

**READING AS A DISCLOSURE OF THE THOUGHTS OF THE  
HEART: PROTO-HALAKHIC REUSE AND APPROPRIATION  
BETWEEN TORAH AND THE PROPHETS**

Name of researcher: Kenneth Bergland  
Name of faculty adviser: Richard M. Davidson, PhD  
Date completed: March 2018

How should we then live? This has been the guiding question throughout the study. In a world that offers a myriad of answers to this one question, I have sought the answer in the Bible, more specifically in the Hebrew part of the Bible. Instead of asking the straightforward question how can the Bible function as a norm for contemporary ethics, the following is based on the assumption that an authentic reading and appropriation of the text needs to understand and emulate how the biblical authors themselves read the Bible. While scholars have studied biblical law, reuse within the Bible, and memorization of revered texts in the ANE, I have tried to combine the three areas in an attempt to clarify how biblical authors read normative texts.

This study is divided into two parts. In the first part, I argue that Torah is best characterized as normative covenantal instruction and that Torah and the Latter Prophets (hereafter Prophets) participated in a scribal culture that did not conform to our standards of literary exactness. In the second part, I have selected four cases of parallels between Torah and the Prophets: (1) Divorce and Remarriage in Deut 24:1–4 and Jer 3:1–10, (2) Sabbath Instructions in Exod 20:8–11; Deut 5:12–15; and Jer 17:19–27, (3) Manumission Instructions in Exod 21:2–11; Lev 25:10, 39–46; Deut 15:12–18; and Jer 34:8–22, and (4) Fasting in Lev 16; 23; 25; and Isa 58:1–14. Finally, I discuss Jer 7 and Ezek 18 as these display a different type of reuse than the preceding four. I have limited myself to cases where reuse and direction of dependence can be demonstrated with reasonable confidence, in order to give an adequate basis for a discussion of how normative texts were appropriated in the specific cases.

Repetition with variation is typical in these texts when reusing a normative text. Neither conflict nor harmony adequately explain the phenomena. In the borrowing text, we rather see a close reading that reads its source(s) expansionistically. There is a response interwoven into the reading, with trajectories the borrowing author might have seen indicated in the very source(s). We find a challenge both to a literalistic reading that limits religion to the plain sense of the text on the one hand, and a creative reading that is not controlled by the text on the other. The cases studied attest to the importance of an immersion into the normative texts for clarifying how we should live, and at the same time giving them new life through texts and forms of life that creatively reuse them while staying rooted in the old words.