He plans and accomplishes His works as the King and Priest.

During the Babylonian Captivity Daniel was given a most majestic vision of the throne of God (Dan 7), which is the only reference to the divine throne in the apocalyptic literature of the Hebrew Bible. Called "the heart of the book of Daniel," Dan 7 presents the great scene of the divine judgment in heaven (vss. 9-10, 13-14). The text states that "thrones were set up" and the "Ancient of Days" "sat" upon one of them. The title "Ancient of Days" ('attiq yômin, "advanced in days") points to the Urzeit from which God and His throne have existed. The verb "to sit" (ytb) is closely connected with the throne and, in many cases, sitting on the throne means starting to exercise kingship and/or judgeship. Dan 7 reveals the sweep of history from the time of Daniel to the establishment of the everlasting kingdom at the termination of the Endzeit. To sum up, judgment issues from the throne of God for those written in the books before the kingdom is given to the saints of the Most High. Thus the divine throne in Dan 7 reveals: (1) the supreme judgeship of the Ancient of Days, and (2) the absolute and sovereign authority of God who at the conclusion of the judgment invests the Son of Man with universal kingship and entrusts Him with the everlasting kingdom.
Our investigation of the "divine throne" passages in the Hebrew Bible has indicated that the "throne of God" motif from its rootage in the sanctuary context has retained the significances and meanings of the premonarchical era. At the same time it also has grown so as to include more comprehensive and complicated implications. That is to say, there is growth, or a line of development in the "throne of God" motif throughout the period of biblical history.¹

It is remarkable that there are more differences than similarities between the biblical "throne of God" motif and the "divine throne" motif in ancient Near Eastern literatures. The unique aspects of the "throne of God" motif in the Hebrew Bible are as follows:

(1) The throne of God signifies the creatorship of God and points to the beginning of time.

(2) It is never deified or identified with God Himself.

(3) It is never called "God" or worshiped as a cult object.

(4) It is referred to with eschatological or Messianic expectation.

(5) It functions as the place of revelation.

(6) It represents the authority of the One who calls the prophets and sends them to deliver the messages of judgment or blessing.

(7) It is the emblem of God's victory over the enemies and His invincibility.

(8) It is the sign of God's perpetual supremacy.

(9) It is the guarantee of national or individual safety, the ground of appeal, or the last redoubt of hope.

(10) It is referred to as the evidence of God's accessibility or closeness to His people.

(11) It is established on moral principles.

(12) While it is set up in heaven for eternity, it is revealed frequently as movable and moving in order for God to accomplish His works in the areas and arenas of His activity.

These ideas are not found in the "divine throne" passages in the extrabiblical literature. The differences are obviously so fundamental that we can only conclude that the "throne of God" motif, in the way it is found in the Hebrew Bible, is apparently not found in ancient Near Eastern literatures.

We may recapitulate the biblical implications and symbolism of the "throne of God" motif as follows: In the Hebrew Bible, the throne of God is most frequently conceived of as the symbol of divine kingship, God's kingdom,
and His sovereign authority over the whole universe and the entire creation.\(^1\) It signifies that Yahweh is the eternal King or Ruler of all nations and peoples. In many cases, it is seen as the center of the universal administration of the divine Monarch. It also stands for the eternal duration of God's kingship and kingdom.

Next to the kingship of God, the throne of God symbolizes the judgeship of God.\(^2\) In many passages the divine throne appears as the judicial tribunal before which all men and women will be judged according to their deeds. Various kinds of judgment are issued from the throne of God: judgments of both Israel and other nations, judgments of both the righteous and the wicked, reward for the faithful and punishment for the unfaithful, and judgments for both the present time and the end-time. All the judgments pronounced from the throne of God are right and fair because the foundation of the throne is "righteousness and justice." It indicates the moral principle by which Yahweh rules and judges His creation.

The throne of God points to the creatorship of God.\(^3\) It testifies that the whole world was made by His

\(^1\) Kgs 22:19//2 Chr 18:18; 1 Chr 29:23; 2 Chr 9:8; Isa 6:1; 66:1; Jer 14:21; 17:12; 49:38; Ezek 1:26; 10:1; Zech 6:13; Pss 47:9 (ET 47:8); 93:2; 97:2; 103:19; Dan 7:9.

\(^2\) Isa 6:1; 66:1; Jer 17:12; 49:38; Ezek 1:26; 10:1; 43:7; Job 23:3; Pss 9:5, 8 (ET 9:4, 7); 11:4; Dan 7:9.

\(^3\) Isa 66:1; Job 26:9; Pss 93:2; 97:2.
hands and even the throne itself is His own handiwork. By pointing to God's creatorship, it speaks of the próton of time or Urzeit. In other words, it leads people to look at the beginning of human history or protology.

In many of the texts which refer to God as Judge, the throne of God naturally points to the eschaton of time or Endzeit. This eschaton may be the national end-time in microcosm as in some cases or the universal end-time in macrocosm as in the other cases.¹ This means that it concerns the end, i.e., eschatology in salvation history. In a couple of these texts the throne of God also provides Messianic expectations.²

In the call visions of the prophets, the throne of God represents the authority of the One who calls and sends the prophets.³ It is revealed as the place or headquarters of the great Commander from which the message of judgment and warning as well as the prophecy of blessing and reward goes forth. In the throne visions, including those of the call visions, the throne of God appears as the "place of revelation."

In several cases, the throne of God is referred to as the insignia of God's victory over the enemies, His

¹Jer 3:17; Pss 9:5, 8 (ET 9:4, 7); 47:9 (ET 47:8); 93:2; Dan 7:9.
³Isa 6:1; Ezek 1:26.
absolute power, and His invincibility.\textsuperscript{1} In other cases, it serves as evidence of the uninterrupted supremacy and perpetual stability of God's kingdom.\textsuperscript{2}

In the days of disaster and despair, the throne of God is regarded as the guarantee of individual and national safety and as a kind of last redoubt of hope.\textsuperscript{3} In the time of defeat and destruction, the prophets mention the throne of God as the ground of their appeal to God and as the prospect of future hope for divine restoration.

Quite often the throne of God stands for divine attributes.\textsuperscript{4} It symbolizes the holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, trustworthiness, eternity, immortality, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and creating power of Yahweh. Sometimes it shows us the contrast between human frailty and divine majesty and between man's creatureliness and God's creatorship. It also provides the contrast between the vicissitudes of the earthly nations and the perpetual sovereignty of God's kingdom.

For those who are unfairly treated or unjustly accused, the throne of God is the place where they come to

\textsuperscript{1}Exod 17:16; Jer 49:38.
\textsuperscript{2}Lam 5:19; Jer 17:12; Pss 11:4; 45:7 (ET 45:6); 93:2; 103:19.
\textsuperscript{3}Lam 5:19; Jer 14:21; 17:12; Ezek 43:7; Pss 11:4; 89:15 (ET 89:14); 97:2.
\textsuperscript{4}Isa 6:1; 66:1; Ezek i:26; 10:1; Job 26:9; Pss 45:7 (ET 45:6); 89:15 (ET 89:14); 97:2.
utter their complaints and arguments and obtain vindication and deliverance from God. For those who are persecuted and suffering, the throne of God is the surety that He is always available and accessible for them, and thus it becomes the unshakable foundation of their faith and trust in God.

Thus, the throne of God in the Hebrew Bible, by way of its various implications and symbolisms, represents God's existence and character, His attributes and ability, and all the titles and relationships which God holds toward His creation, especially human beings. In short, it stands for the totality of God, i.e., who He is and what He does in sustaining the universe and bringing about the salvation of His people.

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1Job 23:3.
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