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“According to All That You Demanded” (Deut 18:16):  
The Literary Use of Names and *Leitworte*  
As Antimonarchic Polemic in the Deuteronomistic History

A DISSERTATION

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By

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“According to All That You Demanded” (Deut 18:16): The Literary Use of Names  
and *Leitworte* as Antimonarchic Polemic in the Deuteronomistic History

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The Deuteronomistic History (Dtr) is a story with a message for Israel in exile. It tells the story of Israel’s leadership from its entry, under Moses and Joshua, into the land covenanted to its ancestors to its eventual expulsion from the land under monarchy. The story begins with the people’s “request” for distance from Yhwh, a request granted in the form of intermediary prophetic leadership (Deut 18:15-22). Thereafter, Israel’s deteriorating leadership situation results in further “requests.” Human kingship, which Israel “demands” (1 Samuel 8) to remedy its leadership’s failures, swiftly leads—except in rare instances—to even greater national apostasy. Israel, Judah, and their “demanded” monarchies’ sins culminate in exile from the land.

This study explores Dtr’s thematic use of onomastic wordplay in his narrative evaluations of some of the principal figures involved in the rise and eventual fall of the monarchy in Israel and Judah, this in terms of the legislation of Deuteronomy. The names and biographies of Samuel and Saul are linked together by the *Leitwort* *šā’al* (“ask,” “request,” “beg,” “demand”). The tragic arcs of David and his heir Solomon-Jedidiah’s lives are told in terms of the *Leitwort* *’āhab/’āhēb* (“love”) and its antonyms. The *Leitwort* *\*šlm/šālôm* links David’s sons Absalom and Solomon to Dtr’s concern for Israel’s loss of “peace” and “wholeness” with Yhwh and itself. Rather than enjoying

eternal dynastic “peace” from Yhwh as boasted by Solomon (1 Kgs 2:33), David’s house, including its “good” kings, experience a “peace” that fits Yhwh’s program of “recompensing” Judah for its covenant violations. The fate of the priestly house of Eli is typological of the fate of Israel and Judah’s royal houses as evident in Dtr’s thematic play on the name “Ichabod” (“Where is the Glory?”). Dtr also plays on the names of Tiglath-pileser and Nebuchadnezzar, Israel and Judah’s exilers and final despoilers, in terms of *gālâ* and *’ôṣār*. Josiah’s name is reinterpreted positively in terms of Deuteronomic “fire,” but also recalling the proto-king Abimelech (Judges 9). The message to the exiles is one of warning about the nature of its “requests” from Yhwh, perhaps especially regarding Jehoiachin’s son Shealtiel after the death of the former in exile.

This dissertation by Matthew L. Bowen fulfills the the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Biblical Studies approved by Christopher T. Begg, Ph.D., S.T.D., as Director, and by Robert D. Miller II, Ph.D. and David A. Bosworth, Ph.D., as Readers.

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*For Suzy, my beloved wife, best friend, and the mother of our precious children,  
Zachariah, Nathan, and Adele*

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	ix
1.1.Statement of the Problem, Purpose, and Scope .....	1
1.1.1. Statement of the problem.....	1
1.1.2. Purpose/Objectives .....	7
1.1.3. Scope.....	7
1.2. The Literature .....	8
1.2.1. Earlier Scholarship on the Deuteronomistic History .....	8
1.2.2. State of Current Research .....	15
1.3. Methodology.....	18
1.3.1. The Deuteronomistic History as Literature.....	18
1.3.2. The Deuteronomistic History as an Exilic Work of Primarily One Editor.....	19
1.3.3. Names and their Literary Importance .....	23
1.3.4. Leitworte and Literature .....	24
1.3.5. Identifying Wordplay.....	25
1.3.6. Dtr's Literary Exploitation of Names in Conjunction with Leitworte.....	26
1.3.7. Biblical Narratology.....	27
1.3.8. Dtr's "Remotivating" Exploitation of Names.....	30
1.4. Summary.....	31
2.1 Saul and Israel's "Asking": "Requesting" Distance from Yhwh: Deut 18:16 .....	32
2.2 Israel "Requests" a Prophet: Israel's Early Leadership (Deuteronomy–1 Samuel 3) .....	34
2.2.1 "Requesting" a Prophetic Intermediary (Deut 5:24; 18:16) .....	34
2.2.2 "Ask Now": Yhwh's Immediacy as Divine Leader (Deut 4:31) .....	38
2.2.3 "When Your Children Ask": Joshua, Leadership, and "Exile" (Joshua 3–5).....	41
2.2.4 "At the Mouth of Yhwh They Did Not Ask" (Josh 9:14).....	43
2.2.5 "Asking" for Leadership after Joshua (Judg 1:1) .....	46
2.2.6 "I Would Make a Demand of You": Gideon and Abimelech, Part I (Judges 8)..	48
2.2.7 "Asking" for Leadership in the War against Benjamin (Judges 20).....	56
2.2.8 Samuel: The "Begged-for" Prophet (1 Samuel 1) .....	59
2.2.9 The "Begged-for" Prophet is "Raised up" (1 Samuel 2–4) .....	67
2.3 Israel "Demands" a King: 1 Samuel 8–12 .....	70
2.3.1 Israel Presents Its "Demand" for Kingship (1 Samuel 8) .....	70
2.3.2 "Is Saul Among the Prophets"? "Asked" from the Baggage Train (1 Samuel 10).....	74
2.3.3 "We Have Added to Our Sins the Evil of Demanding a King" (1 Samuel 12)...	82
2.4 The Aftermath of Israel's "Demand" for Kingship (1 Samuel 14–28).....	90
2.4.1 Mutual Rejection: Saul's Failure to "Ask" Divine Guidance and Yhwh's Refusal to Answer Subsequent "Asking" for Guidance (1 Samuel 14)	91
2.4.2 "Is Saul Among the Prophets II?" Saul "Asks" and Raves at Ramah (1 Samuel 19).....	93
2.4.3 David's Answered "Requests" and Saul's Unraveling (1 Samuel 20–23) .....	96
2.4.4 "Ask Your Young Men": David's "Request" from Nabal (1 Samuel 25).....	100
2.4.5 "Why Are You Asking Me?": Sha'ul as Illicit "Sho'el" (1 Samuel 28) .....	105

2.5 The Function of לָשׁוּא in David's Consolidation of Power	
(1 Samuel 30–2 Samuel 6).....	113
2.5.1 David "Asks" Additional Guidance from Yhwh (2 Sam 2:1) .....	113
2.5.2 "Only One Thing Do I Demand" (2 Sam 3:13) .....	114
2.5.3 David "Asks" Yhwh's Counsel for the Last Time (2 Sam 5:19, 23).....	116
2.6 The Function of לָשׁוּא in Absalom's Rebellion and Solomon's Reign	
(2 Samuel 11–1 Kings 11) .....	118
2.6.1 David's Dissimulating "Demand" (2 Sam 11:7) .....	118
2.6.2 "Do Not Withhold Anything that I Ask You!" (2 Sam 14:18) .....	119
2.6.3 "As If One Asked Counsel from the Oracle of God" (2 Sam 16:23) .....	123
2.6.4 "Let Them Indeed Ask at Abel" (2 Sam 20:18) .....	125
2.6.5 "One Small Request" (1 Kgs 2:16, 20).....	128
2.6.6 "Ask! What Shall I Give You?" Solomon "Asks" at Gibeon of Saul	
(1 Kgs 3:5) .....	131
2.6.7 "Whatsoever She Asked" (1 Kgs 10:13) .....	137
2.7 Conclusion .....	141
3.1 "Beloved" David and Israel: The Obligation to Love the God Who	
"Loves" and "Gives".....	1274
3.1.1. Deuteronomic "Love" .....	145
3.1.2 "Because He Loved Your Ancestors ... He Brought You Out in Person"	
(Deut 4:37) .....	153
3.1.3 Yhwh Will "Circumcise Your Heart ... to Love" Him (Deut 30:6, 16, 20).....	155
3.1.4 "They Will Treat Me with Contempt" (Deut 31:20) .....	157
3.2 "Those Who Despise Me": Israel's Early Failure to "Love" God	
(Joshua-1 Samuel 7).....	157
3.2.1 "Take Very Great Care ... to Love Yhwh" (Josh 22:5; 23:11-13) .....	159
3.2.2 "But Those Who Love Him Are Like the Sun's Going Forth" (Judg 5:31) .....	162
3.2.3 "To [Israel] He Gave a Double Portion, for He Loved [Israel]" (1 Sam 1:5)....	164
3.2.4 "Those Who Despise Me Shall Be Cursed" (1 Sam 2:30).....	167
3.3 David "Beloved": 1 Samuel 16–18.....	170
3.3.1 Saul "Loves" David—or David "Loves" Saul (1 Sam 16:21-22).....	171
3.3.2 Jonathan "Loves" David (1 Sam 18:1, 3) .....	175
3.3.3 All Israel and Judah "Love" David (1 Sam 18:16) .....	178
3.3.4 Michal "Loves" David (1 Sam 18:20; 28); Saul Becomes David's "Enemy"...	179
3.4 David's Failure to "Love" Yhwh: 1 Samuel 20–2 Samuel 19.....	182
3.4.1 Jonathan's One-sided "Love" and David's Lack of "Love": David's Rise to	
Power (1 Samuel 20–30).....	183
3.4.2. "Beloved" Saul and Jonathan? (2 Sam 1:23, 26) .....	187
3.4.3 "She Despised Him in Her Heart" (2 Sam 6:16) .....	189
3.4.5 "You Have Despised Me": David "Takes" Uriah's Wife	
for His "House" (2 Samuel 11–12).....	193
3.4.6 "And Yhwh Loved Him": Solomon "Beloved" (2 Sam 12:24).....	205
3.4.7 Amnon "Loves" Then "Hates" Tamar (2 Samuel 13) .....	208
3.4.8 "You Love Your Haters and Hate Those Who Love You" (2 Sam 19:6) .....	212

3.5 Solomon, “Beloved of Yhwh”: Israel at Its Zenith.....	214
3.5.1 “Beloved” Son of “Oaths” (2 Samuel 12–1 Kings 2) .....	215
3.5.2 “Solomon Loved Yhwh” (1 Kgs 3:3) .....	224
3.5.3 “One Who Loved David” (1 Kgs 5:15): The Foreign Builder of the Davidic “House” .....	227
3.5.4 “Because Yhwh Loved Israel” (1 Kings 10:9): Solomon and Israel at the Zenith .....	231
3.6 Solomon’s Failure to “Love” Yhwh and its Aftermath: 1 Kings 11 .....	233
3.6.1 “But King Solomon Loved Many Women” (1 Kgs 11:1-2) .....	233
3.6.2 “His Heart Was Turned Away from Yhwh” (1 Kgs 11:9): The Legacy of Solomon’s Failure to Love Yhwh .....	236
3.7 Conclusion: A House of David/House of Israel Covenant Parable .....	240
4.1 Absalom, Solomon, and the Monarchies—“Proverbs” of Failed Deuteronomistic “Peace” .....	243
4.1.1 “He Will Repay Him to His Face” (Deut 7:10; 23:22): Yhwh’s Punishment of Israel and Its Monarchs .....	245
4.1.2 “You Shall Become a Proverb” (Deut 28:37): Israel and Its Ill-fated Monarchies .....	247
4.1.3 “I Shall Have Peace though I Walk in the Obstinacy of My Heart” (Deut 29:19) .....	248
4.2 Early Israel’s “Peace” (Joshua 8–1 Samuel 7).....	250
4.2.1 And Joshua Made Peace with Them ...” (Josh 9:15): The Gibeonite “Peace” .....	250
4.2.2 “He Creates Peace”: Yhwh-Shalom and the “Rule” of Proto-kings (Judges 6, 8) .....	254
4.2.3 “Go in Peace: Your Way is יְשׁוּעָה Yhwh” (Judg 18:6) .....	260
4.2.4 “Peace Be with You” (Judg 19:20) .....	264
4.2.5 “Go in Peace” and “May Yhwh Repay You a Posterity” (1 Sam 1:17; 4QSam <sup>a</sup> 2:20).....	268
4.3 “Father is Peace”: Rape, Murder, and the “Peace” of the House of David .....	270
4.3.1 “Peace both to You and to Your House”: Nabal’s “Peace” (1 Sam 25:6, 35)...	271
4.3.2 David’s Traitorous “Peace” with the Philistines (1 Sam 29:7).....	277
4.3.3 Abner’s “Peace” (2 Sam 3:21-23).....	279
4.3.4 The Peace of the War: Uriah’s “Peace” (2 Sam 11:7) .....	282
4.3.5 “His Replacement”: “He Shall Repay” Fourfold/Sevenfold (2 Samuel 12).....	284
4.3.6 Absalom’s and His Father’s “Peace” (2 Samuel 13–18) .....	287
4.3.7 The “Peace” of Amasa and Sheba (2 Sam 20:9, 19).....	291
4.4 “The Blood of War in Peace”: Solomon’s “Peaceful” Accession to the Throne .....	293
4.4.1 “The Blood of War in Peace” (1 Kgs 2:1-9): David’s Final Instructions to Solomon .....	294
4.4.2 “Do You Come with Peaceful Intentions?” Adonijah’s “Peace” (1 Kings 2:13) .....	298
4.4.3 “But David and his Posterity and his House and His Throne Shall Have Peace Forever” (1 Kgs 2:33): Joab’s “Peace” and Solomon’s Boast .....	300



4.5 “Peace” from Yhwh Forever? Solomon’s “Rule” of Israel at Its Zenith (1 Kings 3–5) .....	303
4.5.1 Solomon’s “Peace,” “Rule,” and “Proverbs” (1 Kgs 3:1–5:14) .....	304
4.5.2 Solomon’s and Hiram’s “Peace”(1 Kgs 5:26) .....	305
4.6 “Let Your Heart ... Be Completely with Yhwh Our God” (1 Kgs 8:61): Solomon as a Cautionary “Proverb” .....	307
4.6.1 “The Whole Work which Solomon Made was Completed” (1 Kgs 7:51).....	308
4.6.2 “Let Your Heart Be Completely with Yhwh” (1 Kgs 8:61) .....	308
4.6.3 Solomon “Completes” the House (1 Kgs 9:25) .....	310
4.6.4 Solomon’s “Incomplete” Heart (1 Kgs 11:4).....	313
4.6.5 “I Will Tear the Kingdom Away from You” (1 Kgs 11:11): Tearing of the “Peace”/ “Cloak” .....	315
4.7 The Disintegration of Solomonic “Peace” and Yhwh’s “Repayment” of Israel and Judah (1 Kings 12–2 Kings 25) .....	316
4.7.1 Abijam’s “Incomplete “Heart and Asa’s “Complete” Heart (1 Kgs 15:3, 14) ..	317
4.7.2 Ahab and Jehoshaphat’s “Peace” (1 Kings 22).....	319
4.7.3 “Peace?” Jehu, Jezebel, Jehoram, and Ahaziah’s “Peace” (2 Kgs 9:11, 17-31) .....	323
4.7.4 “Peace and Security in My Lifetime”: Hezekiah’s “Complete” Heart and Incomplete “Peace” (2 Kgs 20:3, 19).....	328
4.7.5 “Gathered to Your Grave in Peace”: Josiah’s “Peace” (2 Kgs 22:20).....	332
Conclusion .....	338
5.1 Introduction: The Glory, Fire, and Revelation of Yhwh .....	341
5.2 Ichabod: “The Glory” and Its “Exile” .....	346
5.2.1 “Yhwh Our God Has Shown Us His Glorious Greatness” (Deut 5:24) .....	347
5.2.2 Undoing the Exodus: Not “Fearing This Glorious and Fearful Name, ‘Yhwh Your God’” (Deut 28:58).....	349
5.2.3 “Those Who Safeguard My Glory, I Will Glorify” (1 Sam 2:2-3): .....	350
5.2.4 “Where is the Glory?” (1 Samuel 3–4) .....	355
5.2.5 “The Glory” in Exile (1 Samuel 5–6) .....	358
5.2.6 David “Glorifies” and “Exposes” Himself (2 Sam 6:20).....	361
5.2.7 “The Glory of Yhwh Had Filled the House of Yhwh” (1 Kgs 8:11) .....	365
5.2.8 Rehoboam’s Even More “Glorious” Yoke (1 Kings 12) .....	367
5.2.9 Tiglath-pileser III: Exiler (2 Kings 15–16) .....	369
5.2.10 Yhwh “Exiles” the Remainder of Israel out of His “Presence” (2 Kings 17–18) .....	371
5.2.11 “And Thus Judah was Exiled from Its Own Land” (2 Kgs 25:21) .....	374
5.3 Nebuchadnezzar and the Despoliation of Yhwh’s “Good Treasury” .....	377
5.3.1 “He Will Open to You His ‘Rain’ Treasure”(Deut 28:12) .....	378
5.3.2 “The House of Yhwh’s Treasury” (Josh 6:19, 24) .....	379
5.3.3 Solomon and the “Treasures” of Yhwh’s House (1 Kgs 7:51).....	380
5.3.4 Shishak (Sheshonq) “Takes” the Treasures (1 Kgs 14:26) .....	383
5.3.5 Asa “Takes” the “Treasures” for Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 15:18) .....	384
5.3.6 Joash of Judah “Takes” the “Treasures” to Buy Off Hazael (2 Kgs 12:19) .....	386

5.3.7 Jehoash of Israel “Takes” Amaziah’s “Treasures” (2 Kgs 14:14) .....	387
5.3.8 Ahaz “Takes” the Davidic “Treasures” of Yhwh for Tiglath-pileser (2 Kgs 16:7-8) .....	389
5.3.9 Hezekiah, the Treasury, and Babylon (2 Kgs 18:15; 20:13-17) .....	391
5.3.10 Nebuchadnezzar takes the “Treasures”(2 Kgs 24:13) .....	394
5.4 Josiah: “Man” of God, “Fire” of Yhwh .....	396
5.4.1 Yhwh as “Consuming Fire” (Deuteronomy 4–5; 9:3) .....	397
5.4.2 “You Shall Burn their Carved Images with Fire” (Deut 7:5; 12:3) .....	399
5.4.3. The “Abomination of Yhwh”: Child Sacrifice (Deut 12:31; 18:10).....	400
5.4.4 Eradicating “Trouble” with “Fire” (Judg 7:15, 25) .....	401
5.4.5 “Fire Out of the Rock”: Gideon, Son of Joash (Judg 6:21) .....	402
5.4.6 “Let Fire Come Out from Abimelech” (Judges 9).....	407
5.4.7“Human Bones Shall Burn upon You”: The “Man of God” at Bethel (1 Kings 13) .....	417
5.4.8 “The Fire of Yhwh Fell” (1 Kgs 18:38).....	419
5.4.9 “If I am a Man of God, Let Fire Come Down” (2 Kgs 1:10, 12) .....	421
5.4.10 “Chariots of Fire” (2 Kgs 2:11-12; 6:17; 13:14).....	423
5.4.11 “Royal” Fire (2 Kings 16–17).....	425
5.4.12 Manasseh’s Passes His Son through the Fire (2 Kgs 21:6) .....	427
5.4.13 Josiah’s Reform: Fight “Fire” with “Fire”(2 Kings 23).....	430
5.4.14 “He Burned the House of Yhwh ... with Fire” (2 Kgs 25:9).....	437
5.5 Conclusion .....	438
6.1. Introduction.....	440
6.1.1. “This Evil Is From Yhwh; Why Should I Have Hope in Yhwh Any Longer”? (2 Kgs 6:33): What Hope for Israel?.....	441
6.1.2. What Kind of “Tidings”? (2 Sam 4:10; 18:19-31): An Epic for ... Exiles.....	444
6.1.3.”What Was the Manner of the Man Who Came Up to Meet You and Told You These Words?” (2 Kgs 1:7): The Ongoing Leadership Question in Exile .....	446
6.1.4. “I Indeed Said That Your House ... Should Walk Before Me Forever, But Now...” (1 Sam 2:30): The Rejection of the Elides as a Model for the Rejection of “Eternal” Dynasties .....	455
6.2. “I Saw a Great Disturbance ... But I Did Not Know What It Was” (2 Sam 18:29): Name and <i>Leitwort</i> as National Story for, and Warning to, the Exiles .....	458
6.2.1. Beloved Houses of Bread: Dynastic “Remnants” in Peril (2 Kgs 25:29).....	459
6.2.2. “My Begging That I Have Begged” (1 Sam 1:27): Shealtiel ben Jehoiachin?.	469
6.2.3.“What Does the Sound of this Disturbance Mean?” (1 Sam 4:14): The Peril of Dynastic “Sons” .....	474
6.2.4. “What are These Testimonies, Decrees, and Judgments”? (Deut 6:20) The Peril of Untaught and Mistaught Sons and Daughters.....	476
6.2.5. “Suring”-up the House of Israel/Judah (1 Kgs 11:38) .....	478
6.3 Conclusion: “What is the Thing That Has Happened, My Son?” (1 Sam 4:16).....	480
7.1 Findings .....	3934
7.2 Originality of Contribution .....	494
Bibliography .....	504

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All scriptural translations herein are mine except as indicated. All abbreviations and sigla herein follow those listed in the “Instructions for Contributors to the Catholic Biblical Quarterly” except as follows:

AASF	<i>Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae</i>
ABG	<i>Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte</i>
ACEBT	<i>Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie</i>
AOTC	<i>Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries</i>
AWEAT	<i>Archiv für wissenschaftlich Erforschung des Alten Testaments</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>Beit Mikra</i>
BLS	<i>Bible and Literature Series</i>
BRS	<i>Biblical Resource Series</i>
BWANT	<i>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</i>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Estudios Eclesiásticos</i>
ESMIH	<i>European Seminar on Methodology in Israel's History</i>
<i>ETS</i>	<i>Erfurter Theologische Studien</i>
ISBL	<i>Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature</i>
HBM	<i>Hebrew Bible Monographs</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JSem</i>	<i>Journal for Semitics</i>
<i>LASBF</i>	<i>Liber annuus Studii biblici franciscani</i>
LHB/OTS	<i>Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies</i> (also: LHBOTS)
NAC	<i>New American Commentary</i>
NBS	<i>Numen Book Series</i>
NIVAC	<i>New International Version Application Commentary</i>
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
<i>PdV</i>	<i>Parole di Vita</i>
PITM OFM	<i>Publicaciones del Instituto Teológico de Murcia – Ordo Fratrum Minorum</i>
<i>RSB</i>	<i>Ricerche Storico Bibliche</i>
SANTAG	<i>Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde</i>
SHAR	<i>Studies in the History and Anthropology of Religion</i>
SHR	<i>Studies in the History of Religions</i>
<i>SIDIC</i>	<i>Service International de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne</i>
STR	<i>Studies in Theology and Religion</i>
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblischen Rechtsgeschichte</i>

## Chapter One: Introduction

*“Judah and Israel were numerous—as numerous as the sand which is by the sea—eating, and drinking, and being merry” (1 Kgs 4:20)*

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem, Purpose, and Scope

#### 1.1.1. Statement of the problem

Regarding the Deuteronomistic History, David Janzen has recently observed that “as an exilic work, the whole point of the History’s narrative is to explain the horror of 586 B.C.E. by placing the siege famine, mass death, destruction of Jerusalem and forced migration from Babylon within an ethical framework that attempts to make sense of this trauma that the exilic readers have undergone.”<sup>1</sup> But as he,<sup>2</sup> and other scholars previously have noted,<sup>3</sup> the story of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple together with the exile of Judah (2 Kings 24–25) seemingly take up precious little of the Deuteronomistic Historian’s narrative (both the history and the historian will generally be referred to hereafter as Dtr).

The assumption, however, that the concluding events of Dtr should constitute the largest or even a dominant part of the narrative, especially if it was originally written with the exile in mind, is not necessarily warranted. If written for an exilic audience, the events

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<sup>1</sup> David Janzen, *The Violent Gift: Trauma’s Subversion of the Deuteronomistic History’s Narrative* (LBH/OTS 561; New York/London: T&T Clark, 2012) 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Thomas C. Römer and Albert de Pury, “Deuteronomistic Historiography (DH): History of Research and Debated Issues,” in *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000) 24–41. This argument is also implicit in Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) 285–87.

narrated in 2 Kings 24–25 would have been those most familiar to them, being the least removed from them in time, and thus events requiring considerably less exposition and treatment than others further back in time and not personally known to them. Janzen himself uses trauma theory to suggest that the “trauma” that exiles had experienced by the exilic community “resist[s] incorporation into a textual narrative precisely because it resists incorporation into personal narratives.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, as a survivor and witness of Judah’s annihilation, Dtr may have been reticent to go into extensive detail about the destruction of Jerusalem and the removal of Zedekiah, although such details manifest themselves elsewhere in his narrative.

Moreover, the notion that Dtr begins to focus on the exile and to address its causes only late in his history, is simply mistaken, as I shall attempt to show. The question is not “*What* story is Dtr telling?” but rather, “*How* does Dtr tell his story?” Put another way, what does Dtr emphasize in how he tells Israel’s history, including the exile? By most accounts, an evaluation of monarchic performance (in both Israel and Judah) in light of Deuteronomy is a crucial part, if not the centerpiece of the history. Some argue that the history, to one degree or another, condemns monarchy while others argue just the opposite: that ultimately Dtr favors monarchy.<sup>5</sup>

If the amount of narrative time and space devoted to a subject is indicative of authorial priorities, are we not forced to conclude that the rise of kingship in Israel is Dtr’s main

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<sup>4</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 35.

<sup>5</sup> Gerald E. Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History* (Ph.D. Dissertation; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1981; SBLDS 87; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

interest, since he devotes so much of his narrative (proportionally) to the early years of the monarchy (1 Samuel 1–1 Kings 11)? Was there something about the nascence of human monarchy in Israel that commands Dtr’s attention in his attempt to answer the question of why the states of Israel, Judah, and their monarchies ended in exile? Is it possible that the very “laconic” description of these events that sits at the end of Dtr paradoxically is evidence of the event’s importance for him? If the answer to the latter two questions is “yes,” the lack of narrative time and space devoted to the actual exile is not an indication that Dtr is (basically) a pre-exilic history that has merely been brought up to date. The problem then shifts from the question, “why does Dtr not offer more on the exile at the end of 2 Kings?” to another question: “*where* is the expected ‘more’ on the exile?” The latter is a critical question that this study will seek to answer.

Too much attention, in my view, has been paid to what is said (or not said) about the exile in the final chapters of the history and not enough to *how* Dtr comments on the exile *elsewhere* in the history—particularly in the pre-monarchic and early monarchic periods. Dtr has, as I will attempt to show, much to say about the exile and its causes in his telling of how the monarchy arose. Their importance to the author is evident throughout Deuteronomy–1 Kings 11.

A related problem that has garnered much scholarly attention is the diachronicity of the text. While few doubt that the material in Joshua–2 Kings (fronted by an older edition of Deuteronomy) constitutes a later compilation (or compilations) from earlier sources, there is a wide spectrum of opinion on which portions of the text date to when (preexilic, exilic, postexilic/Persian eras). There is little consensus other than that the final form of the text is

exilic or later. Thus, if Dtr is to be treated as a narrative unity and if the balance of the narratological evidence leads us to see this material as a conceptually unified whole (as the chronological ordering of the material certainly does), then the *Sitz im Leben* and the implied audience for Dtr's message are to be sought in—not before—the exile. And, as I will attempt to show, neither are they to be sought in the post-6<sup>th</sup> century Persian era.

As noted above, much of Dtr's narrative focus is on the rise of the monarchy. The narrative from Deuteronomy through the end of Judges is squarely focused not only on Israel's entry into the land and its conduct afterward, but also on its *leadership* predicament. To this focus, the names assigned *post factum* to the history's constituent books (after Deuteronomy) all bear witness: Joshua (Israel's primary human intermediary with Yhwh after Moses), Judges (שופטים), a stopgap form of leadership that Yhwh "raised" up intermittently after Joshua's death), 1–2 Samuel (named for the priest and the last judge, who was "raised up" as the first "prophet" like Moses, Deut 18:15-22); and 1–2 Kings (מלכים, self-explanatory). The later canonizers of Dtr's historical material recognized that leadership was the issue throughout the work.

Thus, Israel's leadership was of fundamental concern to Dtr and most often its biggest problem, due to the fact that Israel's cultic failings begin with its leaders. The performance of human intermediary leadership is the reason why things went awry even while the conquest of the land was underway and why the exilic community has experienced what it has. Although Dtr's narrative does not devote itself to the minutiae of Israel and Judah's exile, it does focus on its primary cause: Israel's "demand" for dynastic, monarchic leadership and its roots in Israel's previous "requests" for intermediary leadership. Dtr tells the story of what motivated



Israel to make that demand, i.e., the political and cultic corruption and chaos, due to the absence of effective human leadership during the period of the judges, and what the consequences of that “demand” proved to be: Israel under its monarchic leadership failed to wholeheartedly “love” Yhwh. This failure to “love” Yhwh resulted in Israel’s disintegration—a failure of its **שלום**, even at its height: the unity, completeness, peace, that it should have enjoyed under Yhwh’s kingship, but in fact only enjoyed briefly under Solomon (see especially 1 Kgs 4:2–1 Kgs 5:5, 17-18). The civil corruption and chaos that was Israel’s pretext for “demanding” monarchy (1 Sam 8:4, 10) became monarchic oppression (“taking”)<sup>6</sup> and the cultic apostasy that monarchic observance of Deuteronomy should have prevented (Deut 17:14-20) was institutionalized.

Much of what Dtr has to say concerns Israel’s first kings and the figures who surrounded them (1 Samuel 1–1 Kings 11). Those figures, of course, have names. I will argue hereafter that Dtr uses those names to comment on Israel and its “demanded” monarchy. His use of these names in connection with particular words and themes articulates his thoughts on and attitudes toward Israel’s monarchy and the inevitable outworking of Israel’s demand for additional human intermediary leadership: exile.

Rather than solely expounding the exile’s causations at the end of his history, when monarchic sins and the sins of the people have come to fruition at last, Dtr undertakes to address these issues much earlier. Israel’s reluctance to remain in Yhwh’s presence and its insistence on intermediary leadership is evident already in Deut 18:16 (see also 5:23-28).

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<sup>6</sup> E.g., 1 Sam 8:11-18; 2 Samuel 11–12; 1 Kgs 21:1-16.

Human intermediary leadership, although serving Israel well in the beginning (Moses, Joshua), soon fails in important ways (e.g., Joshua's Gibeonite treaty, Joshua 9). Immediately after the death of Joshua and through much of the period of the Judges, Israel's leadership situation is already dire. At the outset of the Judges period, Israel is already "asking" for what seems to be royal tribal leadership (see Judg 1:1). The question posed by the narratives at the end of Judges—the one that Dtr has already answered to a great degree by 1 Kings 12—is: will human kingship improve upon a situation *already* characterized by the rejection of Yhwh's kingship over Israel.<sup>7</sup>

As I hope to show, the most important commentary on the story of Israel's "exile" is concentrated in the narratives of 1 Samuel 1–Kings 11. The collective story of Israel and Judah's several monarchic houses, including the house of David, is told in miniature in the story of Eli's death and dethronement, the death of his "dynastic" sons, and the survival of an imperiled remnant of his "house." In this "story within a story," the names of the principals are all-important: their names tell the story. Additionally, Dtr relates important thematic messages connected to the later monarchic figures of Josiah, Tiglath-pileser III, and Nebuchadnezzar II. I shall also be addressing these themes and their connection to the names of the aforementioned monarchic figures. However, by the time Solomon (1 Kings 11) and Ahab's (1 Kings 16–22) stories are told by Dtr, Israel and Judah's respective fates seem to have been fixed (although Judah's sentence is still pending until the time of Manasseh).

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<sup>7</sup> Judg 8:22-23; 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:5; cf. 1 Sam 8:7.

### 1.1.2. Purpose/Objectives

The purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate and interpret the thematic nature of the wordplay involving the names of Israel's earliest monarchs Saul, David, and Solomon (and the principle figures associated with them) in the narratives of Dtr, as well as those of Tiglath-pileser of Assyria and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, whose policies give shape to Israel and Judah's ruin and destiny in exile. I will likewise highlight the importance of the etiological wordplay involving the name "Ichabod" (1 Samuel 4). I will further identify the allusions to Deuteronomy in Dtr's onomastic wordplay that he makes throughout his history, and show how the literary use of names together with *Leitworte* within Dtr elucidates the work's overall message, suggesting *when*, *why*, and *for whom* it was written.

### 1.1.3. Scope

An attempt to present an exhaustive treatment of issues pertaining to the texts, terms, and names that will be under discussion in this study would be impossible, even if such were desirable. Similarly, exhaustive citation of the secondary literature on the Deuteronomistic History and the numerous debates pertaining thereto is not possible, practical, or desirable for this study. I will, however, make use of works that are both representative of the scholarship that has been, and is being done on the Deuteronomistic history, works which are, at the same time, relevant to the investigation being conducted here.

Although the primary focus of my study is the material that overtly concerns the monarchy (1 Samuel–2 Kings), this study will also include discussions of monarchy-relevant passages such as (but not limited to) Israel's "asking" for human intermediary leadership at Horeb, the Gideon-Abimelech cycle (Judges 6–9), and the period of premonarchic chaos

described in Judges 17–21. This study will exclude—from the undisputed Deuteronomistic texts which I will utilize for my analysis of Dtr’s literary use of names and *Leitworte*—Deuteronomy 32–33; the apparent accretions of poetic material found at the beginning and ending of 1–2 Samuel (i.e., 1 Sam 2:1-10; 2 Samuel 22; 23:1-7), and the etiological story of 2 Samuel 24, which is not of a piece either with the narratives that precede (2 Sam 23:8-39) or follow it (1 Kings 1).

## 1.2. The Literature

### 1.2.1. Earlier Scholarship on the Deuteronomistic History

It would almost impossible to overestimate the influence of Martin Noth’s seminal thesis on the Deuteronomistic History in his *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*,<sup>8</sup> which has been the touchstone for nearly all scholarship on Deuteronomy-2 Kings up to the present time. Against the earlier view(s) of a Hexateuch (Genesis-Joshua) and the Graf<sup>9</sup>–Wellhausen<sup>10</sup> “Documentary Hypothesis” with source documents that were delineated as Yahwistic [J], Elohist [E], Deuteronomistic [D], and Priestly [P]), Noth proposed that Deuteronomy–2 Kings comprised a literary unity written by an author/editor with an overarching authorial agenda: to show why the destruction and exile of Israel and Judah happened: the failure of Israel, Judah, and their monarchies to observe the legislation of

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT, 1981). German original: idem, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1943).

<sup>9</sup> Karl Heinrich Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments: Zwei historisch-kritische Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: Weigel, 1866); idem, “Die sogenannte Grundschrift des Pentateuchs,” *AWEAT* 1 (1869) 466-77 (repr. *ThStKr* 45 [1872] 287-303).

<sup>10</sup> Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: Black, 1885).

Deuteronomy. This author, writing from Mizpah where he had numerous written sources and legends at his disposal,<sup>11</sup> assembled a history of Israel, incorporating an earlier edition of Deuteronomy, the book of the law found in the temple during Josiah's reign—a book which already had its own textual history—at its head. This author/editor (Dtr) evaluated the performance of Israel and Judah and its kings in terms of their compliance or non-compliance with Deuteronomy's cultic legislation in particular.

In his 1973 collection of studies *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*,<sup>12</sup> Frank Moore Cross modified Noth's thesis, proposing a Dtr consisting of two major editions: the first (Dtr<sub>1</sub>) pre-exilic, pro-Josianic and pro-monarchic written during the time of and under the auspices of King Josiah; the second (Dtr<sub>2</sub>), an exilic and antimonarchic redaction that brought the work of the earlier writer up to date. At roughly the same time, Helga Weippert, advocated a view of Dtr similar to Cross's, except that she discerned an earlier underlying pro-Hezekiah history.<sup>13</sup>

Cross's disciples, e.g., Richard D. Nelson (1981)<sup>14</sup> and Richard E. Friedman (1981),<sup>15</sup> tend to see the work as originally pre-exilic and pro-monarchic. Josiah is, within this model,

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<sup>11</sup> Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 85.

<sup>12</sup> Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 285-87.

<sup>13</sup> Helga Weippert, "Die 'deuteronomistischen' Beurteilungen der Könige von Israel und Juda und das Problem der Redaktion der Königsbücher," *Bib* 53 (1972) 301-339; eadem, "Das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk: Sein Ziel und Ende in der neueren Forschung," *TRu* 50 (1985) 213-49.

<sup>14</sup> Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT, 1981). For a more recent restatement of the argument, see idem, "The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History: The Case is Still Compelling," *JSOT* 29 (2005) 319-37.

the culmination of Israel's history and the epitome of its leadership. Another key issue for Cross and his followers is the apparent "unconditionality" of the covenant that Yhwh makes with David in 2 Samuel 7, versus clearly "conditional" iterations of this covenant elsewhere (e.g., 1 Kgs 2:4; 8:25) and the demise of the Judahite state and Davidic monarchic power at the end of the history.

The redactional dissection of Dtr by European scholars has largely evolved in a different direction from that taken by their transatlantic counterparts. Attempts of European scholars to peel back Dtr layer by layer (or stratum by stratum) began in earnest with Rudolf Smend's enormously influential study (1971),<sup>16</sup> which was quickly followed by those of his students Walter Dietrich [1972]<sup>17</sup> and Timo Veijola [1975],<sup>18</sup> this trio sometimes being referred to as the "Göttingen school." Smend identified an original DtrG (later DtrH) subsequently modified by DtrN, a "nomistic" redactor whose focus was blessings predicated on adherence to Deuteronomy. Dietrich added to Smend's DtrG and DtrN, a DtrP who inserted a stratum of prophetic material. Veijola expands Dietrich's findings regarding DtrN.

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<sup>15</sup> Richard E. Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Works* (HSM 22; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>16</sup> Rudolf Smend, "Das Gesetz und die Völker: Ein Beitrag zur deuteronomistische Redaktionsgeschichte," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag* (Festschrift G. von Rad; ed. H.W. Wolff; Munich: Kaiser, 1971) 495-509.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (FRLANT 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).

<sup>18</sup> Timo Veijola, *Die ewige Dynastie: David und die Entstehung seiner Dynastie nach der deuteronomistischen Darstellung* (AASF B/193; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1975; idem, *Das Königtum in der deuteronomistischen Historiographie: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (AASF B/198; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1977).

These scholars, like Cross, have detected more editions than Noth, although, like Noth, they saw none of these as pre-exilic.

Under virtually every scholarly scenario, however, the issue of the monarchy goes to the heart of when and why Dtr was composed. In the years since Noth, numerous studies have reassessed the evidence on the monarchy within Dtr. Hans Jochen Boecker (1969) reevaluated the Deuteronomist's treatment of the monarchy in 1 Samuel 8; 10:17-27; 12, finessing Noth's view of an exilic, anti-monarchic Dtr.<sup>19</sup> Later studies—many of them in the Göttingen tradition—applied various approaches to the same textual evidence. Frank Crüsemann (1978)<sup>20</sup> utilized Max Weber's sociological models<sup>21</sup> in examining Judges 8–9; 17–21; and 1 Samuel 8–12 and the question of why the monarchy met with resistance throughout Israel's history. Ansgar Moenikes (1995) also seeks the socio-historical roots of the eventual, post-exilic theological rejection of monarchy in Israelite religion in these key evidentiary texts.<sup>22</sup> Reinhart Müller (2004) uses the same texts to demarcate Deuteronomistic views on human and divine “lordship,” discerning (as had previous scholars) a highly-stratified textual history, while also charting an evolution in Deuteronomistic attitudes on the monarchy from

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<sup>19</sup> Hans Jochen Boecker, *Die Beurteilung der Anfänge des Königtums in den deuteronomistischen Abschnitten des I. Samuelbuches: Ein Beitrag zum Problem des “deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks”* (WMANT 31; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969).

<sup>20</sup> Frank Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen Israelitischen Staat* (WMANT 49; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag) 1978.

<sup>21</sup> See Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich; trans. Ephraim Fischhoff; Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>22</sup> Ansgar Moenikes, *Die grundsätzliche Ablehnung des Königtums in der Hebräischen Bibel: Ein Beitrag zur Religionsgeschichte des Alten Israel* (BBB 99; Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1995).

ambivalence (exilic) to emphatic anti-monarchism (post-exilic).<sup>23</sup> David Wagner (2005) examines the whole of 1 Samuel 8–2 Samuel 1 as a paradigm for Israelite kingship with a particular focus on Saul’s “legitimation” and “delegitimation” in terms of the bestowal of Yhwh’s spirit on him and the subsequent withdrawal of that spirit.<sup>24</sup>

On this side of the Atlantic, Cross’s double-redaction theory has long enjoyed wide support. Some Cross-influenced scholars like Marvin Sweeney have embraced Weippert’s theory of a pre-Josiah, pro-Hezekiah edition of Dtr that was updated and expanded even before the exile.<sup>25</sup> A.F. Campbell sees the pre-Josianic history as a foundational “prophetic record” upon which much of Dtr was constructed.<sup>26</sup> Iain W. Provan (1988) has further attempted to refine Cross’s theory in view of the notices on the high places in 1-2 Kings.<sup>27</sup>

Flemming A.J. Nielsen has noted attempts, in reaction to the diverging North American and European diachronic approaches, by scholars such as Andrew D.H. Mayes<sup>28</sup> and Mark O’Brien<sup>29</sup> to “combine” the Cross and Smend models. These are studies, according

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<sup>23</sup> Reinhard Müller, *Königtum und Gottesherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur alttestamentlichen Monarchiekritik* (FAT 2/3; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> David Wagner, *Geist und Tora: Studien zur göttlichen Legitimation und Delegitimation von Herrschaft im Alten Testament anhand der Erzählungen über König Saul* (ABG 15; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> Marvin Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>26</sup> Antony F. Campbell, *Of Prophets and Kings: A Late Ninth-Century Document (1 Samuel 1–2 Kings 10)* (CBQMS 17; Washington, DC: CBA, 1986).

<sup>27</sup> Iain W. Provan, *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings: A Contribution to the Debate about the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (BZAW 172; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988).

<sup>28</sup> Andrew D.H. Mayes, *The Story of Israel Between Settlement and Exile: A Redactional Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (London: SCM, 1983).



to Nielsen, that “presuppose both the editorial rupture after Josiah of the ‘Cross school’ and the strata of the ‘Smend school.’”<sup>30</sup> Attempts to harmonize the Cross and Smend schools, however, may not be the way forward if, as Janzen suggests, the aforementioned “theories of redaction have a tendency to ignore theological complexity that can be attributable to a single author.” Harmonizing the ideas of Noth and Cross, G.E. Gerbrandt (1980),<sup>31</sup> argues that Dtr is essentially promonarchic, doing so by placing greater emphasis on Deuteronomistic evaluations of kings nearer the Deuteronomist’s own time (see, e.g., the treatment of Josiah in 2 Kings 22–23).

While the aforementioned studies have adroitly identified many possible editorial layers and voices—and thus opposing attitudes on the monarchy within Dtr—they have neglected the study of how narrative units might function together in a strategic way to articulate a single authorial or editorial view on kingship. Perhaps the biggest problem with the work of the “Smend school,” in the words of Nielsen, is that its “different strata resemble each other linguistically and ideologically, and chronologically they are close together as well.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Mark A. O’Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (OBO 92; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989); Anthony F. Campbell and Mark A. O’Brien, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History: Origins, Upgrades, and Present Text* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> Flemming A.J. Nielsen, *The Tragedy in History: Herodotus and the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 251; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997) 94.

<sup>31</sup> Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*.

<sup>32</sup> Flemming, *Tragedy in History*, 94.

The recognition of this imbalance has spurred more narrative-oriented studies since the 1970s, particularly among English-language scholars. David M. Gunn (1978, 1980),<sup>33</sup> in studies on the narratives of David and Saul, applied Martin Buber's (1964) ideas on *Leitworte*,<sup>34</sup> this leading him to distinguish two kingships: human (Saul) and divine (David), the former approved by the Deuteronomist, the latter disapproved. Lyle Eslinger's (1985) meticulous narrative reading of 1 Samuel 1–12,<sup>35</sup> which highlighted *Leitworte* like *לש*, found only limited approval for monarchy under the strict auspices of theocracy in Dtr. Moshe Garsiel (1985) noted thematic wordplay on the names "Saul" and "Samuel" in 1 Samuel. David Jobling (1986) took a closer look at narrative structures in Dtr.<sup>36</sup> He saw Judges 6–9 and 1 Samuel 8–12 as "proleptically balancing"<sup>37</sup> each other, the former text being negative toward kingship, the latter positive.

Nonetheless, scholars hitherto have paid much more attention to diachronic issues, rather than to literary phenomena in assessing the problem of the monarchy in Dtr. There is thus still room to make further use of Buber's observations on *Leitworte* in assessing this

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<sup>33</sup> David M. Gunn, *The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation* (JSOTSup 6; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1978); idem, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOTSup 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980).

<sup>34</sup> Martin Buber, "Leitwort Style in Pentateuch Narrative," in Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation* (trans. Lawrence Rosenwald and Everett Fox; ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) 114; see also idem, *דרכו של מקרא: עיונים בדפוסי־סגנון בתנ"ך* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1964).

<sup>35</sup> Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12* (BLS 10; Decatur, GA: Almond, 1985).

<sup>36</sup> David Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Structural Analyses in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 7; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

problem, as some of the aforementioned studies—and especially Robert Polzin’s seminal publications (1980, 1989, and 1993)<sup>38</sup>—have shown. There is also a further need to address the issue of wordplay on names as *Leitworte* (à la Garsiel [1985])<sup>39</sup> on a still wider scale in Dtr. The connections of Dtr’s name-linked *Leitworte* to Deuteronomy and the implications of their use to the topic of the monarchy in Dtr also need to be explored. The above topics are consequently a major focus of this work.

### 1.2.2. State of Current Research

While the Cross double-redaction theory still enjoys some support in North America, continental European scholarship largely continues either to follow the Göttingen school (Smend and his followers) in approaching Dtr as a highly-stratified composition, or fundamentally rejects Noth’s thesis of a “Deuteronomistic History” in favor of seeing Deuteronomy–2 Kings as an unschematic accumulation of heavily-redacted narratives (see further below). Römer (2005), a moderating European voice,<sup>40</sup> embraces a three-stage development model (pre-exilic, exilic, post-exilic/Persian era) for the complex. The great

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges* (San Francisco: Seabury, 1980); idem, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History. Part Two: 1 Samuel* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989); *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History. Part Three: 2 Samuel* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993).

<sup>39</sup> Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Jerusalem: Revivim, 1985).

<sup>40</sup> Thomas C. Römer, *The So-called Deuteronomistic History: A Social, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

strength of his approach is that he attempts to substantiate his diachronic approach to Dtr with reference to ancient literary analogues (Herodotus, etc.).

Many scholars have come to agree with Nielsen that the “tendency toward splitting the deuteronomistic historical work up into more and more layers ... makes it increasingly unlikely that anyone except the scholar who originally identified the many layers should ever be able to recognize them.”<sup>41</sup> If as, Janzen suggests, the studies of Cross and Smend, and their followers “misconstrue complexity of thought for evidence of redaction” and “have ignored easier ways to explain the shifts in diction on which they rely for evidence,”<sup>42</sup> the question has to be seriously asked: do complicated diachronic hypotheses for which we have no good external ancient Near Eastern analogues get us nearer to understanding the overall meaning of Dtr? Regarding this problem, Polzin writes:

Lavish attention to pre-texts and their background makes it difficult to give equally lavish attention to real texts and their interpretation. ... If we find ourselves necessarily married to such an ancient document, whatever care is lavished upon correcting its physical defects sadly corresponds to a fatal ignoring of that text’s ideological and esthetic brilliance, or even, in some cases to a profound denial thereof.<sup>43</sup>

Polzin himself suggests a more promising approach, even if not ultimately a solution: he “presumes” that real texts ultimately “make sense” in spite of scribal errors and other text-critical difficulties, and thus takes a “sympathetic attitude” toward the real text as we have it.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Nielsen, *Tragedy in History*,

<sup>42</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 18.

<sup>43</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Building on Gunn's earlier literary studies on Saul and David, Polzin's three literary studies on the Deuteronomistic History (focusing on Moses, Samuel, and David respectively)<sup>45</sup> may represent a high watermark (within the last thirty years) in literary approaches to Dtr. In the wake of these seminal studies synchronic analyses of Dtr have become more common. Peter D. Miscall, e.g., has written a literary commentary on 1 Samuel that he describes as "open and eclectic" with a focus that "varies from comments on wordplay, narrative style, and narrative techniques to dominant themes."<sup>46</sup>

Currently, many synchronic literary approaches continue in the Bakhtin-influenced<sup>47</sup> vein of Polzin's studies (above). Keith Bodner, e.g., has recently written an astute literary commentary on 1 Samuel<sup>48</sup> as well as several related works<sup>49</sup>—from a literary and narratological perspective. Barbara Green's works on Saul,<sup>50</sup> which extend many of the observations of Polzin and others, are also outstanding representatives of this kind of approach. More recently, Rachelle Gilmour's dissertation examines "narrative

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<sup>45</sup> Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*; idem, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*; idem, *David and the Deuteronomist*.

<sup>46</sup> Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986) xvi.

<sup>47</sup> E.g., Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (ed. Michael Holquist; trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981).

<sup>48</sup> Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (HBS 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> Idem, *The Artistic Dimension: Literary Explorations of the Hebrew Bible* (LHBOTS 590; London: T & T Clark, 2013); idem, *Elisha's Profile in the Book of Kings: The Double Agent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>50</sup> Barbara Green, *King Saul's Asking* (Interfaces; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003); eadem, *How are the Mighty Fallen? A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel* (JSOTSup 365; Sheffield Academic, 2003).

historiography” in 1 Samuel through the lens of literary analysis.<sup>51</sup> Finally, David Janzen has mounted a vigorous case for Dtr both as a literary unity and the product of a single exilic author/editor/redactor, analyzing Dtr’s historiographical narratology in terms of “trauma theory.”<sup>52</sup>

### 1.3. Methodology

#### 1.3.1. *The Deuteronomistic History as Literature*

In this dissertation, I will approach the Deuteronomistic History as “literature.” In other words, I focus on Dtr as an *intended* “true story” rather than engaging the complicated issues pertaining to the “historicity” or non-historicity of Dtr’s pericopes in modern historiographical terms.<sup>53</sup> I will set aside such questions, except as pertaining to the target audience of Dtr’s history: the exiles of Israel/Judah in the post-560 BCE Babylonian world.

This dissertation will be primarily literary critical and narratological in character. That it is, it will not only focus on the history or “story” that Dtr tells, but *how* Dtr tells it, and those to whom he tells it. Thus, I will pay special attention to literary devices and narrative poetics, such as the use of *Leitworte* [see below] and thematic wordplay. This dissertation will likewise use textual criticism to address problematic textual issues (e.g., in Nathan’s condemnation of David, [2 Sam 12:1-14]). Finally, historical criticism will be used in the

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<sup>51</sup> Rachelle Gilmour, *Representing the Past: A Literary Analysis of Narrative Historiography in the Book of Samuel* (VTSup 143; Leiden: Brill, 2011).

<sup>52</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 23-63.

<sup>53</sup> It is unlikely, in any case, that Dtr or his sixth century contemporaries would have debated the “historicity” of the events narrated in the history. They are not presented to the audience as mere “story,” but as things that are assumed to have *happened* (regardless of whether they happened as described). Dtr is attempting to tell a “true story” – a story that was intended to be perceived as such by his implied audience.

sixth chapter in an attempt to determine the approximate compositional date of Dtr and to identify its (possible) intended audience among the exiles.

### 1.3.2. *The Deuteronomistic History as an Exilic Work of Primarily One Editor*

As Janzen points out, arguments against the possibility of a single author/editor for Dtr are implicitly arguments that discount “complexity within the narrative regarding the monarchs, people, apostasy, and divine punishment”<sup>54</sup> and, as he further notes, to “to locate separate authors, or at least an author and redactor” on the narrow lexical and theological bases “is to misread the complexity of thought within the narrative regarding the monarchs, people, apostasy, and divine punishment.”<sup>55</sup> Such arguments often rest on unproven and unprovable assumptions.

In spite of the arguments of Cross and his followers for a kind of “block” model of composition and those of Smend and his followers for “layered” composition, it is not evident from the extant documentary evidence of the ancient Near East that documents—let alone large literary texts—were composed this way.<sup>56</sup> And, of course, there is no *external* evidence for a theoretical Dtr<sub>1</sub> vs. Dtr<sub>2</sub> or DtrG vs. DtrN, DtrP, etc. The *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad*

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<sup>54</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 12.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> See Burke O. Long, *1 Kings* (FOTL 9; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984) 15-16; Robert R. Wilson, “Unity and Diversity in the Book of Kings,” in “*A Wise and Discerning Mind*”: *Essays in Honor of Burke O. Long* (ed. Saul M. Olyan and Robert C. Cully; BJS 325; Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000) 18-19; Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 19. For an important study suggesting how the study of scribal practice should inform—and reform—source and redactional criticism, see David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

*quem* for the bulk of what we have (excluding Dtr's source material) is the exile,<sup>57</sup> after Jehoiachin's death.<sup>58</sup>

Scholars such as Harmut Rösel,<sup>59</sup> Graeme Auld,<sup>60</sup> and K.L. Noll,<sup>61</sup> have argued in various ways against the existence of a Deuteronomistic History. Noll, e.g., on the basis of similar language in the Minor Prophets, contests the idea that "Deuteronomistic" describes anything literary, linguistic, or theological, apart from late glossing. And yet, in spite of this and similar arguments, the clear chronological contiguity of Deuteronomy–2 Kings that was a major factor in Noth's positing a self-contained, unified history by a single Dtr in the first place,<sup>62</sup> remains unrefuted. As Janzen points out, this is still "one of the key arguments for the existence of a Deuteronomistic History"<sup>63</sup> and the "the idea that each of these books was originally written and (largely) redacted independently of the others, even while each book

<sup>57</sup> Noth (*Deuteronomistic History*, 12) believed that the *terminus a quo* for Dtr's editorial work was 562 BCE, on account of the mention of Jehoiachin's release (2 Kgs 25:27-30). Few would argue that any final redaction Dtr would have begun before this date. Given that the text seems to imply Jehoiachin's death, the redactional work probably began after 562 BCE.

<sup>58</sup> C.T. Begg, "The Significance of Jehoiachin's Release: A New Proposal," *JSOT* 36 (1986) 54.

<sup>59</sup> Harmut N. Rösel, "Does a Comprehensive 'Leitmotif' Exist in the Deuteronomistic History?" in *The Future of the Deuteronomistic History* (ed. Thomas C. Römer; BETL 147; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000) 195-211.

<sup>60</sup> A. Graeme Auld (*Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* [London: T&T Clark, 1994]) posits an original "book of the two houses," i.e., a document about the Jerusalem temple (house of Yhwh) and the Davidic dynasty (house of David) underlying both 1 Samuel–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles.

<sup>61</sup> K.L. Noll, "Deuteronomistic History or Deuteronomistic Debate? A Thought Experiment," *JSOT* 31 (2007) 311-45; see more recently, "A Portrait of the Deuteronomistic Historian at Work?" in *Raising Up A Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson* (ed. B. Schramm and K.L. Noll; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010) 73-86.

<sup>62</sup> Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 18-25.

<sup>63</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 20.



after Deuteronomy picks up precisely at the point at which the previous one left off, would appear to be so coincidental as to stretch credulity.”<sup>64</sup> In other words, the complex’s chronological schema is not likely to be the work of late glossators. There is plot and progression: Dtr begins with Israel’s entry into the land and the covenant on which entry and remaining in the land is predicated and closes with Israel and Judah’s expulsion from the land in violation of said covenant. Moreover, the cyclical apostasy in the Judges period coheres with the earlier smaller leadership and covenant failures that begin under Joshua and paradoxically worsen as monarchy takes root under Solomon and his successors in both kingdoms. In the end, the conclusion that *somebody* purposefully gave this material its chronological contiguity and coherent narrative shape seems inescapable.

Rösel and Noll find no overarching *Leitmotif*, and yet (as I have suggested above, §1.1.1) Israel’s “requested” human leadership and the trajectory of its performance constitutes just such a unifying motif from Deuteronomy to the end of 2 Kings, this all within the context of chronological contiguity and narratological coherence (I will offer yet more evidence for both throughout this work). Far from evidence of chronological, narrative, or thematic discontiguity, the names assigned *post factum* to Dtr’s canonical book divisions (Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings) are strong evidence, if not proof, that the focus of material was recognized by ancient readers (much closer in time to the purported events the history narrates and the time of the history’s composition than modern scholars) to be Israel’s

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 21.

(mostly) deteriorating leadership situation from the time of its entry into the land until its final expulsion from the land and the aftermath in exile.

The contiguous *story* as we have it ends in the exile and not in the post-6<sup>th</sup> century Persian period. If Dtr or substantial parts of it were postexilic (thus, e.g., Walter Dietrich,<sup>65</sup> Raymond Person<sup>66</sup>) we might expect to find demonstrable connections with and allusions to Persian-era events, but as Janzen notes, “there are no clear allusions to any specific post-exilic event.”<sup>67</sup> Additionally, we might expect some firm philological evidence of Persian-era composition, such as we find in 1–2 Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah, e.g., the profusion of Persian loanwords their authors used. We do not find this evidence in Dtr.

My approach, then, will be primarily synchronic: an analysis of the real text that we have, and the narrative’s/narrator’s literary use of key terms in his history and his exploitation of the names of several figures who play key roles in the emergence and fate of Israel and Judah’s monarchies, and what his use of this literary device would have suggested in an exilic context (i.e., to exiles—but to *which* exiles?). The text of Dtr in the form that we now have it was, by-and-large, in existence during the exile and probably not long after the death of Jehoiachin in Babylon (as most of the internal evidence from Deuteronomy–2 Kings suggests).<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte*.

<sup>66</sup> Raymond F. Person, *The Deuteronomistic School: History, Social Setting, and Literature* (SBL Studies in Biblical Literature 2; Leiden: Brill, 2002).

<sup>67</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 24. See further, Rainer Albertz, “Why a Reform like Josiah’s Must Have Happened,” in *Good Kings and Bad Kings* (ed. Lester L. Grabbe; ESMIH 7/LHBOTS 393; London: T&T Clark, 2005) 27–46.

### 1.3.3. Names and their Literary Importance

Names are memorable. Virtually every human being has at least one name, often several. No reader of Genesis would suggest that personal and place names are not a key element in the author's narratology. In fact, they may be *the* key element (although that is an argument to be made elsewhere). I suggest that we witness a similar phenomenon in Dtr that is concentrated in 1 Samuel–2 Kings, but very evident throughout the entire work as well. This, of course, is not merely a biblical phenomenon. As Michael O'Connor has noted, "The ancients display awareness of the meanings and shapes of names chiefly in literature."<sup>69</sup> Scott Noegel, for his part, has compiled a volume that situates biblical wordplay, including wordplay involving proper names, in relation to the kind of wordplay found throughout ancient Near Eastern literature.<sup>70</sup>

As O'Connor also notes, "Semitic names are linguistically transparent, i.e., meaningful as ordinary words (or compounds of these) in the language of their bearers and users. Such names are unusual in the modern European languages, although there are a few,

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<sup>68</sup> Even if some portions are datable to the early Persian period, they have been worked into an exilic framework and are thus to be understood in that context anyway. Whatever the case, arguments that certain texts, or portions of texts, belong to a much later time during the Persian period are virtually impossible to corroborate from external evidence. And if we are privileging internal evidence, it is the "Chronistic History Books" (1-2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah) that betray, as Dtr itself does not, the irrefutable hallmarks of Persian-era composition (e.g., Persian loanwords, etc.).

<sup>69</sup> M. O'Connor, "The Human Characters' Names in the Ugaritic Poems: Onomastic Eccentricity in Bronze-Age West Semitic and the Name Daniel in Particular," in *Biblical Hebrew in Its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Steven E. Fassberg and Avi Hurvitz; Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 270.

<sup>70</sup> See *Puns and Pundits: Word Play in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (ed. Scott B. Noegel; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000).

e.g., in modern English, Charity, Hope, Rose, and so on.”<sup>71</sup> The Hebrew names “Saul” (שׂאול, “requested”), “David” (דָּוִד, “Beloved”), “Solomon” (“his replacement”), “Ichabod” (“Where is glory?”) would have probably have been similarly transparent to Hebrew-speaking Israelites of the sixth century and earlier. Where they were not—and even where they were—Dtr helps his audience to see these names with new eyes and within new hues of meaning.

#### 1.3.4. *Leitworte and Literature*

Martin Buber can be credited with identifying the literary phenomenon of repeated, thematically important words that, when noted, guide the reader toward a text’s meaning or, at least, aspects of its meaning which the author considers particularly important. For this phenomenon, Buber coined the term *Leitwort* (“lead-word,” or “guiding word”) which he defines thus: “By *Leitwort* I understand a word or word root that is meaningfully repeated within a text or a sequence of texts or complex of texts; those who attend to these repetitions will find a meaning of the text revealed or clarified, or at any rate made more emphatic. As noted, what is repeated need not be a single word but can be a word root; indeed the diversity of forms strengthens the overall dynamic effect.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> O’Connor, “Human Characters’ Names in Ugaritic,” 270.

<sup>72</sup> Buber, “Leitwort Style in Pentateuch Narrative,” 114; idem, דרכו של מקרא: עיונים בדפוסי־סגנון בתנ”ך, 284.

### 1.3.5. Identifying Wordplay

Wordplay is most easily identified when the terms involved, e.g., a name and a homophone or synonym, are juxtaposed closely together in the text. In some instances, however, the related terms will occur together in the text at some remove. In still other instances, a wordplay or pun involves only a single term or a repeated term while the pun's referent, e.g., the name is missing from the text. This, of course, raises an important question: does the use of a *Leitwort* connected with an important name constitute an allusion or an allusive wordplay when the name itself is absent in the pericope or text? Context is often a guide in such cases.

Years ago, Mikhail Bakhtin described an important instance of narrative context, which he termed "character zone."<sup>73</sup> In an edition of several of Bakhtin's essays, Michael Holquist formulates Bakhtin's conception thus: "A character's zone need not begin with his directly quoted speech but can begin far back in the text, the author can prepare the way for an autonomous voice by manipulating words ostensibly belonging to 'neutral' authorial speech."<sup>74</sup> To suggest that the "character zones" of major figures like Samuel, Saul, David extend over much of the premonarchic period (Deuteronomy–Judges) and that those of Solomon, Josiah, and Tiglath-pileser, extend from Joshua to the end of the history is to suggest that wordplay on, or a literary allusion to, a character's name can, and often does, occur at some remove from the appearance of a character and the character's name within the

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<sup>73</sup> The "zony geroev" is the "field of action for a character's voice encroaching in one way or another upon the author's voice." Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 316.

<sup>74</sup> See "Glossary" in *Ibid*, 434.

text. Thus a conscious wordplay or allusion to Saul might occur, e.g., in Deut 18:16. I proceed here on the supposition that wordplay and allusion may indeed occur at such distant textual remove.

### *1.3.6. Dtr's Literary Exploitation of Names in Conjunction with Leitworte*

It is common for biblical scholars to approach the occurrence of names in the biblical text strictly as philological scientists. In other words, for biblical scholars generally, the scientific etymology of the name has been *the thing*. Unfortunately, scholars also often assume that biblical writers were “primitive” linguists/scientists, i.e., they did not understand their own language, names, and literary conventions as well as we do. But as Moshe Garsiel notes, “Although [biblical] names were invented by ordinary people and not necessarily by linguists, they follow and are subject to the patterns and rules of dynamic language development.”<sup>75</sup>

Michael O'Connor frames the problem thus: “in the past biblical scholars have sometimes disparaged cases in which the ancient understanding or use of a name has been at odds with the (apparent) scientific etymology. The phrase ‘popular etymology’ has sometimes been used as a term of reproach rather than of description.”<sup>76</sup> As J. Gerald Janzen observes,

The practice [of “popular etymology”], a form of punning which often turns on sound-similarity, is well known in the Bible ... All too often in modern times, specific instances of such popular etymology have received only the amount of attention needed to point out their inaccuracy from a historical and linguistic point of view. Yet so far as a proper understanding of the biblical narrative is concerned, it is as

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<sup>75</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 13.

<sup>76</sup> O'Connor, “Human Characters’ Names in Ugaritic,” 270.

irrelevant as it is correct to observe that ‘Babel’ in Genesis 11 does not come from a root meaning ‘to confound’; or to observe that the name ‘Moses’ in Exodus 2 is not formed from a root meaning to draw out.<sup>77</sup>

In other words, a Judahite of the sixth century BCE, would never have mistaken the wordplay on בבל in terms of בלל (Gen 11:9) as a genuine attempt to describe the origin of the former term. However, wordplay and punning can suggest humorously—or even very soberly—how it is that a particular name is ironic and/or appropriate. In OT narrative, and in Dtr in particular, this kind of wordplay or punning is sometimes done repetitively via use of a single word or a variety of words. In this study, I will show how Dtr uses specific *Leitworte* to play on, allude to, and even give new ironic meaning to the names of Israel and Judah’s most important figures.

### 1.3.7. Biblical Narratology

The ancient writer, perhaps even more than the modern filmmaker, was of necessity a story-teller. Then, as now, a good story-teller knew how to engage his or her audience.<sup>78</sup> The biblical writers were no exception in this regard. A major reason that we have the writings constituting our present Hebrew Bible is that these writings were consistently deemed worth preserving—possibly in preference to other, no longer extant writings. Thus the survival of Dtr as a literary whole, even in its present canonical subdivisions, suggests that the historian

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<sup>77</sup> J. Gerald Janzen, “What’s in a Name? ‘Yahweh’ in Exodus 3 and the Wider Biblical Context,” *Int* 33 (1979) 229.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. the story-telling capacities of Joab and the unnamed “wise woman” in 2 Samuel 14.

was a good writer/story teller. The Chronicler's free use of Dtr as a main source further suggests this.

The diverse materials found throughout Dtr have elicited myriads of articles and monographs on the authorship and age of its texts. However, the presence of disparate materials is not the sure sign of multiple authors, stratified composition, etc. Perhaps, just the opposite is true. Fokkelman has observed,

The biblical writers have at their disposal a range of tools with which they convey their values to the reader. These forms and techniques may be arranged along a scale that runs from very clear and explicit to vague, implicit, and well-hidden. A good narrator does not want to make things easy for us by sermonizing himself all the time. He knows that in that in that case his text would be reduced to the level of didactics. He also wants us to make us think, and the best way to do this is to speak indirectly and implicitly.<sup>79</sup>

Attempts to find large numbers of authors with agendas overlook the fact that a good author must use "a range of tools." A teacher in the classroom quickly learns that she or he must employ a teaching toolbox rather than a single tool to avoid dulling that tool through overuse. Dtr exhibits a pleasing difference in the literary tools and narrative devices brought to bear in his text—tools and devices that are, in my view, better seen as evidence of skilled authorship than of multitudinous authors, editors, and/or redactors.

One of Noth's most important contributions to our understanding of Dtr is his recognition of Dtr's skillful and respectful uses of sources;<sup>80</sup> although as Polzin has shown, Dtr's redactional presence may be more "heavy-handed" than Noth and subsequent

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<sup>79</sup> J.P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: A Practical Guide* (trans. Ineke Smit; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999) 149.

<sup>80</sup> Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 10.



diachronically-minded critics have supposed.<sup>81</sup> In any case, we should never simply assume that the presence of multiple voices is necessarily evidence of multiple agendas or schematic disunity. Dtr is not writing monarchic propaganda, although his narrative is aware of, and even repurposes such in some cases. For example, he allows both Nathan (2 Samuel 12) and Solomon (1 Kgs 2:33) to have their say about the eternal “peace” of the Davidic dynasty, though he ultimately vindicates Nathan’s prophecy vis-à-vis Solomon’s boast (as I shall show). His audience, some of whom very likely had strong Davidic sympathies, had diverse voices of their own. In the attempt to speak persuasively, it is better to dialogue with contrary voices rather than shout them down; the same is true in writing (as I think our historian understood). To this end, Dtr writes (and thus speaks) not from a position of royal authoritarianism, but from prophetic authority,<sup>82</sup> and using prophetic rhetorical tools.

Keith Bodner describes a “literary approach” as one that privileges “a close reading of the text that attends to matters of plot, character, point of view, irony, wordplay, direct speech, ambiguity, special and temporal settings and the role of the narrator”<sup>83</sup>—in short, an approach that “has a high degree of interest in the poetics of the text.”<sup>84</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I will discuss these kinds of “poetics” in the text, but will particularly focus on Dtr’s use of

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<sup>81</sup> See Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 2-6.

<sup>82</sup> Idem, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 26-72.

<sup>83</sup> Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 8.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

*Leitworte* and how in particular he exploits names through wordplay—sometimes polyptotic, paronomastic, and synonymic.

### 1.3.8. Dtr's "Remotivating" Exploitation of Names

I dislike the term "folk etymology" in no small part due to the faulty assumptions that this term brings to the study of the kinds of wordplay found throughout the Hebrew Bible, particularly to the analysis of the etiological explanations that often accompany name-giving in biblical Hebrew narrative.<sup>85</sup> As John M. Anderson notes, folk etymology or "folk-etymologizing" is an unnecessarily "dismissive term."<sup>86</sup> Better, as Anderson also notes, is Stéphane Gendron's use of the term "re-motivation."<sup>87</sup> I will, in most instances, describe Dtr's literary use and treatment of names as "exploitation" or "literary exploitation" (although these terms, too, are admittedly imperfect descriptors). My overall position concerning Dtr's exploitation of names is this: names have always constituted rhetorical and literary opportunities, and Dtr made skillful use of personal names in many instances, developing his themes on this basis. I will further argue that Dtr exploits names specifically with an eye to Deuteronomy.

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<sup>85</sup> For an older, but excellent study of onomastic biblical etiological notices, see Burke O. Long, *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament* (BZAW 108; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1968).

<sup>86</sup> John M. Anderson, *The Grammar of Names* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 85.

<sup>87</sup> Stéphane Gendron, "L'étymologie populaire: Quels enjeux pour l'onomastique?" in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Aberdeen, August 4-11, 1996* (2 vols.; ed. W.F.H. Nicolaisen; Aberdeen: Dept. of English, University of Aberdeen, 1998) 1:130-33.

#### **1.4. Summary**

By analyzing Dtr's literary use of the names of the principal figures involved in the rise of the monarchy (as well as important figures connected with Israel and Judah's exile) and the connections made in this complex to specific passages and themes in Deuteronomy, this dissertation will provide a fresh look at the Deuteronomist's attitude toward the Israelite monarchy and its origin. It is anticipated that this fresh perspective will further illuminate the overall literary message of the Deuteronomistic history.

## Chapter Two

*“And now, O Israel, what does Yhwh demand of you, but to fear Yhwh your God and to walk in his ways and to love him and to serve him with your whole heart and your whole self?”  
(Deut 10:12)*

*“Ask ... whether our way shall be prosperous.” (Judg 18:14)*

*“Let us draw near to God here.” (1 Sam 14:36)*

### 2.1 Saul and Israel’s “Asking”: “Requesting” Distance from Yhwh: Deut 18:16

This chapter will examine Dtr’s use of **שאל** as a *Leitwort* as a means of addressing the evolving issue of leadership in Israel and as an ongoing wordplay on the name “Saul,” Israel’s “demanded”<sup>1</sup> king. This *Leitwort* highlights the gradual abandonment of Yhwh’s immediacy as divine leader beginning with Israel’s “request” not to hear Yhwh’s voice any longer (Deut 5:21-26; 18:15-17), its increasing reliance on “asked for” or “demanded” human intermediaries (e.g., Israel’s “demanded” kings), and the monarchic recourse to human, rather than divine, counsel.

For my textual starting point I will use Deut 18:15-17, which describes Israel’s “asking” or “requesting” (**שאל**) not to hear Yhwh’s voice any longer as a “request” for a prophet. This text is incorporated into Moses’s promise that Yhwh will raise up a prophet “like” him—that is, a prophet invested with the same authority and mediatory role:

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<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the verb **שאל** ranges from “demand” (aggressive) to “ask” (more neutral) to “request” (polite), to “borrow” (causative to “loan”) and even to “beg” (out of desperation). This polysemy will be reflected in my translations throughout this chapter.

(15) A prophet from your midst, from among your brothers, like me Yhwh will raise up for you [לך];<sup>2</sup> to him **you must always listen** [תשמעו] (16) according to all that you **asked** [שאלת] from Yhwh your God at Horeb, on the Day of the Assembly saying, “**Let me not hear again** [לֹא אֶסְמָךְ לִשְׁמַע] the voice of Yhwh my God; and this great fire let me not **see** any further, lest I die” (17) Then Yhwh said unto me, “They have done well in saying thus.” (Deut 18:15-17; all translations are mine unless otherwise indicated)

This text uses a polysemic wordplay on שמע: the granting of Israel’s request not to physically “hear” (לשמע) Yhwh’s voice any longer comes with the stipulation that they must always “hear,” that is, obey (תשמעו) the prophet that Yhwh will raise up. Now that Israel will no longer physically “hear” Yhwh’s voice, will it “hear,” i.e., “obey” the raised-up prophet(s)? How will the increased (and increasing) distance between Yhwh and Israel play out long term, especially after its “demand” for kingship? Dtr aims to answer these two questions. The first half of 1 Samuel in particular addresses both questions simultaneously. Dtr uses the verb שמע to assess Israel’s willingness to “hear” Yhwh. The verb שאל too figures as an important *Leitwort* throughout Israel’s history up through Solomon’s accession to the throne. Although שמע and שאל occur frequently together, in the chapter that follows I will focus on the instances of שאל in Dtr’s history that pertain to the ongoing leadership situation in Israel and Israel’s movement away from Yhwh that began with the “request” at Horeb.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A “lamed of interest,” i.e., dative of advantage” (*dativus commodi*) or “benefactive dative.” See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 207-08 (§11.2.10b).

<sup>3</sup> Consequently, a few instances of שאל in Dtr, e.g., Achsah’s “request” for land from her father (Josh 15:18; Judg 1:14), which do not pertain to leadership in Israel and Israel’s movement from Yhwh, are not discussed.

## 2.2 Israel “Requests” a Prophet: Israel’s Early Leadership (Deuteronomy–1 Samuel 3)

### 2.2.1 “Requesting” a Prophetic Intermediary (Deut 5:24; 18:16)

Deut 18:16 frames the episode detailed in Deut 5:24 as Israel’s “request”—i.e., “you requested [שאלוּ].”<sup>4</sup> The details of this “request” are presented in the “epilogue to the Decalogue” (Deut 5:19–6:3).<sup>5</sup> The epilogue’s description of Israel’s response to “hearing” the Decalogue itself seems to be an expanded version of Exod 20:19: “Then they said to Moses: ‘You yourself speak with us and we will hear [נשמע]. But God must not speak with us, lest we die.’” This brief declaration has been elaborated into the present Deuteronomistic story.

The language of Deut 18:15–22 is sufficiently ambiguous to allow for either a single prophetic figure or a series of prophets as the promised נביא. Joshua,<sup>6</sup> Samuel,<sup>7</sup> Dtr himself,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Deut 18:16 interprets the people’s words in 5:24 [27] as a שאל, though this term is not used in the latter passage. There the people order Moses to “go near” and “hear” (imperatives) and “you shall speak unto us ...”

<sup>5</sup> Moshe Weinfeld (*Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation Introduction and Commentary* [AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991] 319–27) delimits the “epilogue” as Deut 5:19–6:3. The larger unit to which this subunit belongs is 5:1–6:3. See Norbert Lohfink, *Das Hauptgebot: Eine Untersuchung literarischer Einleitungsfragen zu Dtn 5–11* (AnBib 20; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1963) 140–51; Enrique Sanz Giménez-Rico, “La Gloria de Yahveh en Dt, 24,” *EE* 79 (2004) 309–36.

<sup>6</sup> So most recently Stephen B. Chapman, “Joshua Son of Nun: Presentation of a Prophet,” in “*Thus Says the Lord*”: *Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson* (ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Book; London: T&T Clark, 2009) 13–26; Hans Barstad, “The Understanding of the Prophets in Deuteronomy,” *SJOT* 8 (1994), 236–51. Although Joshua continues Moses’s prophetic role and is invested with the same authority, he is not called a נביא in Dtr, neither is he said to have been “raised up” (קם); cf. Judg 3:15; 1 Kgs 14:14).

<sup>7</sup> I have argued for Samuel as a specific literary fulfillment of this prophecy, while also allowing for subsequent prophets viewed favorably by Dtr to speak with the same authority. See Matthew L. Bowen, *Rejective Requests and Deadly Disobedience: The Literary Utilization of Deut 18:15–17 in 1 Samuel and Its Function within the Deuteronomistic History* (MA Thesis, CUA: 2009) 20–21.

Ezekiel,<sup>9</sup> Jesus (in later Christian exegesis),<sup>10</sup> and the prophetic office or prophets in general<sup>11</sup> have all been identified as this “raised-up” נָבִיא. Dtr’s attitude toward the נָבִיא is complicated. Hans Barstad adduces evidence that the overall assessment of prophets in Deuteronomy is somewhat negative.<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 13, after all, warns that one of the potential dangers posed by prophets is leading the people into idolatry—precisely the role that Dtr attributes to human kingship. Although Dtr sees the necessity of prophets for Israel after its “request” at Horeb, he does not seem to extol human intermediation in general.<sup>13</sup>

As Noth has pointed out, Dtr is willing to acknowledge some exemplary figures in Israel’s kingship (e.g., Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah), while disapproving of the institution as a

<sup>8</sup> Thus Robert Polzin (*Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* [New York: Seabury, 1980] 61) writes: “The ‘prophet like Moses’ is the narrator of the Deuteronomistic History, and through him, the Deuteronomist himself. The Deuteronomist uses Moses to explain by a hortatory lawcode the wide-ranging implications of the decalogue; this same author will soon be using the Deuteronomic narrator to explain an exemplary history the wide-ranging implications of the lawcode.”

<sup>9</sup> Franz Sedlmeier, “‘Deine Brüder, deine Brüder . . .’: Die Beziehung von Ez 11,14-21 zur dtn-dtr Theologie,” in *Jeremia und die “deuteronomische Bewegung”* (ed. Walter Gross; BBB 98; Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1995) 297-312.

<sup>10</sup> See especially Acts 3:22; 7:35. Cf. John 1:21; 6:14.

<sup>11</sup> Thus, Joseph Blenkinsopp (“Deuteronomy,” NJBC [ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990] 103) commenting on Deut 18:15-22 states: “Prophecy is Israel’s form of mediation: The (probably exilic) author wishes to find a place for prophecy in the ideal commonwealth.” He suggests that the term נָבִיא “is used distributively, i.e., prophets will be “raised up” as the occasion requires. The true prophet is called by Yahweh, is a native Israelite, and is a continuator of the prophetic office of Moses (cf. Exod 33:11; Num 12:1-8; Hos 12:13).” He further notes that this important passage “was interpreted eschatologically in Judaism (Mal 4:5-6; 1QS 9) and early Christianity.” See previous note.

<sup>12</sup> Barstad, “The Understanding of the Prophets in Deuteronomy,” 236-51.

<sup>13</sup> Irmtraud Fischer (“Levibund versus Prophetie in der Nachfolge des Mose: Die Mittlerkonzepte der Tora bei Maleachi,” in *Für immer verbündet: Studien zur Bundestheologie der Bibel* [ed. Christian Frevel and Christoph Dohmen; SBS 211; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2007] 61-68) argues that Dtr, over against priestly tradition, consistently portrays the prophet as the primary human intermediary.

whole.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, for Dtr Samuel plays an indispensable literary role as the “raised up” prophet whom Israel was supposed to “hear” (Deut 18:15-22; cf. Deut 5:24), especially in the matter of kingship (hence the ongoing paronomasia on שמואל and שמע).<sup>15</sup> Deuteronomy itself seems to voice approval for the distance that Israel “requested” between itself and Yhwh (5:25-26; 18:17, “they did well [הֵיטִיבוּ] in speaking thus”), if not actually for prophets: “Would that [מִי־יִתֵּן] they might always have such a mind, to fear me and keep all my commandments so that it might go well [יֵטֵב] with them” (5:26).<sup>16</sup>

As Weinfeld indicates, “God expresses the wish that the fear of the people caused by the theophany should be transformed into fear of God in their heart which will produce observance of God’s commandments.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Yhwh’s words may constitute something of a backhanded compliment to the Israelites at Horeb. Enrique Sanz Giménez-Rico observes that Israel itself had discovered—and noted (Deut 5:24)—that a “direct relationship with God ... could be a death-generating event” but also that one could

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<sup>14</sup> Martin Noth (*The Deuteronomistic History* [trans. David J. A. Clines, Jane Doull, et al.; JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981]; reprinted: Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004; trans. of *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* [2nd ed.; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1957] 83) observes that “Dtr brings the monarchy into his work in a manner designed to make clear that this institution was a late innovation, inappropriate by its nature and hence categorically objectionable and that it accomplished a positive good only under isolated, outstanding representatives.”

<sup>15</sup> See §2.2.8 and 2.2.9.

<sup>16</sup> The text uses polyptoton—wordplay involving terms derived from the same root (e.g., in English, “Spring has sprung”)—to correlate the people’s prosperity (“it shall go well,” יֵטֵב) with their having “done well” (הֵיטִיבוּ) in their apparently reverential words regarding Yhwh (cf. 5:33; 6:3). Their “reverential” distancing of themselves from Yhwh will eventuate, however, in הרע (“evil”) with the coming of the monarchy.

<sup>17</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 325.



experience God directly and “live.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, Israel’s “fear” of God was a fear of death. Israel can “live,”<sup>19</sup> Yhwh insists, by obedience to Yhwh’s commands (5:33),<sup>20</sup> i.e., by “hearing” (6:3). The people’s “fear” or reverence for Yhwh is thus not born out of love or faith, and Dtr picks up on this fact.

Instead of obedience, this “reverence” in the face of Yhwh’s theophany—the fear of death—produced increasing distance from, and ultimately a full rejection of, Yhwh and his commandments, as Dtr takes great pains to show.<sup>21</sup> In his view, once Israel had “requested” and been granted the prophet(s), Israel was required to “hear” the prophet(s)<sup>22</sup> whose words

<sup>18</sup> Giménez-Rico (“La Gloria de Yahveh,” 314) writes: “En el Horeb Israel experimenta que la relación directa con Dios (Dt 5,24: Yahveh nos ha mostrado su gloria y su grandeza y hemos oído su voz en medio del fuego) puede ser un acontecimiento generador de muerte.” Giménez-Rico lists several biblical theophanies in which God is seen and in which there is an expressed fear of death, but in which the participants (nevertheless) survive: Jacob (Gen 32:31), Moses (Exod 3:6), Aaron (Lev 16:2), Gideon (Judg 6:22-23) and Manoah (Judg 13:22-23).

<sup>19</sup> Like הִיָּן, the verb שמע is used as a *Leitwort* in Deut 5:1–6:3. It occurs eight times in the description of the intercessory role that Moses played when Israel asked not to “hear” the voice of Yhwh anymore (Deut 5:22-28) alone. It is also the key term in the description of Samuel’s intercessory role at the time of Israel’s demand for a king (1 Sam 8:4-22) where it occurs five times (8:4, 9, 19, 21-22) as a play on שמואל. The approach-and-hear intercession ascribed to Moses and Samuel via the use of שמע as a *Leitwort* is further evidence that Dtr intended Israel’s demand for a king to specifically recall its request for a prophet in Deuteronomy.

<sup>20</sup> The verb שמע serves as a *Leitwort* in Deut 5:1–6:3 (5:3, 24, 26, 33, 6:2), as Lohfink notes (*Hauptgebot*, 149); see also Giménez-Rico, “La Gloria de Yahveh,” 315.

<sup>21</sup> In Num 11:29, one of the few other places in which the Hebrew Bible where the idiom מִיִּיָּדֶיךָ occurs, Moses exclaims: “Would that [מִיִּיָּדֶיךָ] all of Yhwh’s people were prophets, that Yhwh would put his spirit on them.” Similarly, Exod 19:6 reports that Yhwh intended that the people “be to [him] a kingdom of priests,” i.e., with Yhwh as king. Dtr shows that the movement of Israel is consistently away from these ideals.

<sup>22</sup> Regarding the use of שמע in Deut 18:15-22, Walter Brueggemann (*Deuteronomy* [AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001] 195) observes: “The text uses this crucial imperative to suggest that the prophet shall be one who issues covenant requirements, statutes, and ordinances. That is, the prophet is the one who will assure that Israel remains ‘completely loyal’ to covenant.” Dtr depicts Samuel as having been “raised up” to fulfill this specific role.

were (ideally) like those of Deuteronomic law. They did not. Similarly, human kingship once “demanded” and granted was required to operate within Deuteronomic guidelines. It did not. This is the substance of Dtr’s story of Israel’s “demands” for leadership and where they led.

### 2.2.2 “Ask Now”: Yhwh’s Immediacy as Divine Leader (Deut 4:31)

The paranetic material in Deut 4:1-40<sup>23</sup> anticipates the reiteration of the Decalogue<sup>24</sup> in Deuteronomy 5 and Israel’s subsequent request for an intermediary leader that the nearness of Yhwh—as manifested by the literal hearing of his voice—evokes. That Yhwh is incomparably “near” to Israel is stressed early on: “For what great nation is there whose gods are **near** [קרבים] unto them like Yhwh our God when we call upon him?” (Deut 4:7). Deut 4:25-31 envisions a scenario consistent with the Babylonian exile.<sup>25</sup> The text exhibits an awareness of the circumstances of his Israelite audience in exile (“there,” 4:28), but seems to

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<sup>23</sup> A.D.H. Mayes (“Deuteronomy 4 and the Literary Criticism of Deuteronomy,” *JBL* 100 [1981] 24) writes: “The unity of this long passage may be established on the basis of its language, its form and its content.” Christopher T. Begg (“The Literary Criticism of Deut 4,1-40: Contributions to a Continuing Discussion,” *ETL* 56 [1980] 10-55), on the basis of the *Numeruswechsel* and other phenomena, distinguishes three distinct strata in this unit (4:1-28, 29-31, 32-40).

<sup>24</sup> Scholars disagree on the unity and dating of Deut 4:1-40, though there is wide agreement that this material has been constructed as a preface to the Deuteronomic Decalogue and enunciation of the Law. See recently N. MacDonald, “The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic of Deuteronomy I-IV,” *VT* 56 (2006) 203-24. Norbert Lohfink (“*Höre, Israel!*”: *Auslegung von Texten aus dem Buch Deuteronomium* [Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1965] 87-120) sees 4:1-40 as the work of an exilic writer who gave Deuteronomy its final shape. Noth (*Deuteronomistic History*, 14) calls Deut 4:1-40 “a special case,” seeing multiple hands at work in its composition. Frank Moore Cross (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973] 287) ascribes 4:27-31 to his exilic Dtr<sub>2</sub>.

be writing from an implied “here.”<sup>26</sup> This speech is, as MacDonald notes, an “exhortation to a new generation.”<sup>27</sup>

Here in the context of the giving of the Deuteronomic law, Dtr plays on שמע in the sense of physically “hearing” the sound of Yhwh’s voice. The frequent reminder that Israel had physically heard Yhwh’s voice serves to impress upon the people, among other things, the immediacy of Yhwh and his divine guidance (cf. “the word [הרבר] is very near [קרוב] ... [מאד] to you: in your mouth and in your heart that you may perform it,” 30:14). Israel will reject that immediacy in Deut 5:24 [27]; 18:16. Their refusal to physically “hear” Yhwh’s voice, and thus have Yhwh near them, emblemizes their refusal to “hear” his voice in the sense of “obey.” No theme is more prominent than this throughout Dtr. In the end, having been continuously provoked, Yhwh will himself reject Israel’s “nearness” and cast them out of his sight (2 Kgs 17:13-23; 21:26-27).

Deut 4:32-40 is a *relecture* of Deut 4:1-31<sup>28</sup> and “a dramatic appeal to confess YHWH’s incomparability and accept his commandments.”<sup>29</sup> In advance of Israel’s rejection of Yhwh’s

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<sup>26</sup> Noth (*Deuteronomistic History*, 85) held that Dtr had access to a large amount of source material at Mizpah where he wrote.

<sup>27</sup> MacDonald, “The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic of Deuteronomy I-IV,” 212. Dtr’s exilic audience (the “new generation”) receives a promise: “if you will turn [ושבת] to Yhwh your God **and shall hear** [ושמעו] **his voice** [בקולו] ... he will not forsake you or destroy you or forget the covenant of your fathers which he swore to them” (4:30-31). Dtr will expend considerable effort throughout the remainder of his history on illustrating how the ancestors had been unwilling to “hear” Yhwh’s voice. Dtr uses the verb שמע in this sense as a *Leitwort* throughout. Noth himself (*Deuteronomistic History*, 6) noticed Dtr’s “recurring emphasis on ‘obeying’ the voice of God.” I will elaborate hereafter on Dtr’s strategy in employing this *Leitwort*.

<sup>28</sup> Begg (“Literary Criticism of Deut 4,1-40,” 54-55) sees 4:32-40 as likely constituting a later author’s reflection on the older 4:1-31, but admits that Lohfink’s view of a unified 4:1-40 is “not incompatible with [Begg’s] conception of [4:32-40] as *relecture* of 4,1-31.”

“nearness” (i.e., his “heavenly and earthly presence”),<sup>30</sup> Dtr’s Moses challenges Israel (anew) to reflect on Yhwh’s nearness and his incomparable guidance:

(32) But ask now [שאל-נא] of the days of old which were before you ... (33) “**Has** a people **ever heard** [השמע] **the voice** [קול] of God speaking from the midst of fire, as **you have heard** [שמעת], and lived ... (36) From the heavens **he caused you to hear** [השמיעך] **his voice** [את-קולו] to instruct you and on the earth he showed you [הראך] his great fire, and his words **you heard** [שמעת] from the midst of the fire (Deut 4:32-33, 36).<sup>31</sup>

Moses’s speech in Deuteronomy 4 highlights Yhwh’s heavenly and earthly immediacy to Israel, the majesty of his *divine* leadership, and Israel’s special relationship to him in the present as in the past. Here, as in Deut 5:22-31, tremendous stress is placed on Yhwh’s “voice.”<sup>32</sup> In order to “obey” Yhwh, one must be able to “hear” his voice. Israel’s “asking” is to be a probing of, and a reflection on, its special relationship with Yhwh and his *nearness* to them. Israel must “ask” (שאל) the right questions in order to contextualize the uniqueness of its past experiences with Yhwh. The people are not to “ask” (שאל), as they will in the next episode (Deut 5:24; 18:16), to be removed from that nearness—“not to hear the voice of Yhwh any longer,” and still less to “demand” additional human intermediation when existing

<sup>29</sup> MacDonald, “The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic of Deuteronomy I-IV,” 213.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Weinfeld (*Deuteronomy 1–11*, 211) suggests a comparison with Job 8:8 (“But ask about the first generation ...,” שאל-נא לדור רישון) and Deut 32:7 (“Ask your father and he will tell you ...,” שאל אביך (ויגיד)).

<sup>32</sup> On the significance of the Yhwh’s “voice” here, as in Deut 5:22-31, as well as elsewhere in the OT, see I. Breitmaier, “Gottes Vielstimmigkeit: Die Stimme Gottes, ihre Gesprächspartnerinnen und die Inhalte ihrer Rede in der Tora,” in *Körperkonzepte im Ersten Testament: Aspekte einer feministischen Anthropologie* (ed. Ulrike Bail; Hedwig-Jahnow-Forschungsprojekt; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2003) 154-71.

human leadership fails. This paranetic message is directed toward an exilic audience whose human leadership has failed spectacularly (see chapter six).

### 2.2.3 “When Your Children Ask”: Joshua, Leadership, and “Exile” (Joshua 3–5)

Joshua 3–5 is indeed “rich in tradition” with its “multiple interpretations of Israel crossing the Jordan River.”<sup>33</sup> In Joshua 4, Dtr creates an etiological link between the cultic site Gilgal and Israel’s crossing of the Jordan and entry into the land. In Joshua 5, he intimates the importance of Gilgal in the story of Israel’s exile from the land. Leadership is a major focus of this material.<sup>34</sup>

It is in the context of Joshua, the priests, and an “appointed” twelve’s leading Israel over the Jordan, that Israel receives a directive about these “stones [that are] ... to be a sign and a memorial of a recited narrative of salvation history.”<sup>35</sup> The prescribed actions of Joshua, the priests, and the “appointed” twelve constitute an everlasting testimony of *Yhwh’s salvific leadership*. If future generations of Israelites “ask,” they are to be told to reflect on Yhwh’s

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas B. Dozeman, “The *yam-sûp* in the Exodus and the Crossing of the Jordan River,” *CBQ* 58 (1996) 411.

<sup>34</sup> Joshua 3–4 may also preserve something of an older etiological reflection (or reflections) on priestly leadership. In 4:2, Yhwh commands Joshua to “take for yourselves, from the people twelve men, one man out of every tribe,” a near replication of the order Joshua himself gives in 3:12. Correspondingly, twelve stones are to be taken “from the place where the **priests**’ [הַכֹּהֲנִים] feet stood **firmly** [יָבִיט].” At this point we are told that Joshua “called the twelve men whom he had **appointed** [יָבִיט]” literally, that he had “made firm” (> “appointed,” “prepared”). This well-noted wordplay (see, e.g., Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1997] 69) on *hākîn* (“firmly” 4:3) and *hēkîn* (“appointed” 4:4) also plays on *hakkōhēnīm* “the priests.” The paronomasia may have been intended to etilogically explain the “appointment,” i.e., installation of “priests,” and other special cultic functionaries, as those “made firm.” It is not difficult to see here a literary antecedent for Jesus’s (cf. Joshua) “calling” of “the Twelve,” who become the leaders of the nascent Christian movement (Matt 10:1-2; Mark 6:7; Luke 6:13 [cf. Luke 9:1]).

<sup>35</sup> Nelson, *Joshua*, 69.

leadership (Josh 4:5-7). Future generations’ “asking” about the stones was to be a teaching moment concerning Yhwh’s miraculous and unfailing help and incomparable guidance. The form of the question here (as later in 4:21) is directly derived from Deut 6:20 (“When your children ask you, saying, ‘What ...’” = ... **כִּי־שָׁאֵלְךָ בֶּןְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מָה**).<sup>36</sup>

Joshua 4:14 emphasizes the Joshua had fully stepped into Moses’s intermediary leadership role: “On that day Yhwh made Joshua great in the eyes of all Israel so that they feared him just as they feared Moses all the days of his life.” Noth notes that “in treating the first major action to take place under Joshua [Dtr] lays great stress on an idea which had significance for him (3:14; 4:14; 4:24): Joshua, like Moses is assured of divine help (cf. Deut 31:8; Josh 1:5[17]).”<sup>37</sup> In other words, Moses’s and Joshua’s leadership was effective because—insofar as they were divinely led—they had divine help. The stones commemorate Yhwh’s divine leadership and guidance via Moses and Joshua and the events that demonstrated that guidance.

In Josh 4:19-22, Dtr makes Gilgal the locus of Israel’s iterative future “asking [**שָׁאֵלְךָ**]” (i.e., the question posed previously in 4:6). Dozeman suggests that the “horizon of the first catechism [4:6-7] is much more limited in scope than the second.”<sup>38</sup> The first is “aimed at [Joshua’s] immediate audience” while in the second it is “expanded” in the second

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<sup>36</sup> Robert G. Boling, *Judges: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 6A; New York: Doubleday, 1975) 174, 186. We may also note that the narrator in Josh 4:5-7 substitutes **אֲבָנִים** (“stones”) for the Deuteronomic terms **הַעֲדוֹת** (“testimonies”), **הַחֻקִּים** (“statutes”) and **הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים** (“rules”).

<sup>37</sup> Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 37.

<sup>38</sup> Dozeman, “yam-sup,” 412.

into “a more abstract statement [that] aims to include many generations.”<sup>39</sup> Both catechisms, however, have the rhetorical function of reiterating the importance of future generations’ “asking” in order to connect with Yhwh.

In Josh 4:24, Dtr articulates the point toward which the double catechesis in Joshua 4 has been directed: “...in order that all the peoples of the earth may recognize the hand of Yhwh—how strong it is—in order that you may fear Yhwh your God always.” Yhwh’s magnification of Joshua’s leadership “so that [Israel] **feared** [Joshua] just as they **feared** Moses all the days of his life” (4:14) ultimately functions as a magnification of Yhwh’s own divine leadership: “in order that [Israel] might **fear** Yhwh [their] God always” (4:24).

Israel’s present and future “asking” is to be a commemoration of and a reflection on Yhwh’s incomparable guidance in ages past, so that they might continue to enjoy that guidance in the present and future. A “request” or “demand” (לְשׂוֹאֵל) that went beyond inquiry concerning Yhwh’s divine leadership via Moses and Joshua or “asking” for divine guidance, would necessarily represent something less than acceptable “fear” or “reverence” (see 1 Samuel 8).

#### 2.2.4 “At the Mouth of Yhwh They Did Not Ask” (Josh 9:14)

Having heard that Joshua and the Israelites had subjected the inhabitants of Jericho and Ai to the ban, the Gibeonites (according to Joshua 9) attempt to secure a treaty with Israel

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<sup>39</sup> Dozeman (Ibid.) further suggests that “the broadening of the intended audience is carried over into the instruction, with the result that the answer in the second catechism, Josh 4:21-24, also acquires a larger horizon than it had in the first, Josh 4:6b-7. This shift in horizon is conveyed by the changing location of the stones from the middle of the river to the west bank, at Gilgal.”

through trickery. Here Joshua's usually impeccable leadership falters as he himself fails to seek Yhwh's guidance (9:14; cf. Deut 5:24 [27]; 18:16). This story, of course, has important ramifications for later events during both Saul and David's reigns. Saul allegedly violates Joshua's treaty with the Gibeonites, and David uses Saul's violation as a pretext to wipe out much of what remained of Saul's house (see 2 Sam 21:1-9). Yet the problem of illicit alliances (Deut 7:2; 23:6) pertains more to Solomon's reign than to that of any of his predecessors (see 1 Kings 11), and so Dtr's account of Solomon in particular is being adumbrated here.

Joshua's leadership failure in this episode is usually downplayed, ignored, or denied.<sup>40</sup> While the statement that the "men partook of their provisions but at the mouth of Yhwh **they did not ask** [לֹא שָׁאֵל] (9:14) perhaps suggests that "the responsibility for the problematical treaty had to be shared, not borne by Joshua alone,"<sup>41</sup> it does not exculpate him (see below). Not only did the "men" neglect Yhwh's guidance, but Joshua too sought *no* help from Yhwh in the matter, the suggestion being that Yhwh's guidance was both available and should have been asked for from the start. It is no coincidence that this leadership failure is

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<sup>40</sup> I reject Hans Fuhs's ("שָׁאֵל *šā'al*; שָׁעַל *šē'elā*; מִשָּׁאֵל *miš'alā*; שָׁאֵל *ša'ul* ask," in *TDOT* 14 [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004] 260) suggestion that Josh 9:14 "is probably not saying that a divine oracle was supposed to be obtained for determining the relations between the Israelites, but rather that no sacral-legal connotations attached to these relations to begin with." In my view, the context clearly suggests that if Yhwh had been "asked" on this occasion, the Gibeonites' ruse would have been detected and an illegal treaty averted. Moreover, Dtr takes some pains to show that this prohibited treaty had long-term negative consequences for Israel.

<sup>41</sup> Robert G. Boling and G. Ernest Wright, *Joshua: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 6; New York: Doubleday, 1982) 265.



said to take place at Gilgal (Josh 9:6) where human kingship will ultimately be inaugurated in Israel and where Israel will more fully turn from Yhwh's leadership (1 Samuel 12).

The Gibeonites, as a part of the Hivites (Josh 9:1, 7), should have been subjected to the ban in accordance with Moses's instructions in which the Hivites are mentioned explicitly (Deut 7:1-2). The text indicates that Joshua himself violated these commands: he made "peace" [שלום] with them by "mak[ing] a treaty with them" [ויכרת להם ברית] (9:15), using the same words and word order as in Deut 7:2. To be sure, the leadership failure extended beyond Joshua to the נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה ("leaders of the congregation") who "swore an oath [וישבטו] to them" (9:15).<sup>42</sup> Clearly the decision not to "ask" [לֹא שָׁאַל] Yhwh on the part of Israel's leadership—Joshua and the "chiefs"—reverberated throughout the lifetimes of the first four Israelite kings (Saul, Ishbaal, David, and Solomon) in a series of events involving Saul and the fate of his house. Thus, Josh 9:17 mentions "Beeroth" as one of the Gibeonite cities, and it is from there that Rechab and Baanah, the assassins of Saul's son and heir Ishbaal, hail (see 2 Sam 4:2-12). As Blenkinsopp notes, the motivation for this assassination has as its backdrop Saul's violation of the Gibeonite treaty (as detailed in 2 Sam 21:1-9)<sup>43</sup> that provides David with a pretext for killing off most of Saul's house. Likewise,

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<sup>42</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp (*Gibeon and Israel: The Role of Gibeon and the Gibeonites in the Political and Religious History of Israel* JSOTSup 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 35-36) suggests that there are at least two factors that we can "safely assume ... influenced the formation of the tradition behind this narrative: the need to justify Israelite tolerance of this ethnically alien group and or/to establish responsibility for making the treaty; [and] the need to explain the origins of certain groups of minor cultic personnel operating in the Second (and possibly First) temple." It seems to me that the first of these assumptions is the "safer" one.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 36.

Joab assassinates Amasa (David's nephew, Absalom's former general and potential contender for the throne) at Gibeon (2 Sam 20:8-13).

In sum, Joshua's leadership failure—the failure to “ask” at Yhwh's mouth—eventuating in the Gibeonite treaty directly precipitates events that lead to the removal of Saul's dynasty (Ishbaal) and the near annihilation of Saul's house. Gibeon, then, is the source and locus for, many of the assassinations and deaths that, as commentators have noted,<sup>44</sup> benefit David and eventually facilitate Solomon's accession. At Gibeon Yhwh will later appear to Solomon and Solomon will “ask” for wisdom, rather than (ironically) the lives of his enemies (1 Kgs 3:4-15).<sup>45</sup> As Dtr shows, Joshua's failure to “ask” at Yhwh's mouth worked out well for David and Solomon, but not for Saul—and even less for Israel in the end.

### 2.2.5 “Asking” for Leadership after Joshua (Judg 1:1)

Judges 1:1<sup>46</sup> articulates the basic problem that arises for Israel at the death of Joshua, and that it will face until the advent of Samuel and Saul: the lack of a truly authoritative

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<sup>44</sup> See especially Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001) 76. See also the discussion that follows on p. 77-103. The deaths of Saul and three of his sons at the hand of the Philistines, followed by the assassination of Ishbaal and the bringing of his head to David, and the ritual impalement of the males from Saul's house share two common traits: each event is marked by a stringing up of corpses and all these deaths benefit David. Minimally, the similarity of the scenes in 1 Sam 31:6-13; 2 Sam 4:12; and 21:9-13 is striking. But on the hazards of pressing the case for Shimei's “man of blood” portraiture of David (2 Sam 16:7-8) too far, see David A. Bosworth, “Evaluating David: Old Problems and Recent Scholarship,” *CBQ* 68 (2006) 191-210.

<sup>45</sup> See discussion §2.6.6.

<sup>46</sup> Noth (*Deuteronomistic History*, 8) relegated Judg 1:1 to “the mass of old traditional fragments” which he believed “form the present Judg. 1.” Since Noth, however, the continuity of this material, not only with the rest of Judges, but also with Joshua has been reassessed. As Serge Frolov (“Rethinking Judges,” *CBQ* 71[2009] 33) has recently observed, “Judg 1:1 refers to an event that is reported right across the canonical divide, namely Joshua's death (Josh 24:29). If so, rather than detaching Judges 1 from Joshua 24, the distinctive syntax of 1:1 forges a link between the two texts.” He admits that the “וְיָהוֹשֻׁעַ” + circumstance-of-time construction

human intermediary and leader.” No succession-oracle is given (as is the case in Josh 1:1-9) and there is no prophet immediately “raised-up” in Joshua’s wake (cf. Deut 18:15-22), although a series of “raised-up” judges are forthcoming. Consequently, Israel as a corporate entity now has to “ask” for an oracle regarding who should lead them in battle against the Canaanites (1:1).

Before “judges” even arrive on the scene, Dtr is already intimating the advent of the monarchy in its unhappy materialization (Saul) and its unwilling initiator (Samuel). The formulaic notice that punctuates Judges 17–21 confirms the monarchic focus of the material in Judges: “And in those days there was no king in Israel—every man would do that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg 21:25). This formula, which occurs previously at Judg 17:16; 18:1; and 19:1, is sometimes cited as evidence of a promonarchic or even a pro-Davidic tilt to the material.<sup>47</sup> While it is true that David might be intimated via the leadership role Judah assumes in Judg 1:2; 20:18, these intimations also coincide with Israel “Saul-ing” (לשׂול) for human leadership. While there is indeed then an allegory of David in Judah’s leadership, the largely destructive role that Judah (along with Benjamin) plays in the events adumbrated in Judges should not be ignored. We can safely conclude that Judges anticipates Israel’s

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can “usher in self-contained units (as, e.g., in Ezek 1:1; Ruth 1:1; Esth 1:1).” But the content of this text can be directly linked to that of Josh 24:29 by means of this construction. “Moreover,” he adds, “since the impersonal וְכֵן + circumstance of time construction commonly occurs within canonical books, including both Joshua and Judges (e.g., Josh 24:29; Judg 2:4; 3:18), it obviously does not qualify in and of itself as an opening marker.”

<sup>47</sup> So Marc Brettler, “The Book of Judges: Literature as Politics,” *JBL* 108 (1989) 395-418; Philip Satterthwaite, “‘No King in Israel’: Narrative Criticism and Judges 17–21,” *TynBul* 44 (1993) 75-88.

“demand” for kingship in general, and both kings Saul and David in particular, but it is much less clear that it does so in any positive sense.

### 2.2.6 “I Would Make a Demand of You”: Gideon and Abimelech, Part I (Judges 8)

The Gideon and Abimelech pericope(s) have been the focal point of many studies examining which—and to what degree—elements of Dtr are antimonarchic. One can detect in this complex (Judges 6–9), a polemical anticipation of Israel’s “demand” for kingship, for their “demanded” king, and the harrowing stories of his successors David, Solomon, and the kings of Judah, as well as those of Israel. In Judges 8, Dtr turns the anti-Baal polemic of Judges 6–7 into explicit antimonarchic polemic. Here Dtr uses the *Leitwort* שאל of his earlier wordplay to portray monarchy as leading directly to idolatry and worse.

Gideon/Jerubbaal’s pursuit of the Midianites in Judg 7:23 becomes a pursuit of the Midianite kings in 8:5, 12, a pursuit to which the Succothites refuse to lend their assistance. As Wolfgang Bludorn notes, “Gideon ... interprets their reluctance to help them as an affront against him and he is, therefore, angry.”<sup>48</sup> Gideon’s indignation is not unlike David’s when Nabal refuses to aid David in his pursuit of his own monarchic interests (see 1 Sam 25:4-13). Gideon “claims that YHWH has authorized and instructed him to pursue the Midianites. Any Israelite reluctance to support him is, therefore, an affront to YHWH, as is any reluctance to acknowledge his leadership.”<sup>49</sup> Gideon is now comporting himself as a king or would-be king,

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<sup>48</sup> Wolfgang Bludorn, *Yahweh versus Baalism: A Theological Reading of the Gideon and Abimelech Narrative* (JSOTSup 329; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 155.

<sup>49</sup> Bludorn (Ibid.) states further, “Gideon’s behavior is, therefore, put into a rather unfavorable light by the narrator. It appears that Gideon defines his mission as the fulfillment of YHWH’s promise, although according

a narrative detail that is critical not only for what follows later on in Judges 8, but also for laying the groundwork for Abimelech's oppression.<sup>50</sup> Kingship is already nascent in Israel.

After Gideon's victory (his **שָׁלוֹם** in 8:9) in the Battle of the Ascent of Heres ("Sun"), and his "capture" (**וַיִּלְכְּדוּ**) of the Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna, Gideon "captures" (**וַיִּלְכְּדוּ**) a Succothite youth and "interrogate[s] him [**וַיִּשְׁאַל הוּא**]" (8:14), thus introducing the term **שָׁאֵל** as a play on "Saul" into the narrative.<sup>51</sup> Before their executions, the Midianite kings confess that Gideon's and his brothers' appearances were "like the sons of the king" (Judg 8:18). Indeed, it is his "king"-like handling of the Midianites and their kings<sup>52</sup> that induces the "men of Israel" to "demand" that Gideon be their dynastic "ruler":

(22) Then men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule [**מִשָּׁל**] over us, both you and your son and your son's son, since you saved us from the hand of Midian." (23) But Gideon responded to them, "I myself will not rule [**לֹא-אֶמְשָׁל**] over you, nor shall my son rule [**לֹא-יִמְשָׁל**] over you—Yhwh shall rule [**יִשְׁמַל**] over you" (Judg 8:22-23).

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to the narrator, it clearly is not. Gideon relies on himself only and even wants to be honoured for YHWH's victory. He thus distorts promise YHWH's promise and claims what is exactly due to YHWH and what YHWH does not want him to claim." Dtr will similarly portray David blurring the same lines to his own (and his house's) advantage.

<sup>50</sup> Bluedorn (Ibid., 160) writes: "Gideon will indeed appear to have levelled [sic] the path for the next oppression under Abimelech."

<sup>51</sup> The use of **לִכְדוּ** here recalls Joshua's "ferreting-out" Achan and his sin by lot—the lot "indicating" first Judah, the Zarhites, Zabdi, and finally Achan. It also anticipates the ferreting-out of Saul by lot—that lot "indicating" Benjamin, then the Matrites, and finally Saul himself who is in hiding (1 Sam 10:20-21). After further "asking" (**וַיִּשְׁאַל הוּא**) of Yhwh (10:22), Yhwh identifies Saul's hiding place in the baggage train. Gideon's "interrogation" (or "Saul"-ing) of the young man yields a list of the Succothite leadership (Judg 8:14), which aids Gideon in his king-like retribution against his fellow Israelites, which he carries out with David and Solomon-like efficiency (8:16-17).

<sup>52</sup> Bluedorn, *Yahweh versus Baalism*, 163: "With the execution ... Gideon not only attains his goal of personal revenge, he also publicly demonstrates that he is capable of exercising power over foreign kings and thus he publicly qualifies himself as king."

Crüsemann affirms that the “brief conversation between the men of Israel and Gideon contains, along with Jotham’s fable<sup>53</sup>, the clearest and most fundamental repudiation of kingship in the Old Testament.”<sup>54</sup> I would further add that the above conversation and the narrative in which it occurs is a strong repudiation of kingship also because of its allusions to later monarchic figures. Thus there is more here than just a literary anticipation of Israel’s “demand” for kingship in 1 Sam 8:7 and 12:12, which eventuates in Saul’s kingship—though we certainly find an anticipation of those scenes. The exchange also foreshadows (and subtly refutes) the famous dynastic promise and adoption formula of 2 Sam 7:11-14, which announces a “son” and “sons” to David that will rule Israel as Yhwh’s own “son(s)” in perpetuity. Likewise, it specifically presages Solomon, the son who will inaugurate the fulfillment of that promise. While forms of the verb **משל** in the above dynastic demand alliteratively evoke the names “Samuel” and “Saul,” they are even more suggestive of Solomon (**שלמה**) as a metathesis of his name.<sup>55</sup>

Typically, less attention is paid to what Gideon says next in the conversation and its bearing on the question of kingship: “And Gideon said to them, ‘**Let me make a demand of you** [**אֲשַׁאֲלֶה מִכֶּם שְׂאֵלָה**], that you each man give me an earring from his spoil ...’” (Judg

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<sup>53</sup> I will treat Jotham’s fable at length in chapter five.

<sup>54</sup> Frank Crüsemann (*Der Widerstand gegen das Königtums: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat* [WMANT 49; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978] 42) writes: “Dieses kurze Gespräch zwischen dem **אִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל** und Gideon enthält neben der Jothamfabel die deutlichste und grundsätzlichste Ablehnung des Königtums im Alten Testament.”

<sup>55</sup> A transposition (deliberate or otherwise) of phonemes in a word (see chapter four).

8:24). Gideon's own "demand" (דָּרַשׁ) for gold comes in response to the people's insisting that he rule over them; now, despite his refusal of that demand, "the story proceeds as if Gideon had accepted the kingship."<sup>56</sup> Drawing on Robert D. Miller's "complex secondary chieftain" model,<sup>57</sup> Katie Heffelfinger argues that Gideon did in fact accept their demand that he assume the kingship even in the act of declining it.<sup>58</sup> Gideon would thus be Israel's *first* "demanded" king.<sup>59</sup> The name of his son "Abimelech" ("My father is king") suggests precisely this.

The polyptoton (דָּרַשׁ ... דָּרַשׁ) in Gideon's word in Judg 8:24 is a not-so-subtle play on the name "Saul," evocative of that moment when the people will "demand" (1 Samuel 8) a king to "reign over them." Just as Israel's "demand" for kingship eventuates in monarchic "multiplying" of gold (1 Kgs 9:11, 28; 10:1-25) and idolatry (1 Kgs 11:4-19), Gideon's

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<sup>56</sup> David Jobling (*1 Samuel* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998] 49) further notes: "His subsequent behavior casts doubt on the seriousness of his refusal, for in 8:24-27 he acts like a king, and in the terms of Deuteronomy 17, like a bad king. He accumulates as much gold as he can (Deut 17:17b) and as a result turns aside from YHWH's commandment (Deut 17:20a). A little later he 'multiplies wives for himself' (vv. 30-31; Deut 17:17a)."

<sup>57</sup> Robert D. Miller II, *Chieftains of the Highland Clans: A History of Israel in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries B.C.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005) 6-14.

<sup>58</sup> Katie M. Heffelfinger, "'My Father is King': Chiefly Politics and the Rise and Fall of Abimelech," *JSOT* 33 (2009) 284-87, see esp. 286.

<sup>59</sup> Jobling (*1 Samuel*, 48-49) believes that the people's request accords with the law of kingship in Deut 17:14-20. He writes: "An apparent problem is," however, "that the king must be *of YHWH's choice*. But the people might argue that they *are* requesting a king of YHWH's choice since YHWH chose Gideon to be national leader. They simply want to ratify YHWH's choice at a different level. The people's proposal is, then, legitimate. It is Gideon's pious refusal that is at odds with the law of the king" (emphasis in original). Nevertheless, since Gideon's "pious refusal" may have been anything but (see above), one need not get hung up on that point. Was this "demand" for kingship Deuteronomically legitimate? Yes; but theologically appropriate? Not according to Dtr. We should note that Dtr *never* denies the Deuteronomic legality of a human king, but indicates or hints at almost every turn that it was theologically *inappropriate*, pragmatically disastrous, and ultimately disastrous for Israel as a whole.

“demand” quickly procures him an extraordinary sum of gold (1700+ shekels), which is forthwith melted down and made into an “ephod” (Judg 8:27), an ephod that thereupon becomes **a snare** [מִדְּקָשׁ] to Gideon and his house, and to “all Israel [who] whored after it” (8:27). Here Dtr clearly has in view Moses’s warning in Deut 7:25: “The carvings of their gods you shall burn with fire: you shall not desire [תַּחְמֹד] the silver or gold upon them, you shall not take it for yourself lest **you be ensnared** [תִּדְקָשׁ] thereby, because it is abomination to Yhwh your God.”<sup>60</sup>

Fokkelman suggests that the pedantic “public notary”-like “dryness”<sup>61</sup> of the narrator’s report of the hero’s “demand”<sup>62</sup> is meant to “underline” the greed of Gideon who “is fascinated by the glamour of the gold and the splendor of the royal paraphernalia”<sup>63</sup> Gideon killed the Midianite kings, but seems more preoccupied with “taking” the precious

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<sup>60</sup> Regarding the report in Judg 8:27, J.P. Fokkelman (*Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* [trans. Ineke Smit; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1999] 150) states: “It is not hard to recognize a judgment in these words; two of them are explicit enough: ‘snare’ and ‘harlot.’ The latter has been used twice in the same way in this context, as a metaphor to indicate unfaithfulness; see 2:17; 8:33. Moreover, this figurative use occurs at the religious level, the more important level by which to judge Israel. And if you look up ‘snare’ in a concordance you will find it used sparingly but cuttingly—it is a strong condemnation, cf. for instance Deut. 7:17 [i.e., 7:25] and Judg 2:3, and moreover reserved for idolatry.”

<sup>61</sup> Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*, 147.

<sup>62</sup> E.g., David’s multiplication of them, Abner’s apparent relationship with Rizpah, Saul’s concubine, and David’s reclamation of his ex-wife Michal, the daughter of Saul from Palti(el) to whom she had been given by her father Saul (see 1 Sam 25:44).

<sup>63</sup> Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*, 147.



ornaments around their camels' necks (8:21).<sup>64</sup> Gideon is, after all, only human, and as such predisposed to succumbing to the temptations endemic to kingship.

Dtr's statement that "all Israel whored [וַיִּזְנוּ] after" Gideon's ephod (8:27) recalls his earlier statement on Israel's cyclical apostasy throughout the period of the judges (Judg 2:10b-19), particularly 2:17: "And indeed they did not hear [לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ] their judges, but whored [וַיִּזְנוּ] after other gods and worshiped [וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ] them." Dtr will describe the final iteration of this cycle of apostasy as Israel's "not hearing" Samuel (וַיִּמְאֲנוּ הָעָם לִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל שְׁמוּאֵל, 1 Sam 8:19) the final "raised-up" judge and the first "raised-up" prophet (cf. Deut 18:15-22), by having the people insist "No! But we will have a king over us" (8:19). The remainder of Dtr's history then tells the story of Israel's following its "demanded" king—the king that they "reverenced"<sup>65</sup>—into idolatry and finally exile. A major aim of the later history will be to show just where the insistence on kingship leads Israel and Judah.

At least one other detail requires comment here. The notice in Judg 8:30 that "Gideon had seventy sons" precisely "because he had **many wives** [נָשִׁים רַבּוֹת]" is suggestive of that kingship that he had ostensibly turned down, given the "multiplying of wives" by the king

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<sup>64</sup> Fokkkelman (Ibid.) states: "He is especially fascinated as moments before he himself has renounced the status of king. It's in his blood, and Gideon tries to make up for the damage (I wish I were king after all) by rapacity, and next—and much worse—by the mock-piety of casting a divine image, something which to the true Yahweh worshiper is anathema. Succumbing to the temptations of materialism, the leader sows the seeds of subsequent idolatry and all the disasters resulting from it."

<sup>65</sup> The practice of הִשְׁתַּחֲוּהָ was directed not only toward God, but also toward the king (e.g., 2 Sam 14:4; 1 Kgs 1:16, 53; 2:19). In these cases, the verb is usually rendered something like "reverence" or "obedience," but rarely "worship" (e.g., Ps 45:11), as it is frequently rendered when הִשְׁתַּחֲוּהָ is directed towards God.

that Deut 17:17 warns against.<sup>66</sup> This “multiplying” of wives anticipates the monarchic wife-taking of Saul,<sup>67</sup> David, Solomon, Rehoboam and Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:15; Dtr will single out David and Solomon in this regard, in particular), all of whose sins figure one way or another into Dtr’s assessment of why Israel went into exile. Gideon’s “seventy sons” also anticipate the notorious “idolater” Ahab, whose seventy sons Jehu slaughters at Jezreel (along with the rest of Ahab’s house [2 Kings 10]), as well as Athaliah’s slaughter of the “royal seed” (2 Kgs 11:1) in long-term fulfillment of Nathan’s judgment oracle on David (2 Sam 12:10). Similarly, a single son from a single concubine would bring a “royal catastrophe” upon Gideon’s whole house.

At Gideon’s death, in no small part due to his “demand” (דָּרָשׁ) of them, Israel is in a worse situation than before his advent. Not only did Israel “whore” after Gideon’s ephod (Judg 8:27), it also “turned and whored after the Baals and made Baal-of-the-Covenant their God” (8:33). In Judges 9, Dtr will show where this new allegiance to Baal-of-the-Covenant leads. In the end, Abimelech himself, like Saul, will be “delegitimated”<sup>68</sup> by an “evil spirit”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*, 138.

<sup>67</sup> 2 Sam 12:8 suggests that Saul had a multiplicity of wives. Rizpah was one of his presumably several concubines (2 Sam 3:7; 21:8).

<sup>68</sup> Here we find what I would argue is an example of the “delegitimizing” evil spirit that David Wagner (*Geist und Tora: Studien zur göttlichen Legitimation und Delegitimation von Herrschaft im Alten Testament anhand der Erzählungen über König Saul* [ABG 15; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005] 189-216) observes in the Saul-David story. True, Yhwh’s “legitimizing” spirit is never said to come upon Abimelech, but it does come upon Gideon (“the spirit of Yhwh came upon Gideon,” Judg 6:34). Gideon is thus “legitimated,” and Abimelech (“My father is king”) “delegitimated” when Yhwh sends an “evil spirit” between him and the Shechemites who made him king (Judg 9:23)—a kind of literary refraction of Saul and his “son” David (cf. 1 Samuel 24–25). It is significant that this device also turns up outside of 1 Samuel 8–31, which Wagner argues is a distinct work reflecting “zeitgenössischen Legitimationskonzepten der Achämeniden” (see pp. 10-11; 292).

from God and will suffer an uncannily similar death.<sup>70</sup> Beginning with the Gideon-Abimelech complex, Dtr stresses, with increasing forcefulness, that for Israel, ill-advised “requests” have short and long term consequences for ill.

Later in Judges, a group of Danites will implore Micah’s priest: “Ask [שאל-נא] of God that we may know whether our way shall be prosperous” (Judg 18:14). The priest cryptically<sup>71</sup> answers, “the way in which you are going is נכח [‘in front of’ or ‘opposite’<sup>72</sup>] Yhwh.” The Danites’ question is a fitting one, not only for them, but for all of Israel at this stage of its history. In what follows, Dtr will make clear whether Israel’s way is “in front of” Yhwh (in a positive sense) or “opposite” him (in a negative sense), and his use of the verb שאל in the above question is a harbinger of things to come (Saul and monarchic politics in particular).

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<sup>69</sup> The scene in which an evil spirit comes upon Abimelech in Judg 9:23 looks forward to what will happen to Saul in 1 Sam 16:14-15, 23; 18:10; 19:9. Ken Stone (“Gender Criticism: The Un-Manning of Abimelech,” in *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* [2nd ed.; ed. Gale A. Yee; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007] 194) writes: “Although the reference to an ‘evil spirit from God’ may strike some readers as strange similar references appear in 1 Sam (16:14; 18:10). In those texts too God sends an ‘evil spirit’ in a situation involving divine displeasure with the current ruler, specifically on that ruler—Saul—whose legitimacy as ruler has been undermined by God’s selection of David.”

<sup>70</sup> The account of Saul’s death in 1 Sam 31:4 deliberately mirrors Judg 9:54 (see discussion later in this chapter). The significance and function of this device will be treated further in chapter four.

<sup>71</sup> Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 198.

<sup>72</sup> See *HALOT*, 698-99.

### 2.2.7 “Asking” for Leadership in the War against Benjamin (Judges 20)

Israel’s response to the crisis brought on by the Benjaminite “destructive sons”<sup>73</sup> and their outrage (Judges 20) further stresses the leadership vacuum in Israel in the Judges period. The proceedings of the assembly<sup>74</sup> (the investigation of the affair [20:3] and the subsequent expedition to Gibeah [20:8]) are all carried out as a corporate affair (“as one man”), with a collective decision being made to attack Gibeah “by lot” (בגרל, 20:9).<sup>75</sup>

As at the beginning of the period of the judges, Moses or Joshua-style (prophetic) leadership is lacking. Now, “the formulaic language of requesting an oracle”<sup>76</sup>—used previously in Josh 9:14 to stress Joshua’s leadership failure, and in Judg 1:1 the absence of his leadership—is again employed: “Then they arose and went up to Bethel **and asked** [וַיִּשְׁאַל וְ] of God, and the Israelites said, ‘Who shall go up for us first to wage war with the Benjaminites?’ And Yhwh answered ‘Judah first’” (Judg 20:18).

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<sup>73</sup> Beginning in Judg 19:22, the “son” or “man” of “Belial” (i.e., the man of destructiveness, the scoundrel) becomes something of a stock character (attested first in Deut 13:13) in Dtr. The figure recurs thereafter in Judg 20:13; 1 Sam 2:12; 10:27; 25:17, 25; 30:22; 2 Sam 16:7; 20:1 (cf. 23:6); 1 Kgs 21:10, 13. In 1 Sam 1:16, Hannah protests her innocence—she is not a “destructive daughter” (בַּת־בֵּל יַעַל), implicitly contrasting herself with Eli’s “destructive sons” (2:12). I favor J.A. Emerton’s (“Sheol and the Sons of Belial,” VT 37 [1987] 214–18) definition of *Belial* (“destruction”) for reasons that will be evident in chapter three.

<sup>74</sup> The Israelites are left to “assemble” (וַתִּקְהַל) “before Yhwh at Mizpah” (20:1), where an unspecified number of tribal leaders—here called פְּנוֹת (lit., “corners”)—preside over their “assembly” [קְהָל] (20:2).

<sup>75</sup> The Benjaminites’ response to the embassy from the Israelite assembly and its request to have the perpetrators of the נבלה handed-over reflects the all-too-common Israelite response to divine warnings and other attempts to “root out evil” from its midst: “they were not willing to hear” (Judg 20:13; cf. esp. Deut 1:43; 3:26; 2 Kgs 14:11; 17:14; 18:12). The sin of not “hearing” places a collective guilt on the whole tribe for the earlier נבלה of some of its members comparable to that which fell on Achan and his family. See Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2008) 203.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 200.

As in Judg 1:1, Judah is sent up to lead the expedition against Benjamin. There is no promise of success and it is not even clear that the “right” question was “asked.” Polzin writes: “In both cases [here and in 1:1] the narrator tells us that *Yahweh* says, ‘Judah will go first,’ and it is clear that if the narrator here knows that *Yahweh* decides these matters, the Israelites, like Gideon, do not call upon the name of *Yahweh* as consistently as they should.”<sup>77</sup> In other words, Yhwh is still Israel’s king, and their failure to be led by him is the result of their failure to seek his leadership (cf. Josh 9:14). Israel here again presumes that the course of action (warfare) they themselves have decided upon is correct.<sup>78</sup> The result of this cleromantic venture and Judah’s resultant assumption of leadership is the slaughter of 22,000 Israelites.

Undeterred, Israel “again arrays [וַיִּסְפָּן]” for battle, presumably with Judah at its head as before (20:22), and “asks” Yhwh again. This time the question is reframed, leaving out the leadership issue. And this time, the request is accompanied by weeping: “Then the Israelites went up and wept in the presence of God until evening, and **they asked** [וַיִּשְׁאַל] of Yhwh saying, ‘**Shall I** draw near **again** [הֲאֶזְדַּרְסִי] for battle with the Benjaminites my brother?’” (Judg 20:23). Yhwh responds, “Go up to/against him” (20:23). Here the repetition of יִסָּף reminds one of the cyclical apostasy that Judg 2:17 describes as וַיִּסְפָּן, apostasy that becomes worse with each cycle. One is also reminded here of Israel’s “asking for” or “demanding”

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<sup>77</sup> Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 202.

<sup>78</sup> Polzin’s (Ibid.) conclusion is similar: the Israelites’ error is “in assuming too much about war with their brothers. The subsequent oracular attempts ... will successfully correct these misapprehensions.”

intermediaries—not to hear Yhwh’s voice any longer (Deut 18:16) and its upcoming “demand” for a more permanent and authoritative human leader than a “judge” (1 Samuel 8), a demand which as they themselves will later admit “adds” (“we have added,” **וַיִּסְפְּנוּ**) to their previous apostasy (1 Sam 12:19). Throughout Dtr, **סָרַף** thus characterizes Israel’s “persistence” in apostasy, in “asking” for intermediaries, in seeking its own will.

One more “request” is needed to complete the cycle in the present episode. Notably Israel’s third and final corporate “asking” of Yhwh introduces an Aaronid, together with the Ark of the Covenant, thus setting the stage for the later failure of Eli’s priestly leadership and Israel’s “demanding” Saul: “Then the Israelites **asked** [**וַיִּשְׁאַלְוּ**] of Yhwh—and the Ark was there in those days, and Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Aaron was the priest in those days—‘Shall I go out to battle yet **one more time** [**וְעוֹד אֶחָד**] against the Benjaminites, my brother, or shall I cease?’” (Judg 20:27-28). As Niditch observes, “this version of the request for an oracle is the lengthiest and, in tone, the most desperate.”<sup>79</sup> Only in this third instance does Yhwh promise success.

The leaderless days with Israel’s corporate “asking” of guidance from Yhwh are appropriately brought to a close with a final iteration of the “no king”-formula (Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1) in 21:25, this signaling the narrator’s continued preoccupation with the leadership problem in Israel and his anticipation of the human monarchy that will imminently result from

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<sup>79</sup> Niditch, *Judges*, 204.

it.<sup>80</sup> The formula may be a lamentation for the “lack of acknowledgment of Yhwh’s kingship in Israel”<sup>81</sup> or an assertion of the absence of institutional control during this time, rather than a bewailing of the absence of human kingship.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, Israel is in dire need of a king, but it is Yhwh’s kingship they need, rather than the human king that they will “demand” in short order (as Dtr will show).

#### 2.2.8 Samuel: The “Begged-for” Prophet (1 Samuel 1)

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the story of Samuel’s birth in Dtr’s overall literary scheme. The story performs a host of literary functions. On one level, it is an ironic refraction of the account of Israel’s “asking” for a prophet during its early history (Deut 18:16). On the other, it foreshadows Israel’s intense desire for new leadership, which will manifest itself in a “demand” for a king (1 Samuel 8). The story begins a transition from the rudderless days of the Judges in which “judges” or שופטים were “raised-up” by Yhwh as needed, i.e., in times of distress following apostasy. In those days, the people had to collectively “ask” (שאל, Judg 1:1; 20:18, 23) Yhwh since no prophet (נביא) had yet been

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<sup>80</sup> Boling, *Judges*, 256. I agree with his assessment that “the supplementary stories that conclude the book deal with the cultic manifestation of the anarchy which preceded the careers of Samuel and Saul.”

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>82</sup> In any case, the “no king”-formula need not be read as “pro-monarchic.” It can also be read as a neutral, matter-of-fact statement regarding the lack of institutional control during this period.

“raised up” for them in fulfillment of the promise in Deut 18:15-22. But Israel’s leadership situation is about to shift—seismically.<sup>83</sup>

Polzin sees a literary reflection of Yhwh’s attitude toward Israel’s “demand” for kingship in Hannah’s “begging” for a son,<sup>84</sup> evident in Elkanah’s expression of his injured feelings: “Am I not better to you than ten sons?” (1 Sam 1:8). Yhwh is unquestionably offended by Eli and his sons (mentioned for the first time in 1:3), and his removing them will exacerbate an already existing “leadership vacuum.”<sup>85</sup> The “contribution” of Eli and his sons to Israel’s leadership problem is stressed by the wordplay on their names in 1 Samuel 1 and the subsequent narrative.

1 Sam 1:3 indicates that Elkanah “went up [וַעֲלָה] yearly”<sup>86</sup> to Shiloh and that the “sons of Eli [בְּנֵי עֵלִי; cf. בְּנֵי בַלְיָעַל, 2:12]” were there. 1:6 states that whenever Hannah went up [עָלָה] to the house of Yhwh, her rival wife would taunt or vex her. 1 Sam 1:9 has

<sup>83</sup> 1 Samuel 1–4 treats readers to a feast of puns and wordplays on the names of its principal characters. It will not be possible here to examine each instance in detail, but I shall attempt to include the most relevant and interesting, especially those pertaining to Samuel, Saul, and Eli. In this story, the verb שָׁאַל will serve to enmesh Samuel in Israel’s ongoing leadership problem—he is “requested”—while also hinting at further problems ahead with Israel’s “demand” for a king, a king whose name will literally mean “Demanded.”

<sup>84</sup> Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 22-26.

<sup>85</sup> Marti J. Steussy (*Samuel and His God* [Studies on the Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010] 53) rightly notes that “leadership” is the issue in the Samuel-Eli cycle. However, the “cast[ing] off” of Eli’s sons does not “create a leadership vacuum,” however. That vacuum already exists and will persist.

<sup>86</sup> Moshe Garsiel (“Word Play and Puns as a Rhetorical Device in the Book of Samuel,” in *Puns and Pundits: Wordplay in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* [ed. Scott B. Noegel; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000] 182-84) detects wordplay on the names of Hannah’s “antagonists,” Eli and his sons Hophni and Phinehas and her rival-wife Peninnah, based on the root עָלָה and/or the consonants פֿ”נ in 1 Sam 1:3, 7, 12, 15-16, 18-19, 20-21, 24; 2:11-12, 17-18, 35-36.



**Eli** (עלִי) “enthroned” (שָׁב) “**on**” (עַל) a chair or throne (כִּסֵּא), which was “**on**” (עַל) the threshold of the “house of the Lord” (see 1 Sam 1:9; cf. 1:7). From this quasi monarchic, quasi-divine vantage point, Eli could “watch” Hannah’s prayer:

(12) But when she took a long time to pray before [לִפְנֵי] <sup>87</sup> Yhwh, Eli watched her mouth (13) because Hannah was speaking within her heart: her lips moved, but her voice **was not heard** [לֹא שָׁמַעַתְּ] (1 Sam 1:12-13)

The above phrase “her voice was not heard” aims to contrast Eli’s limited sensory capacities—which are elsewhere said to be “dull” (1 Sam 3:15; 4:15)—with Yhwh who *does* hear Hannah’s prayer. Eli, Israel, and Israel’s kings are characteristically unhearing. Eli could “watch” prayer, without even recognizing it as such. The phrase “her voice **was not heard** [לֹא שָׁמַעַתְּ]” also seems to anticipate the naming of her son “Samuel” (שְׁמוּאֵל, 1:20).

Eli, assuming Hannah to be drunk, offers her the kind of sharp correction that he should have been giving his own sons: “Then **Eli** [עַלִי] said to her, ‘How long will you put on this drunken display? Remove your wine **off of you** [מֵעַל יָךְ]’” (1:14). Hannah responds by denying her use of “wine or strong drink” (1:15), addressing Eli with “courtly language”<sup>88</sup> as if he were a king himself: “Do not take (lit. give) your maidservant for a **daughter of destruction**

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<sup>87</sup> See Garsiel, “Word Play and Puns as a Rhetorical Device,” 182-84.

<sup>88</sup> Regarding the importance of “courtly language” in the “Succession Narrative,” see Charles Conroy, *Absalom! Absalom! Narrative and Language in 2 Sam 13-20* (AnBib 81; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978) 140.

[בת־בל יעל], because I have only been speaking out of my abundant anguish and vexation (1 Sam 1:16).”<sup>89</sup>

At this point the *Leitwort* שאל takes center stage as the priest-judge pronounces his blessing on Hannah: “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel give you your **begging** [של תך] that you have begged [שאלת] from him” (1 Sam 1:17). To Eli’s credit, he now acknowledges the propriety and sincerity of Hannah’s actions. There is no indication that Eli knows anything of the content of her prayer, but he now understands, due to her persistence, that she is שאל-ing a שאלה.<sup>90</sup> Ironically, she has “begged” for Eli’s replacement, and Yhwh will grant that begging.

Next, the narrator gives Samuel’s name in the form of a classical etiological report: “And [she] called his name Samuel [שמואל], ‘because I have **begged him** [שאלתי] from Yhwh” (1 Sam 1:20). From the time of Ben Sira,<sup>91</sup> exegetes have tried to find an actual basis for the name “Samuel” in the root שאל. It is important to differentiate, however, between

<sup>89</sup> Hannah is no “destructive daughter” (בת־בל יעל), but, as will emerge later, Eli’s sons (בני־על) are “destructive sons” (בני־בל יעל, 2:12), this implying that Eli himself is headed for destruction as judge-priest. The wordplay paints a telling picture of the narrator’s (if not Yhwh’s own) perspective on Eli and his sons.

<sup>90</sup> That שאלה (“demand”) of hers, fittingly, will be Eli’s replacement. Hannah’s response is a clever wordplay on her own name (חנה): “Let your handmaid find grace [חן] in your eyes” (1 Sam 1:18). Cf. Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (HBM 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009) 21.

<sup>91</sup> Ben Sira’s recognition of the literary importance of 1 Sam 1:20 and the subsequent wordplay involving שאל is evident in his own adaptation of this wordplay: “Beloved of his people, accepted of his maker, **the one lent** [המשאל] from his mother’s womb, dedicated to יי as a prophet: Samuel [שמואל], Judge, and priest” (Sir 46:13). Ralph W. Klein (*1 Samuel* [WBC 10; Waco, TX: Word, 1983] 19) suggests that Ben Sira accounted for the מ in שמואל by “relating Samuel to the word מושל (‘lent over’) even if the word did not appear in the proper [spelling] sequence.”

scientific etymology and the midrashic exploitation of names—particularly here. While the above etiological report may suggest a midrashic derivation of שמואל from מאל (“from God”) + שאל (“asked”),<sup>92</sup> i.e., *šā’ûl mē’ēl* (\*שאל מאל); or even מאל (“from God”) + ש (“He who”), i.e., “He-who-is-from God,”<sup>93</sup> these meanings are only latent suggestions in the text. There is no possibility that “Samuel” derives from *šā’ûl mē’ēl* or *še mē’ēl* in any scientific sense, but the literary exploitation of the name may point to these meanings along with its inevitable and ironic echo of the name “Saul.”

O’Connor has observed<sup>94</sup> that not only is it unnecessary to see evidence of an underlying Saul birth narrative here<sup>95</sup> (as many still do),<sup>96</sup> but also that the paronomasia—in itself—does not require seeing any connection to Saul at all. While it is sometimes true that “paronomasia is incomplete, as puns, casual rhymes and verbal echoes often are,”<sup>97</sup> the enormity of the narrative shadow cast by Saul (“Demanded”) and a “demanded” kingship in the succeeding chapters leads us to conclude that Dtr has incorporated this story along with its

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<sup>92</sup> See NJPS, 572 n. g.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. P. Kyle McCarter, Jr.’s suggestion (*1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980] 62): “She [Hannah] named him ‘he-who-is-from God’ because it was from Yahweh that she had requested him.”

<sup>94</sup> E.g., M. O’Connor, “The Human Characters’ Names in the Ugaritic Poems: Onomastic Eccentricity in Bronze-Age West Semitic and the Name Daniel in Particular,” in *Biblical Hebrew in Its Northwest Semitic Setting: Typological and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Steven E. Fassberg and Avi Hurvitz; Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 271.

<sup>95</sup> E.g., J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (trans. J.S. Bowden; OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1989) 186; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 65.

<sup>96</sup> See recently Christophe Lemardele, “Saül le nazir ou la légende d’un roi,” *SJOT* 22 (2008) 47-62.

<sup>97</sup> O’Connor, “Human Characters’ Names,” 271.

etiology in large part because of its overall potential literary contribution to the narration of Israel's "demand" in 1 Samuel 8. It is the echoes of the name "Saul" in the repeated use of the verb **שאל** that constitute this literary potential of the Samuel birth story. Otherwise, as Klein indicates, the surrounding narrative details are, in fact, all wrong as references to Saul:

"Elkanah and Hannah were not Saul's parents, Saul was not an Ephraimite, he was not a Nazarite and so on."<sup>98</sup> In sum, while it is not necessary to see a reworked Saul birth narrative here (*pace* McCarter, et al.), one can certainly recognize a "twin"-birth account: Samuel and his "narrative double,"<sup>99</sup> Saul.

Thematic wordplay on the names "Samuel" and "Saul" involving the verbs **שמע** ("to hear," "obey") and **שאל** ("to ask," "request," "demand") has been observed by Moshe Garsiel.<sup>100</sup> Elsewhere, I have noted that the wordplay on Saul and Samuel in 1 Samuel is "an elaborate rumination on, and a re-creation of the scene at Horeb, as recounted in Deut 18:15-17."<sup>101</sup> Deut 18:15-22 represents the office of the prophet in ancient Israel as resulting from Israel's "request" not to "hear" the voice of Yhwh anymore. 1 Samuel 1–12 describes the institution of kingship similarly. In 1 Samuel 8, Israel refuses to "hear" Yhwh's voice in the person of Samuel, the "raised-up" prophet (1 Sam 1:23) any longer and "demands" (8:10) a

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<sup>98</sup> Klein, *1 Samuel*, 9. Polzin (*Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 25) notes that the Saul-birth narrative proposal "certainly casts no light on the story itself and causes these verses [1 Sam 1:17, 20, 28] to intrude awkwardly in their present context."

<sup>99</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 221.

<sup>100</sup> Garsiel, "Word Play and Puns," 186; idem, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies, and Parallels* (Jerusalem: Revivim, 1985) 72-75.

<sup>101</sup> Bowen, *Rejective Requests and Deadly Disobedience*, 3.

“king like all the nations.” Yhwh’s response to this demand is to grant the people Saul (שׂאול), Israel’s “demanded” first dynastic king.

The name “Saul” (שׂאול) is a fairly standard hypocoristic theophoric Hebrew name meaning “requested [of the deity].” Dtr plays on the basic meaning of the name “requested [i.e., of Yhwh],” which implies a request to Yhwh by his parents (presumably the name-givers). Dtr converts the implied parental “request” made to Yhwh into an Israelite “demand” of Yhwh. Saul’s name thus becomes a useful literary means of inculcating all Israel in the sin of the monarchy. Dtr makes the name “Saul” a descriptor of the sin itself.

The etymology of “Samuel” is a more complex issue. The presence of the theophoric element אל (“El,” later, “God”) is clear—one of the commonest elements in Hebrew names. The element שׂמׁוּ presents several possibilities, none of them entirely satisfying. Some scholars hold that this element is simply שׂמׁוּ (“name”) + the possessive suffix ךׁ (“his”), thus “His name is El” i.e., “his name [the name on which he cultically calls] is El” from \**simuhū-il*.<sup>102</sup> West Semitic names like *Sumu-AN*,<sup>103</sup> i.e., *Sumu-el*<sup>104</sup> would seem to support this

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<sup>102</sup> McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 62. See also Bill T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003) 57.

<sup>103</sup> Theodor Bauer, *Die Ostkanaanäer: Eine philologisch-historische Untersuchung über die Wanderschicht der sogenannten "Amoriter" in Babylonien* (Leipzig: Verlag der Asia Major, 1926) 38-40.

<sup>104</sup> *Sumu-el* is attested as the name of a king of Larsa. See Stanley D. Walters, “The Year Names of Sumu-el,” *RA* 67 (1973) 21-40; Edwin C. Kingsbury, “La dixième année de Sumu-el,” *RA* 71 (1977) 9-16; J.M. Durand, “Notes sur l’histoire de Larsa,” *RA* 71 (1977) 17-34; cf. *HALOT*, 1554-55.

etymology. Others have suggested that this element is a form of \*שָׁמַח “to be high,”<sup>105</sup> thus, “El is Exalted.”

For Dtr’s literary purposes it was enough that the homophony between the name Samuel (שְׁמוּאֵל) and the verb שָׁמַע might evoke the idea “heard of God” or “hearer of God,” or as Garsiel puts it, “one who hears the word of God.”<sup>106</sup> The etiological report in 1:20 with its paronomasia on שָׁאֵל is a stroke of literary genius precisely because this word “can be heard”<sup>107</sup> in the names of both שְׁמוּאֵל and שָׁאוּל, and so splices the event of Samuel’s birth into the ongoing issue of leadership in Israel with an eye toward the upcoming monarchy. We can conclude, then, that the etiological report of 1 Sam 1:20 is a conscious wordplay on both names.

This suggestion is strengthened by an analysis of what follows in the conclusion to the Samuel birth pericope. Hannah states: “For this boy I have prayed, and Yhwh has granted me **my begging** [שָׁאֵלְתִּי] which **I have begged** [שָׁאֵלְתִּי] from him. But I also **loaned him back** [הִשְׁאֵלְתִּהוּ] to Yhwh, he is **borrowed** [שָׁאוּל] by Yhwh” (1 Sam 1:27-28). Samuel is Yhwh’s “Saul.”<sup>108</sup> Garsiel suggests that the “various connotations” of שָׁאֵל as a *Leitwort* in 1

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<sup>105</sup> Arabic سَمَا “be high, exalted”; see *HALOT*, 1554-55.

<sup>106</sup> Garsiel, “Word Play and Puns,” 186.

<sup>107</sup> Garsiel, *First Book of Samuel*, 72-3.

<sup>108</sup> Yairah Amit, “‘*Hû’ šā’ûl l’yhwh*,’ Unifying Allusion—Some Methods of Literary Editing [Hebrew],” *BM* 27 (1981/2) 238-43; Garsiel, *First Book of Samuel*, 73; Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 25.

Samuel are exploited “in order to create a double antithesis: between Samuel and Saul, and between Saul and David.”<sup>109</sup> As Polzin indicates, this is no “accidental or haphazard mixture ... of two traditions.”<sup>110</sup> Instead, “the birth of Samuel, in all its complex detail, introduces and foreshadows the birth of kingship in Israel.”<sup>111</sup>

What commentators have not noted, however, is that שאל as *Leitwort* also relates this story and those that follow with the leadership conundrum that began at Horeb (Deut 18:16) and the subsequent problems that Israel’s “request” (cf. שאל) there called forth. In what follows, I will argue that the subsequent chapters in the Samuel story are intended as a literary fulfillment of Yhwh’s promise that a prophet would be “raised up” for Israel (Deut 18:15-22), this after the leadership vacuum that sets in with Joshua’s death.

### 2.2.9 The “Begged-for” Prophet is “Raised up” (1 Samuel 2–4)

Stanley Walters suggests that Elkanah’s desire “Only, may Yhwh raise up his word” as expressed in 1 Sam 1:23 is indicative of Yhwh fulfilling his promise to “raise up” a prophet.<sup>112</sup> Elkanah’s words constitute then a polysemic play on the verb קם. Following

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<sup>109</sup> Garsiel, *First Book of Samuel*, 72-3.

<sup>110</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 25.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Stanley D. Walters, “Hannah and Anna,” *JBL* 107 (1988) 385-412. I am reading here with MT. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> reads מפיך (“that which goes out of your [Hannah’s] mouth”) which agrees with LXX: τὸ ἐξελθὸν ἐκ τοῦ στόματός σου (“that which goes out of your [Hannah’s] mouth”). The Peshitta has חלה (“your word”). These variants conceivably represent a later attempt (or attempts) at clarifying the ambiguous antecedent of the word ברוך which stands outside the Samuel pericope itself in Deut 18:15-22. But cf. 4QSam<sup>a</sup>/LXX’s possible literary allusion to Jephthah and his daughter in Judg 11:36 (כאשר יצא מפיו)! In

Samuel's birth, 1 Samuel 2–4 continues the story of Samuel's "raising." The narrative reiterates the implied wordplay on Samuel (and Saul), while extending the semantic range of **שאל**: "Then Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife and said: 'May the Lord repay you a posterity from this woman in place of **the loan** [**שאל** ה'], which **you have lent** [**שאל** ה' <sup>113</sup>] to Yhwh'" (1 Sam 2:20). Garsiel notes that the use of **שאל** "in its various senses" in 1 Sam 1:27-28 "binds together and creates reciprocal relations between these stages of asking, giving and thanking. The two parties who 'lend' to each other are the Lord and Hannah."<sup>114</sup> The effect of the polysemy is the same in 2:20 as in 1:27-28, but now Samuel is going back "on loan" to Yhwh, this placing him in the Shiloh temple and positioning him to replace Eli, whose leadership is already depicted as clearly failing. The wordplay on **שאל**, then, moves the leadership story to its next stage of development.

Juxtaposed with the notice that "Samuel grew in favor with God" (1 Sam 2:21) is the statement that an aging Eli "heard [**שמע**] everything that his sons were doing to all Israel" (2:23).<sup>115</sup> Ironically, Eli had previously been unable to "hear" (1 Sam 1:13) Hannah, and later he will be unable to "hear" Yhwh (3:1-14) or have a "vision" (3:1) from Yhwh. Eli gives his

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either case, the jussive **ק** with Yhwh as subject is not in dispute and this clearly alludes to Deut 18:15-22, where Yhwh is also the subject of **ק** and **ק**.

<sup>113</sup> Reading with LXX, Peshitta and Vulgate; cf. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> [**שאל** ה']. See McCarter, *I Samuel*, 80.

<sup>114</sup> Garsiel, *First Book of Samuel*, 73.

<sup>115</sup> Garsiel ("Word Play and Puns," 186) notes that **שמע** serves as a *Leitwort* in the description of the sins of Eli's sons (2:22-25) and their punishment (3:11; 4:14, 19).



sons an ineffectual rebuke in which he stresses *his* “hearing” the rumors of their deeds, rather than his seeing them for himself (2:22-25),<sup>116</sup> this playing on the name “Samuel.”<sup>117</sup> Dtr’s concluding remark in 1 Sam 2:25 offers one of his profoundest theological statements: “but they did not hear [לֹא שָׁמְעוּ] their father’s voice because Yhwh planned to kill them.”<sup>118</sup> If Yhwh approved Israel’s “request” for a prophet so that it need “not hear the voice of Yhwh any longer”—it was not because Yhwh did not know where that request would lead. Similarly, the “demand” that epitomizes Israel’s stubborn refusal to “hear” Samuel,<sup>119</sup> when they “add” a “demand” for a king a few years later, is approved by Yhwh with full knowledge

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<sup>116</sup> Rachele Gilmour (*Representing the Past: A Literary Analysis of Narrative Historiography in the Book of Samuel* [VTSup 143; Leiden: Brill, 2011] 60) writes: “Eli’s blindness is an important theme that is developed throughout the narrative in 1 Sam 1-4. In 2.22, Eli ‘heard’ about what his sons were doing (וַשְׁמַע אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן בְּנָיו לְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל), ‘And he heard everything which his sons did to all of Israel’) and his ‘hearing’ is further emphasised by the repetition of שָׁמַע (‘to hear’) in v. 23 and v. 24. Implicit in Eli’s hearing about their wickedness is that he has been too blind to ‘see’ it and this why it has continued unchecked. He could not ‘see’ the sins of his sons and becomes aware of them only by ‘hearing’ rumours.”

<sup>117</sup> Polzin (*Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 43) notes that “Samuel’s name is echoed in the words of Eli to his sons šēṣmū’āh - šēṣmū’ēl; šm’ in this passage (vv. 22-25) means both to ‘hear’ (vv. 22, 23, 24 [twice]) and to obey” (v. 25). See also his discussion on p. 49.

<sup>118</sup> Polzin (*Ibid.*, 49) correlates this statement with Elkanah’s word to Hannah in 1 Sam 1:8 and with the disobedient demand for kingship that follows in 1 Samuel 8: “The implications of the LORD thrice commanding Samuel to make Israel a king (8:7, 9, 22)—and thereby commanding him to cooperate with and enable their rejection of him—fill the first two chapters of Samuel with ominous tones concerning the history to come. The voices co-mingle: ‘Am I not worth more to you than ten sons?’ ... ‘But they would not listen to the voice of their father; for the LORD wanted to slay them.’”

<sup>119</sup> 1 Samuel 3 takes some pains to establish Samuel as the prophet who “hears” Yhwh’s voice in contrast to Eli and his dull senses (1 Sam 1:13; 3:2; cf. 4:15), and vis-à-vis an unhearing Israel, for whom the soon-to-appear Saul will become an unhappy cipher. Though unable to “see” a vision (3:1) or “hear” Yhwh speak, Eli, nonetheless urges Samuel to respond to Yhwh’s call when Samuel hears it: “Then Eli said to **Samuel**, ‘Go lie down and it shall be if he calls to you, you shall say “Speak, Yhwh, for your servant **hears** [שָׁמַע]”’” (1 Sam 3:9). As Polzin (*Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 48) indicates, “Samuel is not able to receive God’s thrice-attempted revelation to him until Eli gives him the response that will open things up.”

of how it will eventuate—even though Yhwh’s “soul was grieved over the misery of Israel” (Judg 10:16).

### 2.3 Israel “Demands” a King: 1 Samuel 8–12

Israel’s “demand” for kingship is presented in episodic fashion. The elders of Israel present the initial demand in 1 Samuel 8, and then this demand is recalled in Samuel’s subsequent speeches (1 Samuel 10; 12). Israel’s “demand” for a king represents a further development in its movement away from Yhwh. Assuming Samuel’s sons were installed as “judges” in Beersheba (8:2-3) under his “prophetic” authority (as Yhwh’s “raised up” intermediary),<sup>120</sup> his sons’ corruption represents a further failure of the intermediation that the people had “requested” (Deut 18:16). Israel had “requested” not to hear Yhwh’s voice in person (Deut 18:16) and now they “demand” more intermediation: a more powerful, and (they believe) an incorruptible intermediary who will give them “justice.” Ironically, this new intermediary will further distance Israel from Yhwh’s “justice” and from Yhwh himself.

#### 2.3.1 Israel Presents Its “Demand” for Kingship (1 Samuel 8)

The people see the judges as institutionally inadequate and corrupt. They cite the recent example of Samuel’s own sons (8:1-5), but the narrative also has Eli’s lack of parental (and institutional) control in view (1 Sam 1:3–4:18), and probably the failings of judges like Gideon and Jephthah as well. The people assert in their “demand” that Samuel’s sons do “not

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<sup>120</sup> Antony F. Campbell (“1 Samuel,” NJBC [2nd ed.; ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990] 148) cautions: “We know nothing of the powers that might have enabled him to do so, nor of an institution of sufficient authority to have given rise to national discontent.” However, Moses and Joshua may serve in this instance as precedents for Samuel’s authority to appoint leadership in Israel (cf. Exod 18:25; Josh 4:4; cf. Deut 31:7).

walk in [their father's] ways" (8:5). This assertion implies that Samuel himself is "just," and that the sons of their future "just" kings will "walk in [their fathers' just] ways." The people are both right (see 1 Kgs 3:5; 15:26; 22:43; 2 Kgs 22:2) and terribly wrong (1 Kgs 11:6; 22:53; 2 Kgs 21:21-22).

When the elders of Israel approach Samuel with their demand, one is reminded of the "sin of the spies"<sup>121</sup> episode as recounted by Moses in Deut 1:19-28, in which the Israelites approach Moses with the idea of sending out twelve spies. That proposal seemed like a good idea at the time to Moses (וַיִּטַּב בְּעֵינֵי הָדָבָר, 1:23), just as Yhwh seems to approve the people's proposal of prophetic intermediation (הַטִּיבוּ, Deut 5:28; 18:17), even while subtly alluding to their lack of faith. The proposal, however, does not sit well with Samuel (וַיִּרֶע אֵלֱהֵי שְׁמוּאֵל, 1 Sam 8:6). Some see selfish motives in Samuel's displeasure (e.g., that the "demand" impinges on Samuel's own authority).<sup>122</sup> Often overlooked, however, are those details in the "demand" that threaten to undermine Samuel's signature achievements as prophet and judge. Samuel had successfully turned away Israel from "foreign gods [אֱלֹהֵי הַנֹּכַר], especially "the baals and ashtaroth" (1 Sam 7:2-3), Israel's recurrent sin (cf. Judg 2:13; 10:6). Furthermore, Samuel had successfully interceded with Yhwh to "save" Israel from the Philistines (1 Sam 7:8-11), one of the "nations." Israel wished, not to be saved by

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<sup>121</sup> Weinfeld (*Deuteronomy 1–11*, 141-45) notes that Deut 1:19-28 points back to 1:7-8.

<sup>122</sup> So David M. Gunn (*The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* [JSOTSup 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980] 59): "Samuel's displeasure is on account of his own self-regard."

Yhwh, but rather to be “like all the nations” (8:5, 20). Not trusting in Yhwh’s “salvation,” they demanded foreign “justice.”

Thus, the people’s “demand” reflects a lack of faith and a fear of death as in the earlier spies-episode and the “request” for a prophet at Horeb. Like the prior “demand” for an additional intermediary (the prophet), this demand for an additional intermediary (a king) is also nonetheless granted by Yhwh (1 Sam 8:7-9). This time, however, Yhwh explicitly states that “the people, **the ones demanding** [שאלוּם] a king from him” (8:9)<sup>123</sup> have “rejected him from being king over them” (8:7)—something far worse than their previous lack of faith.<sup>124</sup>

Granting Israel’s demand again, Yhwh directs Samuel to “hear” the *vox populi*. Polzin recognizes that “this play on the meaning within *šāma*<sup>c</sup> echoes throughout the Deuteronomist’s account of kingship and provides us with a central theme on the nature and failure of kingship.”<sup>125</sup> Given that Israel’s first request was granted “according to everything

<sup>123</sup> Robert Alter (*The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* [New York: Norton, 1999] 42) rightly notes that the participle שאלוּם “takes us back to the verb of asking used in Samuel’s naming and points forward to ... Saul,” but the horizon that the text ultimately has in its (rear)view is Israel’s “request” at Horeb (to which the naming of Samuel also harks back).

<sup>124</sup> Israel has continued its pattern of “not hearing” from the time of the Exodus and Horeb, a problem that has worsened since the death of Joshua and the era of the judges (“but they would not listen [לֹא שָׁמְעוּ] to their judges and whored after other gods,” Judg 2:17). Samuel is the last in a line of judges whom the people refuse to “hear.” Unfortunately for Israel, this last judge was also “the raised up” prophet envisaged in Deut 18:15-22.

<sup>125</sup> Polzin (*Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 48). On p. 49 he continues: “The problem and paradox of the kingship is bound up with this play on *šāma*<sup>c</sup> in these dialogues between Eli and his sons, Samuel and Eli, Samuel and the LORD, Samuel and the people, Samuel and Saul. In one sense to hearken to the voice of the LORD means not to desire a king ... [see 1 Sam 8:7]. On the other hand Samuel must hearken to the voice of the LORD who commands him to hearken to the people’s voice by giving them a king. Kingship paradoxically results from both obeying and not obeying the LORD.”

[לשמע] which [they] requested [שאלת],” namely that they would not have to “hear [שמע] Yhwh’s voice [את־קול]” (Deut 18:16), it is significant that Yhwh now tells Samuel to “hear [שמע] the voice [בקול] of the people “regarding everything [לכל] ... according to all [ככל] their deeds” from the time of the exodus (1 Sam 8:7-8). Those deeds included a rejection of Yhwh’s nearness—his actual voice [קול], and now involve their rejection of Yhwh as king (another rejection of Yhwh’s voice resident in the intermediary prophet).

The people’s words in 1 Sam 8:19-20<sup>126</sup> constitute a critical part of Dtr’s case against Israel. The people not only refuse to “hear” the raised-up prophet; they also state the motive for their “demand,” and establish some criteria by which later kings can be measured: does the king give the people justice? Does the king go out at the head of Israel’s armies? Does the king fight Israel’s battles? (cf. David in 2 Samuel 11). By refusing to “hear” Samuel, the “raised-up” prophet (see 1 Samuel 1), the people manifestly violate Deut 18:15-17 which records their ancestors’ promise to “hear” (Deut 5:24 [27]) the intermediary that they had “requested” (Deut 18:16), instead of *physically* hearing the voice of God. In Deut 18:19, Yhwh declares that there will be a punishment for any Israelite who will not—in lieu of hearing Yhwh’s voice—“hear” the raised-up prophet.<sup>127</sup> Peter Miscall asks, “Will the Lord

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<sup>126</sup> (19) But the people refused [וימאנו] to hear [לשמע] Samuel’s voice [בקול שמואל] and they said, “No, but a king shall be over us (20) **so that we ourselves may also become like all the nations** [והיינו גם־אנחנו ככל־הגוים], and so that our king may give us justice [ושפטנו] and go out before us and fight our battles.”

<sup>127</sup> The people may believe that they are on solid legal footing (Deut 17:14: “I will set a king over me, like all the nations about me”) as their statement “and we too shall be like all the nations” (1 Sam 8:20) implies. However, Dtr shows them rather as indicting themselves for violating Deut 18:9: “You shall not learn to do

now require it [the failure to hear] of Israel? Has Israel given heed to the word of the Lord?”<sup>128</sup> Dtr will answer the latter question with a resounding “no,” the former in the affirmative.

### 2.3.2 “Is Saul Among the Prophets”? “Asked” from the Baggage Train (1 Samuel 10)

One literary function of the “positive” Saul narratives is the blurring of the line between prophet and king. A distinguishing literary feature of the story of Saul’s anointing (1 Sam 9:1–10:16) is the ongoing paronomasia on the *Leitwort* בּוֹא and the noun נָבִיא.<sup>129</sup> (I leave the important wordplay on נָגִיד and הַנָּגִיד aside for the present).<sup>130</sup> A particularly noteworthy instance of this occurs when Saul’s servant proposes that Saul and he go to the local “man of God” (i.e., Samuel) whose word “certainly comes to pass [בּוֹא בְּאֵן]” (9:6). In response, Saul asks “What shall **we bring** [נָבִיא] to the man?” One can also understand the question as “What [is] **a prophet** [נָבִיא] to man?” (9:7).<sup>131</sup> That the double-voiced nature of

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according to the abominations of those nations.” Dtr goes to great lengths to show that the monarchy not only led Israel to engage in all of those “abominations,” but that the monarchy itself, as it turned out, proved to *be* one of those abominations.

<sup>128</sup> Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986) 50.

<sup>129</sup> This wordplay begins in 1 Sam 9:6-7 and recurs through 9:9-16, 22; climaxing in 10:5-11. For more on the wordplay on נָבִיא / בּוֹא and נָגִיד / הַנָּגִיד (נָגִיד), see Wilhelm Vischer, *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testament. Zweiter Band: Die Propheten* (Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1943) 176; Martin Buber, “Die Erzählung von Sauls Königswahl,” *VT* 6 (1956) 126; J. B. Curtis, “A Folk Etymology of *Nābi*” *VT* 29 (1979), 491-3; Shemuel Shaviv, “*Nābi*’ and *Nāgîd* in 1 Samuel IX 1-X 16,” *VT* 34 (1984) 108-13; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 176.

<sup>130</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>131</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 93.

this question is deliberate,<sup>132</sup> is evidenced by 9:9: “the prophet [נָבִיא] in former times was called the seer.”<sup>133</sup>

Shemuel Shaviv suggests that the force of the above wordplay is to suggest that the prophet is not only one to whom “we bring” (i.e., remuneration, somewhat pejoratively), but also one whose words “come to pass.”<sup>134</sup> He further notes that this wordplay brings the narrative into conjunction with two important Deuteronomic texts on prophets and their prophecies: Deut 13:2-3 (“When a prophet [נָבִיא] ... arises in your midst ... and gives you a sign or portent and the sign or portent comes to pass [וַיָּבֹא]...”) and 18:22 (“When a prophet [נָבִיא] speaks in the name of Yhwh [יְהוָה] and the word does not come about [וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה] and does **not come to pass** [וְלֹא־יָבוֹא], it is the word which Yhwh has not spoken, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously”), among other biblical texts.<sup>135</sup> The allusion to 18:22 is especially significant because Dtr is attempting to establish Samuel as the promised prophet of Deut 18:15-22.

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> On the Deuteronomistic origin and purpose of 1 Sam 9:9 and the title *nābî*, see Terry L. Fenton “Deuteronomistic Advocacy of the *nābî*: 1 Samuel IX 9 and Questions of Israelite Prophecy,” *VT* 47 (1997) 23-42. Fenton concludes that *nābî* means “speaker.” See also Giovanni Garbini, “Dal veggente al profeta: evoluzione di un genere letterario,” *RSB* 11 (1999) 69-83. Garbini concludes that *nābî* means “called” rather than “speaker.”

<sup>134</sup> Shaviv, “*Nābî* and *Nāgîd*,” 109.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 109-10. Besides Deut 13:2-3 and 18:22, this wordplay also occurs in Jer 25:13; 28:9; Ezek 33:30-33; cf. 38:17.

When Samuel “cause[s]” Saul “to hear [אָשְׁמִיעַךְ]” the word of God (1 Sam 9:27) and anoints him in secret (10:1), he predicts that Saul will meet, i.e., find “three men going up to God to Bethel”<sup>136</sup> carrying with them three young goats, three bread-loaves and a wineskin (10:3). The three men will “ask [וְשָׁאֵל]” about his welfare, i.e., “greet” him, and offer him two of their loaves which he is to take (10:4). After this he is to “go” [תֵּבוֹא] to the “hill of God” and when he “comes” there [כִּבְּאֵךְ] he will meet a band of “prophets” [נְבִיאִים] who will be “prophesying ecstatically [מִתְנַבְּאִים]” or “acting like prophets,”<sup>137</sup> at which point the spirit of Yhwh will rush upon him and he will “prophecy [וְהִתְנַבֵּיתָ]” with them and be changed into another man” (the sign of his “legitimation”).<sup>138</sup> The play on Saul’s name in 10:4 bears a seemingly innocuous sense in which Saul is “asked,” even as it coincides importantly with the climax of the preceding wordplay on בּוֹא and נְבִיא, in which Saul becomes “another man” and behaves like a prophet. He is “Saul” now in a new sense.

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<sup>136</sup> On the significance of the minor characters in 1 Sam 9:1–10:1, see Jonathan Jacobs, “The Role of the Secondary Characters in the Story of the Anointing of Saul,” *VT* 58 (2008) 495-509.

<sup>137</sup> See Klaus-Peter Adam, “‘And He Behaved Like a Prophet Among Them’ (1Sam 10:11b): The Depreciative use of נִבֵּא Hitpael and the Comparative Evidence of Ecstatic Prophecy,” *WO* 39 (2009) 1-53.

<sup>138</sup> Wagner (*Geist und Tora*, 71-2) suggests that Saul’s legitimation is evident in 1 Sam 11:1-11 when the spirit comes upon Saul and he comports himself heroically. Adam (“‘And He Behaved like a Prophet,’” 13-14) argues, rather, that the spirit of Yhwh in 1 Samuel 10 “is a sign of Saul’s delegitimation” and that the narrative’s attitude towards him is either one of “ambivalence” or negativity since “in comparable contexts, the coming of the spirit is followed by a miraculous warlike action, as in the case with Samson killing a lion according to Judg 14:6 or 30 men in Judg 14:19.” Cf. the oncoming of Yhwh’s spirit in Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6, 19; 15:4. *Contra* Adam, however, 1 Sam 11:1-11 arguably constitutes the requisite “miraculous warlike action.”



Perhaps the most important statement in 1 Sam 9:1–10:16 comes in 10:9: “**And it happened** [וַיִּהְיֶה] when he [Saul] turned his shoulder to go from Samuel that God changed his [heart] into another heart, and all those signs [הַסִּמְנוֹת] **came to pass** [וַיָּבֹאוּ].”<sup>139</sup> The moment of Saul’s *royal* “legitimation,” is also the moment of Samuel’s *prophetic* re-legitimation. If these signs came to pass (cf. Deut 18:22) and Yhwh lets none of Samuel’s words “fall to the ground” (1 Sam 3:19), how ought Israel regard Samuel’s long-term forecast for them and their “demanded” king in 1 Samuel 12? Polzin raises the issue of Samuel’s failure to “come” to Gilgal within seven days (1 Sam 13:8) as announced by him in 10:8 as a possible failed prophecy, and how this is to be understood in light of Deut 18:22<sup>140</sup>: need Saul or Israel “be afraid” of Samuel?

From a text-structural standpoint, however, Samuel’s promise to come to Gilgal (10:8) is a separate issue from (though still related to) the “signs” of 10:1-7a, which all come to pass on the same day. Saul’s apparent confusion over “what is a prophet?” (9:7) and what constitutes “prophecy” (i.e., when is a prophet speaking as Yhwh’s prophet or as an ordinary human being?) gets Saul (and later all of Israel) into trouble. Even though Samuel did not “come” as announced (10:8), was not Saul (and Israel) still supposed to “hear” Samuel? Dtr answers “yes,”<sup>141</sup> viewing 10:8 as authoritative instruction rather than “prophecy.” A major

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<sup>139</sup> There will be a distinct reminiscence and refraction of this moment in 1 Sam 15:27 with the symbolic tearing of Samuel’s robe.

<sup>140</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 107.

<sup>141</sup> Polzin (Ibid.) sees Samuel’s words in 10:8 as a “failed prediction,” i.e., as a failed prophecy in that his words do “come to pass” exactly as stated. But are those words a “prophecy” or “sign” in the same sense as 10:1-7a? Saul is evidently so convinced by the exact fulfillment of Samuel’s “signs,” that he expects—and has

point of this story is that Israel misapprehends not only “What is a prophet to man?” (9:7), but also the corollaries of its own leadership “demands” and the inevitable outworking of those corollaries.

Saul comes [וַיִּבְאֹן]<sup>142</sup> and encounters the band of prophets [נְבִיאִים] as foretold and himself “behaves like a prophet [וַיִּתְנַבֵּא]” (10:10). The sight of Saul “prophesying with prophets [עַם-נְבִיאִים נִבֵּא]” occasions the exclamation: “What has happened [הֵיךְ] to the son of Kish? Is Saul too among the prophets?” (10:11), this providing a partial etiology for the מַשַּׁל, “Is Saul among the prophets?” (10:12). That etiology is also apparently rooted in the subsequent question from a local שִׁשִּׁי, “Who is their father?” (cf. the *double entendre* “What is a prophet to (a) man [לְאִישׁ]?” [9:7]). For Dtr, Israel’s relationship to its prophets, kings, and Yhwh himself is ultimately one of misapprehension. The overall picture of Saul may be ambivalent here (even positive), but the wider issue of Samuel, prophets, and prophecy steals much of the limelight.

The second “neutralizing” episode or installment of Israel’s “demand” for kingship takes place when Samuel calls the people “to Yhwh at Mizpah [אֶל-יְהוָה הַמִּצְפָּה]” (10:17), a phrase which highlights the cultic nature of the gathering. Here Dtr pointedly recalls the

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his people (Israel) expecting—that Samuel’s additional statement that Saul should wait seven days indicated that Samuel’s arrival would occur precisely within this time period. Hence they start abandoning Saul at the end of the “appointed time.” Here (in 13:8-9, 11) the wordplay on בָּוֹא and נִבֵּא is especially delicious. Samuel does “come,” and thus his words “come to pass,” but *contra expectationem*. Saul’s cultic offering similarly represents his misapprehension of his authority (10:7). Samuel had reserved the offering of the cultic burnt offering, at least in this instance, for himself. And in any case, Samuel was to show Saul what to do.

<sup>142</sup> Other manuscripts and witnesses (LXX, Peshitta) have the singular here. The form may have become a plural via homoioteleuton with the וַיִּבְאֹן from the previous clause.

event in Judges where “the assembly was gathered together as one man ... **to Yhwh at Mizpah** [אַל־יְהוָה הַמִּצְפָּה]” (Judg 20:1; 21:5). That assembly culminated in all Israel’s going to war with Benjamin. The scene here in 1 Sam 10:17 likewise recalls the assemblies in Deut 5:22 (18:16) and Judg 20:1-2. There is a reminiscence here as well of the assembly at Mizpah in 1 Sam 7:5 at which Samuel is Yhwh’s instrument in subduing the Philistines.

In 1 Sam 10:19, Samuel reiterates Yhwh’s charge from the episode of the initial “demand” at Ramah (“they have not rejected [מֵאַסֹּר] you, but me they have rejected [מֵאַסֹּר] from being king [מִמֶּלֶךְ] over them,” 8:7). But here, as Álvarez points out, the people are said to reject Yhwh not only as king, but rather as “savior”<sup>143</sup>: “You yourselves have this day [הַיּוֹם] rejected [מֵאַסֹּתֶם] your God who was himself a savior [מוֹשִׁיעַ] to you from all your evils and distresses. But you have said, ‘No, but you shall set a king over us’” (10:19). The use of the term הַיּוֹם here is again suggestive of the cultic nature of the occasion (cf. הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, Deut 5:24 [21]; בַּחֶרֶב בַּיּוֹם הַקָּהֵל, 18:16; הַיּוֹם, Ps 95:7).<sup>144</sup> The reference to Yhwh as מוֹשִׁיעַ highlights Yhwh’s status as the source of the “salvation” or “deliverance” iterated throughout the period of the Judges which Israel has constantly rejected through its

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<sup>143</sup>Miguel Álvarez Barredo (*Los Orígenes de la Monarquía en Israel: Tradiciones Literarias y Enfoques Teológicos de 1 Sam 8-12* [PITM OFM 52; Murcia: Editorial Espigas, 2009] 39) writes, “El pueblo ahora lo rechaza (מֵאַסֹּר), no como rey, tal como sucede en 1 Sam 8, 7, sino como salvador (מוֹשִׁיעַ) de Israel.”

<sup>144</sup> Abraham P. Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days* (New York: KTAV, 1978) 114.

disobedience since that “day” at Horeb.<sup>145</sup> It also provides a key neutralization of the subsequent presentation of Saul as a legitimate מֶלֶךְ (1 Samuel 11; see especially v. 3) or means of salvation for Israel (cf. 1 Sam 10:27). One might go so far as to say that Dtr’s characterization of Yhwh as מֶלֶךְ here is a repudiation of any human king and even any judge as a true מֶלֶךְ.

Beginning in 1 Sam 10:17, Dtr has Saul “chosen” and “asked” again, this time in a more ominous manner than in his being “greeted” in 10:4. Álvarez notes that this asking is described in terms of an “election” by lot and by direct consultation of Yhwh.<sup>146</sup> Samuel orders the Israelites, “Now present yourselves before Yhwh by your tribes and your thousands” (10:20), and begins a cleromantic inquest—presumably by lot—to ascertain “him whom Yhwh has chosen” (10:24; cf. 12:13). Ironically, the inquest transpires almost exactly like Joshua’s “sorting out” of Achan (Joshua 7). As Bodner notes, this is “not a happy or festive moment” for Saul.<sup>147</sup> Daniel Hawk describes Achan’s cleromantic selection as a “procedure” by means of which “the nation is gradually united and reintegrated against an

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<sup>145</sup> Álvarez (*Los Orígenes de la Monarquía*, 39) observes further: “El perfil del Dios Salvador corta transversalmente Jue-1 Sam 12, dejando entrever del dtr. que sólo Dios salva (מֶלֶךְ) de las desgracias y peligros, corroborando su tesis con la presencia del término dtr. «hoy» (הַיּוֹם), el cual en su pensamiento subraya la actualización de las cláusulas de la alianza del Sinaí, y encierra de este modo, según su óptica, la historia de Israel en una desobediencia constante a Dios, que se plasma ahora en nuevo rechazo.”

<sup>146</sup> Álvarez (*Ibid.*, 35) observes: “Saul ha sido elegido rey de dos maneras por sorteo (v.20-21bα), y, otra por medio de una consulta directa a dios, que senala sobre quien recae oficio regio (v.21bβ-24).”

<sup>147</sup> Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 99.

offender who is in turn gradually alienated. With surgical precision, the nation separates from those within who are ‘not one of them.’”<sup>148</sup>

When Saul is finally “taken” (וַיִּלְכְּדוּ, 10:21), the text states: “When Saul the **son of Kish** was taken, **they sought him out** [בִּנְקִישׁ וַיִּבְקְשׁוּהוּ] but he was not found.” This wording constitutes both a play on the meaning of “Saul,” and a paronomasia on בִּנְקִישׁ and בִּקֵּשׁ (*biqqēš*).<sup>149</sup> Such wordplay is significant since it points back to Saul’s “seeking” (בִּקֵּשׁ) the asses/signs (אִתְּנוּת/אִתְּנוֹת)<sup>150</sup> at his father Kish’s behest (9:3) in his call narrative, and forward to his “seeking” to kill David in the later narratives, in which בִּקֵּשׁ frequently recurs.<sup>151</sup>

Significantly, when Saul cannot be found [לֹא נִמְצָא],<sup>152</sup> “they ask [וַשְּׁאֵלֻּם] Yhwh further, ‘Has the man [אִישׁ] come [הֲבָא] here [הֲלֵם]?’”<sup>153</sup> (1 Sam 10:22). Here Saul becomes

<sup>148</sup> L. Daniel Hawk’s (*Joshua* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000] 119) observations on Achan are eerily applicable to Saul, the eventual “troubler” of the land (1 Sam 14:29).

<sup>149</sup> With its doubled ב, *biqqēš* **sounds** almost as if it has an assimilated נ, though morphologically and etymologically it does not.

<sup>150</sup> In addition to the other aforementioned wordplay, punning on אִתְּנוֹת (“signs”) and אִתְּנוּת (“asses”) recurs throughout 9:1-10:16. Thus Saul is not merely seeking asses, he is also a “sign”-seeker, a state of affairs which further stresses his misapprehension of the nature of prophecy (cf. 9:7).

<sup>151</sup> David A. Bosworth (*The Story within a Story in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* [CBQMS 45; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2008] 78) notes that Saul consistently “seeks” (בִּקֵּשׁ) David: 1 Sam 19:2, 10; 20:1; 23:14, 15, 25; 24:3; 26:2, 20, and that he “pursues” (רָדַף) David: 1 Sam 23:25, 28; 24:15; 26:18, 20.

<sup>152</sup> He has gone missing, just like the asses. On the significance of נִמְצָא as a *Leitwort* in 1 Samuel 9–10, see Jacobs, “Secondary Characters,” 507-8.

“asked” in another, not-so-innocuous way (as compared with 1 Sam 10:4). The language not only plays on his name, but recalls his own question in 9:7 and the “man’s” question in 10:12 about prophets, as well as the wordplay on **נָא** throughout 9:1–10:16 (see above). Yhwh’s answer, “he is hiding/has hidden himself [**נִחַבֵּא**] in the baggage train” adds an ironic and ignominious twist to the foregoing paronomasia on the word “prophet” (**נָבִיא**). Saul is then unceremoniously dragged from the baggage and stationed in Israel’s midst. On this occasion Israel not only **rejects** Yhwh anew (10:19) and again “demands” their king, but they do this by weeding Saul out like Achan, “seeking” him like a lost ass or a sign, and then “asking” from Yhwh his whereabouts in the baggage train.

### 2.3.3 “We Have Added to Our Sins the Evil of Demanding a King” (1 Samuel 12)

The final episode of Israel’s “demand” for kingship and the definitive installation of Saul begins with Samuel’s declaration to Israel: “Lo! **I have obeyed** [**שָׁמַעְתִּי**] your voice regarding everything which you spoke to me, and I have caused a king to reign over you” (1 Sam 12:1). Samuel’s then bears solemn witness to his innocence and uprightness before assembled Israel (“Whose ox have I taken [**לִי חֶקֶתִּי**]? Whose ass have I taken [**לִי קַחְתִּי**]? ... From whose hand have I taken [**לִי קַחְתִּי**] a bribe?” 12:3). The threefold repetition of **לִי קַחְתִּי** picks up the wording of Samuel’s earlier speech according to which Israel’s king will “take”

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<sup>153</sup> The above adverb **הַלֵּם** will be used again in another seminal moment of “asking” (1 Sam 14:36-37) that involves Saul. There is certainly an allusion there to the scene in 10:20-24 (see esp. 10:22).

(1 Sam 8:11-17).<sup>154</sup> Samuel thus asserts that his leadership has been very *un-kinglike*, an assertion which *e contario* suggests the kind of leadership that will be evident in Israel's kings.<sup>155</sup>

Samuel next restates Israel's rejection of Yhwh (12:12),<sup>156</sup> and then presents "Saul" to Israel (12:13). As Eslinger indicates,<sup>157</sup> Samuel's allusion to the Ammonite threat (12:12) masks Israel's own stated reason for its demand for kingship (8:3). The issue, however—whether framed in terms of Samuel's corrupt sons, the Ammonite threat, or a desire to be "like the nations"—is still one of human leadership. As in 1 Samuel 10, the narrator creates a growing sense that Israel ought to be having second thoughts about its earlier unremitting "demand": "And now, behold: the king whom you have chosen, whom **you demanded** [שאלתם]<sup>158</sup>—behold: Yhwh has set a king over you" (12:13). Samuel's speech does not

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<sup>154</sup> Hans Jochen Boecker (*Die Beurteilung der Anfänge des Königtums in den deuteronomistischen Abschnitten des I. Samuelbuchs: Ein Beitrag zum Problem des "deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks"* [WMANT 31; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969] 70) writes: "Wenn ein Wort innerhalb dieser Verse besonders ins Auge fällt, so ist es das wiederholt gebrauchte לקל. Damit wird an dieser Stelle das Wort mehrfach aufgenommen, das wir als charakteristisch für das 'Königsrecht' von 1 Sam 8,11ff. erkannt hatten." This feature will be treated at greater length in chapter three.

<sup>155</sup> P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 9; New York: Doubleday, 1984] 290) writes, "The king who takes is the king of 1 Sam 8:11-17, about whom the prophet warned the people." For further discussion on the significance of the verb לקל as characteristic of the monarchy over against Yhwh's will for Israel, see chapter three.

<sup>156</sup> "You said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when Yhwh was your king" (12:12b); see 1 Sam 8:19 (cf. 8:5-7); 10:19.

<sup>157</sup> Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12* (BLS 10; Decatur, GA: Almond, 1985) 401-02.

<sup>158</sup> Reading with the MT rather than some LXX manuscripts which lack a verb rendering שאל. Origen's LXX (LXX<sup>O</sup>) and the Lucianic (LXX<sup>L</sup>) reading agree with MT ([καὶ] ὅν ἡτήσασθε = אשר שאלתם). Several Hebrew manuscripts have אשר.

explicitly name Saul, but he is made implicitly present in the verb-form **שאל** <sup>159</sup> **הם**. The force of Dtr's wordplay is that the name "Saul" (**שאל**) takes on the meaning "demanded (of the people)" rather than "requested (of Yhwh)," the clear meaning of this hypocoristicon.<sup>160</sup>

In a scene highly reminiscent of 1 Samuel 7,<sup>161</sup> the Deuteronomistic agenda of Samuel's speech surfaces in 1 Samuel 12, with the future wellbeing of both the king and the people being predicated on their "hearing": "But if **you will not hear** [**לֹא תִשְׁמַעַן**] the voice [**בְּקוֹל**] of Yhwh, but rebel against Yhwh's mouth, then Yhwh's hand will be against you and against your king"<sup>162</sup> (12:14-15). The people have thus far refused to "hear" (**שָׁמַעַ**) Samuel (**שְׁמוּאֵל**), especially in the matter of kingship (1 Sam 8:19); and their "fear" of Yhwh has been declining since their initial refusal to "hear" Yhwh's voice (Deut 18:15-17). In spite of their previous disobedience and self-will, Samuel offers them a second chance<sup>163</sup>—albeit a

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<sup>159</sup> Eslinger (*Kingship of God in Crisis*, 403) writes: "Samuel, a master at diplomatic rhetoric, opens his remarks on the behavioural requirements of monarchic Israel with two notes that emphasize that the people have gotten what they wanted."

<sup>160</sup> The non-mention of Saul's name may also reflect an additional literary strategy. The implied audience of Samuel's speech is exilic. This strategy and its significance will be explored in chapter six.

<sup>161</sup> Eslinger (*Kingship of God in Crisis*, 408-10), following observations of Buber ("Die Erzählung von Sauls Königswahl," 113-73); H. Seebass ("Traditionsgeschichte von 1 Sam. 8, 10:17ff., und 12," ZAW 77 [1965] 286-96); H.W. Hertzberg (*I and II Samuel: A Commentary* [trans. J.S. Bowden; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964] 100) points out the verbal and structural similarities between 1 Samuel 7 and 12:16-25.

<sup>162</sup> Reading with the LXX (καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν βασιλέα ὑμῶν = **וּבַמֶּלֶךְ יִכְם**), rather than the MT ("your ancestors = **וּבְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם**).

<sup>163</sup> Boecker (*Die Beurteilung der Anfänge des Königtums*, 82) writes: "Israel wird von neuem vor die Gehorsamsforderung gestellt, es bekommt noch einmal die Chance eines Anfangs."



slim one—to succeed under their “demanded” king.<sup>164</sup> The people, along with their king are still required to “hear” the prophet. If not, the people and their king will be subject to consequences that have been held in abeyance for the time being. Moreover, Samuel proceeds to furnish a confirmatory proof of his warning:

(16) And now, stand by and watch this great thing which Yhwh will do before your eyes. (17) Surely it is the wheat-harvest today [ה'יום]—I will call upon Yhwh and he will give forth **thunder** [קול ורעם] and rain, so that you may know and see your great evil which you have done in Yhwh’s eyes **in demanding** [לשאול] a king for yourselves (1 Sam 12:16-17).

This demonstration “serve[s] to legitimate Samuel by showing that they need his services as a mediator.”<sup>165</sup> In 1 Sam 12:10, the people had confessed their sin of idolatry: “We have sinned [חטאנו] for we have forsaken Yhwh and served the baals and the ashteroth.” Thunderstorms do not occur normally in Israel during the wheat-harvest and its crops are thus “divinely” endangered by such an occurrence now: Samuel is threatening the people with eventual famine (cf. Elijah’s use of rain in 1 Kings 17–18).<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Noth (*Deuteronomistic History*, 91) describes Dtr’s schema as one in which Yhwh “gives the people one ‘saviour’ after another despite their unfaithfulness and, what is more, meets the people’s demand for a king, recognises the king as his anointed (1 Sam. 12:3, 5) and gives the monarchy a chance to prove itself beneficial to the people (1 Sam 12:20ff.) in their subsequent history. For Dtr then the demand for observance of the divine law has as its background the fact that God has manifested himself and acted repeatedly at the beginning of Israelite history and has repeatedly intervened to help.” Eslinger’s (*Kingship of God in Crisis*, 406) assessment that “the monarchy ... changed nothing essential in Israel’s political structure” fails to take note of what this additional stratum of human intermediaries meant for Israel. Where Deuteronomy 13 suggests the danger of prophets leading Israel into apostasy, 1 Samuel 8–12 intimates that monarchy only exacerbates this danger.

<sup>165</sup> Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 413.

<sup>166</sup> Bodner (*1 Samuel*, 114) observes: “The prospect of rain during the wheat harvest betokens economic loss, reminding us again of Samuel’s warning in chap. 8 that the king will ‘take.’” On Elijah’s use of rain as evidence of his prophetic authority, see McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 218.

Boecker indicates that this text evokes the Sinai theophany and reflects Israel's "*Theophanietradition*" as represented in the poetry of Judg 5:4-5 and Amos 1:2.<sup>167</sup> Fred Woods also insightfully observes that Samuel's sign is an instance of anti-Baal storm polemic.<sup>168</sup> It is very significant, then, that this sign is tied to Israel's twin sins of Baal/Ashtoreth worship and "demanding" a king. 1 Samuel 12 also seems to allude to Exod 20:15-18: "Then all the people saw the thunder [קולת] and the lightening ..." <sup>169</sup> Samuel is now the prophet "like" Moses (Deut 18:15-22). In this instance, instead of "requesting" not to hear the voice of Yhwh any longer (which in Deut 5:21-26 and 18:15-17 resulted in the promised raising up of an intermediary prophet), the people confess their sin of having demanded the intermediary king (Saul= "Demanded"). The "anti-Baal" sign of the thunderstorm obliges the people to confess that their "demand" for kingship was also a sin:

(18) Then Samuel called upon Yhwh and he gave forth **thunder** [קל] and rain on that day and all the people greatly feared Yhwh and Samuel. (19) And all the people said to Samuel: "Intercede on behalf of your servants toward Yhwh **so that we do not die** [ואל־נמות] for **we have added** [יספנו] to our sins the evil [רעה] **of demanding** [לשאל] a king for ourselves." (1 Sam 12:18-19)

As Woods also indicates, the word קול [ו] "seems to have been deliberately selected here [given that] the word *qol* is attested three times [in 1 Samuel 12] ... [as] a Leitwort,"<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Boecker, *Die Beurteilung der Anfänge des Königtums*, 82-4.

<sup>168</sup> Fred E. Woods, *Water and Storm Polemics against Baalism in the Deuteronomistic History* (American University Studies 7, Theology and Religion 150; New York: Peter Lang, 1994) 84-6.

<sup>169</sup> Samuel's directive to the people, "Do not fear ..." (1 Sam 12:20), is evidently drawn from Moses's injunction in Exod 20:20 ("Do not fear! For the purpose of testing you God has come.") Both Moses's and Samuel's "do not fear" directives occur in the context of theophanic "thunder" (Exod 20:18; 1 Sam 12:17-18).

<sup>170</sup> Woods, *Water and Storm Polemics*, 85.

occurring at 12:1, 14-15.<sup>171</sup> This creates a clever wordplay involving “thunder” (קול ורע), the sign of Yhwh’s supremacy over Baal, and the “voice” (קול) of Yhwh (and Samuel) that Israel persistently refused to “hear” (12:14-15; cf. Deut 5:24 [27]; 18:15-17) and the people’s voice (12:1). Israel had refused to hear Yhwh’s קול; now they will hear his קול ורע, not only as “a displeased reaction to their request”<sup>172</sup> but also as a foretaste of what will happen should they subsequently refuse to “hear.”<sup>173</sup> Israel’s “very existence” hangs in the balance.<sup>174</sup>

If Dtr’s polemical invocation of a storm here is “Yahweh’s demonstration of his supremacy as God of heaven and earth, the only king whom Israel should seek and who can send storm or moisture in any seasons,”<sup>175</sup> the implications for Israel’s human king are unmistakable. He is being classed with the impotent baals, ashtharoth, and asherahs. He is a substitute that draws Yhwh’s people away from Yhwh.

As previously (see, e.g., 1 Samuel 1–2, 8, 10), Dtr uses the verb שאל to play doubly on the names “Saul” and “Samuel.” As Garsiel points out, שאל has now appeared at least

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 92 n 27.

<sup>172</sup> Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis*, 413.

<sup>173</sup> Eslinger (Ibid.) writes: “On account of his intimacy with this powerful God and their shared antipathy towards the request for a king, Samuel is a man to be feared by the people alongside God. Think what he could call down upon them if they angered him by not hearing Yahweh’s voice.”

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Woods, *Water and Storm Polemics against Baal*, 86. Yhwh is “King of kings and lord of lords at all times and in all seasons. By contrast, the false god Baal is obviously limited to a fixed cycle and void.”

“four times over” (8:10; 12:13, 17, 19) in or adjoining Samuel’s speeches “to make clear that it is the people who ask the Lord for a king.”<sup>176</sup>

Like the double play on “Samuel” and “Saul,” the literary function of the verb **סָף** in the people’s confession (12:19) is also two-fold. First, its use in conjunction with the mention of the people’s desire not to “die” (**מוֹת**) directly recalls their Horeb “request”: “If **we again** [**וְיָמָתֵנוּ**], add to] **hear** [**לִשְׁמָעַ**] the voice of Yhwh our God, **we shall die** [**וְיָמָתֵנוּ**],” Deut 5:25 (22). The verbal parallels are even closer to the Deuteronomy 18 version of the people’s request: “...according to all that **you requested** [**שָׁאַלְתָּ**] from Yhwh your God at Horeb on the day of assembly, saying ‘**Let me not again** [**לֹא אֶסָף**] **hear** [**לִשְׁמָעַ**] the voice of Yhwh my God, **so that I do not die** [**וְלֹא אָמוּת**]” (Deut 18:16). The second literary function of **סָף** in 1 Sam 12:19 is to make the “demand” for a king the latest, climactic manifestation of the cyclical apostasy described in Judges. The people’s confession “we have added [**וְיָסַפְנוּ**] to our sins the evil [**רָעָה**] of demanding a king” in 12:19 is an adaption of the formula **וְיָסַפְנוּ**

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<sup>176</sup> Garsiel, *First Book of Samuel*, 73. He further (Ibid, 94) observes that “In this way, a basis is formed for comparing the two requests, Hannah’s and the people’s. The former asks out of a broken and pure heart for offspring, and ‘lends’ Samuel to the Lord for life, so that a leader springs up who listens to the word of the Lord and makes the people do the same (the verb ‘hear/listen to,’ *šm* – **שָׁמַעַ**, resembles Samuel’s name – *šmw’l*). The people on the other hand proffer a request which is thoroughly bad in itself; and so the person who is ‘asked of’ the Lord, lent by him to the mother and returned by her to him, and the person who is ‘asked for’ by the people, to the expressed anger of the Lord and his prophet. Later Saul is noted for neither ‘asking of’ [*šā’al*] the Lord nor hearing his voice.”

יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה iterated in Judg 3:12; 4:1; 10:6; 13:1. Their “demand” is the people’s greatest act of apostasy thus far.<sup>177</sup>

The reader here is faced with an inescapable question: can there be a happy outcome to this deed for the “demanded” Saul (שָׂאֻל) or the “demanding” Israel? The rest of Dtr’s history addresses that question. Although it is framed here as an open-ended question, 1 Sam 12:25 is suggestive of the answer: “But if you indeed do evil, both you and your king shall be carried off / come to an end [תִּסָּפֹן].”<sup>178</sup>

By 1 Sam 12:25 it is clear that Samuel has not succeeded as prophet in “assur[ing] that Israel [would] remain ‘completely loyal’ to the covenant.”<sup>179</sup> The people had refused to “hear” his voice and had “demanded” a king, just as their ancestors had “requested” (שָׁלְאָה, Deut 18:16) a prophet to intercede between them and Yhwh. That intercessory role would now shift in large measure to Israel’s new mediator—the king. The stated penalty for failure to “hear” the prophet will be the same for the people and their king—that failure will be “required” (דָּרַשׁ) from them (Deut 18:19).

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<sup>177</sup> Noth (*Deuteronomistic History*, 44) points out that Dtr uses the formulaic תִּסָּפֹן idiom “which introduces most of the sections” through the book of Judges to suggest that “the apostasy sets in worse each time,” i.e., “(their evildoing) became worse still, since he has stated in the introduction that each successive generation ‘behaved worse than their fathers’ (2:19).”

<sup>178</sup> The verbal form תִּסָּפֹן is generally thought to be a Niphal form of \*סָפַ, meaning “carry away” or “carry off.” It is also possible, however, to read this verb as a form of \*סָפַ [“come to an end”] if Dtr’s use of \*סָפַ is a pun on the people’s use of סָפַ in 1 Sam 12:19; Deut 5:24 [27]; and 18:16. The ambiguity of תִּסָּפֹן here may be deliberate. It conveys the threat that the people and its king will be “carried off” into exile, even while holding out the still more menacing possibility that they will come to a complete end—total annihilation (cf. Amos 3:15).

<sup>179</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 195.

## 2.4 The Aftermath of Israel's "Demand" for Kingship (1 Samuel 14–28)

After presenting the dramatic run-up to Israel's "demand," for kingship, Dtr turns to showing that their "demand" had consequences and the nature of those consequences. The name "Saul" ("Demanded") will now function with full transparency, i.e., as an ever-present reminder that Israel will not be able to escape the consequences of its leadership "demands," neither in the short nor the long term.

As Miscall has noted, "little or nothing is said [in the Deuteronomic legislation] of how people should respond to their king. He is to govern them, but nothing is said of their obeying him and his words."<sup>180</sup> In other words, there is no divinely pronounced penalty for not "hearing" the king as there is for "not hearing" the prophet (Deut 18:19). As the history unfolds, Dtr shows that Israel, unwilling to "hear" the prophets, is fully willing to follow the leadership of its kings into idolatry.<sup>181</sup> The king, like every other Israelite, is under the obligation to "hear" the raised-up prophet. Dtr presents Saul as tragic figure who, time and time again, fails to "hear," and so brings Yhwh's requital upon himself (see Deut 18:19). And Saul's story will turn out to be Israel's, as well.

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<sup>180</sup> Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 51.

<sup>181</sup> While prophets too might lead the people into idolatry (cf. Deuteronomy 13), the "raised-up" prophet of Deut 18:15-22 would function—at least ideally—"like" Moses himself.

*2.4.1 Mutual Rejection: Saul's Failure to "Ask" Divine Guidance and Yhwh's Refusal to Answer Subsequent "Asking" for Guidance (1 Samuel 14)*

Bridging the parallel stories of Saul's presumptuous disobedience<sup>182</sup> at Gilgal (1 Samuel 13 and 15)<sup>183</sup> which result in his delegitimation, 1 Samuel 14 opens with a hero story about Jonathan (14:4-16). Quickly, however, the issue of Saul's leadership again comes to the forefront. Before the battle of Michmash initiated by Jonathan, Saul is about to ask counsel from Yhwh (14:19 [18]),<sup>184</sup> as was proper. When, however, the noise of the approaching Philistine army grows louder, he makes the officiating priest "withdraw [his] hand" (14:20 [19]). This scene recalls Joshua's failure to "ask" Yhwh's guidance regarding the Gibeonites in Joshua 9, which had disastrous consequences (and would yet for Saul's own house!). Saul's "failure" here, however, does not seem to result in any immediate problems.

After Israel routs the Philistines, Saul wishes to proceed against the Philistines again, but once more neglects to "ask." Mindful of this omission, the priest suggests they "draw near

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<sup>182</sup> Dominic Rudman ("Why was Saul Rejected?: A Reassessment of 1 Samuel 9–15," *ScrB* 31 [2001] 101-7) suggests that, beyond presumptuous disobedience, Saul was also unable to bring the people back to God and, in fact, allowed the people to lead him into apostasy. Cf. Saul's confession to Samuel "I transgressed the mouth of Yhwh because I feared the people and obeyed their voice" (1 Sam 15:23). The issue is, again, one of chronically defective leadership.

<sup>183</sup> Gilmour (*Representing the Past*, 132) lists 1 Samuel 13, 15 as examples of the deliberate "repetition of plot elements" and as a "device for comparative structures." Other such examples of this device are 1 Samuel 24–26 and David's killing of messengers in 2 Samuel 1 and 4. She writes: "In these examples of plot repetition there is often only a distant causal connection between them. By drawing a comparison of the same leader in two very similar situations, the narrative accentuates the small differences in their behavior and in the circumstances surrounding the situations. These differences convey the character's development or degradation between the two stories and so contribute to the movement of rise and fall in the overall structure of the book."

<sup>184</sup> See Garsiel, *First Book of Samuel*, 74.

to God” (14:36). Here Saul (שׂאול) becomes the *subject* of the verb שׂאל for the first time,<sup>185</sup> after his name was initially juxtaposed with שׂאל in 1 Sam 10:21-22. The שׂאל-formula in Judges, which there both illustrated and highlighted the void of leadership in Israel—a void that anticipated the advent of kingship, and the emergence of Saul himself—now and hereafter emphasizes Saul’s decline: “Then **Saul asked** [וַיִּשְׁאַל שׂאול] of God, ‘Shall I go down after the Philistines? **Will you give them over** [וְהִתַּתָּם] into the hand of Israel?’ But he did not answer him on that day” (1 Sam 14:37). Offended by Saul’s previous presumptuous acts in 1 Samuel 13 and 14:20, Yhwh refuses to give Saul any guidance. Beginning here, the thematic wordplay on שׂאל “receives a new ironic turn when Saul fails time and again in his requests to God.”<sup>186</sup>

For Dtr, Saul’s presumptuous disobedience—failure to “hear” Yhwh’s voice—that leads to his early “delegitimation” and eventual removal from the kingship is the most noteworthy near-term fallout of Israel’s “demand” for kingship. He presents Saul’s tendency toward disobedience primarily in two episodes. The first, 1 Samuel 13 [see above], stresses the disobedience that leads to the kingship being taken from Saul and transferred to David. The second episode—a longer composition—offers a more detailed explication of Saul’s (and Israel’s) tendency to “not hear” with literary echoes from throughout Dtr’s history.

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<sup>185</sup> Heretofore in 1 Samuel Saul has been the explicit or implicit object of שׂאל, evoking the passive participial form שׂאול “demanded” that constitutes his name.

<sup>186</sup> Garsiel, “Wordplay and Puns as a Rhetorical Device in the Book of Samuel,” 188.



#### 2.4.2 “Is Saul Among the Prophets II?” Saul “Asks” and Raves at Ramah (1 Samuel 19)

When Saul demands, “Ask [שאל] whose son the young man is!” (1 Sam 17:56), he unwittingly has his own replacement “asked” into his court, and things go quickly from bad to worse for Saul. Then comes a second version of the “Is Saul among the Prophets?” etiology, which is clearly composed with knowledge of 1 Sam 9:10-16,<sup>187</sup> but is much less flattering in its portrayal of Saul. This retelling is aptly situated within Dtr’s description of Saul’s unraveling (and David’s rise). In 1 Sam 19:9, the “delegitimizing” evil spirit comes upon Saul as previously (see 1 Sam 16:14-15, 23; 18:10).<sup>188</sup> Michal, in response, through the deceptive use of teraphim (19:13, 17)<sup>189</sup> helps her husband David escape from Saul to Samuel at Ramah (19:9-19).

His plan thus foiled, Saul sends messengers to capture David at Ramah, where they meet “a company of **prophets prophesying**” [הַנְּבִיאִים נִבְּאִים] (19:20), as Saul himself had years before (10:10; cf. 10:5). Prophetic ecstasy overtakes two sets of messengers (וַיִּהְיוּ נִבְּאִים, 19:20-21).<sup>190</sup> When Saul “adds” (וַיִּסַּף) to send messengers the third time, they too behave ecstatically (וַיִּהְיוּ נִבְּאִים, 19:22). Then Saul himself goes to Ramah, to the well of Sechu:

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<sup>187</sup> See Bernard Lehnart, “Saul unter den ‘Ekstatikern’ (I Sam 19,18-24),” in *David und Saul im Widerstreit: Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit: Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* (ed. Walter Dietrich; OBO 206; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004) 205-23.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. Wagner, *Geist und Tora*, 189-216.

<sup>189</sup> Saul’s question: “why have **you deceived me** [רַמִּיתָנִי] like this?” plays on the name “Ramah.”

<sup>190</sup> The switch in verbal stems here from Niphal to Hithpael serves to distinguish the behavior of the prophets from the messengers (at least in this pericope).

“And he [Saul] **demanded** [וַיִּשְׁאַל] and said ‘Where are **Samuel** and David?’ And someone responded, ‘In the pastures at Ramah’” (19:22). Ironically, Saul’s “demanding” David,<sup>191</sup> makes David a “Saul,” i.e., “asked for” and David here, in the act of hiding himself, steps into the role of his predecessor.

As Saul journeys to the “pastures” of Ramah, a “spirit of God” (רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים) comes upon him too and he continually “raves” ecstatically (וַיִּתְנַבֵּא) until he “comes” (בָּאֵו) to the pastures. As many commentators have noted, this episode plays on the polysemy of הִתְנַבֵּא which can mean “exhibit the behavior of a prophet” (ecstasy) or to “rage”<sup>193</sup> (madness). The polysemy moves steadily from the more positive to the pejorative sense of the verb. The narrative closes with a graphic picture of Saul’s “prophesying”: “Then indeed Saul himself stripped off his clothes and indeed he himself **raged** [וַיִּתְבַּא] in Samuel’s presence and he fell down naked all that day and all night. For this reason they say: ‘Is Saul too [גַּם] among the prophets [נְבִיאִים]?’”<sup>194</sup> (19:24).

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<sup>191</sup> Saul’s demand recalls Hannah’s “begging” for Samuel (in 1 Samuel 1) whose name is said to mean “asked from Yhwh” (1 Sam 1:20). One is reminded as well of the elders’ “asking” for or “demanding” a king who will turn out to be Saul, a Saul “greeted” (“asked”) as a new man (10:4-5), but then embarrassingly “asked” from the baggage train (1 Sam 10:22). The scene also looks forward to a not-too-distant time when Saul will “ask” for Samuel again (1 Samuel 28), more desperate than ever to evade the inevitable loss of his kingship and power.

<sup>192</sup> Recall the paronomasia on נָבִיא and בָּאֵו that recurs throughout 1 Samuel 10 (see §2.3.2).

<sup>193</sup> *HALOT*, 659.

<sup>194</sup> The narrator has taken some pains to explain the גַּם in the proverb: the emphatic constructions גַּם הַמָּה (3 x) referring to the messengers in 1 Sam 19:20-21 and גַּם הָיוּ (4 x) referring to Saul in 1 Sam 19:23-24.

The etiology of 1 Sam 10:11-12 (with its proverb) is retold in 1 Sam 19:11-24 to further neutralize the initially “positive” picture of Saul: Samuel’s anointing of Saul which brought the “legitimizing” spirit of Yhwh upon him (10:6; cf. 11:6), made him a new man, and caused him to prophesy among the prophets is now refracted into an *un-anointing*: an ambiguous “spirit of God” comes upon, causes him to “rave” or “rage” ecstatically and strip off his clothes, “thus giving up his royal privileges”<sup>195</sup> in front of Samuel. 1 Sam 19:24 leaves us in no doubt what spirit had come upon Saul: the spirit that made him rave according to 18:10. Gunn writes: “In the light of [Saul’s] raving/prophesying in 18:10 it is clear that the spirit of prophecy can function in the same way as the spirit of evil. Both are weapons in the hand of God.”<sup>196</sup> And so, “once more we are taken back to the beginning of Saul’s career, as the spirit of prophecy which had marked his election then (10:10-[12]) is now used to circumvent his purpose (19:19-24).”<sup>197</sup> Saul, by going to Ramah and “asking” for David, unwittingly circumvents his own aim, even as he achieves Yhwh’s plan to remove the king for whom Israel “asked.”

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<sup>195</sup> Adam, ““And He Behaved like a Prophet,”” 15. He suggests that “the narrative’s main focus is on Saul’s hierarchical subordination to a prophet.”

<sup>196</sup> Gunn, *Fate of King Saul*, 83.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

### 2.4.3 David's Answered "Requests" and Saul's Unraveling (1 Samuel 20–23)

The verb **שאל** plays an ironic and prominent role in the account<sup>198</sup> of Saul's delegitimation and David's rise.<sup>199</sup> Bill Arnold suggests that "the way the narrative uses David's growing reliance on cleromancy [is] an intentional and deliberate preparation for Saul's reliance on necromancy in 1 Samuel 28."<sup>200</sup>

When Jonathan promises to do "for" David whatever David instructs (1 Sam 20:4), David states that he will test Saul's intentions toward him by hiding in the countryside until the third day (20:5). Polzin notes the "preponderance of definitive, forceful, strident, and emotionally charged language that permeates these verses [20:1-23]."<sup>201</sup> The abundance of tautological infinitives here<sup>202</sup> emphasizes the emotional situation—the danger, and duress in which David finds himself: If Saul "at all makes an issue of [David's] absence [**פקד** **נשאל** **נשאל**],"<sup>203</sup> Jonathan is to say "David truly **begged permission** [**נשאל** **נשאל**] from me to run down to Bethlehem his hometown because his whole clan has an annual feast there" (1 Sam 20:6). The scenario transpires just as David foresees and Saul demands an explanation of

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<sup>198</sup> This material is primarily of pre-Deuteronomistic and pro-Davidic origin, but Dtr uses it to fill out his picture of the leadership problem throughout Israel's pre-exilic history. As Saul seeks to protect his kingship from David by seeking David's life, Jonathan undermines his father's efforts and thus his father's kingship.

<sup>199</sup> Fuhs ("שאל, *šā'al*," 260) writes: "David's own ascent is closely associated with successful Yahweh inquiry, though the institution does undergo a profound alteration that ultimately brings about its dissolution."

<sup>200</sup> Bill T. Arnold, "Necromancy and Cleromancy in 1 and 2 Samuel," *CBQ* 66 (2004) 200.

<sup>201</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 191.

<sup>202</sup> There are at least nine tautological infinitive constructions in 1 Samuel 20: **ידע ידע** (20:3, 9 *bis*); **שכח שכח** (20:5); **פקד פקד** (20:6); **נשאל נשאל** (20:6, 28 *bis*); **חרה חרה** (20:7) and **אמר אמר** (20:20).

David's absence: "Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to dinner [הל חם]?" Then Jonathan answered Saul [שׂאול] : "David truly **begged permission** [נשאל נשאל] from me [to go] to **Bethlehem** [בית־לחם] (1 Sam 20:27-28).<sup>203</sup> This scene plays on שׂאול and "Saul" yet again: Saul is now getting more desperate to retain his own kingship and (ostensibly) his son's (cf. 20:31).<sup>204</sup>

In 1 Samuel 22, Doeg makes the accusation before Saul that Ahimelech the priest has been "asking" [וַיִּשְׁאַל] God on David's behalf (1 Sam 22:10). Saul then summons Ahimelech and his family to the royal court and indicts Ahimelech on this accusation himself: "And Saul [שׂאול] said to him: 'Why have you conspired against me ... and have asked [וַיִּשְׁאַל] of God for him ...?'" (22:13). As Taggar-Cohen indicates, "it is quite clear that the most important accusation is the professional aid given by Ahimelech to David, since it appears at the end of Saul's speech and is the only issue Ahimelech refers to from the three [accusations]: food, weapon and divination."<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup>Note the wordplay: "the son of Jesse" will not be dining (i.e., הל חם) at court, but feasting in safety with Jesse at בית־לחם.

<sup>204</sup> The phrase נשאל נשאל as a tautological verbal construction repeated twice in a unique series of such constructions, employing a rarely-used stem form, and as a wordplay on "Saul," highlights the phrase: David is at his most vulnerable and only Jonathan's חסד can save him. The reflexive force of נשאל נשאל ("asking [leave for] oneself") also plays on David's being the *passive* subject of the son of Kish's [בֶּן־קִישׁ] relentless "seeking" (בִּקֵּשׁ, 1 Sam 20:1) of the son of Jesse's life.

<sup>205</sup> Ada Taggar-Cohen, "Political Loyalty in the Biblical Account of 1 Samuel XX–XXII in the Light of Hittite Texts," *VT* 55 (2005) 262.

Ahimelech denies the charge of **שאל**-ing on David's behalf: "Did I begin **asking** [**שאל**]<sup>206</sup> of God for him? Far be it from me!"<sup>207</sup> (22:15). Saul nevertheless has Ahimelech, his sons, and the rest of the priestly line from Nob executed (22:16-19); only Abiathar (midrashically, "Father has left a remnant" **אב' + יתר**)<sup>208</sup> remains and joins David—thus partially fulfilling the prophecy of "the one who is left over" [**הנותר**] in 1 Sam 2:36.<sup>209</sup>

The verb **שאל**, then, stands at heart of the "demanded" king's insecurity over his own kingship and the matter of David as an increasing threat to that kingship. Its function as a wordplay on "Saul" appears to run parallel to the "delegitimizing" withdrawal of Yhwh's

<sup>206</sup> Ketiv: **לשאל**; Qere: **לשאל**, as in several manuscripts.

<sup>207</sup> As Taggar-Cohen ("Political Loyalty," 262) notes, the idiom **הלילה ל** "is used to express a denial of a wrong doing which may cause death." Ahimelech's use of this idiom, followed by his subsequent statement, "let the king not lay this matter against his servant," constitutes an unambiguous denial.

<sup>208</sup> The name "Abiathar" may actually mean something like "My Father is rich/gives generously" (see Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der Gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* [BWANT 3/10; Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 1928] 193; *HALOT*, 6). Although attested only as a participle in the Qal-stem (i.e., the liver appendage, i.e., the surplus), the name's second element **\*יתר** can be understood polysemically as to "leave over" (Exod 10:15; 12:10, etc.) and "to give prosperity" (Deut 28:11; 30:9) in the Hiphil. See *HALOT*, 451-53. It is clear that 1 Sam 22:20 is playing on the sense of "leave over," "leave a remnant." See below.

<sup>209</sup> Moshe Garsiel (*Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* [trans. Phyllis Hackett; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991] 128-29) recognizes what is going on here. 1 Sam 20:22 deliberately recalls the prophecy of 1 Sam 2:36 regarding Eli's sons. There the text plays on the Egyptian names Hophni (**חפני** < *hfnr* "tadpole") and Phinehas (**פנחס** < *p3 nhsy* "the Nubian," i.e., "the black/bronzed one") with the verb form **ספחני** ("put me"), i.e., "put me ... in one of the priest's offices." However, it also contains an allusive play on the name Abiathar, "the one who is left over [**הנותר**] in your house [**בביתך**] shall come [**יבא**] ..." Biblical tradition associates Eli's and Abiathar's ancestor Ithamar (son of Aaron and brother of Eliezar) with **יתר**: "Then Moses talked to Aaron and to Eliezar and to **Ithamar**, his sons **who were left over** [**הנותרים**], 'Take the offering **that is left over** [**הנותרת**] ..." (Lev 10:12, a paronomasia on "Ithamar"). But more importantly for Dtr, there is also in 1 Samuel 22, as Garsiel indicates, a distinct and deliberate literary connection between the slaughter of Gideon's sons in the Abimelech-Jotham pericope and the slaughter of Ahimelech and the priests of Nob in 1 Samuel 22: the delegitimacy evident in Abimelech's mass-murder of Gideon's sons anticipates Saul's mass-murder as evidence of his delegitimation. These events have inauspicious implications for Manasseh and the Davidic dynasty (2 Kgs 21:16).

spirit, its replacement with the “evil” spirit, and the bestowal of Yhwh’s spirit upon David (cf. 1 Sam 16:13).<sup>210</sup> While Saul’s “asking” thus now fails (1 Sam 14:37) and Saul has made “asking” Yhwh on David’s behalf a treasonous offence, David is subsequently described as successfully “asking.” Until now, almost invariably “Saul has an active, David a passive relationship to prophecy.”<sup>211</sup> David now becomes more active, and Samuel—his death notices and a posthumous appearance aside—vanishes from the narrative.<sup>212</sup> In a sense, Saul’s “asking” for David at Ramah and David’s “asking” in the ensuing narratives mark David’s becoming Saul and Samuel.

When David hears that the Philistines are plundering the threshing floors of Keilah, he asks Yhwh whether he should go up and attack them: “Then David **asked** [וַיִּשְׁאַל] Yhwh, saying, ‘Shall I go and attack these Philistines?’ And Yhwh responded to David, ‘Go and attack the Philistines, and you shall save [וַיִּהְיֶה שְׁעָרָה] Keilah.’” (1 Sam 23:2). Saul and Doeg had previously inferred that David had help (Ahimelech) on prior occasions in consulting Yhwh (1 Sam 22:10; 15-18). Here, however it is stated that David actually “asked” on his own and received an answer.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Cf. Wagner, *Geist und Tora*, 189-216.

<sup>211</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 184.

<sup>212</sup> Steussy (*Samuel and his God*, 92) writes: “David’s coming ends Samuel’s era. Samuel’s speaking is no longer important. The Natioth story focuses on Saul’s discomfiture, not Samuel’s authority. Samuel’s silent presiding shows just how diminished a role is now being played by the man none of whose words God let fall to the ground. It is an odd and unsettling image for Samuel’s last live appearance.”

<sup>213</sup> This state of affairs marks an important transition point for David: he is now privileged with Yhwh’s divine guidance, while Saul no longer is. Saul can no longer “ask” and receive an answer (1 Sam 14:37). This shift seems to correspond to the withdrawal of Yhwh’s spirit (16:14), and its coming upon David at his anointing

The narrative then explains that David's men are terrified to go up against the Philistines, and so "David **asked** Yhwh yet again [וַיִּסְכֵּף עוֹד לְשָׂאֵל בִּיהוָה], and Yhwh answered and said, 'Get up! Go down to Keilah, because I am giving the Philistines into your hands'" (1 Sam 23:4). Gunn notes that "David is allowed considerable flexibility in his dealings with the divine world ... he incurs no divine displeasure for hesitation in the face of Yhwh's clear word, for 'lack of faith.'" <sup>214</sup> David, with Yhwh's help, wins the day and "save[s] [וַיִּשָּׁע] the inhabitants of Keilah" (23:5). The wordplay involving שָׂאֵל again stresses that David is now Israel's "legitimate" leader, although he is not yet "king." He is able to "rescue" or "save" [וַיִּשָּׁע] Israel in the same sense that the judges saved Israel, while Saul becomes increasingly concerned about retaining his own kingship (as David himself will later).

#### 2.4.4 "Ask Your Young Men": David's "Request" from Nabal (1 Samuel 25)

The Nabal story is situated at a juncture of immense importance to Dtr. 1 Sam 25:1 mentions Samuel's death and burial. Between Samuel's death and Saul's madness, the leadership situation in Israel has again deteriorated significantly. There is no mention of a prophet being "raised up" in Samuel's stead. Here we encounter yet more use of the verb שָׂאֵל that alludes to Saul and to leadership issues both in and outside the narrative.

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(16:13). Yhwh's spirit (and thus Yhwh) is now with David (18:28). He has already been cast as Israel's "legitimate" leader, although Saul retains the kingship for now.

<sup>214</sup> Gunn (*Fate of King Saul*, 88) adds: "On the contrary, he receives a more explicit assurance!"



1 Sam 25:3 introduces us to Nabal and his beautiful wife. She is characterized as the paragon of virtue and piety, while he embodies miserly idiocy. The name “Nabal” is another example (see, e.g., Gideon/Jerubbaal, Abimelech, Samuel, Saul) of a name manipulated for literary purposes. As numerous commentators have pointed out “fool” (נָבָל) is an unlikely name for a parent to give a child;<sup>215</sup> hence the most common solution has been to dismiss it as a transparent pseudonym or dysphemism. McKenzie, for instance, argues that “Nabal” is Jether/Ithra from 1 Chr 2:7 and 2 Sam 17:2.<sup>216</sup> However, as Barr and others have pointed out, “Nabal” is arguably not even a Hebrew name<sup>217</sup> and may instead be cognate with Akkadian *nablu(m)* and Ugaritic *nblt* “light,” “flame,” among other possibilities. The fact that “Nabal” is glossed with the adjective נָבָלָה (“stupidity,” “folly,” “willful sin”)<sup>218</sup> in paronomasia suggests an origin other than the noun נָבָל (“fool”) for the name,<sup>219</sup> though the implication of “fool” is still important from a narratological standpoint.

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<sup>215</sup> As James Barr (“The Symbolism of Names in the Old Testament,” *BJRL* 52 [1969] 21-22) puts it: “If this was so [i.e., if one must conform to one’s essential nature as expressed in one’s name] and if Nabal meant “churlish fool,” then Nabal’s mother or father was greatly at fault in calling their child, presumably when still a baby, by a name to which it would have to conform with disastrous ill-mannered behavior in later life.” The idea that it is a “nickname” is also unlikely. Alter (*The David Story*, 152) calls it an “improbable name” and “in all likelihood not originally Hebrew.” See recently Bosworth, *Story within a Story*, 79-81.

<sup>216</sup> Steven L. McKenzie (*King David: A Biography* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000] 97) writes that 1 Chr 2:17 “refers to Jether as the father of Abigail’s son, Amasa. And 2 Sam. 17:25 names Ithra the Ishmaelite as the husband of David’s sister Abigail. Jether and Ithra are variant spellings of the name.” McKenzie also speculates that Abigail may have been David’s half-sister.

<sup>217</sup> Barr, “Symbolism of Names,” 25-27; cf. Alter, *The David Story*, 152; Bosworth, *Story within a Story*, 79-81; McKenzie, *King David*, 97.

<sup>218</sup> See *HALOT*, 664.

<sup>219</sup> Bosworth, *Story within a Story*, 79-81.

Numerous commentators have noticed the similarities between Nabal and Saul.<sup>220</sup>

Bosworth further argues that the *mise-en-abyme* employed in this pericope intricately constructs Nabal as a kind of narrative stand-in for Saul.<sup>221</sup> The death of Nabal will be “David’s first providential death”;<sup>222</sup> the next one will be Saul’s, followed by most of his house, and then of many other potential threats to David.

In 25:5 David sends ten youths as messengers to “ask” [וּשְׁאַל־תָּם] Nabal’s “peace” (i.e., greet Nabal) in David’s name. David’s formulation contains the word שָׁלוֹם four times (25:5-6). Miscall wonders, “Is ten [i.e., the ten young men sent to ‘greet’ Nabal] an indication of force or the size of the expected ‘gift’ which they are to return?”<sup>223</sup> At a superficial level, the idiomatic use of שָׁלוֹם serves to remind us of the narrative that we have just stepped away from (Saul’s pursuit of David). We may also note that the verb סָרַף serves the very same function in the *mise-en-abyme* of Genesis 38 (37–39),<sup>224</sup> in which Tamar functions as

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<sup>220</sup> E.g., Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 210-11; Ellen Van Wolde (“A Leader Led by a Lady: David and Abigail in 1 Samuel 25,” *ZAW* 114 [2002] 355-75) suggests that Abigail’s speech to David really speaks of Saul rather than of Nabal.

<sup>221</sup> Bosworth, *Story within a Story*, 70-117.

<sup>222</sup> Halpern (*David’s Secret Demons*, 77) writes: “The apology that alibis David for these killings is ham-fisted ... Abigail has pleaded with David not to kill the man [Nabal], when he conveniently drops dead of natural causes. This how David acquires his second wife who brings him a substantial estate in the hinterland of Judah, but plays no further role in the narrative. Did Abigail murder her husband to defect to David? One cannot help but think of the occasional topos of the murder suspect who comes to believe that the death of all who cross him or her is a divine judgment.”

<sup>223</sup> Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 150-51.

<sup>224</sup> On Genesis 38 as an example of a *mise-en-abyme*, see Bosworth, *Story within a Story*, 37-69.

“Joseph” (Gen 38:5, 26). David’s “asking” Nabal’s peace, makes Nabal “asked” (i.e., makes him “Saul,” like Saul himself in 1 Sam 10:4).<sup>225</sup>

Additional wordplay on the name “Saul” surfaces in 1 Sam 25:8: “Ask [שאל] your young men so that they may tell you ... for we have come on a good day. Give [תנה] whatever your hand finds to your servants and to your son David.” Miscall asks: “Is this a request or a thinly veiled demand?”<sup>226</sup> Gunn writes: “Despite its polite address ... the request looks remarkably like a demand for pay-out in a protection racket. David’s men have done Nabal no harm and now David wants a reward.”<sup>227</sup> “The request really amounted to extortion,” states McKenzie bluntly, “‘protection money’ paid to a mafioso [since] David makes clear that he could take what he wanted from Nabal’s shepherds at any time” (25:7).<sup>228</sup> As Ina Willi-Plein indicates, the problem that underlies the whole story is the absence of an adjudicating authority,<sup>229</sup> i.e., a lack of effective judicial leadership, a problem which the monarchy had been expected to fix (see 1 Sam 8:1-6, 20), but which king Saul had not

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<sup>225</sup> The use of the idiom שאל-ל-לשלום here, as in 1 Sam 10:4, involves more than is immediately apparent. Significantly, this idiom will turn up in a slightly different form in the narrative of David’s adultery with Uriah’s wife (2 Sam 11:7; see §2.6.1).

<sup>226</sup> Miscall (*1 Samuel*, 151) adds, “That is, David and his men, and possibly Nabal’s too, are involved in a ‘protection racket.’” See Gunn, *Fate of King Saul*, 97-98.

<sup>227</sup> Gunn, *Fate of King Saul*, 96. In other words, David’s use of courtly speech (“find favor in the sight of,” “your son, David,” etc.) is window-dressing. This will not be the last time that this kind of speech is used to mask true intentions (cf. the “wise woman” of Tekoa’s deception of David in 2 Samuel 14).

<sup>228</sup> McKenzie, *King David*, 97.

<sup>229</sup> Ina Willi-Plein, “Abigajil und die Kunst der Rede: Zur Informationsgehalt der wörtlichen Reden in der Davidshausgeschichte,” *Diasynchron: Beiträge zur Exegese, Theologie und Rezeption der hebräischen Bibel. Walter Dietrich zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Thomas Naumann and Regine Hunziker-Rodewald; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009) 417-32.

resolved (and that would persist under David; see 2 Sam 15:4). Again the verb **לָשׁוּ** is used to illustrate Israel's dire leadership problem.

Both Nabal and Uriah lose their wives and their lives to David's caprice and desire for "more" (power, women, etc.).<sup>230</sup> Thus David's "asking" Nabal's peace and implicitly threatening him, calling on him to "ask" his young men about his "protection" of them involves more than it appears: his "asking" makes Nabal a "Saul" ("asked," "demanded"). And it is probably no coincidence that the whole episode closes with David taking the wives of two "Sauls" (1 Sam 25:39-43)—Abigail the wife of Nabal and Ahinoam,<sup>231</sup> apparently one of Saul's wives (see 1 Sam 14:50).<sup>232</sup> Hence, Nathan's statement in his condemnation of David: "I gave you ... your master's **wives**" (2 Sam 12:8).<sup>233</sup> Israel's leadership situation in 1 Samuel 24–26 with a deceased Samuel, a mad Saul, and a power-hungry David was not much of an improvement over the situation in the period of the judges, and it was made no better by David's unrestrained behavior at this juncture. In 1 Sam 25:5, 8 the verb **לָשׁוּ** both identifies Nabal with Saul and illustrates the leadership problems that Israel's "demand" for kingship worsened rather than resolved.

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<sup>230</sup> The literary parallel between "Nabal" and "Uriah" will be addressed further in chapter three.

<sup>231</sup> In addition to 1 Sam 25:39-43, Abigail and Ahinoam are mentioned in tandem in 1 Sam 27:3; 30:5; and 2 Sam 2:2. Abigail and Ahinoam are the wives of David's composite "master" Saul-Nabal, of whom David claimed to be "son" and "servant" (1 Sam 24:16; 25:8; 26:17-25).

<sup>232</sup> Jon D. Levenson and Baruch Halpern, "The Political Import of David's Marriages," *JBL* 99 (1980) 507-18; See also Halpern, *David's Secret Demons*, 87; McKenzie, *King David*, 114; Bosworth, *Story within a Story*, 74 n. 8.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 2.4.5 “Why Are You Asking Me?”: *Sha’ul as Illicit “Sho’el”* (1 Samuel 28)

The reiteration of Samuel’s death notice from 1 Sam 25:1 (in 28:3) shifts the narrative entirely—albeit momentarily—away from David to a scene that has troubled generations of theologians and exegetes: Saul’s “asking” counsel from a deceased Samuel through the medium of Endor.<sup>234</sup> This episode will highlight Israelite kingship’s (at least theoretical) dependence on the prophets for Yhwh’s guidance. Saul’s inability to obtain divine guidance leaves Israel largely in the same leadership predicament in which it found itself during the time of the judges. The narrative offers no hint of a happy ending for Saul or for Israel, whose subsequent kings will themselves fail to obtain desperately-needed divine guidance.

Here Dtr interjects the notice that “Saul had removed [הַסִּיר] those consulting ancestral spirits [הַאֲבוֹת] and the mediums [הַיִּדְעָנִים] from the land” (1 Sam 28:4).<sup>235</sup> Dtr thus acknowledges that Saul, in spite of previous acts of disobedience and others failings, had

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<sup>234</sup> Elenore Reuter, “Wer sich auf Tote einlässt, bezahlt mit dem Leben : Saul bei der Totenbeschwörerin von En Dor,” *BK* 61 (2006) 16-20. The digressive nature of this story is noted by Klaus Peter Adam (“1 Sam 28: A Comment on Saul’s Destiny from a Late Prophetic Point of View,” *RB* 116 [2009] 27-43); Thomas Podella (“Nekromantie,” *TQ* 177 [1997] 121-33) and Mordecai Cogan (“The Road to En-Dor,” in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* [ed. David P. Wright, David Noel Freedman, and Avi Hurvitz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995] 319-26) helpfully contextualize Saul’s inquiry in relation to Canaanite and wider ANE practices.

<sup>235</sup> Timo Veijola (“Geographie im Dienst der Literatur in 1Sam 28,4” in *David und Saul im Widerstreit –Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit: Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* (ed. Walter Dietrich; OBO 206; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004] 256-71) notes the problematic geography that accompanies this notice and proposes that this material belongs to DtrP.

heretofore been enforcing an important piece of Deuteronomic legislation regarding illicit cultic inquiry as proscribed in Deut 18:9-14.<sup>236</sup>

The reiteration of Samuel's death notice in 1 Sam 28:3 and the mention of Saul's pious removal of illicit "inquirers" suggest that something ironically relevant both to Samuel's death and illicit inquiry will be forthcoming. Whereas the death notice in 1 Sam 25:1 marked the beginning of David's dependence on cleromantic "asking" of Yhwh (though he had been using cleromantic guidance at least since 23:2),<sup>237</sup> its reiteration in 28:3 inaugurates Saul's (and the later monarchic) use of necromancy.<sup>238</sup> Saul's previous request for divine guidance (שאל) turned out poorly (1 Sam 14:37). Contrastively, the narrative from 1 Samuel 25 onward has shown David as successful in his inquiries to God at every step of the way.

Now, in his moment of extreme need, Saul (legally) "asks" guidance from Yhwh: **"Then Saul asked [וַיִּשְׁאַל שְׂאִיל]** of Yhwh, but Yhwh did not answer him either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets" (1 Sam 28:6; cf. 14:37).<sup>239</sup> Just as when Samuel came "late" to

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<sup>236</sup> As Klein notes (*1 Samuel*, 268), this action was "in accord with the Mosiac legislation in Deut. 18:9-14 and in Lev. 18:31 and Lev. 20:6, 27."

<sup>237</sup> Assuming Doeg's accusation against Ahimelech is *not* true (22:10), David's cleromantic asking begins in 23:2, 4. For useful discussions of the profuse technical terminology in 1 Sam 28:3-25, see Michael Kleiner, *Saul in En-Dor: Wahrsagung oder Totenbeschwörung? Eine synchrone und dichrone Analyse von 1 Sam 28,3-25* (ETS 66; Leipzig: Benno, 1995) 27-135.

<sup>238</sup> On the literary contrast between Saul and David here, see Arnold, "Necromancy and Cleromancy," 204-6.

<sup>239</sup> Here Dtr reuses the wordplay from 1 Sam 14:37 almost verbatim: **"Then Saul asked [וַיִּשְׁאַל שְׂאִיל]** of God, 'Shall I go down after the Philistines? ... But he did not answer him on that day.'

Gilgal (1 Sam 13:8), Saul, lacking divine guidance, is again forced to make a decision<sup>240</sup>—inevitably the wrong one.<sup>241</sup> Yhwh will not “answer” Israel’s king (cf. 1 Sam 8:18).<sup>242</sup>

Having exhausted every “legal” means of cleromantic inquiry,<sup>243</sup> Saul turns to illicit necromancy<sup>244</sup>: “Then Saul [שׂאול] said to his servants, “Seek me out a woman possessing an ancestral spirit [אִשָּׁה בַּעַל־תְּאוּבָה] that I may go unto her and inquire through her [וְאֶדְרָשָׁהּ]”.<sup>245</sup> In one stroke, Saul (שׂאול) becomes an “asker” of ancestral spirits (שׂאֵל אֹב) and “inquirer of the dead” (דָּרַשׁ אֶל־הַמֵּתִים), the mantic practitioners forbidden by Deut 18:10-11. As Bill Arnold indicates, this is the literary “characterization of Saul” that Dtr’s “literary device” of depicting David’s successful cleromancy has been working toward.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> As Gunn (*The Fate of King Saul*, 108) puts it, “As though re-living that day at Gilgal he takes matters into his own hands.” No matter what Saul does at this point, he will go astray.

<sup>241</sup> The situation here is also a strange inversion of another earlier scene at Gilgal when Joshua had neglected to “ask at Yhwh’s mouth” (Josh 9:14) and the scenes of a prophet-less, kingless Israel “asking” Yhwh’s guidance—guidance that sometimes resulted in Israel’s being slaughtered (Judges 20). Saul, who early on failed to “ask” (cf. 14:20), and then both failed to “hear” and “transgressed Yhwh’s mouth” (1 Sam 15:24), is now desperate for divine guidance.

<sup>242</sup> I.e., because he (Saul) had not “heard his voice” and had caused Israel to “rebel against Yhwh’s mouth” (cf. 1 Sam 12:14-15). Hence, the hand of Yhwh would now be against Israel and against its king (12:15).

<sup>243</sup> As Fuhs (“שׂאֵל, *śā’al*,” 260) indicates: “Inquiring of the dead confirms God’s judgment and silence.”

<sup>244</sup> See Arnold, “Necromancy and Cleromancy,” 199-213.

<sup>245</sup> According to Arnold (*Ibid.*, 201), אֹב likely signifies “the deified spirit of one’s ancestor and subsequently the ancestral image.”

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 199. “The Deuteronomistic Historian used the account of Saul’s necromantic inquiry at Endor rhetorically as a means of characterizing the ill-fated king (1 Sam 28:3-19) and has elsewhere used Israel’s legitimate means of divination—that is, divination by means of casting lots, or cleromancy—as a contrastive literary device to prepare for this characterization of Saul.”

When Saul as Israel's king orders a fellow Israelite: "Divine [קְמוּסֵי־נָא]<sup>247</sup> for me an ancestral spirit and bring up [הָעֵלִי] for me the one whom I order you" (1 Sam 28:8), he goes beyond merely transgressing what is forbidden by Deut 18:10 ("There shall not be found among you ... **anyone practicing divination** [קָסָם קְסָמִים]... or **anyone asking** [וּשְׁאֵל] ghosts, or anyone possessing a familiar spirit [וַיִּדְעֵנִי] or anyone making inquiries to the dead"). Now, he gives official sanction to necromancy, the very thing that Samuel had cited as the strongest possible metaphor for "not hearing" Yhwh (1 Sam 15:23: "rebellion is the sin of divination [קָסָם]").<sup>248</sup>

At first the woman refuses: "You yourself **know** [יָדַעְתָּ] what Saul has done: how he has cut off those consulting ancestral spirits and **possessing familiar spirits** [וַהֲיִדְעֵנִי]" (28:9).<sup>249</sup> Here her speech plays on the verb יָדַע ("know"). In reply, Saul swears an oath by Yhwh that the medium will not be punished so as to move forward with his "request."

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<sup>247</sup> According to Arnold ("Necromancy and Cleromancy," 201), Saul's imperative to the woman ... involves a technical term for divination generally, which is not limited to necromancy, but includes all forms of divination. Saul's intention is specified as necromancy here by the prepositional phrase [בְּאֵלִים]. On קָסָם as "soothsaying" (*wahrsagen*) or "divination" (*weissagen*), see Kleiner, *Saul in Endor*, 49-52.

<sup>248</sup> Bodner (*1 Samuel*, 296) writes: "Thus, the one who warns Saul that rebellion is like the sin of divination in 15.23 now himself becomes the object of divination, as Saul seeks to be part of a dead poet's society."

<sup>249</sup> Arnold ("Necromancy and Cleromancy," 201) indicates that the use of אֵלִים with יָדַעֲנִי "expresses the necromantic practices involved in communicating with the deceased ancestor and, metonymically, the phenomenon of the ancestor cult generally."



Evidently no longer afraid of punishment, the medium then asks “whom shall I bring up [אֵלֶּהָ] up for you [לָךְ]?”<sup>250</sup>

The medium quickly recognizes Saul’s deception, exclaiming “Why have you deceived me?” Saul, in response, presses on with his illicit inquiry: “Then the king said to her, ‘Do not fear. What have you seen?’ And the woman said to Saul, ‘I see a god [אֵלֵּהִים] coming up [עֹלֶה] from the earth’” (28:13). 28:14 indicates that Saul “knew” (וַיֵּדַע) that it was Samuel (a further play on יָדַעַנִּי), and that this knowledge induced him to “worship” the *elohim*-Samuel with his face low to the ground—the homage normally due Yhwh and the king. Samuel, unimpressed, demands to know why he has been disturbed and brought up (28:14). Saul responds that he is in dire straits with the Philistines upon him: “God [אֵלֵּהִים] has turned away [סָר] from me [מֵעָלַי] and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams, and so I am calling upon you to **cause me to know** [לְהוֹדִיעַנִי] what to do” (28:15).

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<sup>250</sup> Kleiner (*Saul in En-Dor*, 52-57) calls the causative use of עָלָה (“*heraufkommen lassen*”) an “*Evokationsterminus*.” Its use here with its allusion to earlier narratives (1 Samuel 1–6) is particularly clever. As in Samuel’s birth narrative (1 Samuel 1–2), עָלָה, from which the name “Eli” is probably derived (cf. עָלָה “elevated,” i.e. “[the god is] elevated”) serves as wordplay on “Eli” in a scene of divine inquiry. However, this time the “asking” scene is horribly inverted: Hannah is not “asking” for Samuel to be born with Eli looking on; rather, Saul (“Asked”) is “asking” Samuel up from the realm of the dead—“**Bring Samuel up for me** [הַעֲלֵה לִי]” (28:11). Samuel is now the “raised-up” prophet in an entirely new sense (cf. הִקְיָם). Dtr. seems to be playing on עָלָה and קָוָם and their earlier use in the story of Eli’s downfall and Samuel’s “raising up.” See especially 1 Sam 2:25; 3:12. Saul and his sons, like Eli and his sons, will soon be in the realm of the dead with Samuel (28:19).

The above dialogue plays again on ידע. It also plays on the polysemy of אלהים, which, of course, usually refers to God/god or gods, but can also refer to the divinized dead (“gods”),<sup>251</sup> as in Isa 8:19.<sup>252</sup> Saul resorts to an unorthodox means of obtaining the “divine”<sup>253</sup> wisdom or instruction he needs in attempt to circumvent or forestall the will of Yhwh. Dtr, however, suggests via his wordplay on שמע and “Samuel” (28:18-23) that the Deuteronomic “instruction” (תורה; cf. התורה in Isa 8:16-17)<sup>254</sup> is the “wisdom” (Deut 4:6) that Saul should have “asked” for all along,<sup>255</sup> and that necromancy is ultimately unable to “compete” with prophetic<sup>256</sup> or Deuteronomic “instruction.”

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<sup>251</sup> Mark S. Smith (*The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* [2nd ed.; BRS; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002] 164) uses KTU 1.6 VI 45-49 to illustrate this usage: “In these four lines, *rp'im* ‘rephaim,’ is parallel with *'ilnym*, ‘divinities,’ and *'ilm*, ‘gods,’ is parallel with *mtm*, ‘the dead.’” He further notes that “Akkadian *ilu* and Phoenician *'ln* are used for the dead.” See also Kleiner, *Saul in En-Dor*, 134-5.

<sup>252</sup> Cf. Arnold, “Necromancy and Cleromancy,” 203.

<sup>253</sup> Steussy (*Samuel and his God*, 93) writes, “Consultation with the ancestors, which is the process that such specialists seem to have facilitated, was a widespread Israelite practice, and it did not necessarily involve appeal to other gods.”

<sup>254</sup> Arnold (“Necromancy and Cleromancy,” 204) perceptively notes the connection between Isa 8:19 and 8:16-17: “Isaiah is aware that in this military crisis, Ahaz and his people are as likely to turn to the old necromantic standby as they are to wait patiently for Yhwh (so ‘I will wait for the Lord ...,’ 28:17).” From Dtr’s exilic perspective, Saul is a prism through which one may see the necromantic activity of all Israel’s subsequent monarchs.

<sup>255</sup> We will meet this kind of *Volksweisheit*, of which the medium was a practitioner, in other women in the monarchic stories (e.g., the “wise women” of Tekoa [2 Samuel 14] and Abel-beth-maacah [2 Sam 20:20]).

<sup>256</sup> Cf. Smith, *Early History of God*, 164.

Dtr will further show that Yhwh's will is absolute and that Saul cannot circumvent or forestall it.<sup>257</sup> Samuel responds, “Why **are you asking** [לָשׂאֵל נִי] me?” (1 Sam 28:16) in a final climactic and poignant play on Saul's and Samuel's names, employing the verb that has bound them together from Samuel's “begged-for” birth, and harking back as well to Israel's earlier “request” for a prophet (Deut 18:16) and later “demand” for a king (1 Samuel 8–12). Gunn notes that “the implication for Saul is that his life's achievement is to be blotted out. Israel is to revert to where it was at Saul's first appearance, blighted by foreign conquest.”<sup>258</sup> This is also where Dtr's story of Israel will end: Israel blighted by foreign conquest and in exile.<sup>259</sup>

As Gunn also indicates, “The scene comes to a climax in Saul's fear,” i.e., *Todesfurcht*<sup>260</sup> (cf. Israel's fear of death at Horeb in Deuteronomy), while Pigott observes that the role of the medium in this episode “is similar to Abigail in that she mediates a prophetic word which not only informs Saul that his death is imminent (28:19) but also confirms David

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<sup>257</sup> Arnold (“Necromancy and Cleromancy,” 207) notes: “Saul has, in effect, sealed his own doom by inquiring of the dead.”

<sup>258</sup> Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 108. This was because Saul the king “**did not hear** [לֹא שָׁמַעַתָּה] Yhwh's voice and you did not enact [לֹא עָשִׂיתָ] his fierce anger upon Amalek, on this account, Yhwh is enacting [עָשָׂה] this word [דְּבַר] this day” (1 Sam 28:18).

<sup>259</sup> Polzin (*Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 219) writes: “The death of Saul and his sons prophesied by Samuel in chapter 28 is an uncanny reenactment of the parable that introduced the history of kingship in Israel. One may even suggest that Saul's reign itself acts like a kind of shadow parable by which the reader is meant to look forward to David's day and beyond—even to the exile—and see there the same false start and providential delay that embodied Saul's rule.”

<sup>260</sup> Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul*, 109; Kleiner, *Saul in En-Dor*, 143-48.

as his legitimate successor.”<sup>261</sup> There may also be a veiled allusion here to David’s own (possibly) necromantic venture later on (2 Sam 12:16a).<sup>262</sup>

When the narrative returns to Saul in 1 Samuel 31, it proceeds quickly to his death. The Philistines, not content to defeat the Israelites, pursue Saul and his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua. His sons are killed, and Saul himself is struck with an arrow. Here Dtr works in a portrayal of Saul’s death that deliberately echoes that of Abimelech: Saul commands his “arms- bearer” (נִשְׂא כָל יוֹ) to “draw [his] sword” (שָׁלַף חֶרֶבְךָ) and dispatch him (1 Sam 31:5), just as Abimelech had commanded “his arms-bearer” (נִשְׂא כָל יוֹ) to “draw [his] sword” (Judg 9:54) and dispatch him.<sup>263</sup> Their modes of death differ only in that Saul’s arms-bearer is too afraid to finish the job, and so forces Saul to die an even more ignominious death by suicide.

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<sup>261</sup> Susan M. Pigott (“Wives, Witches and Wise Women: Prophetic Heralds of Kingship in 1 and 2 Samuel,” *RevExp* 99 [2002] 154) further suggests that rather than taking “no further part in the visionary episode ... the text seems to indicate that instead that the woman may have mediated the entire encounter between Saul and Samuel.” Cf. Saul’s questions in 1 Sam 28:13-14. On the possible meaning of her response (“I see אֱלֹהִים coming up”), see Manfred Hutter, “Religionsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu ’Ihym in 1Sam 28,13,” *BN* 21 (1983) 32-36.

<sup>262</sup> See Herbert Niehr’s (“Ein unerkannter Text zur Nekromantie in Israel: Bemerkungen zum religionsgeschichtlichen Hintergrund von 2 Sam 12,16a,” *UF* 23 [1991] 301-6) examination of the use of אֱלֹהִים ... וַיִּבְקֶשׁ in 2 Sam 12:16a in light of KTU 1.124. The אֱלֹהִים “god(s) / ancestors in 1 Sam 28:13 may be the same as the אֲבוֹתָם (i.e., “the ancestors”) in 2 Sam 12:16a (cf. Isa 8:19; Lev 19:31). On the connection between KTU 1.124 and 1 Sam 28:3-25, see also G. Del Olmo Lete, “Receta mágica para un infante enfermo (KTU 1.124),” *Sef* 52 (1992) 187-92. The possibility of David’s use of necromancy cannot be explored in any greater depth here.

<sup>263</sup> Stone (*Un-manning of Abimelech*, 197) writes: “Saul like Abimelech suffers the consequences of ‘an evil spirit’ from God. Saul, like Abimelech, actually asks to be killed by his armor-bearer to avoid dying under shameful circumstances.”

Saul's necromantic summoning of a deceased Samuel is a ghastly refraction of the Samuel birth narrative. Saul's "asking" Samuel from Sheol<sup>264</sup> is born out of his desperate struggle to retain power and deepening personal darkness that are completely opposite to the humility and purity of heart in which Hannah "begged" Yhwh for Samuel.

## 2.5 The Function of שאל in David's Consolidation of Power (1 Samuel 30–2 Samuel 6)

The verb שאל continues to serve as a *Leitwort* in the narratives that describe the decimation of Saul's house and David's consolidation of royal power, continuing to raise the specter of Israel's "demands" for intermediary leadership with its evocation of Samuel and Saul. Even as Saul is on his way to his own demise, David successfully employs Abiathar and the ephod to "ask" (וַיִּשְׁאַל דָּוִד בַּיהוָה) Yhwh's guidance<sup>265</sup> in getting his family and the spoil back from the Amalekites (1 Sam 30:6-8). With the Amalekite threat overcome and Saul dead, David's pathway to the kingship is now considerably clearer.

### 2.5.1 David "Asks" Additional Guidance from Yhwh (2 Sam 2:1)

After the high drama of Saul summoning Samuel from Sheol and Saul's subsequent Abimelech-like death in battle, the scene shifts back to David who learns of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths, this occasioning David's famous lament (2 Sam 1:19-27). Following that

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<sup>264</sup> The song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10) contains the line "He brings down to Sheol [שְׁאוֹל] and raises up [וַיַּעַל]" (2:6b). This poem not only reflects its immediate narrative context, but also suggests how the narrative as a whole will eventually play out.

<sup>265</sup> Fuhs ("שאל, šā'al," 260) suggests that this event marks a change in the institutional cleromantic inquiry of Yhwh: "The Yahweh inquiry changes into a prayer for Yahweh's guidance."

lament, the narrative resumes with the following report: “And it happened after this that David asked [לֵשְׁאֵל] Yhwh, saying, ‘Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?’ And Yhwh said to him, ‘Go up.’ And David said, ‘To which shall I go up?’ And Yhwh responded ‘To Hebron.’” (2 Sam 2:1). This oracular conversation serves to show both that Yhwh was “with” David as Israel’s leader and that David himself required Yhwh’s divine leadership and guidance for his own survival. Where Dtr has previously used לֵשְׁאֵל to articulate Israel’s desire for human leadership, particularly kingship, David’s “asking” of Yhwh here both reflects and stresses his desire to replace Saul (and Ishbaal) as Israel’s king. With Saul’s removal, David’s “asking” for divine guidance is revealed to be a “demand” for a pathway to kingship.<sup>266</sup>

### 2.5.2 “Only One Thing Do I Demand” (2 Sam 3:13)

As David begins to gain the upper hand in “the war between the houses,” the narrative makes a point of explaining why the tide ultimately turned against Ishbaal and the house of Saul. David’s consolidation of power involves yet another “demand” by him, this playing on the name of “Saul.” “Wives” are clearly the theme of 2 Sam 3:1-16.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Once at Hebron, David is anointed king over the house of Judah (2 Sam 2:4), where he also learns about Saul’s burial. Meanwhile Abner, Saul’s first cousin and commander of his army, expedites Ishbaal’s succession to his father Saul, who is made king—note the word “anoint” is not used here—over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and (in short) over all Israel (2 Sam 2:10). The dueling kingships lead to a protracted war between the houses of Saul and David (2 Sam 3:1), in which David’s power grows and Ishbaal’s wanes. McKenzie (*King David*, 117) observes, correctly in my view, that “the cause for this war was David’s aggression spurred by his ambition to annex Israel.”

<sup>267</sup> E.g., David’s multiplication of wives, Abner’s apparent relationship with Rizpah, Saul’s concubine, and David’s reclamation of his ex-wife Michal, the daughter of Saul from Paltiel to whom she had been given by her father (see 1 Sam 25:44).

Abner's alleged sleeping with Ishbaal's concubine Rizpah was a potential assertion of authority<sup>268</sup> over Ishbaal's precarious kingship (2 Sam 3:7),<sup>269</sup> and Ishbaal was right to view it as such. Dtr will subsequently revisit the concubine "power-play" scenario more than once (2 Sam 16:21; 1 Kgs 2:17). According to the narrative, Abner's anger over Ishbaal's charge of wrongdoing motivates his switching sides from the house of Saul to David. Abner's speech in 3:9-10 reflects the pro-Davidic attitude of Dtr's source. David meets Abner's request for an alliance with a much bigger "demand"<sup>270</sup>: Only one thing do I **demand** [דָּמָה] of you, that is to say, you shall not see my face except you bring Michal, daughter of **Saul** [בִּתְשָׁאֵל] before me, when you come to see my face" (2 Sam 3:13) . Here דָּמָה is employed in a wordplay on "Saul." David, whether as usurper or legitimated replacement, is "demanding" the kingship from the house of the king whom Israel had once "demanded" (hence Saul's name).

David's "demand" for Michal is essentially a demand for his opponents' (Abner's and Ishbaal's) surrender, since capitulation to his "demand" would be nothing less than an acknowledgment that David is now in a position to demand whatever he wants. David's

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<sup>268</sup> According to Halpern (*David's Secret Demons*, 28) the clear implication of 2 Sam 3:6 is that "Abner controlled the house of Saul" after the death of Saul and his elder sons."

<sup>269</sup> McKenzie (*King David*, 117) notes that the story "presupposes an important principle about monarchy that surfaces repeatedly in the David story, namely that sleeping with a member of the royal harem is tantamount to staking a claim on the throne. Thus, when Ishbaal accused Abner of sleeping with Saul's former concubine Rizpah (3:8), he was not concerned with matters of morality or propriety but with a challenge to his kingship."

<sup>270</sup> At this point Abner is in no position to dictate the terms of a bargain. Since, as Fokkelman (*Reading Biblical Narrative*, 89) indicates "David is much more powerful ... he stays where he is [in Hebron] and moreover makes a heavy demand that the Saulite state has to meet."

successful reclamation of Michal effectively signals the end of any claim that Ishbaal had against David's kingship and of his own claim to the kingship.

Yet again, Dtr uses the verb **שאל** here at a key moment in Israel's history to illustrate the problems inherent in human leadership and the evils to which the transfer of power in human kingship gave rise. David's "demand" for Michal links his desire for Saul's throne to Israel's desire for kingship. Israel will not be nearer to Yhwh because of David, but farther away—one step closer to exile. David's moment of triumph will prove to be a somber one for Israel.

### 2.5.3 *David "Asks" Yhwh's Counsel for the Last Time (2 Sam 5:19, 23)*

When the Philistines "hear" that their sometime ally David has been anointed king over all Israel, they come up "seeking" (**לבקש**) David—an ambiguous term given David's traitorous history with the Philistines, but one that has previously been used to describe Saul's own pursuit of David. David "hears" this news and interprets the move as hostile. Out of fear he hunkers down in the "stronghold" (**מצודה**).<sup>271</sup>

This Philistine threat constitutes the last remaining challenge—for the moment<sup>272</sup>—to his supremacy over Israel, and prompts David to "ask" Yhwh's guidance (2 Sam 5:19). Here too, the verb **שאל** draws attention to David's ambitions which are—since he has already obtained the kingship of Judah and Israel—to consolidate that kingship. Yhwh's response

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<sup>271</sup> Evidently the stronghold of Adullam (see 1 Sam 22:4-5). See also NJPS, 654 n. h.

<sup>272</sup> The next challenge—Absalom—will come from within his own house, and from among his own sons.



indicates that he is still “with” David and supportive of his leadership of Israel, in contrast to his rejection of Saul’s house.

When the Philistines “again” come up to battle, David “asks [שאל]” Yhwh (1 Sam 5:23), creating an *inclusio* or *envelope figure* around the Baal-perazim etiology (5:20-22), and highlighting the scene as one of enormous importance to Dtr’s narrative. David’s final “asking” is accompanied by the promise that Yhwh will march forth as Divine Warrior and defeat the Philistines. David’s divinely-aided defeat of the Philistines ensures that his painstaking consolidation of the kingship will succeed, but it also marks a change in Yhwh’s relationship with Israel and the monarchy: the monarchy—and consequently Israel—from this point on will cease to “ask” Yhwh for guidance, or to rely on prophet-mediated guidance.<sup>273</sup> Dtr’s subsequent narratives, beginning with Jonadab in 2 Samuel 13, introduce the king’s counselor (cf. Ahithophel, 2 Samuel 15) and other “wise” sources of “divine” counsel. Hitherto such references to requesting or giving “counsel” apart from “asking” Yhwh have been extremely rare or non-existent in Dtr.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Robert Polzin (*David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* [ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993] 174) observes the following regarding the distribution of שאל as the verb for inquiring of God in Dtr: “From the beginning of the History through David’s establishment of Jerusalem as his royal capital in 2 Samuel 6, the consistent language for inquiring of God is “to ask of (šā’al bē) God [or the LORD].” Whether we find ourselves in the premonarchic period or in the monarchic period up to 2 Samuel 6, and whether Saul or David does the inquiring, šā’al is the verb used.”

<sup>274</sup> The “advice” and “counsel” sought by Israel in Judg 20:7 are ultimately not separate from its “asking” Yhwh in 20:18, 23, and 27.

## 2.6 The Function of **שאל** in Absalom's Rebellion and Solomon's Reign (2 Samuel 11–1 Kings 11)

The verb **שאל** continues to raise the specter of Saul and Israel's ill-advised "demand" for monarchy even as Dtr unfolds the scenes of David's adultery, his murderous cover-up, and the bloody, measure-for-measure punishment that Yhwh will exact from his house. Its use further illustrates David's (and Israel's) movement away from prophets as the intermediaries that Israel had once "requested" and stresses their increasing reliance on other sources of "divine" counsel.

### 2.6.1 David's Dissimulating "Demand" (2 Sam 11:7)

Following David's "taking" Bathsheba and his adultery with her, his cover-up of these actions involves another notable use of **שאל**. According to the narrative, "David sent and **enquired after** [וַיִּדְרֹשׁ לָ] the woman" (2 Sam 11:3), wording which suggests a high degree of pre-mediation to his "taking" of Bathsheba. The narrator, however, proleptically reserves the use of the near-synonym **שאל** (with David as subject) for David's treatment of Bathsheba's husband in the aftermath, an appropriate literary move given that Uriah's end, unlike Bathsheba's, will be akin to the demise of Saul, Saul's sons, Abner, and Nabal (although the narrature will use **שאל** in connection with Bathsheba in one more critical scene in 1 Kings 2; see further below).

Shortly after his egregious act, David summons Uriah and bombards him with questions. He "demands" [וַיִּשְׁאַל] of him to know the "peace" (i.e., the "prosperity," **שלום**) of Joab, the people, and the war (2 Sam 11:7)—as though he really wants to know. Neither

David—nor any of his successors, except in one very notable instance (1 Kings 3)—will ever again “ask” (אָנאָמ) Yhwh for divine guidance, either on their own or through prophets.

Consequently, Israel’s human leadership as embodied in the king, is doomed to fail.

The last element of the triad in 2 Sam 11:7, taken literally, is an oxymoron—the “peace of the war” or “the peace of war.” The wording here is subtle, but deliberate. The line between war and peace in the subsequent narratives will become very blurred—see Absalom’s rebellion and the issue of “shedding of the blood of war in peace” (1 Kgs 2:5) in particular. Just as the verb אָנאָמ in 1 Sam 25:5, 8 served to link Nabal with Saul, here אָנאָמ links Uriah to Nabal and Saul (David’s “enemies”) whose wives David has taken, and illustrates David’s hypocritical attempt to hide his sinful act and perhaps hints at a (as yet hidden) agenda to keep Uriah’s wife.

#### 2.6.2 “Do Not Withhold Anything that I Ask You!” (2 Sam 14:18)

The verb אָנאָמ also plays a subtle but important role in the story of Absalom’s return and subsequent rebellion. After Absalom’s revenge killing of Amnon for his rape of Tamar and Absalom’s flight, David “is comforted regarding Amnon” (2 Sam 13:39) and pines away for Absalom (13:39–14:1). Knowing this, Joab devises a “ruse” to have Absalom brought home legally.<sup>275</sup> Joab procures a “wise woman” and concocts the mourner’s costume and the false story that masks the real-life scenario (14:2) and “puts the words into her mouth”

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<sup>275</sup> Claudia V. Camp (“The Wise Women of 2 Samuel: A Role Model for Women in Early Israel?” *CBQ* 43 [1981] 15) remarks: “Whether it is pride or legality that prevents David from acting at once is unclear, but in 14:1-3 we see that Joab finds it necessary to devise a ruse to bring Absalom home.”

(14:3).<sup>276</sup> According to Polzin, the threefold use of לִבְלִי in 14:2 involves “accents of ambiguity that refer back to David.”<sup>277</sup> The scenario of a widow in “mourning” bereft of a son evokes Bathsheba (11:26-27; 12:24). It also anticipates Joab’s conversation with the “wise woman” at Abel-beth-maacah in 2 Sam 20:5-22.

When the “wise woman” appears before the king, a rather lengthy conversation ensues, a conversation made all the longer by the woman’s use of what Conroy calls “courtly language,”<sup>278</sup> the overtly deferential language used toward members of the royal court, especially the king. More notable, however, is her clever use of legal and proverbial language.

David is “confronted by an imaginary situation requiring a royal verdict,”<sup>279</sup> precisely because Joab knows that this is what David’s reconciliation with Absalom will require. The “wise woman” induces David to swear, “The life of Yhwh if a hair of your son shall fall to the ground” (14:11), thus “unwittingly passing judgment on his own case as well.”<sup>280</sup> The woman’s subsequent question “Why have you then devised after this fashion against the people of God?” (14:13) accuses David “of devising something against the people directly,

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<sup>276</sup> Perhaps this phrase suggests some rehearsal in advance, but one also has to allow for the operation of the woman’s own creativity—she is, after all, חֲכָמָה.

<sup>277</sup> As Polzin (*David and the Deuteronomist*, 141) notes, “the ambiguity in 13:37 is whether David is mourning over the dead Amnon or the exiled Absalom. Although we find out eventually that David mourned for Absalom when he died (19:1, 2), we are never sure whether he mourned for Amnon or not.”

<sup>278</sup> Conroy, *Absalom! Absalom!* 140.

<sup>279</sup> McCarter, *II Samuel*, 350.

<sup>280</sup> Camp, “Wise Women of 2 Samuel,” 16.

not indirectly by peril to the crown prince or the king.”<sup>281</sup> Thus, by “wisely” causing David to imperil “the people of God (עַם־אֱלֹהִים) by putting them under an oath they cannot fulfill,<sup>282</sup> the woman essentially blackmails David and the royal family into taking Absalom back.

As the “wise woman” draws back the veil on her false story (“the king is not bringing home his banished son,” 14:13) she resorts to proverbial “wisdom,” declaring: “For we must certainly die, and are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up; but God will not remove life and he **devises plans** so that the one banished from him will not always be banished” (14:14). She cleverly answers her own accusation that David has “devised” (חָשַׁבְתָּהּ) against the people (14:13), with a truism about God’s “devising plans” (חָשַׁב מַחֲשָׁבוֹת) to reclaim the fugitive Absalom in a further attempt to manipulate David (14:14).

The woman caps her speech with the declaration, “**As a messenger** [כַּמַּלְאָךְ] of God, so is my lord **the king** [הַמֶּלֶךְ]: to hear [i.e., discern] good and evil—and may Yhwh your God be with you” (14:17). The paronomasia involving “messenger”/“angel” and “king” here ironically recalls the “messengers” and “kings” interplay in the story of David’s adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:1-2, 4, 8-9, 19-25), of which the present event is a consequence. The “wise woman” likewise ascribes to David the very same “wisdom” that Solomon will “ask” for in 1 Kgs 3:9-10.

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<sup>281</sup> McCarter, *II Samuel*, 348.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

Her simile, though flattering, is not strictly true since her real purpose has not been discerned by David heretofore.<sup>283</sup> The “wise woman” has outwitted David with the same “wisdom” or “cleverness” that David and Solomon will later use to dispose of David’s enemies and potential threats to Solomon’s accession. But now David is no longer fooled. He exclaims: “Do not withhold anything from me that **I ask** [שאל] from you!” (2 Sam 14:18), a “demand” that foreshadows Solomon’s “asking” for Wisdom in 1 Kgs 3:6-13 and his later willingness to grant the Queen of Sheba whatever she “asks” (1 Kgs 10:13). David’s “asking” שאל (šō’el) the “wise woman” is also reminiscent of Saul’s “consultation” of Samuel through the medium (“Why are you **asking** [שאל, šō’el] me...?”) in 1 Sam 28:16 (cf. “Seek me a medium **that I may go to her and inquire through her** [ואלכה אליה ואדרשה בה]; 28:7). But it also anticipates Josiah’s use of messengers and recourse to Huldah the prophetess (“Go, consult Yhwh [לכו דרשו את יהוה]; 2 Kgs 22:13-20). Again, notably, David is no longer “asking” Yhwh’s counsel.<sup>284</sup> One is reminded of Joshua’s and Israel’s failure to “ask” at Yhwh’s mouth (Josh 9:14). The failure to “ask” Yhwh’s guidance is now royal policy and the consequences for David’s house will be tragic. The folly of this failure will become evident in the time of Josiah.

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<sup>283</sup> According to Polzin (*David and the Deuteronomist*, 143), “it seems likely ... that the woman’s story in 2 Samuel 14 is deliberately couched in such a way that there is no obvious need for David to possess the kind of angelic wisdom that ‘discerns good and evil’ (v. 17) or discover the hand of Joab in her story. On the other hand, the contrast between the transparency of Joab’s ploy and the tragedy of David’s decision could not be greater. The woman’s words about David’s wisdom, whether put in her mouth by Joab or uttered on her own account may be flattering to David but they are surely ironic to the reader, who is supposed to remember them from now on in the story, whenever disaster strikes the house of David.”

<sup>284</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 174-75.

Having obtained her purpose, the wise woman in her final words reiterates her flattery of David: “My lord the king [המלך] is as wise [חכם] as an angel [כמלאך] of God” (2 Sam 14:20). The ensuing events will illustrate just what kind of “wisdom” David possesses, as the specter of Saul continues to hover over the narrative, and Israel’s “asking” for prophecy and kingship continue to loom large.

### 2.6.3 “As If One Asked Counsel from the Oracle of God” (2 Sam 16:23)

The mention of an “Eliam the son of Ahithophel” (2 Sam 23:34) in the catalogue of David’s warriors raises the possibility that Bathsheba was the granddaughter of David’s onetime counselor Ahithophel. If so, Dtr’s assertion that “David (11:3) sent **and inquired** [וידרש] about [ל] the woman and one said, ‘This is indeed Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, wife of Uriah the Hittite’” (2 Sam 11:3) takes on additional irony.<sup>285</sup>

From his first appearance (in David’s prayer, 2 Sam 15:31), the narrative consistently emphasizes Ahithophel’s role as counselor.<sup>286</sup> David’s extraordinary fear of Ahithophel’s “counsel” evident in his prayer (2 Sam 15:31, 34) is soon explained by the narrator, thus heightening the narrative “suspense”<sup>287</sup>: “The counsel of Ahithophel which he advised in those days was as if one **asked** [שאל] at the oracle of God: that is how the counsel of Ahithophel was regarded by both David and Absalom” (2 Sam 16:23). This almost

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<sup>285</sup> I noted previously the interplay of the near-synonyms דרש (11:3) and שאל (11:7)—David “inquires after” Bathsheba, and disingenuously “asks” Uriah (§2.6.1).

<sup>286</sup> 2 Sam 15:31, 34; 16:20, 23; 17:7, 14–15, 21, 23.

<sup>287</sup> See Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*, 136.

“blasphemous”<sup>288</sup> simile is one of Dtr’s more important statements. As Polzin has noted, there is more than a passing suggestion here that the “counselor” has essentially replaced the prophet in supplying guidance to the king.<sup>289</sup> Fuhs suggests that the simile in 16:23 “marks the end of the institution [of Yhwh inquiry]” because “the counsel of a political advisor is now equated with a divine response.”<sup>290</sup>

David ceased to “ask” counsel from Yhwh after defeating the Philistines and securing his kingship.<sup>291</sup> Thus, the “blasphemy” is not the narrator’s, but King David’s and Absalom’s: human counsel has supplanted divine counsel, just as human kingship had earlier been allowed to usurp divine kingship. Apart from Nathan’s denunciation of David for his adultery and murder, there is no direct evidence that he ever functioned as a prophet after the dynastic promise (2 Samuel 7). On the contrary, in 1 Kings 1 Nathan functions exactly like Ahithophel, i.e., as a cunning royal counselor, who speaks on his own authority.

The verb לָשׁוּׁ, which in the previous stories has been used to demonstrate Saul’s rejection by Yhwh and Yhwh’s legitimation of David, now underscores the divine punishment

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<sup>288</sup> Fokkelman (Ibid.) states: “Here we have a rare—one might almost say blasphemous—comparison: the word of the human being ... enjoys the prestige of a veritable oracle (word of God).” Ahithophel’s counsel enjoyed such prestige as much because it was accepted by David and Absalom as because it was “good” counsel (see 2 Sam 17:14).

<sup>289</sup> See the Polzin’s discussion of this and related issues in *David and the Deuteronomist*, 173-78.

<sup>290</sup> Fuhs, “לָשׁוּׁ, šā’al,” 260.

<sup>291</sup> Although 2 Sam 21:2 records that David “sought Yhwh’s face” after three years of famine and that Yhwh replied that the famine was on account of the bloodguilt of Saul, one of the clear implications of this statement is that David had not been “asking” Yhwh in the interim. Although the difference between “asking” Yhwh and “seeking Yhwh’s face” is not exactly clear (the latter may involve approaching Yhwh at a cultic site—his cultic “presence”), the narrator avoids stating that David had been or was presently “asking” Yhwh.



of David. The use of **לָשׁוּׁ** here further serves to highlight the consequences of Israel's "demand" for kingship: civil war, among other things. As with Israel's previous "request" for prophetic intermediaries, the people are now getting just what they "demanded" (cf. Deut 18:16): under human kingship, bloody internecine strife for the throne is par for the course.

#### 2.6.4 "Let Them Indeed Ask at Abel" (2 Sam 20:18)

2 Samuel 20 tells the story of Israel's revolt under the leadership of a "destructive" Benjaminite (cf. Judg 19:22; 20:12-13), Sheba son of Bichri, which serves as a coda to the story of Absalom's revolt. The end result will be, as in most of the surrounding stories, the elimination of a threat to David's (and Solomon's) power: in this case a Saul-like, Saul-related, Benjaminite.

Here the figure of the "wise woman" from 2 Samuel 14 is revived in the form of the "wise woman" [**אִשָּׁה חַכְמָה**] of Abel Beth Maacah.<sup>292</sup> Conroy has noted the numerous verbal parallels between this pericope and that of the "wise woman" of Tekoa, among other stories.<sup>293</sup> Like the "wise woman" of Tekoa, the "wise woman" of Abel is adroit not only in the use of courtly language,<sup>294</sup> but also the proverbial language of "wisdom." E.E. Green finds that both of these "wise women" are cast as female authority figures whose authority is

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<sup>292</sup> McCarter (*II Samuel*, 431) writes: "The masquerading wise woman of chap. 14 who has been told by Joab what to do [14:3], persuades David to set aside the interest of the society as a whole in favor of the interests of one man, and the result is rebellion. In the present chapter the wise woman of Abel, who tells Joab what to do, counsels the sacrifice of one man in the interests of the society as a whole, and the result is the prevention of rebellion. A resolution of the fratricide Abishalom at court [sic] is resolved by the execution of a man who would lead the Israelites in a war against their brothers (cf. 19:42)."

<sup>293</sup> Conroy, *Absalom! Absalom!* 142; cf. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 431.

<sup>294</sup> Conroy, *Absalom! Absalom!* 140.

grounded in Wisdom.<sup>295</sup> As such, she will invoke the title “mother in Israel”<sup>296</sup> (1 Sam 20:19), the same used of the judge and prophetess,<sup>297</sup> Deborah (Judg 5:7). Robin Gallagher Branch further notes that the “wise woman” of Abel, like Abigail (1 Samuel 25), rescues her people with wise speech.<sup>298</sup>

The choice of words which the “wise woman” uses to save her people proves to be the most intriguing, arguably the most significant, and easily the most puzzling aspect of this story: Addressing Joab in courtly parlance, she prevails upon him to “hear” her: “They surely spoke of old, saying ‘**Let them indeed ask counsel** [שאלו שאלו] at [of?] Abel, and in this way they brought matters to an end. I am one seeking the peace [שלמי] of the faithful in Israel. You are trying to kill a city and a mother in Israel. Why are you swallowing up the Lord’s inheritance?’” (MT 2 Sam 20:18).<sup>299</sup> The proverb was as much a *crux interpretum*

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<sup>295</sup> E.E. Green, “Donne sage: Autorità femminile durante il regno davidico,” *RivB* 43 (1995) 467-84.

<sup>296</sup> M.L. Geyer, “Stopping the Juggernaut: A Close Reading of 2 Samuel 20:13-22,” *USQR* 41 (1986/87) 33-42.

<sup>297</sup> Judg 4:4 identifies Deborah as “a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth” and states that she “judged Israel.” This notice, and the title “mother in Israel” used of her (Judg 5:7) and of the “wise woman” of Abigail (1 Sam 20:19) are probably significant for our understanding of how Huldah the prophetess (2 Kgs 22:14) functioned and why Josiah’s messengers resorted to her. See discussion in chapter six.

<sup>298</sup> Robin Gallagher Branch, “Women Who Win with Words: Deliverance via Persuasive Communication,” *In die Skriflig* 37 (2003) 289-318.

<sup>299</sup> Most commentators and recent translations take the ל in the phrase “a city and a mother [עיר ול]” epexegetically, i.e., Abel is “a mother city in Israel.” Given the “wise woman’s” use of proverbial language, we should probably see this ambiguous language as referring to herself as well: “a mother in Israel,” i.e., “one who seeks the peace of the faithful in Israel” may refer to her function as a “wise woman” (cf. “prophetess”).

anciently as now, as the textual witnesses attest.<sup>300</sup> McCarter notes the odd grammar of the proverb, namely that there are “few parallels for a Pi‘el verb strengthened by a Qal infinitive absolute” and that “the Pi‘el of *šāl* with this meaning is otherwise unattested.”<sup>301</sup> The key datum here is that the cultic “asking”<sup>302</sup> was done at Abel-beth-maacah, which the woman presents as a “model city”<sup>303</sup> for such “asking,” both in times past (בראשנה) and on into the present. The suggestion is that what is/was done at Abel is not done elsewhere in Israel, including the royal court, where according to Dtr’s post-Bathsheba narrative, human counsel had supplanted divine counsel.

Another implication (whether MT preserves the correct reading or not) of the “wise woman’s” statement is that this “asking” stopped the violence Joab was then threatening against Abel. The scene—a “destructive son” (בן־בל־יעל) who is a Benjaminite (בן־בנימין) holed-up in a city after having committed a grave offence—is a kind of miniature version of what

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<sup>300</sup> The Peshitta renders the proverb exegetically (“when asking, they ask a prophet,” *ܠܡܝܢܐ ܕܥܠܝܢܐ*). Incisively picking up on the similarity of the language between the Abel proverb (“Let them indeed ask [שאל] of Abel [באבל]”) and the “Saul” proverb (or, “Is it also [הגם] asked [שאל] of the prophets [נביאים]?” 1 Sam 10:10-11; 19:24), the Peshitta interprets the former in terms of the latter. LXX tries its hand at the Hebrew proverb twice (“When interrogated, one was interrogated at Abel and at Dan, whether one had forsaken that which the faithful of Israel had laid down; when asking they asked at Abel”= Ἡρωτημένος ἠρωτήθη ἐν τῇ Ἀβελ καὶ ἐν Δαν εἰ ἐξέλιπον ἂν ἔθεντο οἱ πιστοὶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, ἐρωτῶντες ἐπερωτήσουσιν ἐν Ἀβελ καὶ οὕτως εἰ ἐξέλιπον), suggesting that the translator may have had two variant manuscripts in front of him, or, alternatively, that a conflation of two Greek versions has occurred. If “Dan” were a part of the original proverb, it would make for an interesting literary connection to Judg 18:5.

<sup>301</sup> McCarter, *II Samuel*, 430.

<sup>302</sup> Fuhs (“שאל, *šāl*,” 260) suggests that “the passage preserves a reminiscence of a divine inquiry in Abel of Beth-maacah.” Cf. Geyer, “Stopping the Juggernaut,” 33-42.

<sup>303</sup> Fuhs, “שאל, *šāl*,” 260.

Dtr presented in Judges 20 (the Benjaminites' refusal to hand over the "destructive sons" precipitated civil war, whereas here the killing of Sheba and the ejection of his head in 2 Samuel 20 helps bring civil war to a close). Paradoxically, the cultic "asking" on the earlier occasion had resulted in mass casualties on both sides; on this occasion, recourse to "wise" counsel apparently prevents additional bloodshed, though it is far from evident that Yhwh's counsel was even "asked" by Joab or the wise woman, her proverb notwithstanding.

The death of Sheba was a short term fix for David and Solomon's rule over the northern tribes, which remained under the Davidic thumb for a few more years. The long term effect, however, was to further sunder Israel from Judah (cf. 1 Kings 11). The fracturing of the "house" of Israel here begins to mirror the fracturing already evident in the "house" of David. The verb **שאל** in this episode, then, further illustrates Israel's (and its leadership's) misapprehension of its relationship with, and standing before Yhwh, which are clearly not what they were "of old" (**בראשנה**, 2 Sam 20:18).

#### 2.6.5 "One Small Request" (1 Kgs 2:16, 20)

The story of Solomon's succession reaches its climax in the elimination of Adonijah, the heir apparent. As David Gunn has observed, the story of Solomon's accession "ends with Solomon reliving the circumstances of his own birth: his accession is marked by intrigue, deceit, and murder (within his house moreover—the victims are his brother Adonijah and cousin Joab) which he employs as the means of protecting his own interests, just as David did

in the matter of Bathsheba.”<sup>304</sup> Those interests are particularly threatened by Adonijah’s “request” for Abishag, the concubine of David’s un-virile old age. Again in this pericope the use of the verb שאל as a *Leitwort* raises the specter of Saul and the consequences of the people’s “demand” for kingship.

Just as David helped secure his kingship by “demand[ing] one thing” (דבר אחד) שאל ..., 2 Sam 3:13), i.e., Michal, the daughter of Saul (בת־שׂאול), when Abner and Ishbaal’s power began to erode, Adonijah attempts to improve his position once his own power and claim to the throne are effectively gone by making “one request” (שאלה אחת), 1 Kgs 2:16) for Abishag through Bathsheba (בת־שׁבע). The scene in 1 Kgs 2:13-16 is thus clearly an intentional refraction of the earlier one.

The conversation begins in 2:13 with a rather transparent wordplay on Solomon’s name, which recalls the recent revolt of Absalom (אבשלם, “Father is peace”) and hints darkly at Adonijah’s fate.<sup>305</sup> The phrasing of David’s and Abijah’s demands are worded very similarly: אך דבר אחד אנכי שאל מאתך (“Only one thing do I demand of you,” 2 Sam 3:13); ועתה שאלה אחת אנכי שאל מאתך, “But now one request do I ask of you,” 1 Kgs 2:16). One might argue that the latter is merely a paraphrase of the former, and indeed Adonijah clearly adopts his father’s strategy in seeking a path to the kingship. Unfortunately for him, his position is not strong enough to successfully orchestrate this maneuver.

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<sup>304</sup> Gunn, *Story of King David*, 82.

<sup>305</sup> I will address the wordplay on “Solomon” further in chapter four.

When Bathsheba approaches Solomon with Adonijah's "request" ("I have one small **request** [שאלָהָ] to **ask** [שאלָהָ] of you," she says), Solomon tells her: שאלָהָ ("Ask [it]!" 1 Kgs 2:19-20). But when the "request" turns out to be Abishag for Adonijah, Solomon is enraged: "And why are you **demanding** [שאלָהָ] Abishag the Shunamite for Adonijah? **Demand** [שאלָהָ] the kingship for him also!" (2:22). In courtly language,<sup>306</sup> Bathsheba couches Adonijah's "one request" as "one small request." Robert Vasholz suggest that Bathsheba's request on behalf of Adonijah was anything but innocent, rather reflecting the "acumen" of "a very wise woman (and mother)" who "helped her son secure his reign"<sup>307</sup> and further compares her to the wise women of Tekoa and Abel-beth-Maacah.<sup>308</sup> I would argue as well that Bathsheba's "wise" device was her subtle but deliberate alteration of Adonijah's words: the addition of one simple adjective. To Solomon, of course, this "request" is anything but small<sup>309</sup>—he (rightly) considers it a "demand" for the kingship—just as David's "demand" for Michal was, in fact, a "demand" for the kingship.

These two sons of David, then, both participate in history repeating itself—Adonijah subtly attempting to employ his father's old gambit, Solomon suspecting him of doing just that. They had both experienced their brother Absalom's play for the throne by sleeping with his father's concubines at the counsel of Ahithophel, which was "as if a man asked counsel of

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<sup>306</sup> Cf. Conroy, *Absalom! Absalom!* 140.

<sup>307</sup> Robert I. Vasholz, "The Wisdom of Bathsheba in 1 Kings 2:13-25," *Presbyterion* 33 (2007) 49.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> As Vasholz (Ibid.) notes, "Solomon recognized the implication *tout de suite*."

God” (2 Sam 16:22-23; cf. 12:11-12). As Nathan foretold to David, who had “demanded” the “peace of war” from Uriah (2 Sam 11:7), the “sword would never depart from his house” (2 Sam 12:10). Adonijah’s “demand”—like Israel’s demand for kingship—can only eventuate in his own death.

#### 2.6.6 “Ask! What Shall I Give You?” Solomon “Asks” at Gibeon of Saul (1 Kgs 3:5)

Following the blood and intrigue that marred David’s takeover of Saul’s throne, his taking of Bathsheba, Absalom’s revolt, and Solomon’s eventual succession, the narrative takes a positive turn in its depiction of Solomon. Beginning in 1 Kings 3, Dtr portrays Solomon as the zenith of monarchic Israel. Contrary to Mordecai Cogan’s assessment, however, it is not “over-reading” to see Dtr “characteriz[ing] Solomon as ‘bearing the seeds of his own destruction’” in his marriage alliance with Egypt (1 Kgs 3:1-3).<sup>310</sup> True, Dtr “describes Solomon, and only him of the Davidic dynasty as ‘loving Yhwh’ [3:3],”<sup>311</sup> but this very fact makes Solomon’s later sin of “loving” many foreign women all the more egregious (11:1-2). This is the point of Dtr’s prior characterization of him in 3:3. (I will address this subject in chapter three.) It is Solomon’s early loyalty to Yhwh and Yhwh’s great beneficence to Solomon that are the backdrop against which Solomon’s later apostasy will be related and the gravity of his sins magnified.

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<sup>310</sup> Mordecai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001) 189.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

1 Kgs 3:4-15—Solomon’s “request” for wisdom—plays an important role in establishing this “positive” backdrop against which Solomon’s later “wisdom” will be measured. As far as I am aware, the significance of Solomon’s “asking” for wisdom has not previously been considered in relation to earlier “demands” by Israel and its human leaders. Accordingly, it is the implications of Solomon’s “asking” in relation to those earlier demands that I now wish to explore.

That Solomon receives his “asking” theophany at Gibeon is significant for a host of reasons. The mere mention of “Gibeon” (גִּבְעוֹן, 1 Kgs 3:4-5) recalls the story of the Gibeonite ruse in Josh 9:14 in which Joshua’s leadership falters and he and the other Israelite leaders fail to “ask” (לֹא שָׁאַל) at the mouth of Yhwh, this resulting in a treaty of “peace” [שָׁלוֹם; cf. Solomon!] <sup>312</sup> with the Hivite Gibeonites. It further recalls the subsequent battle at Gibeon in which the Israelites come to the aid of their new “vassals,” the Gibeonites (Joshua 10). Gibeon comes into play again in the battle between David and the house of Saul over the kingship. Very significantly, according to 2 Sam 21:1-9, David executes seven of Saul’s male offspring at Gibeon under the pretext of rectifying a breach of the Gibeonite peace treaty by Saul—a “peace” treaty that Dtr intimates was itself a violation of Deuteronomic law from the get-go.

As opposed to the Gibeah of Saul’s traditional residence,<sup>313</sup> Gibeath-ha-Elohim (“Hill of God,” 1 Sam 10:5) may be Gibeon—the Gibeath-Saul of 2 Sam 21:6, i.e., ἐν Γαββαῶν

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<sup>312</sup> For more on the significance of Deut 7:2 and Solomon’s שָׁלוֹם, see chapter 4.



Σαουλ (LXX) on which the surviving Saulides were ritually executed “on the mountain before Yhwh” (21:9), i.e., “on the mountain of Yhwh” (emending בְּהַר יְהוָה to בְּחִיר יְהוָה in 21:6).<sup>314</sup> It was at Gibeon too (2 Sam 20:8-13) that Joab (David’s nephew, general, and enforcer) murders Amasa (Joab’s designated replacement), this providing David and Solomon with a pretext for themselves executing Joab who had thrown his support to Adonijah (1 Kgs 1:7), the heir apparent. In short, Gibeon is a place of enormous significance not only for Saul, his beginnings, and the downfall of his house, but for Solomon in eventually securing the throne. It is here—“Gibeon of Saul,” “the mountain of Yhwh,” “the great high place” where Saul’s clan may have held its feasts<sup>315</sup>—that Yhwh “appears” [נִרְאָה] to Solomon and says, “Ask! [שֶׁאֵל] What shall I give you?” (1 Kgs 3:5).<sup>316</sup> Since David’s consolidation of power (2

<sup>313</sup> On the relationship between Gibeah and Gibeon as reflected in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century archeological record, see Miller’s recent treatment (*Chieftains of the Highland Clans*, 118-19).

<sup>314</sup> See Karl van der Toorn, “Saul and the Rise of Israelite State Religion,” *VT* 43 (1993) 522; Blenkinsopp, *Gibeon and Israel*, 59; D. Edelman, “Saul’s Journey Through Mt. Ephraim and Samuel’s Ramah (1 Sam. 9:4-5; 10:2-5),” *ZDPV* 104 (1988) 44-58; A. Demsky, “Geba, Gibeah, and Gibeon—An Historico-Geographic Riddle,” *BASOR* 212 (1973) 26-31; cf. 2 Sam 5:25: MT גִּבְעָה; LXX Γαββαων. On Dtr’s treatment of the Gibeonites, see P.J. Kearney, “The Role of the Gibeonites in the Deuteronomic History,” *CBQ* 35 (1973) 1-19. Edelman also sees a post-exilic struggle between the Gibeonites (Saulides) and the (Davidic) party of the returned exiles in Jerusalem reflected in 1 Kings 3; 1 Chronicles 8-9; and 2 Chr 1:3-13 (“Gibeon and the Gibeonites Revisited,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* [ed. Joseph Blenkinsopp and Oded Lipschits; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003] 153-67). Van der Toorn (“Saul and the Rise of the Israelite State Religion,” 522) states: “Considering the correspondence between ‘the Hill of God’ and the ‘Mountain of Yahweh’, and in view of the cases in which Gibeah/Geba stands for Gibeon, it must be assumed that the ‘Gibeah’ mentioned in 1 Sam x 10 refers in fact to Gibeon.”

<sup>315</sup> 1 Sam 10:5, 10; 1 Kgs 3:4. Van der Toorn (“Saul and the Rise of Israelite State Religion,” 523) writes: “it would be natural for a clan settled at Zela near Gibeon to celebrate its clan sacrifices at ‘the great high place.’”

<sup>316</sup> When Yhwh appears to Solomon and instructs him to “ask” (שֶׁאֵל), this represents something of a biblical first, or perhaps even a unique event. Yhwh is not merely being “heard” (Deut 4:2; 5; 18), but “seen” (cf. Exod 24:9-11). Unlike the famous episode during Solomon’s descendant Ahaz’s reign, in which Isaiah comes to the king and tells him to “ask” any sign he wishes (Isa 7:10-12), Yhwh here comes in person and tells Solomon

Samuel 5), neither he nor Solomon have “asked” Yhwh’s counsel.<sup>317</sup> Now, Yhwh comes in person and instructs Solomon to “ask,” as if intending to reestablish communication with the monarchy.

This scene inverts Israel’s “request” for a prophet (Deut 18:15-17) and “demand” for a king from (and in place of) Yhwh (1 Samuel 8; 10:17-27; 12); perhaps, to an even greater degree, it is a narrative inversion of the story of Hannah “begging” Samuel from Yhwh and having that desire granted because of her faithful persistence (1 Samuel 1). Israel’s “king ...like all the nations” (Deut 17:14; 1 Sam 8:5, 20) now “asks” for the wisdom that should distinguish Israel from (above) all the nations. Will it?

Solomon’s responds with a speech (1 Kgs 3:6-9) that is as pious as the similarly-worded (albeit longer) prayer that David offers after receiving the dynastic promise in 2 Sam 7:18-29. Like the offer of a perpetual dynasty to David, Yhwh’s offer to Solomon, to grant whatever he “asks” is a test which Solomon, like David, appears—at first—to pass with flying colors (1 Kgs 3:10-13). In these verses we find Dtr’s densest single cluster of the verb **שאל** (seven times). Yhwh gives Solomon, as Israel’s leader, a chance to “ask” aright on Israel’s behalf, unlike Israel’s previous “demands” and as a counter to the failings of its previous leaders in this regard (i.e., Joshua, Gideon, Saul, and even David). Yhwh also gives Solomon a chance to reestablish the line of communication that has been absent since David had ceased

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to ask for *anything* that he wants. The offer is somewhat ironic in the overall narrative context since, as we have seen, the king is able to “demand” (and take!) virtually whatever he wants (see, e.g., 2 Sam 3:12-16; 11:3-7). Throughout Dtr, Yhwh has granted Israel’s “requests” and “demands” when they send intermediaries to “ask” of him. Dtr also has Moses invite Israel to “ask” about Yhwh’s immediacy to them (Deut 4:32).

<sup>317</sup> Although David “sought Yhwh’s face” one time, finally, after several years of famine in Israel [2 Sam 21:1], he did not again “ask” [**שאל**] Yhwh’s counsel. See note 292 on this point.

to “ask” counsel from Yhwh (cf. 2 Samuel 5) by turning to “wise” counselors.<sup>318</sup> Solomon apparently makes the perfect request: “wisdom” from Yhwh. Can it be that Israel will succeed under kingship after all?<sup>319</sup> And will Solomon succeed where David failed?<sup>320</sup>

Solomon does not need to “ask the lives of [his] enemies.”<sup>321</sup> The narrative has hitherto shown (ironically) that he already has the “wisdom” (1 Kgs 2:6, 9) to eliminate them himself. Here again the dative of advantage (ל) or potential benefit occurs in connection with a usage of שׂא. Israel has asked “for” itself a prophet<sup>322</sup> and a king;<sup>323</sup> Adonijah had “asked” Abishag “for himself” Yhwh seems pleased with Solomon’s “asking” for wisdom,

<sup>318</sup> See Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 173-78.

<sup>319</sup> Compare 1 Sam 12:14, which suggests that it is possible—in theory—for Israel to succeed under a king versus 12:15 and 25, which anticipate the end result of Israel’s human kingship.

<sup>320</sup> The similarity of this episode to that of the dynastic promise of 2 Samuel 7 is not accidental. We have already noted David’s and Solomon’s correspondingly pious prayers. There is likewise the granting of blessings that would seem to ensure the perpetuity of the dynasty. But there are also echoes of Nathan’s pronouncement of the curse following David’s adultery. David had also been “given” (cf. נתן) an abundance of like blessings and had ungratefully “despised” Yhwh (see discussion in chapter three). The implicit suggestion is that Solomon must be different than David in this very regard, and “wisdom” is the apparent game-changer. Solomon’s seeming altruism (“Give your servant a **hearing** [שמע, *šōmē*<sup>a</sup>] heart **to decide what is just** [לשפט] for the people,” 1 Kgs 3:9, i.e., the “understanding to hear **what is just** [משפט],” 3:11) is not dissimilar to Absalom’s expressed wish to do משפט and צדקה for everyone in Israel who lacked a “hearer” (שמע, *šōmē*<sup>a</sup>; see 2 Sam 15:1-6, and esp. 15:4). Absalom’s social conscience was a means to an end: to steal the hearts of the men of Israel (2 Sam 15:6), and thus the throne. David’s failure to give Israel “justice” (cf. 1 Sam 8:5-6) provided Absalom an opportunity to exploit.

<sup>321</sup> This phrase may actually represent a cultic formula. Cf. Fuhs, “שׂא, *šā’al*,” 258.

<sup>322</sup> The dative of advantage in this instance is reflected in Yhwh’s response to Israel’s “request” for distance in Deut 18:15: “A prophet out of your midst ... Yhwh will raise up **for you** [ל]”; and 18:18: “I will raise up **for them** [לם] a prophet ...”

<sup>323</sup> 1 Sam 8:5; 12:17, 19. Cf. 1 Sam 8:18, 22.

however—one cannot but recall—none of the previous requests in Dtr’s history ultimately benefitted the requestors.

Deuteronomic law treats it almost as axiomatic that extravagant wealth—the multiplying of “silver and gold” like wives—leads to idolatry (Deut 17:17). Yhwh’s next statement, then, is somewhat perplexing from Dtr’s point of view: “And even **that which you have not asked** [אֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁאַלְתָּ] I have given to you—even wealth, even glory such that there shall not be any among kings like you all your days” (1 Kg 3:13). This statement, however, makes sense if we view Yhwh’s offer of wealth, like his initial question (“Ask! What shall I give you?”), as a test of Solomon’s character.

Gideon had “demanded” gold (8:24-26) from the Israelites whom he had saved and the object he made with this led Israel inexorably into idolatry (8:27). How then will Yhwh’s granting Solomon unasked-for riches turn out? How will Solomon handle all of Yhwh’s beneficence? Dtr knows the answer, of course. It is given away in 1 Kgs 3:14 (“If ...”). Dtr shows that while the wilderness generation of Israel, Gideon, and Solomon share the distinction of having seen (רָאָה) Yhwh in some aspect,<sup>324</sup> all three ended up apostatizing from Yhwh.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Deut 5:24 (cf. Exod 24:10-11 and the seemingly contradictory Deut 4:9-12, the latter text appearing to deny the reality of Israel’s vision of Yhwh); Judg 6:22-24; 1 Kgs 3:5; 9:2 (cf. 11:9).

<sup>325</sup> Josh 5:6-9 (see §2.2.3); Judg 8:27; 1 Kgs 11:9.

### 2.6.7 “Whatsoever She Asked” (1 Kgs 10:13)

1 Kings 10 presents Solomon’s kingdom and monarchic Israel at their zenith. Israel now not only has a king “like all the nations,” but a king *greater* than the kings of all the nations (10:23), thus fulfilling Yhwh’s words to Solomon in 1 Kgs 3:12-13. This moment is the standard by which Dtr will measure the depth of Solomon’s apostasy and the failure of the monarchy.<sup>326</sup>

The effusive praise placed on the lips of the queen of Sheba affirms Solomon’s incomparability (1 Kg 10:6-9). But her words in 10:8 deserve special notice: “Happy [אֲשֵׁרָא] are your men, happy [אֲשֵׁרָא] are these servants of yours, who stand before you perpetually and hear your wisdom.” Several commentators have noted the connection between “happiness” (אֲשֵׁרָא) the “tree of life” as a symbol of the asherah (אֲשֵׁרָה, named after the goddess Asherah, but with multivalent application)<sup>327</sup> and “wisdom” in Prov 3:13, 18.<sup>328</sup> The flattery she heaps on Solomon is also reminiscent of the “wise woman” of Tekoa’s flattery of David.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Nehemiah’s first-person memoir recalls the aforementioned “incomparability statements” about Solomon, juxtaposing this image with that of a king whose foreign wives “caused him to sin” (Neh 13:26).

<sup>327</sup> Smith, *Early History of God*, 132-33.

<sup>328</sup> E.g., Ibid., 134-36. See also Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992) 48-69. For a recent assessment of the “Asherah/asherah” debate and related issues in biblical scholarship, see John J. Collins, *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005) 99-129.

<sup>329</sup> 2 Sam 14:17, 20: “My lord is wise like the wisdom of an angel of God, knowing all things on earth.”

1 Kgs 14:15 and 23 suggest that the asherah thrived in the cults of both Israel and Judah shortly after Solomon's reign, which is a telling comment on the effects of Solomon's cultic permissiveness. As we have already seen, Bathsheba as queen mother plays a prominent role in the accession of her "wise" son Solomon to the throne and the unfolding story of the rise of the monarchy in Israel. In various other places, Dtr intimates a connection between the queen-mother and the asherah. Maacah was the daughter of Absalom [or, Abishalom], wife of her first cousin Rehoboam, and queen mother to two of Israel's kings Abijam ("Yamm is my father") and Asa ("[Yhwh is a] healer"). Dtr's positive appraisal of Asa includes the notice that he had removed Maacah from her position as queen-mother "because she had made a horrible image [מפלצת, perhaps a lewd image] as an asherah" (1 Kgs 15:13). Reminiscent of Gideon, "Asa cut down [וִיכָרֵת] the horrible image and he burned it in the wadi Kidron" (1 Kgs 15:13), as required by Deuteronomic law (Deut 7:5; 12:3). The real political power of the queen-mother<sup>330</sup> and her influence on the cult<sup>331</sup> can be clearly seen in Athaliah's usurpation of the throne of Judah (2 Kings 11, see esp. v. 18). Athaliah's mother, Jezebel (another "queen-mother"), was the royal patroness of the baals and the asherah in Israel (1 Kgs 18:19). Clearly Adonijah approached Bathsheba with his "demand" for Abishag because he saw in the queen-mother a sure pathway to having the demand granted ("he will not turn you down," 1 Kgs 2:17). The queen mother sat on a throne at the right hand of the king (2:19). The queen-mother was not, however, as Adonijah supposed, a pathway to his own kingship, but (as Dtr

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<sup>330</sup> See N.-E. A. Andreason, "The Role of Queen Mother in Israelite Society," *CBQ* 45 (1983) 179-94; Nancy Bowen, "The Quest for the Historical Gebira," *CBQ* 64 (2001) 597-618.

<sup>331</sup> See Susan Ackerman, "The Queen Mother and the Cult in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 112 (1993) 385-401.

will take pains to show) a pathway to idolatry for Israel, beginning with Bathsheba's gambit to have Solomon placed on the throne.

With his kingdom now secure, and having been blessed with all manner of wealth, Solomon is in a more giving mood than he was in 1 Kings 2, granting his visitor's requests particularly as proof of his own incomparability: "And King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba her every desire, whatsoever she asked [שאלה] (1 Kgs 10:13). But what is stated here about Solomon's apparent magnanimity bears directly on the problem of his "multiplying wives" and "loving many foreign women." He was similarly generous with them and gave them whatever they asked, including his allegiance to their gods (1 Kgs 11:1-4).

According to Dtr, Solomon, the apex of Israelite kingship and the paragon of "wisdom," became the conduit for the importation of every "foreign" (i.e., every non-Yahwistic) cultic influence (1 Kgs 11:1-11), a permissiveness that also allowed the loathed asherah to soon flourish.<sup>332</sup> When Dtr comments in 2 Kgs 21:7 that Manasseh "placed [שם] the carved image of the asherah which he had made in the house which Yhwh said to David and to Solomon his son: 'In this house and in Jerusalem which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel I will place [שם] my name forever,'" he is not only noting the "last straw" sin (the "placing" of an asherah where Yhwh had "placed" his name; cf. Deut 7:2; 12:3)<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> See especially 1 Kgs 14:23; 15:13.

<sup>333</sup> The correlation of שם ("he placed") and שם ("I will place") seems to suggest that what the function of the פסל—or what it was thought to represent—in non-Deuteronomic (i.e., so-called "foreign") Israelite religion was analogous to what the "name" represents in Deuteronomic "name"-theology.

that provoked Yhwh to send Judah into exile, but is also commenting on human kingship in general and the sin that precipitated Israel's downfall: the "demand" for kingship (1 Samuel 8). In the place where Yhwh was determined to set his name (מִשְׁכָּן), Israel was determined to set (מִשְׁכָּן) a king (Deut 17:14)—and worse (2 Kgs 21:7). Manasseh's deed was the inevitable outworking of Solomon's recourse to the cults of his foreign wives and the general cultic permissiveness that this enshrined. Israel did not long enjoy the benefits of the "wisdom" that Solomon "requested" from Yhwh, which was soon substituted for by another kind of "wisdom," the asherah.

Hereafter, Dtr's use of מִשְׁכָּן is less in evidence, though it does not entirely disappear, as a *Leitwort* (it recurs in the Elijah-Elisha cycle.)<sup>334</sup> Elijah "asks" ("begs") Yhwh for death in the face of Ahab and Jezebel's persecution of Yhwh's prophets;<sup>335</sup> and there may be echoes of the Samuel birth narrative in 2 Kings 4 (see especially 4:28).<sup>336</sup> Israel's initial, fear-born (rather than faith-born) "request" for human intermediation that eventuated in the "demand" for kingship already by Solomon's time led to the disastrous results that Yhwh and Samuel

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<sup>334</sup> After 1 Kings 10, מִשְׁכָּן occurs more rarely: 1 Kgs 19:4 (Elijah "asks" to die); 2 Kgs 4:28 (see below); 6:5 (the passive participle מִשְׁכָּן, "borrowed," "on loan"); 8:6; 10:13. It occurs mostly in the Elisha stories.

<sup>335</sup> According to Fuhs ("מִשְׁכָּן, šā'al," 258) "because he [Elijah] had failed in his battle with the Ba'al cult." See *ibid.* on the possible significance of the idiom מִשְׁכָּן נִפְשׁ in 1 Kgs 19:4, as well as in Job 31:40; Jon 4:8. It is also interesting to consider 1 Kgs 3:11 in the context of "asking" a "life" from Yhwh: Solomon could have—but did not—cultically "ask" the lives of his enemies (he took most of them anyway).

<sup>336</sup> The Shunamite woman asks: "Have I begged [הֲשַׁאלְתִּי] a son from my lord ...?" This 1 c.s. perfect form of מִשְׁכָּן is particularly prominent in 1 Samuel 1.



had foreseen. The question is no longer “if” the penalties foreseen in Deut 18:19 and 1 Sam 12:25 will be “required” of Israel but when and how.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Dtr’s use or inclusion<sup>337</sup> of **לשׁוּׁ** as a *Leitwort* throughout (most of) his history suggests that Israel’s movement away from Yhwh and toward exile began with its fear of death (Deut 5:24) at Yhwh’s incomparable nearness (Deut 4:7) as this was irrefutably evident in his deeds on Israel’s behalf and climactically manifest in the Horeb theophany. Israel’s “reverence” for him was not born out of faith or love, as Yhwh’s “commendation” of their fear (5:29) itself implicitly acknowledges. As such, Israel’s “request” (Deut 18:16) for human intermediation produced only ever-increasing distance between Yhwh and Israel. Joshua’s Moses-like leadership, though effective in the main, failed to seek Yhwh’s guidance at a critical moment (Josh 9:14). Israel reacted to Yhwh’s intermittent “raising-up” of Judges for its rescue (in the wake of Joshua’s demise) by apostatizing all the more and so intensifying the distance between God and people. The early tribal leadership of Judah vis-à-vis Benjamin, as “asked” about from Yhwh (Judg 1:1; 20:18), though initially effective (Judg 1:20)<sup>338</sup> eventually proves futile, if not disastrous (Judg 20:20).

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<sup>337</sup> See chapter one.

<sup>338</sup> Even when the text “legitimizes” Judah’s leadership (“Yhwh was with Judah,” Judg 1:19) it also acknowledges Judah’s failure: “but [Judah] could not drive out the residents of the valley[s] because they had chariots of iron” (ibid.).

Samuel, the priest, judge, and “raised-up” prophet “begged from Yhwh” ultimately fails in his attempt to keep the people faithful to the Deuteronomic covenant inasmuch as they refuse to “hear” him, and persist in their “demand” for kingship which produces the disobedient Saul (“demanded”) who only furthers Israel’s disobedience.

The above examination of לָשׁׁוֹא as a *Leitwort* further reveals Yhwh’s desire to be “near” his people, but whose distance from them is increased, not only by their “demand” for additional intermediaries—kings—but also by those kings’ failure to “ask” Yhwh’s guidance. Saul initially spurns asking Yhwh’s guidance (1 Sam 14:19), and afterward becomes ever more frustrated when Yhwh will not respond to his “asking” (14:37; 28:6), only seeing the futility of seeking his own will when rebuked by a dead Samuel for his illicit request—“why do you **ask** me?” (28:16)

David’s successful “requests” for guidance initially set him in contradistinction to “Saul,” but he too ceases to “ask” Yhwh once he has achieved his ambitions (cf. 2 Samuel 5 and afterward). Beginning with his “greeting” Nabal, “demanding” becomes David’s means of getting what he wants, including eventually the kingship (see his “demanding” Michal from Ishbaal, 2 Sam 3:13). Having ceased to “ask” Yhwh’s guidance, David seeks his own caprices, including other men’s wives (i.e., Uriah’s wife) and engineers a cover up via hypocritical “asking” (2 Sam 11:7). David and his house become increasingly dependent on the “asked” advice of counselors and other “clever” or “wise” persons, a development which only serves to create further breaches in his house (2 Samuel 13–20), thus fulfilling Nathan’s curse. Nathan himself metamorphosizes from prophet to wise counselor, who, along with a

subtly “wise” Bathsheba is able to secure the kingship for Solomon, the latter even turning an aspiring Adonijah’s “request” against him with fatal consequences (1 Kings 1–2).

Climactically, <sup>ל</sup>שׂוּ proves to be the term of greatest significance when Yhwh attempts to reestablish his earlier immediacy and intimacy with Israel (1 Kgs 3:3-15), appearing to Solomon and urging him to “ask” whatever he wants. The wisdom that Solomon “asks,” together with the abundance which he does not “ask” (which Yhwh nevertheless freely grants), makes Solomon far and away the most blessed of kings—not only of Israel’s kings, but those of the nations as well (in Dtr’s view). Thus when Solomon, in spite of all of Yhwh’s beneficence to him and Israel, apostatizes in favor of his foreign wives and their cults, he exacerbates an already exacerbated breach in the covenant relationship between Yhwh and Israel, resulting in even greater distance between God and people.

## Chapter Three

*“How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me?” (Judg 16:15)*

### 3.1 “Beloved” David and Israel: The Obligation to Love the God Who “Loves” and “Gives”

In the previous chapter, I explored Dtr’s use of **לש** as a *Leitwort* and an ongoing wordplay on the names “Saul” and “Samuel.” This theme calls attention to Israel’s “asking” for leadership in the form of additional human intermediation (i.e., prophets and kings), and highlights Israel’s ever-increasing distance from Yhwh as evident in its human leadership’s failure to “ask” Yhwh’s counsel. In the chapter that follows, I will show how Dtr uses a similar ongoing wordplay on the names “David” and “Jedidiah” (Solomon’s cognomen), the names of Israel and Judah’s second and third major kings, in terms of the following:

- The verb **אהב** (“love”), a synonym to the less-productive verbal root cluster from which the name David (“Beloved”) is derived (**אדד/אדדד/אדדד**);
- The antonymic verbs **בז** (“despise”)<sup>1</sup> and **לש** (“treat contemptuously,” “discard,” “abhor”) in David’s case; and the heart being “turned away” in Solomon’s case.

I will further address how this wordplay relates to the all-important concept of “loving” Yhwh as legislated in Deuteronomy. Monarchic “taking” (**לקח**) in the face of Yhwh’s liberal “giving” (**נתן**) and monarchic violation of Deuteronomic proscription statutes (**חמץ**, i.e., intermarrying with the nations rather than destroying them and their cults, Deut 7:1-10; 12:1-

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<sup>1</sup> See *HALOT*, 117.

6; 20:17-18) emerge as particularly egregious forms of failing to “love” Yhwh. It becomes evident that the “curse” pronounced by Yhwh through Samuel against “those who despise me” (1 Sam 2:30) concern David and his house as much as it does the house of Eli.

Israel’s failure to “love” Yhwh according to the law that Moses had given them (Deuteronomy) and the warnings that Joshua had issued prior to his death (Josh 22:5; 23:11-13) is tied to the advent of human kingship in Israel, especially *Davidic* kingship. This failure to love Yhwh was particularly realized in the failure of the Davidic monarchy to “love” Yhwh, beginning with David’s monarchic “taking” and his murderous cover-up of his violation of Bathsheba which precipitates further destructive “foolishness” (נבלה) by his sons, and culminates in Solomon’s “loving” many foreign women and “clinging” to their gods “in love.” I will also explore the juxtaposition of this theme with additional wordplay on the names “Jonathan” and “Nathan” involving the antonyms נתן and לקח. The ideal relationship with the one who has always “loved” and who “gives” will be clarified in the course of this discussion.

### 3.1.1. Deuteronomic “Love”

Aside from the necessity of “hearing” Yhwh, few things are stressed as repeatedly in Deuteronomy as Israel’s obligation to “love” (\*אבה) Yhwh (Deut 5:10; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 30:6, 16, 20), and to do so out of the wholeness of one’s being (6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:[3]; 19:8-9). This “love,” as William Moran<sup>2</sup> and others since have noted,<sup>3</sup> includes the

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<sup>2</sup> William Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy,” *CBQ* 25 (1963) 77-87.

political loyalty that exists between suzerain and vassal, but does not—and cannot—exclude the emotional aspect: the full loyalty and affection of the heart.<sup>4</sup>

Deuteronomy also emphasizes Yhwh’s “love” (אהב) for Israel (Deut 4:37; 7:7-8, 13; 7:12-13; 23:5; cf. 10:15), this including אהבה, “affection”<sup>5</sup> which, according to Walter Brueggemann, “bespeaks a strong emotional attachment that runs beyond any reasonable, explicable act.”<sup>6</sup> Israel’s love for Yhwh is thus intended to reciprocate the “love” that Yhwh has shown both its ancestors (10:15; cf. 4:37) and the present generation (7:8, 13; 23:5).

Deuteronomy connects the concept of “loving” Yhwh to “clinging to” (דבק) Yhwh.<sup>7</sup> “Love” for Yhwh is manifest by “clinging”<sup>8</sup> to him and to no other God. Gen 2:24 attests the antonymy of the verbs דבק and עזב (“leave,” “abandon”).<sup>9</sup> Throughout his history, Dtr will

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 338.

<sup>4</sup> See Susan Ackerman, “The Personal Is Political: Covenantal and Affectionate Love (*’āhēb*, *’ahābā*) in the Hebrew Bible,” *VT* 52 (2002) 437-58; Jacqueline E. Lapsley, “Feeling Our Way: Love for God in Deuteronomy,” *CBQ* 65 (2003) 350-69; Udo Rüterswörden, “Die Liebe zu Gott im Deuteronomium,” in *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke: Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur ‘Deuteronomismus’-Diskussion in Tora und Vorderen Propheten* (ed. Johannes F. Diehl, Jans Christian Gertz, et al.; BZAW 365; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2006) 229-38.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the verb אהב (“love”), Deut 7:7-8 employs the verb אהבה, which denotes affection, attachment, desire, being joined (for examples of a man’s affection for a woman that illuminate the metaphor of Yhwh’s stance toward Israel, see esp. Deut 21:11; Gen 34:8). Cf. *HALOT*, 362-63.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001) 96.

<sup>7</sup> Deut 4:4; 10:20; 11:22; 13:4 (cf. 17); 30:20.

<sup>8</sup> Deut 11:22; 30:20; cf. Josh 22:5.

lay great stress on not only loving, but “clinging”<sup>10</sup> to Yhwh, thereby illustrating the disastrous consequences of “abandoning” him<sup>11</sup> and “clinging” to foreign nations and other gods.<sup>12</sup>

Deuteronomy further explains that Yhwh’s “love” for Israel was not due to any special merit on the part of the people themselves, but in keeping with the “oath” that he swore to their ancestors (Deut 7:7-8). Thanks to Yhwh’s keeping this oath, Israel was to “know that Yhwh [is] the God—the faithful ‘El,’ who keeps the covenant and the **lifesaving grace** [לְחַסְדָּם] to the thousandth generation **for the one who loves him** [לְאֹהֲבָיו] and keeps his commandments” (7:10). This knowledge was not only intended to instill a strong sense of individual responsibility for reciprocating Yhwh’s “love” (7:9), but also a corporate sense of responsibility for the obedience and loyal “love” of one’s fellow Israelites (Deut 13:1-3, 6-18, cf. 7:25-26).

The textual starting-points for the discussion in this chapter will be Deuteronomy’s best-known injunction to “love” Yhwh in the “Shema” (Deut 6:4-5), and Yhwh’s subsequent promise to continue to “love” Israel even as he has loved their ancestors, blessing them with every good thing, provided they continue to “hear”:

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<sup>9</sup> I.e., a man “leaves” his parents and “clings” to his wife. **עֹזֵב** was also the technical term for divorce (see the use of the feminine perfect passive participle **עֹזֵבָה** in Isa 54:6; 60:15; 62:4); cf. Akkadian *ezēbu*. See *HALOT*, 806-7.

<sup>10</sup> Deut 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; 30:22; Josh 22:5; 23:8.

<sup>11</sup> Judg 2:12-13; 10:6; 1 Kgs 9:9; 2 Kgs 21:22.

<sup>12</sup> Josh 23:8; 1 Kgs 11:2; 2 Kgs 3:3; 18:6.

(4) **Hear** [שמע], O Israel! Yhwh is our God, Yhwh is one! (5) **And you shall love** [ואהבת] Yhwh with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (Deut 6:4-5)

(12) And it shall be, if **you always obey** [תשמעו] these rules and keep them carefully that Yhwh your God will keep for you the covenant of **lifesaving grace** [חחסד] which **he swore** [נשבע] to your ancestors. (13) **And he will continue to love you** [ואהבך], and bless you, and multiply you, and will bless the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground and your grain [דגן] and your new wine [תירש] and oil, and the calving [שגר] of your herds, and the lambing [ועשתרת]<sup>13</sup> of your flocks in the land which **he swore** [נשבע] **to give** [לתת] your ancestors. (Deut 7:12-13)

The “Shema” makes Yhwh’s “oneness” (אחד) a paradigm for the exclusivity of Israel’s “love” for him,<sup>14</sup> exclusivity which must not be compromised. Bruggemann suggests that a “bilateral, symmetrical relationship” between Yhwh and Israel is being “explored positively” in Deut 7:12-13.”<sup>15</sup> The positive blessings enumerated in 7:12-13 are all predicated upon strict obedience, while the negative consequences of disobedience are not even stated.<sup>16</sup> Thus, “Yhwh’s goodness to Israel” is being strongly emphasized here.<sup>17</sup> Several scholars have noted the wordplay in 7:13 on the names of the Canaanite gods Dagan (דגן)/“your grain” (דגנך),

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<sup>13</sup> See Manfred Görg, “Die ‘Astarte des Kleinviehs,’” *BN* 69 (1993) 9-11.

<sup>14</sup> See Wolfram Herrmann, “Jahwe und des Menschen Liebe zu ihm: zu Dtn. vi 4,” *VT* 50 (2000) 47-54.

<sup>15</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Brueggemann (*Ibid.*, 98) writes: “It is important that the positive ‘if’ of obedience is not matched here by a negative ‘if not.’ The threat is held in abeyance, even if signaled in verse 10, because the text here makes an unqualified affirmation of Yhwh’s goodness to Israel.”

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



Tirath (*trt*)<sup>18</sup> / “new wine” (תִּירָשׁ), Sheger (*šgr*)<sup>19</sup> / “calving” (שָׁגַר), and the goddess Ashtaroth אֲשֶׁת־רֹת (“lambing” (עֲשֶׂת־רֹת)), all attested in Ugaritic texts.<sup>20</sup> The suggestion of Deuteronomy’s “de-deifying”<sup>21</sup> nameplay is that Israel does not need the gods whom the “nations” believe perform these functions (Dagon, Sheger, Tirath, Ashtaroth or any of their counterparts). Yhwh’s “love” is more than sufficient to supply Israel’s every need, provided Israel’s “love” for Yhwh is manifest in “full, glad obedience.”<sup>22</sup>

Venema notes the importance of the term “numerous” in Deuteronomy 7.<sup>23</sup> Israel’s increase will not come through imitating the “much”-ness of the nations (7:7, 17) nor through their gods. Only Yhwh’s continuous “love” and blessing, which is conditional on Israel’s covenant obedience (“hearing”) and reciprocal loyal “love” (7:9), will “multiply” Israel (7:13; cf. 8:1, 13). “Multiply” (\*רַבַּב/\*רַבִּי) also happens to be a key term in Deuteronomy’s kingship law (Deut 17:14-20). Royal “multiplication” by Israel’s future king “like all the nations” will not be a substitute for Yhwh’s “love,” and it too will fail to “multiply” Israel.

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<sup>18</sup> Attested in KTU 1.39.16; 1.202. See Judith M. Hadley, “The De-deification of Deities in Deuteronomy,” in *The God of Israel* (ed. Robert P. Gordon; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 169.

<sup>19</sup> Attested in KTU 1.5.III.16, 17; 1.148.31; and in the Deir ‘Allā Inscription (line 14, and possibly line 6). See Hadley, “De-deification of Deities in Deuteronomy,” 167. The Punic theophoric name *bdšgr* (“slave of Sheger”) would seem to be strong evidence of Sheger’s “divinity” in the Levant (at least in the first millennium).

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp (“Deuteronomy,” NJBC [ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990] 99) draws attention to this wordplay.

<sup>21</sup> Hadley, “De-deification of Deities in Deuteronomy,” 168.

<sup>22</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 97.

<sup>23</sup> R.G.J. Venema, “Israël en de talrijke volken: Deuteronomium 7,” *ACEBT* 13 (1994) 48-55.

The commandment to “love” Yhwh is to be particularly observed when Israel inherits the land, since Yhwh’s giving the land is proof of his “love” for Israel. In Deut 10:11-12, Moses recalls that following his intercession with Yhwh on Israel’s behalf, Yhwh ordered him to go before Israel “so that they might go in and inherit the land, which I swore to their ancestors to give them.” Moses then proceeds to attach “moral requirements”<sup>24</sup> to this inheritance: “And now, O Israel, what does Yhwh demand of you, but to fear Yhwh your God and to walk in his ways **and to love** [לְאַהֲבֶהוּ] him and to serve him with your whole heart and your whole self?” (Deut 10:12). Thus, although “heaven and the heaven of heavens is Yhwh’s ... [and] the earth with everything in it” (10:14), the awe-inspiring fact that Yhwh “had affection [חֶסֶד] for [Israel’s] ancestors **by loving** [לְאַהֲבֶהוּ] them, and chose their posterity after them” in particular (10:15),<sup>25</sup> should serve to motivate every aspect of their conduct in the land (Yhwh’s “rest”).

In the extension of their “love,” Israel is to imitate Yhwh. Deut 10:18 (10:16-19!) makes clear that Yhwh’s love extends to the resident alien: “And he **loves** [לְאַהֲבֶהוּ] the resident alien [גֵּר] **by giving** [לְתַתֵּן] him food and clothing.” Therefore, Israel is to do likewise: “**And you shall love** [לְאַהֲבֶהוּ] the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (10:19). Here the text further highlights “giving” as a function or manifestation of Yhwh’s “love.”

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<sup>24</sup> Blenkinsopp (“Deuteronomy,” 100) notes that “the opening ‘and now’ introduces moral requirements” throughout Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut 4:1; 10:12).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid: “The universal power of Israel’s God is contrasted with the particular choice of his people (cf. Isa 40-55).”

Yhwh's "love" is sufficient to turn a curse (קללה) into a blessing (Deut 23:4-5), even when the curse is pronounced upon Israel by foreigners. But the reverse is also true: he can turn a blessing into a curse. In short, Deuteronomy portrays Yhwh as the consummate "giver": the giving of the land being the manifestation *par excellence* of his "love" for Israel's ancestors and for Israel (7:13; cf. 1 Sam 1:5). The sign by which Israel will know that Yhwh had fully fulfilled his promise to "give" them the land is his awarding them "rest from all their enemies all around" and their "dwell[ing] in safety" (12:10; cf. 25:19). Israel was to experience this condition first under Joshua's leadership (Josh 21:44; 23:1) and for the last time under their second king (2 Sam 7:1), appropriately named "Beloved" (אהבה, see §3.3).

Deuteronomy equates "loving" Yhwh with "keeping" its prescriptions (Deut 5:10; 11:1, 22; 19:9; 30:16). Especially egregious violations of this legislation ("the covenant of Yhwh," Deut 4:23; Josh 7:15; 23:16) are called נבלה ("folly," "foolishness"). As Blenkinsopp indicates, נבלה is "an ancient term for a serious disorder, usually of a sexual nature affecting the entire community."<sup>26</sup> A broader definition of נבלה that accounts for Achan's deed is a foolish act that imperils the survival of one's own "house" (family) or the "house" of another, thus "destructive folly." It emerges that in Dtr's descriptions of נבלה, the survival of Israelite "houses" is particularly at issue. The destructive impact of נבלה on community and family is expressed in the phrase "folly in Israel" (Deut 22:21-22; cf. Josh 7:15; Judg 6:20, 16; 2 Sam 13:12); it is a sin "that ought not to be done," as Gen 34:7 puts it.

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<sup>26</sup> Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomy," 105.

Dtr's narratives further evidence a correlation between נבלה and בליעל ("destructiveness"<sup>27</sup> or "worthlessness") as a violation of "the covenant of Yhwh" and a failure to "love" Yhwh.

Also integral to Deuteronomy's conception of "love" is the noun חסד. English lexica and translations render this term with "steadfast love," "covenant mercy,"<sup>28</sup> "covenant of love,"<sup>29</sup> "loyalty,"<sup>30</sup> "covenant of loyalty,"<sup>31</sup> "kindness,"<sup>32</sup> "mercy."<sup>33</sup> While these translations capture aspects of חסד, they fail to account for or convey its dominate connection with the preservation of life, particularly the preservation of "seed" and the "house." Almost anywhere חסד occurs in biblical narrative, it does so in the context of preserving "houses" and posterity,<sup>34</sup> and is thus better rendered "lifesaving kindness" or "lifesaving grace." I will

<sup>27</sup> J.A. Emerton, "Sheol and the Sons of Belial," *VT* 37 (1987) 214-18.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., NAB Deut 7:9.

<sup>29</sup> NIV Deut 7:9.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., NJPS Josh 2:12, 14. In *HALOT* (pp. 336-37), glosses for חסד include "**joint obligation** between relatives, friends, host and guest, master and servant; closeness, solidarity, **loyalty**"; "lasting loyalty, **faithfulness**"; "**faithfulness; goodness, graciousness**"; "**proofs of mercy**" (emphasis in original).

<sup>31</sup> NRSV Deut 7:10.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., NJPS Deut 7:10; KJV, NAB Josh 2:12, 14. *BDB* (pp. 338-39) glosses חסד as "goodness, kindness."

<sup>33</sup> KJV usually alternates between "kindness" ("lovingkindness" or adverbially "kindly") and "mercy."

<sup>34</sup> E.g., in Judg 1:24 Josephite spies promise the man from Bethel חסד for showing them the city's entrance, and they let him and his whole clan go when he does so. Judg 8:34-35 notes that Israel not only failed to remember Yhwh, but did not show Jerubbaal/Gideon any חסד, i.e., they allowed almost his entire "house" to be exterminated. In 1 Sam 15:6, the Kenites are allowed to go out from the Amalekites who are to be subjected to חסד because they had shown the Israelites חסד during the exodus and wilderness period. Because the Kenites had allowed the Israelites to live, Israel in turn allows the Kenites to live. In Gen 21:23, Abimelech is concerned about the preservation of his posterity (cf. David and Jonathan). Later in Gen 24:27, 49, Abraham's

accordingly render חסד uniformly as “lifesaving grace.”<sup>35</sup> Deut 7:8 makes clear that Yhwh’s keeping of the oath he swore to Israel’s ancestors expressed his “love” for Israel. This function of “love” is key to understanding Dtr’s depiction of Jonathan’s one-sided “love” for David (cf. 1 Sam 20:17) and the promises that Jonathan attempts to secure from him (see 1 Sam 20:8; 2 Sam 3:8; 9:1, 7).

### 3.1.2 “Because He Loved Your Ancestors ... He Brought You Out in Person” (Deut 4:37)

As noted previously (§2.2.2), the implied audience of the paraenesis in Deuteronomy 4 is exilic (see esp. vv. 29-31). The text has two thresholds in view: the exodus/entrance into the land (Deut 4:5, 20) and the exile (4:25-27). Thus Moses’s declaration “But you, **the ones who are clinging** [חֹסְדֵיכֶם] to Yhwh your God are alive this day” (4:4) is not just addressed to the survivors of the wilderness generation who are about to enter the land, but also to the exiles who are faithfully “clinging” to Yhwh.

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servant uses חסד (and אמת) with reference to Yhwh’s providing a way for Abraham’s posterity to continue through Isaac and for Isaac to have posterity through a potential marriage to Rebekah. In Gen 47:29, Jacob-Israel requests that Joseph show him חסד by taking an oath not to bury him in Egypt, so that his posterity—his “house”—would not be tempted to stay in Egypt. That this חסד-oath pertains specifically to the welfare of his posterity is evident given the gesture that accompanied it, i.e., Joseph’s (euphemistically) placing his hand “under [his, Jacob’s] thigh” (i.e., underneath the procreative organs). In Ruth 1:8-9; 2:20, Naomi refers to the חסד of Yhwh that will enable her daughters-in-law to have posterity, and in Ruth’s case grant posterity to the dead through a Levirate marriage. Performing the responsibilities of such a levirate marriage, notably, is called “build[ing] up his brother’s house” (Deut 25:9). Other such examples might be cited.

<sup>35</sup> On חסד as “grace” I follow John 1:14, 17 which expresses the Hebrew notion of חסד with the Greek term χάρις. See also LXX Esther 2:9, 17. Cf. Takamitsu Muraoka, “Hebrew/Aramaic Index to the Septuagint,” in Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), Appendix 4, 261.

In Deut 4:37 Moses reminds Israel that in the past Yhwh had taken action on their behalf, including leading them out of Egypt “in person [בפניו]” because “he loved [אהב] your ancestors.” Their “chosenness” (“therefore he chose their posterity after them,” 4:37) is thus a corollary to Yhwh’s “love.” Israel’s reciprocation of that “love” will be evident in their “keeping” Yhwh’s “decrees” and “commandments” which Moses is enjoining upon Israel, that “it might go well with [them]” (4:40). If the Israelites who “live,” are those who “cling” to Yhwh (4:4), failure to “cling” to Yhwh and to “love” him will result in death and disaster—something which the exilic audience has already experienced. The text emphasizes the susceptibility of the “heart” to turn away from Yhwh in this process.<sup>36</sup>

In the narrative that follows, Dtr will present stories of Israel’s most notable leaders, particularly its “demanded” kings, whom Yhwh subsequently “chose” (Saul, 1 Sam 10:24; David, 16:7-12) and particularly “loved” (David, Solomon, 2 Sam 12:24), who, however, themselves failed to fully “love” Yhwh and to “cling” to him. The death and disaster that Israel experienced with the exile are the consequences of the sins of Israel’s kings—beginning with David and Solomon—their failing to reciprocally “love” God by “keep[ing] his decrees and commandments” (Deut 4:40). As a result it has not “gone well” with Israel. Exilic Israel is faced again—and perpetually—with the choice of “loving” or “despising” Yhwh, of “clinging” to him or “clinging” to other gods “in love.” What will Israel choose?

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<sup>36</sup> E.g., Israel must not let the things which their “eyes have seen” depart from their “heart” (Deut 4:9), but rather seek Yhwh with their “whole heart” (4:29), since the heart is the seat of reflection on Yhwh’s incomparability, but is also too easily “turned aside” after other forbidden attractions.

### 3.1.3 Yhwh Will “Circumcise Your Heart ... to Love” Him (Deut 30:6, 16, 20)

Brueggemann calls Deuteronomy 30 “a remarkable theological achievement” as “a statement of unmitigated judgment” which “becomes a matrix out of which YHWH’s newness for Israel is announced.”<sup>37</sup> Moses had previously commanded Israel: “Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart and do not stiffen your necks any longer” (Deut 10:16). Now in chap. 30 Moses affirms: “But Yhwh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your posterity **to love** [לְאַהֲבָה] Yhwh your God with all your heart and with all your soul in order that you may live. And **Yhwh** your God **will give** [יִתֵּן יְהוָה] all of these curses upon your haters [אֹיְבֶיךָ] and your enemies [שֹׁנְאֶיךָ] who have persecuted you” (Deut 30:6-7).” Israel is thus left without excuse for continuing in obduracy (i.e., with an “uncircumcised heart”) and for failing to keep Yhwh’s covenant.<sup>38</sup> The message for Dtr’s persecuted and hated exilic audience is clear: all obstacles to “loving” Yhwh as he has “loved” (and “loves”) Israel have been removed. Israel need not fear “haters” or “enemies,” because Yhwh will “give” his curses upon them. Israel need only “love” Yhwh.

Deut 30:11-14 makes it clear that Israel’s relationship with Yhwh does not *de facto* require intermediaries. For Dtr, even the prophet as intermediary (to say nothing of the king) represents something of an intrusion into a more ideal relationship. Israel from the very beginning resists the presence of God, which is elsewhere equated with the land itself:

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<sup>37</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 265.

<sup>38</sup> Blenkinsopp (“Deuteronomy,” 107) writes: “the new covenant of the exilic Deuteronomist, also reflected in Jer 31:31-34, presupposes a change of heart effected by Yahweh which would make law observance a labor of love.”

Yhwh's "rest."<sup>39</sup> Only by "loving" Yhwh and living obediently in the covenant that they are making (or renewing)<sup>40</sup> will Israel maintain any claim on that "rest": "See! I am setting [נָתַתִּי] before you this day life and good, and death and evil: namely, I command you this day **to love** [לְאַהֲבָה] Yhwh your God by walking in his ways and by keeping his commandments and decrees and regulations so that you may live and multiply and that Yhwh your God may bless you in the land where you are going to inherit" (Deut 30:15-16).

Dtr records that Moses invoked "heaven and earth as witnesses," i.e., covenant witnesses<sup>41</sup> against Israel "this day", "setting" (lit., "I have given" נָתַתִּי) before them "life and death, blessing and curse" so that they may "choose life" (30:19). Israel's posterity will only "live" by "**loving** [לְאַהֲבָה] Yhwh [their] God, by **hearing** [לְשָׁמַע] his voice, and **clinging** to him [וְלִדְבַקְהוּ בּוֹ]" because he is "their life and ... length of days for residing upon the ground which Yhwh swore to [their] ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to **give** [לְהָתַת] [it] to them" (Deut 30:19-20). The blessings promised or "sworn" to Israel's ancestors (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) can only be realized by reciprocating Yhwh's "love" for Israel and its ancestors.

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<sup>39</sup> Yhwh's "rest" = the land (Ps 95:11; Ps 134:14) and the temple (Isa 66:1; 2 Chr 6:41; Ps 134:8; cf. Isa 18:14).

<sup>40</sup> Blenkinsopp ("Deuteronomy," 107) suggests that the "form of words" in Deut 30:15-20 "was probably actually used at covenant-making and covenant-renewing liturgies."

<sup>41</sup> Blenkinsopp (Ibid.) compares Deut 4:26 and the use of הָעֵדִיתִי ("I call X to witness") there.



### 3.1.4 “They Will Treat Me with Contempt” (Deut 31:20)

Dtr, however, knows a future—and exilic Israel knows a recent past—in which Israel did not “love” Yhwh, this despite Yhwh’s continuous “love” and long-running beneficence toward the whole “house of Israel”: “But when I shall have brought [Israel] to the ground which I swore to [his] ancestors—flowing with milk and honey—and they eat and are filled and grow fat and turn to other gods and serve them, **they will treat me with contempt** [וַיִּנְאַצְוּנִי] and they will frustrate [הִפְרֹ] my covenant” (Deut 31:20).<sup>42</sup>

Dtr shows that Israel’s treating Yhwh with contempt, which in turn led to its going into exile, had its precedents in the misdeeds of its priestly and royal leadership: People “abhorring” or “discarding” Yhwh’s sacrifices (וַיִּנְאַצְוּ 1 Sam 2:17) under the influence of the Elides and David’s “treating Yhwh with utter contempt” (וַיִּנְאַצְוּ אֶת יְהוָה ... “הוֹדָה” 2 Sam 12:14; see below).

## 3.2 “Those Who Despise Me”: Israel’s Early Failure to “Love” God (Joshua-1 Samuel 7)

As discussed in the previous chapter, Israel’s “asking” for intermediaries (Deut 5:24; 18:16; 1 Samuel 8; etc.) was not born out of love for Yhwh, but rather from a fear of death. Deuteronomy’s repeated insistence that Israel *wholly love* Yhwh makes clear that Israel’s failure to wholly love Yhwh was an ongoing problem, not only prior to and during the Horeb experience, but long afterward. Given this and Deuteronomy’s literary location at the head of

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<sup>42</sup> The causative verb הִפְרֹ (\*פִּרַּר, “break, destroy, suspend, foil, make useless,” “frustrate,” *HALOT*, 974-75) also occurs in 31:16 and elsewhere in Dtr at Judg 2:1; 2 Sam 15:34; 17:14; 1 Kgs 15:18.

Dtr's history which focuses so much on Israel's monarchic trajectory, we anticipate that failure to love "Yhwh" will be an issue of importance in what follows in Dtr.

The juxtaposition in Deuteronomy 7 of the foreign intermarriage ban (v. 2) and the  $\square\aleph$ -requirements<sup>43</sup> (vv. 1-5; 25-26) with the positive affirmation of Yhwh's "love" for Israel (v. 6-15), suggests that observance of the intermarriage ban and the  $\square\aleph$ -requirements are a necessary (though not the only) "response to the love of God."<sup>44</sup> Thus the aim of Deuteronomy's legislation on marriage,  $\square\aleph$ , and "loving God" is not genocide, but rather to separate Israel from idolatry.<sup>45</sup> It must be significant then that in the Joshua narratives, Dtr first weighs Israel's reciprocal "love" for Yhwh in terms of the  $\square\aleph$  (e.g., reading Josh 7:21 and 9:1-27 in terms of 22:5 and 23:11-16).<sup>46</sup>

The observance or violation of the  $\square\aleph$  statutes of Deuteronomy—the performance of which Dtr sees as an important defense against "Canaanization" and the encroachment of illicit worship—also serve as a benchmark against which Dtr could measure the performance

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<sup>43</sup> For an in-depth treatment of Deuteronomy's  $\square\aleph$ -requirements, see Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (BJS 211; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991) 89-121.

<sup>44</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 101.

<sup>45</sup> Stern (*Biblical Herem*, 96) writes: "Deut 7:2 reflects [the fact] that  $\square\aleph$  was never intended as the sole mode of operation (i.e., genocide). Along with the separation of the  $\square\aleph$ , which according to Deut 20:18 was aimed at idol worship, the legislator aimed at the separation of Israel from marriages that would lead to idolatry."

<sup>46</sup> Dtr depicts Moses as setting the high water mark in carrying out  $\square\aleph$  on Israel's enemies during the wilderness period. Moses recalls his having subjected Sihon of Heshbon and his people to  $\square\aleph$  (Deut 2:30-35) as well as Og of Bashan, his people, and "sixty cities, the whole region of Argob" (Deut 3:1-8). Dtr portrays Joshua as less thorough-going in this regard and his failures as significant (see, e.g., Joshua 9).

of Saul and others, based on their compliance (or non-compliance) with these statutes.<sup>47</sup> The incorporation of Rahab and her “house” into Israel (Joshua 2) through “lifesaving grace” (חסד), Achan’s “taking” from the חרם (called נבלה, a sin of destructive foolishness, Josh 7:15), and Israel’s illicit covenant with the Gibeonites (Joshua 9), suggest Israel’s collective and individual willingness to violate or compromise the legislation of Deuteronomy. Ironically, Rahab the prostitute has more faith in Yhwh than Achan the Judahite just as Uriah the Hittite will seemingly love Yhwh more than David, Israel’s Judahite king. Monarchic failure to wholeheartedly “love” Yhwh precipitates Israel and Judah’s failure to “love” Yhwh which will eventuate in Israel and Judah and their monarchic houses being subject to the curses announced in Deuteronomy (see also 1 Sam 12:25).

### 3.2.1 “Take Very Great Care ... to Love Yhwh” (Josh 22:5; 23:11-13)

The conclusion to Dtr’s story of Joshua’s leading Israel into the land reemphasizes the importance of Israel’s keeping Deuteronomy’s requirement to love Yhwh. Joshua’s departure from the scene is marked by several speeches in Dtr’s style. Nelson writes: “This transitional moment provided DH [Dtr] with an opportunity to commend compliance with the law of Moses,” just as Yhwh does in Josh 1:7-8.<sup>48</sup> Here Dtr reiterates the necessity of “loving” Yhwh at an important historical juncture, the end of Joshua’s leadership: “Only take very great care

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<sup>47</sup> Deuteronomy’s חרם-statutes are detailed in 7:2, 22-26 (where they are intertwined with cult purification laws); 13:13-19 (which prescribes the destruction of any Israelite city in which worship of foreign gods occurs, including its animals); and 20:16-18. The “Yhwh has given” formula occurs in each of these instances (7:2, 22; 13:13; 20:16).

<sup>48</sup> Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 250.

to perform the commandment and instruction ... by loving [לְאַהֲבָה] Yhwh your God and walking in all his paths and to keep his commandments ... and clinging [לְדַבְּקָה] to him” (Josh 22:5).

Dtr’s Joshua connects the importance of “loving” Yhwh directly to Yhwh’s having given them “rest” in the land (22:4), as if continued possession of the land hinges on Israel’s observance of this “command and instruction.” Elie Assis notes the similarity of the language in 22:5 to Deut 10:12-35; 11:22; 19:9; and 30:20,<sup>49</sup> while Hawk points out that the “piling up” of infinitival phrases taken from Deuteronomy<sup>50</sup> “forcefully underscores the theme of fidelity to Yhwh, introducing the subject in the most positive terms.”<sup>51</sup>

In his first farewell speech (Joshua 23), Joshua explicitly states that continued possession of the land depends on Israel’s “loving” God. Here again, Dtr has in view Yhwh’s granting Israel “rest” [רָחֵם] in the land (23:1), and again enjoins observance of Deuteronomy (“the book of Moses’s instruction [law],” 23:6). Hawk suggests that “the promise that YHWH will drive out the inhabitants of the land, conditioned upon Israel’s commitment to love YHWH, walk in all his ways, and hold fast to him (Deut 11:22-23), is now rendered

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<sup>49</sup> Elie Assis, “‘For It Shall Be a Witness Between Us’: A Literary Reading of Josh 22,” *SJOT* 18 (2004) 211-12.

<sup>50</sup> L. Daniel Hawk (*Joshua* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000] 234) writes: “A chain of infinitival phrases follows: ‘to love the LORD your God’ (cf. Deut 6:5; 10:12; 12:1, 13, 22, etc.), ‘to walk in all his ways’ (cf. Deut 5:30; 10:12; 11:22), ‘to keep his commandments’ (cf. Deut 5:10; 7:9; 8:11; 13:4 [MT 5], etc.), ‘to hold fast to him’ (cf. Deut 4:4; 10:10; 11:13, etc.).”

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

unconditionally (Josh 23:5).<sup>52</sup> But the reiteration of the positive instruction of Josh 22:5 becomes a warning beginning in Josh 23:11: “Take very great care regarding yourselves **to love** [לְאַהֲבָה] Yhwh your God, because if you indeed turn and cling [וּדְבַקְתֶּם] to the rest of these nations ... and you make marriages with them and you go in among them and they among you, know for certain that Yhwh your God will no longer dispossess these nations before you, and they shall become a trap, and a snare, and scourge in your sides and goads in your eyes until you perish off of [מֵעַל] this good land which Yhwh your God has given [נָתַן] you” (Josh 23:11-13).<sup>53</sup> Joshua’s (Dtr’s) warning<sup>54</sup> about “loving” Yhwh and not joining with the nations in marriage specifically looks forward to Solomon’s idolatry and his foreign marriages (see below).

Caetano Minette de Tillesse sees Josh 23:15-16 as the moment<sup>55</sup> at which Israel’s movement toward exile begins: “Therefore it shall be, when every good thing has come upon you which Yhwh your God has spoken to you, that even so will Yhwh bring upon every evil thing until he has destroyed you off of this good ground which Yhwh has given [נָתַן] unto

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 251.

<sup>53</sup> Frank Moore Cross (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973] 287), recognizing the exilic implications of this speech, assigns Josh 23:11-13, 15-16 to his Dtr<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>54</sup> Hawk (*Joshua*, 251) further observes: “Joshua’s modification of the Deuteronomic text shapes the relationship between divine initiative and human response, so that the call to ‘hold fast’ and ‘love’ YHWH is presented as a response to rather than a condition of YHWH’s activity on behalf of the nation. This point made, Joshua then places a condition on the divine promise; YHWH will not continue to drive out the nations if Israel insists on joining with them (vv.12-13).”

<sup>55</sup> Caetano Minette de Tillesse, “La crise du Pentateuque,” ZAW 111 (1999) 1-9.

you” (23:15-16). Dtr has Israel and the monarchy’s (particularly Solomon’s) failure to “love” Yhwh in view at this moment. The literary movement toward the exile is already underway.

Joshua’s renewed emphasis on not only “loving” (אהב) but also “clinging” (דבק, i.e., “holding fast”) to Yhwh has two situations in view: Israel will shortly begin a cycle of “abandon[ing] [ויעזבו] Yhwh” (Judg 2:12-13 *bis*); Joshua’s speech also anticipates Israel’s situation under Solomon. Deut 11:22-25 lays great emphasis on Israel’s “loving” Yhwh and “clinging” to him so that Israel’s “possession” or “inheritance” might attain its fullest extent, a dominion only achieved under Solomon according to 1 Kgs 4:21. It was this same Solomon’s disastrous decisions pertaining to “loving” and “clinging” to Yhwh and its consequences for Israel and its ideal inheritance that Joshua’s warning has in view.

### 3.2.2 “But Those Who Love Him Are Like the Sun’s Going Forth” (Judg 5:31)

The final two lines<sup>56</sup> in the song of Deborah reecho Deuteronomy’s theme of “loving” God discussed earlier: “Thus may all your **enemies** [אויביו] perish, Yhwh / **But those who love him** [ואהביו] are like the sun’s going forth [צאתו] in his might” (5:31). These lines “summarize” the foregoing drama in the poem (i.e., 5:24-30) by “asking that [Israel’s] enemies be like Sisera and [its] friends like Jael.”<sup>57</sup> The dichotomy established here between “lovers” and “enemies” (“haters”)<sup>58</sup> of Yhwh is suggestive of David (“Beloved”), whom Dtr

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<sup>56</sup> For an analysis of these lines, see Michael P. O’Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 230.

<sup>57</sup> Tammi J. Schneider, *Judges* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000) 97.

will depict as the one who first “goes out” and “fights Yhwh’s battles” (1 Sam 18:5, 16; 25:28), i.e., as one who presumably “loves” Yhwh (like Jael), but who later fails to “go out” to fight Yhwh’s or Israel’s battles (a king to fight their battles is what Israel “demanded,” 1 Sam 8:10, 20).<sup>59</sup> Dtr seems to make little distinction between Yhwh’s “enemies” and David’s “enemies” until he has Nathan state that David not only “despised Yhwh” (2 Sam 12:9-10), but “treated Yhwh with utter contempt” (12:14). According to Polzin, Judg 5:31 “strongly suggests that even Israel may be a part of the company of Lord’s enemies.”<sup>60</sup> If Saul becomes Yhwh’s “enemy” (1 Sam 28:16) by failing to “hear,” what will be the status of David who “despises” and “treats Yhwh with utter contempt?” And what of his evil-doing descendants?

Dtr appends to the song of Judg 5:1-30 the brief notice that “the land was at rest” (5:31). Similar notices occur in Josh 14:15 and Judg 3:11, 30. The concept of the land’s “resting” is certainly related to Deuteronomy’s ideal of Yhwh’s granting “rest” to Israel from its enemies (Deut 12:9-10; 25:9), a rest which they enjoyed under Joshua (Josh 21:44; 23:1). Here too the text looks forward to David and the “rest” that he will enjoy from his enemies (2 Sam 7:1, 11) when he finally consolidates his power over Israel and Judah, and receives the dynastic promise (7:11-17), but then “despises Yhwh” and “treats him with utter contempt” (12:9-10, 14).

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<sup>58</sup> Robert G. Boling (*Judges: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* [AB 6A; New York: Doubleday, 1975] 115) suggests that “the verse itself [Judg 5:31] is archaic as witnessed by the contrast between <sup>ʾ</sup>wybyk and <sup>ʾ</sup>hbyw, ‘enemies’ and ‘lovers.’”

<sup>59</sup> I.e., David opts to remain at home in opulence and ease at the time of “going forth [𐤀𐤍𐤔] of kings/messengers” (2 Sam 11:1; cf. “the going forth [𐤀𐤍𐤔] of the sun in his might,” Judg 5:31).

<sup>60</sup> Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History. Pt. 1: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) 167.

Schneider further notes that the land's "rest" is attributed in Judg 5:31 neither to Barak nor to Deborah.<sup>61</sup> If the land's "rest" can be attributed to anyone that precedes this notice, it would seem attributable rather to Jael—a foreigner like Rahab and one of those who "loves" Yhwh—dispatching Sisera, one who "hates" Yhwh. In this instance at least, the land's rest is connected to "love" for Yhwh. This forty year "rest" immediately precedes Israel again "doing evil in Yhwh's sight" and his handing them over to the Midianites for seven years (Judg 6:1), at which point Yhwh commissions Gideon, Israel's first proto-king, to "save" Israel (6:14).

### 3.2.3 "To [Israel] He Gave a Double Portion, for He Loved [Israel]" (1 Sam 1:5)

The proto-kingship under Gideon and Abimelech (a subject that will be given further treatment in chapter five) resulted in Israel's again "whoring after the baals" (Judg 8:33) and "abandoning Yhwh" (10:6), rather than taking great care to "love" (Josh 22:5; 23:11) and "cling" (22:5; 23:8) to Yhwh. By this failing to "love" Yhwh and by disregarding his covenant, Israel risked becoming Yhwh's "enemy" (Judg 5:31; cf. 1 Kgs 9:9).

The cyclical apostasy of the Judges period culminates in an (as yet) unsurpassed act of "destructive folly" (נבלה): the cruel rape of a Levite's concubine, and the Benjaminites' refusal to hand the perpetrators over for justice (Judges 19–20). This "destructive folly" was born out of contempt for Yhwh and his covenant (Deut 31:20), and resulted in the near extinction of an entire tribe (many "houses") from Israel. The נבלה committed by the

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<sup>61</sup> Schneider, *Judges*, 97. "Baraq is not listed as a judge nor is he or Deborah listed as the reason or cause of the ensuing peace."



Benjaminite “destructive sons” (בני־בל יעל) anticipates more destructive “folly” in Israel to come, not only by Eli’s “destructive sons,” but more significantly by David’s own נבל sons. The refrain “there was no king in Israel, but every man did what was right in his own sight” (Judg 17:16, 21:25) leads us to conclude, as did Israel, that something has gone terribly awry during the Judges period. Israel believes that a king will be a corrective (1 Samuel 8) to this kind of נבלה. Will it?

As discussed in the previous chapter (§2.2.8), Samuel’s birth-narrative (1 Samuel 1) plays a critical role in Dtr’s overall literary strategy of showing why and how Israel’s human leadership, especially the monarchy, failed. A number of scholars have noted that the Samuel birth-narrative (1 Samuel 1)—Elkanah’s and Hannah’s marriage in particular—is a representation of Yhwh and Israel’s relationship in miniature. Bodner, for instance, describes this pericope as “a story for a community that has experienced the barrenness of exile and the taunting of rivals”<sup>62</sup> Polzin suggests that “‘the having of sons’ is the image chosen by the author [of 1 Samuel 1] to convey the complicated story of how Israel came to have kings.”<sup>63</sup> Israel itself may have even heard an allusion to Yhwh in the name “Elkanah” (אלקנה) “El has created”),<sup>64</sup> this making the literary effect of the name of Samuel’s father here even more suggestive.

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<sup>62</sup> Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (HBM 19; Sheffield: Sheffield/Phoenix, 2009) 17.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 25.

<sup>64</sup> Genesis 14:22; cf. 14:19; Isa 1:3.

1 Sam 1:5 is a *crux interpretum* that bears on how this story is usually read. Jobling succinctly summarizes the issue: “Depending on the meaning of one obscure word [אֵיכָל] we may read Elkanah’s action at the sacrifice in one of two ways. Either he gives Hannah a special portion of food *because* he loves her *though* YHWH has closed her womb (NRSV), or he gives her only the regular portion *though* he loves her *because* YHWH has closed her womb (RSV).”<sup>65</sup>

In Deuteronomy, Yhwh’s “giving” to Israel is said to be a function of his “love” for Israel (see §3.1), and we will see that Jonathan’s “giving” to David is clearly a function of the former’s “love” for the latter (see §3.4.2 and §3.5.1 below). Assuming the Deuteronomistic (exilic) orientation of 1 Samuel 1 in its present literary context and given that כִּי as a concessive particle is relatively rare outside of poetry, Elkanah’s “giving” Hannah a “double portion” or some kind of “special portion” *because* of (causal כִּי) seems to be the far more likely reading in v. 5. But whether we are dealing with “one portion, a pim in value”<sup>66</sup> “one fattened (or: selected) portion”<sup>67</sup> or the traditional “double portion” (NRSV), the “giving” has to do with Elkanah’s “love” for Hannah, whether it is a consequence of this or not.

Elkanah’s “giving” to Hannah out of (or in connection with) his “love” for her is a prelude to Yhwh’s own “giving” to Hannah. The verb נָתַן (“give”) occurs frequently throughout this pericope (1:4-5, 11 [*bis*], 16-17, 27). Hannah shares with David and his

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<sup>65</sup> David Jobling, *1 Samuel* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998) 140-41.

<sup>66</sup> David Aberbach, “*mnh 'ht 'pym* (1 Sam. I 5): A New Interpretation,” *VT* 24 (1974) 350-53.

<sup>67</sup> Ferdinand Deist, “‘*APPAYIM* (1 Sam. I 5) < \**PYM*?’” *VT* 27 (1977) 205-8.

children (see §3.5-§3.6) the distinction of being the only character in Dtr who is expressly stated to be the object of “love.” The narrative stresses Elkanah’s “love” for Hannah, but nothing is said about Hannah’s feelings for Elkanah (or even for Yhwh). As a taunted exilic community, Israel would have seen something of its own reflection in Hannah: Hannah-Israel is “loved.” Yhwh’s “love” for Israel has been manifest in days past by his giving Israel the land (Deut 4:37-38) and every other blessing (Deut 7:13). Hannah is now “begging” from Yhwh in faith what she desires most, and Yhwh will “give” what she begs (i.e., a son; cf. the dynastic “son” of 2 Samuel 7). As has been discussed in the previous chapter, Yhwh will similarly grant what Israel “demands” from him (i.e., kings). In the former instance, Yhwh gives to Hannah what he has granted Israel at other times out of “love”: he makes her fruitful and multiplies her (Deut 7:13). He likewise gives Israel kings (dynastic “sons”), but not out of love (cf. Hos 13:11).

#### 3.2.4 *“Those Who Despise Me Shall Be Cursed” (1 Sam 2:30)*

When an anonymous “man of God” comes to Eli and announces the delegitimation and punishment of the priestly “house” which Yhwh had previously “chosen” (1 Sam 2:28), his oracle not only has the Elides in view, but other soon-to-be-chosen “houses,” i.e., the monarchy: “those who despise me **will be cursed** [יִקָּלַל]” (2:30). When Shimei comes out of Bahurim “cursing” David as “a bloody man and a man of destruction [אִישׁ בַּלְיָעַל]” (2 Sam 16:5-13), David muses that this curse may be Yhwh’s short-term punishment upon him because of his sins (16:10-12). He had, in Nathan’s words, “despised” Yhwh (12:9-10).

David's wish that Yhwh would "look upon [his] affliction [עֲנִי/עֲנִיָּה] and ... requite him good in place of his [i.e., Shimei's or Yhwh's] curse" (16:12) is ironic considering the sexual violations (cf. עֲנִי\*) in David's own "house" that have brought him to this state of affairs (as we will see, §3.5.7) and Yhwh's express wish that the "sons of wickedness" not "afflict" (לַעֲנוּתוֹ) Israel anymore (2 Sam 7:10). Although David, like Hezekiah generations later, might consider a restoration of good fortune in the present a sufficient blessing (see 2 Kgs 20:19), Dtr's long-term view is very much focused on the "desolation and a curse [וְלִקְלָלָהּ]" that the houses of Judah and David will become (2 Kgs 22:19), in consequence of a monarchic and especially Davidic failure to "love" Yhwh.

In the mode of Achan's admitted actions in Josh 7:21 (cf. 7:1, 15), "taking" becomes a monarchic manifestation of "despising" or "hating" Yhwh (see 2 Sam 11:4; 12:1-12). Frank Crüsemann has noted the importance of the verb לָקַח ("take") in Samuel's words addressing the "rights [מִשְׁפָּט, lit., justice] of the king" (8:11-17),<sup>68</sup> while Reinhard Müller calls attention to לָקַח as an important antimonarchic term in Samuel's final, apologetic speech (1 Sam 12:1-17).<sup>69</sup> Israel's king will not be the just "reader" or "meditator" of the book of Yhwh's

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<sup>68</sup> Frank Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat* (WMANT 49; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) 64-70; cf. Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12* (BLS 10; Decatur, GA: Almond, 1985) 34.

<sup>69</sup> Reinhard Müller, *Königtum und Gottesherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur alttestamentlichen Monarchiekritik* (FAT III/2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 181-82.

“instruction” (as envisaged Deut 17:14-20). Rather, Israel’s king will be a “taker,”<sup>70</sup> and the self-interested “multiplier” that Moses warns against (Deut 17:16-17) in opposition to the divine “multiplication” that comes via reciprocating Yhwh’s “love” (Deut 7:12-13). Dtr will work this image of the “taking” and “multiplying” king into his “Yhwh has given”-motif with its wordplay on the names “Jonathan” and “Nathan.”

The king of Deut 17:14-20 represents an ideal<sup>71</sup> rather than any figure that Dtr actually portrays. Even Josiah, for whom Dtr reserves his highest praise,<sup>72</sup> is much more of an “activist” ruler than the provisions of Deuteronomy allow. Voigt puts it well: “The truly revolutionary nature of the Deuteronomic program is seen most clearly in the law of the king.”<sup>73</sup> The king of Deut 17:14-20 is not recognizably a “king”—neither to the “nations” that Israel wished to imitate, nor to Israel itself.

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 9; New York: Doubleday, 1984) 290.

<sup>71</sup> Antony F. Campbell, *I Samuel* [FOTL 7; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003] 141) writes: “The whole history of Israel, kings included, is judged by the strictures of the deuteronomic code. Deut 17:14-20 might be the extreme expression of this conviction, but like many an extreme position, it merely follows logic to its conclusion.”

<sup>72</sup> Bernard M. Levenson, “The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History’s Transformation of Torah,” *VT* 51 (2001) 511-34.

<sup>73</sup> Peter T. Voigt, *Deuteronomic Theology and the Significance of Torah: A Reappraisal* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 216. Levenson (“Reconceptualization of Kingship,” 524) writes: “The double denial by Deuteronomy of the conventional participation of the king in justice and cultus amounts to an extraordinary rejection of the standard Israelite and Near Eastern royal ideology. The Law of the King paradoxically denies him all the essential components of royal power and prestige: supreme judicial authority and sponsorship of the cult. Even military leadership is sharply curtailed.”

### 3.3 David “Beloved”: 1 Samuel 16–18

The narrative moves immediately from the “rejection” of Saul to the “rejection” of Eliab (16:7) and the rest of Jesse’s sons who are “not chosen.” It is against bleak background of “rejection”—Israel’s “rejection” of Yhwh’s kingship (1 Sam 8:7; 10:19), Yhwh’s rejection of Saul’s kingship (1 Sam 15:23, 26; 16:1), and of David’s older brothers (16:7)—that Dtr paints his initially bright portrait of David as “beloved.”

The etymology and precise meaning of “David” are uncertain.<sup>74</sup> Most scholars still see the name as having some sort of origin in or connection to the root \*דָּד/דָּד/דָּד<sup>75</sup> from which the term דָּד (“beloved,” “lover”; “lust”; “father’s brother,” i.e., “uncle”)<sup>76</sup> is usually thought to be derived. However, as Halpern notes, “no text spells David’s name *dd*, as ‘uncle’ is sometimes written.”<sup>77</sup> The older defective spelling is דָּד, which was later expanded to דָּדִד.

Setting the issue of scientific etymology aside, an association of the name “David” (דָּד) with דָּד (“beloved”) is easily generated on the basis of homophony alone—whatever the name’s actual origin. Biblical Hebrew does not employ the root \*דָּד/דָּד/דָּד as a verb,

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<sup>74</sup> See recently Baruch Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001) 266; see also *HALOT*, 215.

<sup>75</sup> E.g., Adalbert Hoffmann, *David: Namensdeutung zur Wesensdeutung* (BWANT 100; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *HALOT*, 215.

<sup>77</sup> Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons*, 266.

as does Ugaritic. While Ugaritic uses the noun forms *dd* (or *yd*) in parallel with *’hbt*,<sup>78</sup> the Hebrew cognate (\***דד**) to *’hbt* picks up the primary verbal functions of \***דד/דדד/דדד**. As Garsiel has observed, “David” is “construed as ‘loved’ ... using the root *’-h-b* (**דד**), [which] becomes a leading motif in the narrative cycle which deals with him.”<sup>79</sup> Dtr uses the verb **דד** and its cognates at least 31 times in direct connection with David and his son Solomon/Jedidiah, a fact that of itself raises the possibility of narrative evaluations being made on the basis of this word. The direct etiological conjunction of Jedidiah with **דד** in 2 Sam 12:24-25 confirms the intentionality of this association elsewhere. Furthermore, the frequency and importance of **דד** in Deuteronomy invites us to consider these aforementioned evaluations in terms of that book.

### 3.3.1 Saul “Loves” David—or David “Loves” Saul (1 Sam 16:21-22)

At the end of the short pericope relating Samuel’s secret anointing of David (1 Sam 16:1-13), Yhwh’s “legitimizing” spirit<sup>80</sup> comes upon David, who is now named for the first time. The identity of the “man after [Yhwh’s] own heart” (1 Sam 13:14), perhaps a

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. *HALOT*, 215.

<sup>79</sup> Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* (trans. Phyllis Hackett; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991) 242.

<sup>80</sup> On the significance of this phenomenon, see David Wagner, *Geist und Tora: Studien zur göttlichen Legitimation und Delegation von Herrschaft im Alten Testament anhand der Erzählungen über König Saul* (ABG 15; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005) 189-216.

circumlocution for “beloved,” is now revealed. Will this man, loved by Yhwh, reciprocate that love?<sup>81</sup>

This story reaches its climax with David’s first entry into Saul’s court, a moment marked by an initial play on the name “David” and the verb אָהֵב (“love”): “Then David [דָּוִד] came to Saul and stood before him **and he loved him** [וְאָהֵב דָּוִד] greatly and he became his armor-bearer” (1 Sam 16:21). “Love” in both its political and affective sense is suggested here.<sup>82</sup>

It is usually assumed that Saul is the subject of the verb אָהֵב and David is the object in the above verse. McCarter asserts: “Without doubt the meaning is that Saul was greatly pleased with David, that he felt great affection for him.”<sup>83</sup> Alter, for his part, inserts the name “Saul” into his translation as the subject preceding אָהֵב, probably on the basis of LXX<sup>L</sup> (though this is nowhere stated by him).<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Campbell (*1 Samuel*, 141) observes: “The risk in Deuteronomy is that the king’s ‘heart will turn away’ (Deut 17:17). Here the king God has chosen is a man after God’s own heart.”

<sup>82</sup> J.A. Thompson (“The Significance of the Verb *Love* in the David-Jonathan Narratives in 1 Samuel,” *VT* 24 [1974] 335) writes: “It is arguable that the verb *’āhēb* was carefully introduced at this point because of a certain ambiguity of meaning. It is the proper term to denote genuine affection between human beings, husband and wife, parent and child, friend and friend. But since the verb can have political implications ... we may suspect that already in 1 Samuel xvi 21 the narrator is already preparing us for the later political use.” Peter Ackroyd (“The Verb Love-*’āhēb* in the David and Jonathan Narratives—A Footnote,” *VT* 25 [1975] 214) adds that this multivalent use of אָהֵב attests “the subtlety of an author or compiler who, in drawing together older traditions, binds them skilfully into a larger unity by the use of link words and overtones of meaning.”

<sup>83</sup> P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980) 281.

<sup>84</sup> See Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: Norton, 1999) 99; Barbara Green, *King Saul’s Asking* (Interfaces; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003) 65.



G.C.I. Wong, however, challenges the usual assumption that Saul is the subject of **בָּהֵן** and David the object in 1 Sam 16:21, arguing that the reverse may be true.<sup>85</sup> Several considerations, nonetheless, militate against taking David as the subject. David in the subsequent narratives—at least until 2 Samuel 13—is always the object of **בָּהֵן** (see below §3.4.2-§3.4.4) as the emotions and motives of the characters around David are revealed—even as David’s own sentiments remain conspicuously unmentioned.<sup>86</sup> While it is not impossible that David “loved” Saul, the intensification of the verb **בָּהֵן** by the adverb **מְאֹד** (“greatly”) reflects an emotionality that is uncharacteristic of David, but very characteristic of Saul, especially in the ensuing narratives.

Whatever the case, Wong’s commendation of the “wisdom” of the ambiguity maintained by the King James Version (KJV) in its translation of the verse (“and he loved him greatly”) has merit.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, we can say with some assurance that the point of 16:21—whether it is speaking of Saul’s “greatly loving” David or of David’s “greatly loving” Saul—is that what began as a relationship of “love,” even “a mutually favorable relationship”<sup>88</sup> quickly degenerated into enmity (Saul soon becomes David’s perpetual **בֹּאֵן**).

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<sup>85</sup> G.C.I. Wong, “Who Loved Whom? A Note on 1 Samuel XVI 21,” *VT* 47 (1997) 554-56. Indeed, in the paratactic verbal sequence in 1 Sam 16:21 (**כָּלִים וַיִּבֶּא דָוִד אֶל־שָׁאוּל וַיַּעֲמֵד לִפְנֵי וַיִּצְהָבֵהוּ מְאֹד**), David, and only David, can be the subject of three of the four verbs. In these instances, the content of the prepositional phrases precludes Saul as their verbal subject. Only in the third instance, where there is no prepositional phrase or additional wording is Saul not precluded as subject.

<sup>86</sup> Alter (*David Story*, 115) observes: “David ... knows how to veil his motives and intentions—a veiling replicated in the narrative strategies used to present him.”

<sup>87</sup> Wong, “Who Loved Whom?” 555.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 554.

The only character who does not initially “love” David in these early narratives about him is Goliath, David’s gigantic literary foil, who “despises” the king-to-be (1 Sam 17:42) as a child soldier.<sup>89</sup> This passage, like 1 Sam 10:27 which mentions the בני-בל יעל who “despised” Saul, helps establish the antonymy between the terms בזה and אהב that is crucial to later descriptions of David (2 Samuel 6; 12:9-10). David, rather than Saul, is already the one “fighting Yhwh’s battles” (see 17:42, and especially 18:17). Ironically, David is not only quickly vested with the trappings of Saul’s kingship (Saul’s armor, 17:38-39), but also with his name (“Asked”): “Ask [שאל] whose son the young man is” (1 Sam 17:56). From this point on, David will no longer be “Jesse’s son” alone. The next part of the narrative will focus on “how Saul will make David a son and then seek to remove him.”<sup>90</sup>

In response to Saul’s inquiry, Abner “takes” [ויקח] David and brings him (again) before Saul (1 Sam 17:57). The narrator’s remark here and in 1 Sam 18:2 that “Saul **took him** [ויקחהו, i.e., David] at that time **and did not give him permission** [ולא נתנו] to return to his father’s house” again verifies Samuel’s warning that Israel’s human king would “take” the people’s “sons and daughters” (1 Sam 8:11), i.e., destroy “houses.” Importantly, it also looks forward to the time when David will become the “taker”; indeed, it will be David’s “taking” of a certain “daughter,” the wife of one of his officers, which will shape Israel’s destiny as

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<sup>89</sup> On the ethical problems of David as a child soldier and the somewhat negative evaluation of David’s “self-seeking” and “the evil of his heart” in the Goliath episode, see David A. Bosworth, “David, Jether, and Child Soldiers,” *JSOT* 36 (2011) 185-97.

<sup>90</sup> Green, *King Saul’s Asking*, 68.

much as any single act in Dtr's history. Furthermore, the verb **אהב** here resumes the subtle wordplay on the name "Jonathan"<sup>91</sup> that will become more prominent in the narrative that follows.

### 3.3.2 Jonathan "Loves" David (1 Sam 18:1, 3)

Thompson observes that in 1 Sam 18:1-4 "the narrator sets the stage for David's first major advance in his progress toward the throne."<sup>92</sup> This pivotal moment is marked by the narrator's use of the verb **אהב** with David as object: "And by the time he had finished conversing with Saul, Jonathan's soul was bound together with David's, and Jonathan **loved him** [**אהבני**] as much as his own soul" (18:1). Whereas the subject and object of **אהב** in 16:21 are ambiguous (see above), here they are not, with the text playing on "David" (**דוד**) as "beloved."

Thompson further observes that "The narrator uses the ambiguous word love *ʾāhēb* because it denoted more than natural affection however deep and genuine this may have been. Sensing the certainties of the future Jonathan was ready even then to acknowledge David's sovereignty over himself and over the nation."<sup>93</sup> Jonathan's love for David—the basis of which is left curiously unexplained by Dtr—is "both political and personal."<sup>94</sup> But Jonathan, sensing David's eventual triumph over his father and the presumptive corollary that Saul's

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<sup>91</sup> See §3.3.3–§3.3.4.

<sup>92</sup> Thompson, "The Significance of the Verb *Love*," 336.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 192.

remaining heirs will be slaughtered, is also concerned about the future of his own “house” (thus his request for an oath and חסד from David; see below).

As noted above, the verb נתן, like אהב, serves as a *Leitwort* in the story of Yhwh’s “giving” the kingdom to David and the wordplay between נתן and “Jonathan” is resumed in 18:2 (“he [Saul] took him [ויקחהו] and did not give him permission [ולא נתנו] ...”). Dtr intimates here that Saul already perceives David to be a threat, a fact confirmed in 18:9 (“Saul kept his eye on David from that day forward”). Ironically, Saul’s jealous actions—eyeing David and not “giving” him leave to return to his father’s “house”—will only hasten David’s acquisition of the kingdom, and further jeopardize Saul’s own “house.” Here we are also reminded of Samuel’s משפט המלך (1 Sam 8:9-18) in which he declared that Israel’s king would be a “taker.” Saul makes David the object of the same royal “taking” prerogative that will be David’s own undoing when he consolidates his royal power later on.

In 1 Sam 18:3, Dtr resumes the play on “David,” emphasizing Jonathan’s “love” for David: “And Jonathan and David made a covenant [ברית ... ויכרתה<sup>95</sup>] **because he loved him** [באהבתו אותו] as much as his own self. Then Jonathan stripped off **the robe** [המעיל] which was upon him **and he gave it** [וינתנהו] to David” (18:3-4) The “robe” (מעיל)—as has been often noted, and as 1 Sam 15:27-28 makes clear—symbolizes kingship. When Jonathan (“Yhwh has given”) “gives” his מעיל and other accouterments to David he fulfills Samuel’s

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<sup>95</sup> The syntax of the Hebrew phrase is notable: David and Jonathan are the composite singular subject of the verb ויכרתה, their names being placed together between the verb and its object ברית, all of this stressing the closeness of their relationship.

prophetic declaration to Saul regarding the torn **מעיל**: “Yhwh has torn the kingship **off of you** [**מעל יך**] this day, **and has given it** [**וַיִּתְּנֶהָ**] to your intimate” (1 Sam 15:28). Jonathan’s “giving” thus neatly plays on his own name and his unwitting role in Yhwh’s plan to “give” David the kingship. Polzin notes that in 18:1-4 “Jonathan gives everything to David—his robe, his armor, his sword, bow, and girdle, his covenant, his love, and even his very soul ... whereas David is not reported as giving anything in return.”<sup>96</sup> David’s aptitude for “giving” is much less in evidence than his aptitude for “taking,” a theme that Dtr will develop shortly.

Although evidently one-sided, Jonathan’s unfailing “love” for David will result in the preservation of his (Jonathan’s) “house” (i.e., his line) through Mephibaal (2 Sam 9:1-13; 21:7), even when David—or “providence”—moves to eliminate most of Saul’s house. This aspect of Jonathan and David’s mutual **ברִית** becomes more evident in 1 Samuel 20.

“Giving,” like “love” in these narratives, seems to flow in one direction: to David. He is as his name suggests: “beloved” and “Yhwh has given” him what Jonathan would otherwise have received as Saul’s heir. As Jobling observes, “what Saul cannot do Jonathan as Saul’s heir, can do and does. He gives up his heirdom to David.”<sup>97</sup> Since this “giving up” is ultimately Yhwh’s doing, “Jonathan” is the perfect name, theologically and literarily, for the figure who bears it.

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<sup>96</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 178.

<sup>97</sup> Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 93. He writes further (p. 96): “The kingship has in effect already passed from Saul to David by the mediation of Jonathan. The remaining Jonathan passages serve merely to reinforce this.”

### 3.3.3 All Israel and Judah “Love” David (1 Sam 18:16)

In contrast to his treatment of Jonathan’s “love” for David, Dtr offers a clear basis for Israel and Judah’s “loving” the latter: “And all Israel and Judah **loved** [אָהַב] **David** (דָּוִד) because he went out and came in before them” (1 Sam 18:16).<sup>98</sup> Thompson notes that “In this context, the verb love expresses more than natural affection. It denotes rather the kind of attachment people had to a king who could fight their battles for them.”<sup>99</sup> In other words, David is “beloved” because he performs the function that Israel had desired in its human king when it first “demanded” kingship (1 Sam 8:20) and which Saul, at least sometimes, has abdicated. Again Dtr’s use of the *Leitwort* אָהַב stresses the appropriateness of David’s name and suggests how it was that he ended up ascending to the throne: he was “loved” by all Israel and Judah because of his kingly deportment.

Of all those said to “love” David in this pericope, Israel and Judah and their “love” for David are, Garsiel suggests, the most important.<sup>100</sup> Over time, this “love” will become an allegiance that allows David to supplant Saul and Ishbaal. But as Bodner notes, “glancing ahead in the wider Deuteronomistic History, ‘Israel and Judah’ will not always be so unified and the *very mention* of the two groups implicitly gives an inkling of disunity to come.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 196.

<sup>99</sup> Thompson, “The Significance of the Verb *Love*,” 337.

<sup>100</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 242-43.

<sup>101</sup> Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 197.

### 3.3.4 Michal “Loves” David (1 Sam 18:20; 28); Saul Becomes David’s “Enemy”

The revelation of Saul’s fierce hatred of David coincides with another member of his family’s falling in love with David. Saul’s response to Israel’s unbounded “love” for David (18:16) is to propose making him a member of the royal family through marriage: “Here is my eldest daughter Merab: **I will give** [אֶסְתֵּן] her to you as a wife, just become my valiant son [i.e., warrior, לִבְיָהוּ] and fight the battles of Yhwh” (18:17). In fact, however, Saul wishes to dispose of David in a manner not dissimilar to David’s disposal of Uriah the Hittite later on.<sup>102</sup>

David’s (apparently) humble response, “Who am I and what is my clan [שִׁבְטִי]—my father’s ... in Israel that I should be son-in-law to the king?” (18:18) conceals his emotions and motives.<sup>103</sup> Whether David’s profession of unworthiness is sincere or not, “it is ... clearly in his interest to conceal from the jealous king any desire he may harbor to marry the king’s daughter, for such an alliance could be converted into an implicit claim to be successor to the throne.”<sup>104</sup> Saul, left unsure of David’s next move and perhaps out of spite,<sup>105</sup> withholds Merab from David and marries her off to Adriel the Meholathite (18:19).

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<sup>102</sup> I.e., via foreign surrogacy: David will use the Ammonites; Saul plans to use the Philistines (18:17).

<sup>103</sup> Alter, *David Story*, 115.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. I concur with Alter in connecting the word שִׁבְטִי with Arabic حَيّ “clan,” “tribe,” “tribal community.”

<sup>105</sup> Peter Mommer, “David und Merab: eine historische oder eine literarische Beziehung?” in *David und Saul im Widerstreit: Diachronie und Synchronie im Wettstreit: Beiträge zur Auslegung des ersten Samuelbuches* (ed. Walter F. Dietrich; OBO 206; Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004) 196-204.

While David's emotions thus remain veiled, Michal falls in love with David: "But Michal, Saul's daughter, **loved** [מִיכָל] **David** [דָּוִד] and they informed Saul ..." (Sam 18:20). Alter points out that Michal is "the only woman in the entire Hebrew Bible explicitly reported to love a man."<sup>106</sup> Robert Lawton, noting a number of parallels between this and the Jacob-Rachel story, e.g., the mention that Jacob "loves" Rachel (Gen 29:18, 20), suggests that the reader, aware of these parallels, "expects to learn that David 'loves' Michal. And yet that is what the reader does not hear."<sup>107</sup> Instead, the "love" relationship is inverted (i.e., woman-loves-man) and "there is no mention of David's loving [Michal]."<sup>108</sup> Lawton further suggests that "mentioning Merob sets up a parallel which underscores what David lacks in his relationship with Michal: love."<sup>109</sup> The consequences of David's lack of "love" for Michal become evident in 2 Samuel 6 (see §3.4.3), and his lack of "love" or affection for those who love him and serve his interests is, as Joab will come to recognize, David's defining characteristic (2 Sam 19:6; see §3.4.8).

Ackerman notes that David is Michal's social inferior at this point and that "it is Michal's enhanced status in relationship to David's that puts her in a position to 'love.'"<sup>110</sup> In other words, the "love" of a social equal would have been of no advantage to David. For the

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<sup>106</sup> Alter, *David's Story*, 115. See also Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political," 441.

<sup>107</sup> Robert B. Lawton, "1 Samuel 18: David, Merob, and Michal," *CBQ* 51 (1989) 425.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Ackerman, "The Personal Is Political," 452-53.



present, however, David becomes “beloved” of the king’s daughter, and though he does not return Michal’s “love,” he will make her love work to his advantage.<sup>111</sup>

Saul, for his part, attempts to use this widespread and growing “love” for David in Israel, Judah, and his own family (Jonathan, Michal) to undermine him. Saul, like David himself, sees an opportunity in Michal’s “love”: “**I will give her** [אֶת־נָחָה] to him and she will become **a snare** [לְמוֹקֵשׁ].” At the same time, Saul’s “giving” Michal to David in order to destroy him plays into Yhwh’s plan to “give” (note here again the “Jonathan”-motif) the kingdom to David. Bodner notes that Saul “forestalls suspicion” of his motives “by making the approach through his servants. Their involvement is evidence of his good faith.”<sup>112</sup> Saul orders his “servants” to speak with David secretly and to communicate this flattering message: “The king is pleased with you and all of his servants **love you** [אֶת־בְּנִיךָ], so now become the king’s son-in-law!” (1 Sam 18:22). Saul’s assertion could well be true: his servants do “love” David, this further enflaming Saul’s jealous hatred of David. However, Saul clearly intends to put David off his guard. The play on “David” here is clever: Saul wants David to believe his own press—he is “beloved” by all.

The pericope concludes with a reiteration of Michal’s “love” for David: “Saul knew that Yhwh was with David and that Michal, daughter of Saul, **loved him** [אֶת־דָּוִד]” (1 Sam 18:28). This notice serves not only to reinforce the foregoing emphasis on David’s “beloved”-

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<sup>111</sup> The proposal that he become the king’s son-in-law pleases David well enough (18:26); Michal’s “love” will be a useful means to an end.

<sup>112</sup> Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 199.

ness, but makes Dtr's next revelation about Saul still starker: "But Saul feared David all the more, and Saul became David's enemy [אִוֵּי] continually" (18:29). As Polzin notes, the "combined effect" of this and the preceding "narrative revelations is to impress upon the reader that as everyone else loved David, to that extent did Saul hate him."<sup>113</sup>

Unfortunately for David, and for the houses of Israel and Judah later, David does believe his own press—he is "beloved" by all: Saul and his servants, Michal, Jonathan, and (as ever implied by David's theophoric hypocoristic name) Yhwh. This idyllic image of the king-to-be as initially "beloved" by all is the narrative backdrop against which Dtr will evaluate David's character as king and stress the gravity of David's later sins. As Yhwh continues to be "with" David in all his advances toward the throne, David begins to labor under the mistaken assumption that whatever he does is divinely approved. In so doing, he will lose sight of his "humble" origin (1 Samuel 16–17), cease to rely on Yhwh's guidance,<sup>114</sup> and ultimately fail in his obligation to "love" Yhwh.

### 3.4 David's Failure to "Love" Yhwh: 1 Samuel 20–2 Samuel 19

From the outset of the David cycle, the verb אָהַב has been used to positively characterize David as "beloved" in a kind of extended etiology that explains the appropriateness of his name and why he, as the object of "love," quickly made his way into Saul's family and thus acquired a position from which to vie for the throne for which Samuel had anointed him.

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<sup>113</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 177.

<sup>114</sup> See §2.5.3.

A major theme of 1 Samuel 20–2 Samuel 19 is the בֵּית- or “house”-theme. The בֵּית, understood polysemically as a physical “house” (a “palace” for a king” and a “temple” for a god), was by extension a “family” (posterity) and a “dynasty” for a king. The above segment recounts the primarily negative, and often devastating effect of David’s rise to power and the consolidation of his kingship on various “houses,” including his own, as he builds a “palace” for himself, contemplates a “temple” for Yhwh, and chooses (or has chosen for him) a successor with whom to build his “dynasty.” A major point of the segment will be that David’s transformation into a “king like all the nations” and subsequent failure to “love” Yhwh as prescribed in Deuteronomy—his “despising” and “treating Yhwh contemptuously” (2 Sam 12:9-10, 14)—had disastrous consequences for his family (consequences described in terms of “love” and “hate”) and long-term consequences for his “house” (including his own “dynasty”) and for the “houses” of Israel and Judah. Solomon too, as the cornerstone of David’s “sure house,” is also described as ultimately failing in his obligation to “love” Yhwh with his whole heart, a failure which has immediate and long-term consequences for the “house” of Israel as a united entity (Israel and Judah) and the subsequent breakup of that “house.”

#### *3.4.1 Jonathan’s One-sided “Love” and David’s Lack of “Love”: David’s Rise to Power (1 Samuel 20–30)*

In 1 Samuel 20, the reader’s attention is almost immediately directed to Jonathan’s one-sided “love” for David. At this juncture, David, and consequently his kingship and future “house,” are in peril (“there is but a step between me and death,” 20:3). Gunn sees naïveté on Jonathan’s part in that his “love” for David facilitates David’s accession and imperils his

father's (and thus his own) position.<sup>115</sup> In fact, however, Jonathan exhibits an acute awareness of what the "covenant of Yhwh" between himself and David that he requests will mean over time: It will enable David's accession to the throne, but will also ward off the threat of a purge of the members of Jonathan's "house," i.e., potential claimants to the throne: "And while I am alive you shall show me **the lifesaving grace** [חַסְדִּי] of Yhwh, but if I die, you shall **not cut off your lifesaving grace** [חַסְדִּי] from my house forever; and even when Yhwh has **cut off the enemies** [אֹיְבָיו] of David from the face of the land, the name of Jonathan must not be cut off from the house of David or Yhwh will require it from the hand of David"<sup>116</sup> (20:14-16). The reader now knows that Saul is the David-"hater" *par excellence* (אֹיֵב) and his heirs, as David's rivals for the throne, are by default David's "haters" as well. Jonathan also understands that the "enemies" of David will include members of his father's own "house." What then is the basis for Jonathan's total self-divestiture of his royal inheritance? It is Jonathan's inexplicable "love" for David, here stressed trebly: "Then Jonathan swore [ὁμόσαι = לִשְׁבַע<sup>117</sup>] to David again, because **he loved him** [בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ]—as **he loved** [בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ] his own soul **he loved him** [בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ]" (20:17). Jonathan foresees what David will do to his (David's) "enemies," including his father's family and even members of David's own family. But,

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<sup>115</sup> David M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOTSup 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980) 84-85.

<sup>116</sup> Reading with LXX. On the superiority of the reading represented by LXX 1 Sam 20:14-16 without the euphemistic addition of the term "enemies" (i.e., enemies of David in 20:16), see Morton Smith, "The So-Called 'Biography of David' (I Sam 16-II Sam 5-9. 21-24)," *HTR* 44 (1951) 167-69; McCarter, *I Samuel*, 337.

<sup>117</sup> Again, reading with LXX (versus MT לִשְׁבַע).

provided his own “house” is preserved, Jonathan is willing to expose the rest of his father’s “house” to danger out of “love” for David, just as Rahab betrayed the other inhabitants of Jericho (see Josh 2:12-13).

Although Jonathan (“Yhwh has given”) has given away his royal privileges, David knows that he is still far from secure.<sup>118</sup> Saul will continue to pursue David. Saul falsely believes that Yhwh will “give” David into his hand (see, e.g., 1 Sam 23:7, “God has given him into my hand”; “but God did not him into his hand,” 23:14), and Jonathan again helps David (23:16-17). Instead, Yhwh will repeatedly “give” Saul into David’s hand (1 Sam 24:4, 10, 18).

Saul soon understands his predicament: he will lose the kingdom. He also knows what David will do to his posterity as potential rivals for the throne. To preserve his “name” in his “father’s house,” i.e., to avert the slaughter of his posterity, Saul insists that David “swear” an oath “by Yhwh” that he “will not cut off [Saul’s] posterity” (24:21). David does swear an oath, the exact contents of which are never specified (24:22). The previous “cutting off” of the כִּנֵּי of Saul’s robe, symbolic of the “cutting off” of Saul’s procreative ability (thus his posterity) casts further doubt on the sincerity of David’s oath—whatever it may have entailed.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> David, like Rahab the harlot, evidences deep concern for the preservation of his “father’s house,” sending his father and mother to Moab “until I know what God will do for me” (1 Sam 22:3).

<sup>119</sup> When a dead Samuel appears to Saul in a מַעִיל, one is not only reminded of the fate of the house of Eli (עֵלִי, see chapter two) and the tearing of the kingdom “off of” (מַעִיל) Saul (1 Sam 15:27-28), but also of the מַעִיל and the other royal accouterments that Jonathan “gave” David (18:4) and even Saul’s very own “royal” מַעִיל, the כִּנֵּי of which David had cut off (1 Sam 24:4-5). In the end, following one final “oath” by Saul to the medium in a bid to save his “house” (28:10), Samuel’s ghost foretells that Yhwh “will give” (וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה) Saul

Even as Dtr details David's rise toward power, he undermines the idea that David is the pious "man after [Yhwh's] heart" (1 Sam 13:14), who will keep the commandments that Saul failed to keep. 1 Samuel 25 chronicles David's "taking" Abigail (25:39), the wife of Nabal, a potential rival or obstacle to David's power. "May your haters [אֹיְבֶיךָ] be as Nabal [נָבָל]," she says (25:26), *even before* the untimely death (25:38) of her foolishly self-destructive husband (an אִישׁ הַבֵּל יַעַל, who commits נָבָל true to his name, 25:25-26), leading the reader to wonder if there is even more to pious Abigail and indignant David's exchange than meets the eye.

Another aspect of David's progress toward the throne that troubles readers is David's own חֶרֶם-violation which, unlike Saul's חֶרֶם-violation (i.e., failing to execute the ban against Agag the Amalekite king and the best of the Amalekite cattle) that results in the latter's final delegitimation (1 Samuel 15), seems to pass without formal disapproval from Yhwh (see 1 Sam 27:8-9; 30:18-20).<sup>120</sup> This is sometimes viewed as an example of Yhwh's capriciousness or injustice, since David essentially does what Saul does. But there is another way to view this חֶרֶם-violation: David is not yet king of Israel and consequently, in Dtr's eyes, does not yet bear the same weight of responsibility as Saul. Thus, although indeed a

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and three of his sons, including Jonathan, "into the hand of the Philistines," along with the host of Israel (28:19), a reiteration of the point to which Dtr's earlier wordplay on "Jonathan" has been driving: "Yhwh has given" David the kingdom. But the "Jonathan" wordplay presages something else as well: The Lord's repeated "giving" to David foreshadows the criticism that will be leveled against David by Nathan (1 Samuel 12; see §3.4.5). The end of Saul will be the beginning of David's—and Israel's—troubles.

<sup>120</sup> Walter D. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012) 369-72.

failure to execute אָהַב and thus a failure to fully “love” Yhwh, this failure will not be the basis for the punishment of David’s dynastic “house.” Rather, Dtr emphasizes that it is an act of “despising” Yhwh committed in David’s own “house” that will invoke Yhwh’s “eternal” punishment of that house (2 Samuel 11–12). We do, however, get a sense here—even if somewhat indefinite as yet—that David is no pious “lover” of Yhwh.

### 3.4.2. “Beloved” Saul and Jonathan? (2 Sam 1:23, 26)

Upon receiving news of Saul and Jonathan’s death at the hands of the Philistines—good news as far as his monarchic ambitions are concerned (cf. 2 Sam 4:10)—David publicly mourns, then executes the Amalekite bearer of these tidings (2 Sam 1:11–16), just as he will later execute the Gibeonite tidings-bearers and killers of Saul’s regnant son Ishbaal (4:12). David then takes up a lament in which he describes the royal father and son as “**beloved** [הַנְּאֻהָבִים] and sweet [הַנְּעִימִים]” (1:23), not unlike his “lament” for Abner after his murder by Joab (3:31–36), which subtly or unsubtly recalls Nabal’s (“the fool’s”) death (1 Samuel 25).

Previously in Dtr’s monarchy narrative, אָהַב has been used almost exclusively with David as its object (Hannah once). David’s description is starkly at variance with Saul’s life, who was anything but “beloved” from the time of his anointing (see, e.g., 1 Sam 10:27), and was not “sweet” in life or death thereafter. Likewise, it is never said that Jonathan was “loved,” even if his disposition is more “pleasant” than his father’s. The agent of the Niphal plural participial form of אָהַב is deliberately and wholly ambiguous. On the other hand, the audience always knows who “loves” (and also who “hates” or “despises”) David. David’s

rhetoric serves a purpose here not unlike that of his frequent references to Saul as Yhwh's untouchable "anointed" (i.e., David does not want to appear do accede to the throne via a coup, and thus set a precedent for his own overthrow). Saul occupies, but is being removed from the throne that will be David's (not Jonathan's). Saul and Jonathan are "beloved" in the sense that the throne reflects Yhwh's "love"—"love" for David.

David's description of Saul and Jonathan as "beloved and sweet" is as self-serving as his other acts at the propitious deaths of opponents. By whom are Saul and Jonathan "beloved"? *Not by David*. Danna Nolan Fewell and David Gunn,<sup>121</sup> and more recently Tod Linafelt<sup>122</sup> have observed that the text carefully avoids saying the David "loves" anyone. This is evident not only in 1 Samuel 16–20 and 2 Sam 1:23, but is also poignantly clear in 2 Sam 1:26: "**Your love** [אֶהְבֶּתְךָ] for me was more wonderful than the **love of women** [אֶהְבֶּתָּן אִשִּׁים]." David speaks forlornly of Jonathan's "love" for him, but says nothing of his own love for Jonathan. David, in his very name, is Yhwh's "beloved," but, as subsequent narratives show, Yhwh is not David's "beloved." David's great failing—the one underlying all others—is his failure to "love" Yhwh.

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<sup>121</sup> Dana Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible's First Story* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993) 148-51.

<sup>122</sup> Tod Linafelt, "Private Poetry and Public Eloquence in 2 Samuel 1:17-27: Hearing and Overhearing David's Lament for Jonathan," *JR* 88 (2008) 507.



### 3.4.3 “She Despised Him in Her Heart” (2 Sam 6:16)

Polzin has noted the prominence of “house” (בֵּית) as a *Leitmotif* in 2 Samuel 5–7.<sup>123</sup>

2 Sam 5:11 reports that Hiram, king of Tyre—the king of one of the “nations” whose kingship Israel had coveted for itself (1 Sam 8:5, 20; Deut 17:14)—sent cedar trees and craftsman who “built David a house,” i.e., the royal palace that would be an important symbol of the surety of his kingship (cf. 2 Sam 5:12). 2 Sam 5:13 suggests that David’s first act—or at least his first priority—as “king over all Israel” was to “take” more wives, probably as an insurance policy on the perpetuation of his “house,” i.e., his dynasty (cf. Abigail’s vision of David’s “sure house” of which she is to be a part, 1 Sam 25:28). Viewed against the backdrop of Deuteronomy, however, this “wife-taking” casts David in a negative light. In particular, David’s marriage to “Maacah daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur” (2 Sam 3:3) violates Deut 7:3. Moreover, his wife-taking here and hereafter represents that “multiplying” of wives prohibited to kings in Deut 17:17.

Furthermore, David’s reclamation of Michal (2 Sam 3:13-16) would seem to involve his violating the requirements of Deut 24:1-4 (i.e., not remarrying a remarried ex-wife).<sup>124</sup> Dtr

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<sup>123</sup> See Robert Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 54-87.

<sup>124</sup> That this deed of David’s involved a violation of Deut 24:14-4 seems to explain the rabbinic speculation that Paltiel and Michal had never consummated their marriage (*b. Sanh.* 19b). Similar contrivances are suggested by the rabbis for the Bathsheba episode. David, after all, must, in their eyes, have kept the whole law. Interestingly, three of the first four terms used in Deut 24:1 (אִשָּׁה, אִשָּׁה, אִשָּׁה, אִשָּׁה) each used multiple times in Deut 24:1-4) are evoked by the name “Ishbaal” (אִשְׁבַּעַל, “Man of the [divine] Possessor” or “Man of the Lord [i.e., Yhwh]”) which was later piously altered to “Ishbosheth” (“man of shame”; McCarter [*II Samuel*, 82] suggests that one MS of LXX<sup>L</sup> (e<sub>2</sub>) preserves the original reading). If 1-2 Chronicles (which retains the form אִשְׁבַּעַל) is any indication, this wordplay was, at an earlier stage of the textual tradition, more apparent in 2 Sam 3:14-16. The name אִשְׁבַּעַל or אִשְׁבַּעַל could also be read (midrashically) as “The husband has possessed.” The

creates additional pathos by stating that when “**Ish**[baal] took her from (her) **husband** [שׁוֹשֶׁל],” on behalf of David, “her husband [שׁוֹשֶׁל] walked with her weeping” (2 Sam 3:15-16). In this very human moment, David comes off as inhumane. David’s “love” for Michal is dubious at best (vis-à-vis Phaltiel’s evident love for her);<sup>125</sup> his need for her is purely political.<sup>126</sup> She will be a trophy wife in the harem that David continues to multiply (contra Deut 17:17).

In 2 Samuel 6, the picture of David as “beloved” begins to erode, and there are other subtle hints of an ominous future. If the earlier narrative left any doubt about how Michal felt about David’s forcibly “taking” her back from Phalti(el), her feelings are clarified here. The story of David’s rise stressed Michal’s “love” (אֶהֱבָה) for David (1 Sam 18:20, 28). That love no longer exists, and the consequences for David’s and Saul’s “houses,” the “daughter” of Saul herself, and the “house” of Israel will not be insignificant.

In 2 Samuel 6, the term אֶהֱבָה occurs no less than twelve times as David first moves the ark from the “house of Abinadab” (6:4) in Gibeah to the “house of Obed-edom” the Gittite

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first word in Deut 24:1, אֶהֱבָה is repeated throughout 24:1-4, and is put to ironic use in the description of David’s reclamation of Michal.

<sup>125</sup> Steven L. McKenzie (*King David: A Biography* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000] 118) writes: “Michal’s husband, Palti(el) ben-Laish, felt genuine affection for Michal and went running after her as Abner carted her away ... But she was important to David for different reasons. In all the time they had been apart David had never once tried to get her back. But now, with Abner’s defection, Saul’s throne was in sight, almost in David’s grasp. As Saul’s son-in-law through marriage to Michal, David was a member of the royal family with a legitimate claim to the crown. Michal was a political asset.”

<sup>126</sup> As J.P. Fokkelman (*Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* [trans. Ineke Smit; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1999] 89) observes, “To David, she [Michal] is just a pawn on the chessboard of national politics: if he can have her back, Abner will have proved his loyalty, and at the same time the possession of the princess will [increase] the legitimacy of his (David’s) kingship over the whole of Israel. Without her, he will be no more than upstart in the eyes of many. Michal has been made a symbol of the transfer of the tribes, and there is no noticeable personal feeling for her in David.”

(6:10). Obed-edom is a foreigner<sup>127</sup> and David uses him as a guinea-pig. Instead of bringing disaster, however, the ark becomes the conduit of a blessing from Yhwh to Obed-edom's "house" (6:11). David desires the same blessing for his own "house" and thus has the ark brought up to Jerusalem "with gladness" (6:12). David here shows no qualms about bringing potential disaster upon a (loyal) foreigner and his house nor, when the potential disaster turns out to be a blessing, about transferring the means of the blessing to himself for his own benefit and that of his house.

David's bringing of the Ark into Jerusalem was evidently a ritual reenactment of Israel's entrance into the land, its entering Yhwh's "rest" (cf. Psalm 132). It is also David's most visible assertion of royal authority over cultic matters thus far.<sup>128</sup> When David goes with the Ark in procession "dancing before Yhwh," wearing a linen ephod that left him exposed (see chapter five), Michal looking on from a window "despised him [וַתִּבְזֶה לוֹ] in her heart" (2 Sam 6:16). The emphasis on "house" in this story may suggest that Michal "despises" David, not merely due to his undignified nudity, but because David "has destroyed her family."<sup>129</sup> Seeman observes, "Like Sisera's mother [Judg 5:28], Michal gazes out on the downfall of a house with which she is identified. She witnesses the warrior David returning

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<sup>127</sup> Alter (*David Story*, 227) suggests that Obed-edom may have been a Philistine from Gath, "conceivably someone who had attached himself to David during his sojourn there."

<sup>128</sup> On David's involvement with the cult and cultic authority in Dtr, see Walter Vogels, "David: sa politique et sa religion," in *Foi et Politique dans la Bible: Actes des premières Journées Bibliques de Lubumbashi 25-27 février 2003* (ed. Jean-Luc van de Kerkhove; Lubumbashi: Editions Don Bosco, 2004) 7-36.

<sup>129</sup> McKenzie, *King David*, 137.

from battle not so much against the Philistines as against her father's legacy, which he seems irrevocably to have supplanted.”<sup>130</sup>

David, perhaps acting in the capacity of priest-king of Jerusalem (cf. Psalm 110), offers sacrifices and blesses the people “in the name of **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**” (6:18), and then returns to “bless” his “house” (6:20), as if to invoke the blessings that attend the Ark upon his own “house.” On his return Michal comes out to meet him and verbalizes her contempt (6:20). David’s responds that Yhwh has “chosen” him above her father and “**above all** [**מִכָּל**] his house [**בֵּיתוֹ**]” (6:21), playing on Michal’s name and her status as “daughter” (**בַּת**, cf. **בַּת שָׁאוּל**, 6:23) in that failing “house.” David will not be having any children by Michal (6:23), “thereby securing his kingship”<sup>131</sup> against any Saulide from his own issue,<sup>132</sup> which may be the point of Dtr’s extending the wordplay on “Michal” from 6:21 to 7:1 (“rest **from all** [**מִכָּל**] his haters”).

David thus destroys Michal’s “house” in at least four ways: his “crossing over” (1 Sam 27:2) to the Philistines directly contributed to the demise of her father and brothers;<sup>133</sup> he

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<sup>130</sup> Don Seeman, “The Watcher at the Window: Cultural Poetics of a Biblical Motif,” *Prooftexts* 24 (2004) 21.

<sup>131</sup> Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 111.

<sup>132</sup> James W. Flanagan (“2 Samuel,” NJBC [ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990] 156): “Michal’s childlessness is a sign of David’s control. It places Saul’s line figuratively under house arrest and opens the possibility for Davidic, but non-Saulide succession.”

<sup>133</sup> I.e., by his alliance with Achish and his non-intervention on Saul’s behalf. If David had aided Saul against the Philistines, Saul and his sons might not have died; but David could not have then acceded to the throne. David’s “crossing over” to the Philistines at the very least meant his non-intervention in a battle that

will slaughter seven of her father's remaining heirs (2 Sam 21:1-4); he "took" her (i.e., ripped her) away from Palti(el), the husband who "loved" her (cf. 2 Sam 3:16); and he destroys any hope she has for a "house" by refusing to reproduce by her. David again displays his willingness to destroy the "houses" of others (Saul, Nabal, Paltiel, Michal) in order to "build" his own.

*3.4.5 "You Have Despised Me": David "Takes" Uriah's Wife for His "House" (2 Samuel 11-12)*

David's monarchic wife-taking, which began with his "taking" the wife of Nabal (Abigail) and possibly one of Saul's wives (Ahinoam), and his later re-"taking" of Michal from Palti(el), as well as all the other wives he reportedly "took" (2 Sam 5:13; cf. 3:2-5) establishes a distinct behavioral and character pattern for David in Dtr's narrative, especially toward women: he "takes" them if they will benefit him politically. Samuel had forewarned that Israel's human king would be a "taker" (1 Sam 8:11-17; 12:3-4), and even David himself had been "taken" into Saul's service (17:57; 18:2).

Nicholas Wyatt identifies Uriah the Hittite with Araunah (Ornan) the Jebusite (possibly Jerusalem's last Jebusite king), and suggests that Bathsheba may have been "Queen of Jerusalem."<sup>134</sup> Regardless of whether Wyatt's deductions are correct, the narrative intimates that Uriah was not just an ordinary subordinate of David's. While we know precious little about Uriah's biography, his name—if not Hebrew "My light is Yhwh"—may be (or

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brought death to Saul, Jonathan, two of Saul's other sons, and the hosts of Israel. David was willing to sacrifice all of these persons for the sake of his own monarchic ambitions. David's murder of Uriah and his fellow soldiers will reflect similar self-interest.

<sup>134</sup> Nicholas Wyatt, "Araunah the Jebusite and the Throne of David," *ST* 39 (1985) 39-53.

contain) the Hurrian word *ewri* (“lord”). Uriah’s high position in David’s army may suggest his onetime social prominence among the pre-conquest inhabitants of Jerusalem. If so, David’s taking of Bathsheba represents David’s characteristic “taking,” in that—like the wives of Nabal, Saul, and Phalti(el)—it enhances David’s political status, and in this instance helps solidify his throne by the elimination of a rival and the “taking” of his wife. Nabal was a chieftain with a large estate in Judah; Saul, of course, was king of Israel; Ahinoam may have been Saul’s wife, and Michal was Saul’s daughter as well as Jonathan’s and Ishbaal’s sister. The presence of the latter two in David’s harem would have strengthened his claim to the throne of Israel.

While Uriah was a subordinate, according to 2 Sam 23:39 and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam 11:3 (the latter text calls him Joab’s “arms-bearer”),<sup>135</sup> it seems that David regards him as a potential rival to the throne or a threat to David’s power, just as David and Solomon regard Joab and others as threats to Solomon’s throne later on (see, e.g., 1 Kgs 2:5-6). So the narrative’s treatment of David’s sins may not be a simple case of stressing David’s “injustice toward powerless subordinates,”<sup>136</sup> but rather a way of emphasizing David’s effort to secure his own throne, i.e., to make his own house “sure” through illicit means (versus Yhwh’s promise to do this for him). Similarly, the elimination of rivals and the multiplication of wives (contra Deut 17:17) becomes Solomon’s *modus operandi*.

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<sup>135</sup> See also Josephus, *A.J.* 7.131; cf. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 279.

<sup>136</sup> Flanagan (“2 Samuel,” 157) notes that “the dual references [in 2 Sam 11:2 to Eliam (Bathsheba’s father) and Uriah, both listed among David’s warriors in 23:34-39] stress the injustice toward powerless subordinates.”

Alter keenly observes that “throughout this story [2 Samuel 11], David is never seen anywhere but in his house.”<sup>137</sup> This is a deliberate element of Dtr’s depiction of how a supposedly “sure house” could be made unsure. Like Eli (עֵלִי) “upon” (עַל) his “throne” (1 Sam 1:9) at the temple threshold observing prayer (1:12), David’s rising up “off of” (מֵעַל) his bed and walking “on” (עַל) “the roof of the king’s house” (גַּג בֵּית־הַמֶּלֶךְ) to watch a married woman wash (2 Sam 11:2), placed him an improper vantage point from which to exercise authority over an unequal. Eli for his part—though his “house” would be punished for his and his sons’ sins—recognized Hannah’s faith and sincerity (1 Sam 1:17), tacitly acknowledging his previous rush to judgment concerning her (“remove your wine off of you [מֵעַל יָד]” 1:14). David, for his part, does not stop at watching, and his “house” suffers, immediately and in perpetuity, because of this act. On the “roof” (גַּג) of the same “house” where David deliberates about “taking” Bathsheba, his own son Absalom will spread a tent and rape his concubines “in the sight of all Israel” (1 Sam 16:21-22),<sup>138</sup> thereby wreaking incalculable havoc on his father’s “house” (and his own).<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Alter, *David Story*, 256.

<sup>138</sup> J.P. Fokkelman (*Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses. Volume I: King David [II Sam. 9-20 & I Kings 1-2]* [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981] 210) writes: “The roof from which David had seen Bathsheba and where desire overpowered him is the same roof where ... a tent is set up for Absalom, so that he can insult his father ‘in the sight of all Israel – words from the prophecy.”

<sup>139</sup> See 2 Sam 18:18 in light of 2 Sam 14:27 and 1 Kgs 15:2, 10. Absalom’s male heirs were apparently exterminated, though a daughter survives. Absalom’s house, then, resembles other royal and priestly houses that are nearly eliminated, but manage to survive. Dtr’s presentation of the facts suggests that he is perhaps aware of this.

David's lustful "watching" Bathsheba from the roof of his house violates Deut 5:21 (Exod 20:17): "you shall not covet [ולא תחמד] your neighbor's wife [אשת רעך] and you shall not lust after your neighbor's house [בית רעך], field, [etc.]" David's sin of coveting and "taking" was of a kind with Achan's "coveting" (חמד) and "taking" (לקח) the gold, silver, and clothing from the חרם (Josh 7:21), and the prohibited "coveting" of idol-silver and idol-gold on the part of Israel (Deut 7:25-26). By "taking" his neighbor's wife (2 Sam 11:4) into his own "house," David was in a very real sense bringing "abomination" (cf. Deut 7:26), and consequently ruin, into that "house" (2 Sam 12:8-12). Similarly, Achan's "covetousness," was נבלה according to Joshua (Josh 7:15), and this נבלה resulted in the destruction of his entire "house," i.e., his sons and daughters and his household (Josh 7:23-26; cf. the Benjaminite "sons of destruction, Judg 19:22-30).<sup>140</sup>

Deut 22:22 states: "If a man is found sleeping with [or having slept with] with a woman married to a husband, they shall die—even the both of them: the man sleeping with the woman and the woman—that you may exterminate evil [חרע] from Israel." David's "taking" another man's wife merited at least his own death under this statute, and his act is akin to other forms of נבלה-misconduct cited in Deut 22:20-30 (see §3.5.2). David had committed "folly" in Israel (Deut 22:21; cf. Gen 34:7; see especially Judg 20:6, 10). Nathan

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<sup>140</sup> The Benjaminite "sons of destruction" imperiled the "houses" of a man and his guest (Judg 19:22-30) with נבלה (19:23; "folly in Israel," 20:6, 10) and in so doing imperiled their own houses and their entire tribe with its houses (Judges 20-21).



explicitly describes David's deed as "evil" (רָעָה, 2 Sam 12:9). David brings evil upon his house and upon the house of Israel.

Here the literary strategy of Dtr's inclusion of the story of David's "taking" the wife of Nabal (1 Samuel 25) becomes more evident. True, Nabal (נָבָל) had imperiled his own "house" by his "foolish" refusal of David's "demand" (this was his נָבָלָה, in Abigail's words). But in 1 Samuel 25 Dtr is also looking forward to David's "taking" of Bathsheba, and committing "destructive folly" that will produce further "folly" in his "house" in short order (2 Sam 13:12).

In murdering one of his generals, Uriah a foreigner, David paradoxically "magnifies his crime rather than lessens it,"<sup>141</sup> violating Deuteronomy's special statute on the גֵּר, i.e., "resident alien," which as king he had a particular obligation to uphold (see especially Deut 10:17-19 in the context of 17:19). Israel's "love" for the stranger was a prescribed response to Yhwh's love for Israel (Deut 10:12-19) and his justice, and thus an important manifestation of "love" for Yhwh. David's failure to "love" Yhwh by "loving" the גֵּר who served him was thus a shift away for the king who earlier enacted social "justice" (2 Sam 8:15) like Yhwh (Deut 10:17-19).

Ultimately, David will choose to build his own "house" (dynasty) on this deed and its fruits. When Bathsheba "return[s] to her house" (2 Sam 11:4), she returns to a "house" that

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<sup>141</sup> McKenzie (*King David*, 157) writes: "The fact that he is called a 'Hittite' magnifies David's crime rather than lessens it. Uriah was a resident alien, one of the groups, along with the widows and orphans, whose rights the king was especially charged to protect."

will never be the same again—it will soon not exist. The building of David’s “house” (family, posterity, and dynasty) at the expense of the “houses” of others will come at a hefty and (as yet) unforeseen price. Dtr’s narration of the cover-up of David’s violation and his murder of Uriah continues the polysemic “house”-theme. After badgering Uriah with questions (2 Sam 11:7), David orders Uriah: “Go down to your house and wash your feet,”<sup>142</sup> but upon leaving the king’s “house” (11:8) Uriah does not go down, but rather sleeps at “at the door of the king’s house” (11:9). Nameless informants report that “Uriah did not go down to his house” to David who subsequently demands of Uriah “why did you not go down to your house?” (11:10). Uriah’s “righteous” as opposed to merely pious, response (“The ark, Israel, and Judah occupy tents and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped upon the battlefield: can I go down to my house to eat, drink, and sleep with my wife? Your life and the life of your throat should I do such a thing!” 11:11) is a perfect indictment of David’s own behavior: eating, drinking, and bedding Uriah’s wife at home (i.e., in this case David’s) “house,”<sup>143</sup> while Israel, Judah, the Ark, Joab et al. were all on the battlefield, whither David himself should have “gone out” at their head (cf. 1 Sam 8:20; 2 Sam 11:1).

David tries again to get Uriah to cover his (David’s) tracks, even making him eat and get drunk in his presence (11:12-13), but when Uriah stays the night with David’s servants and does not go to his “house” (11:13), David feels that his hand has been forced, and has

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<sup>142</sup> “Go down to your house”: Solomon will tell Adonijah something eerily similar (1 Kgs 1:53).

<sup>143</sup> David Marcus (“David the Deceiver and David the Dupe,” *Prooftexts* 6 [1986] 165) sees in Uriah’s behavior “not that of an ultra-professional and pious soldier, but that of an offended husband, seeking to counter David’s attempt to pin the paternity of the unborn child on him. In this reading Uriah dissembles when he refuses to go home on account of religious and military scruples.” Thus, “Uriah’s refusal to go home can be seen as a brilliant coup on his part.”

Uriah murdered with up to eighteen of his fellow-soldiers (thus, LXX<sup>L</sup> 2 Sam 11:24).<sup>144</sup>

David's callous and perhaps proverbial response to these deaths, "the one like the other the sword devours" (11:25) will provide Yhwh with an ironic means of punishing David and his "house" that will fit David's crime (12:11-10; see below).

Nathan's parable (12:1-4) contains both a veiled play on the name "Nathan" and a semi-veiled play on the name "Bathsheba" (12:3-4). "Bathsheba" (בַּת־שֶׁבַע) can be taken to mean "daughter of abundance"<sup>145</sup> (שֶׁבַע [II] = "abundance, plenty"),<sup>146</sup> "daughter of prosperity"<sup>147</sup> or "daughter of (an) oath." Dtr will exploit all three of these senses of the name. As P.W. Coxon indicates, when Nathan states in the midst of his parable that the lamb was like a "daughter" to the poor man ("and she was **like a daughter** [כַּבֶּתֶר] to him," 2 Sam 12:3) he is indulging in a play on the name Bathsheba.<sup>148</sup> Further, as Garsiel notes, while the name "Bathsheba" does not occur in the parable, Nathan's above words clearly "hint at the first component," i.e., בַּת.<sup>149</sup> Interestingly, David's outraged response to Nathan's parable (unwittingly) plays on the second component of Bathsheba's name, although this wordplay

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<sup>144</sup> As McCarter (*II Samuel*, 283) notes, the MT text of 2 Sam 11:23-24 is widely recognized as "defective at this point" and that the detail ("some eighteen men") was lost from MT by haplography. In this case, LXX<sup>L</sup> represents a superior text (and *Vorlage*) to MT.

<sup>145</sup> Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (BWANT 3/10; Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 1928) 146.

<sup>146</sup> *HALOT*, 1400.

<sup>147</sup> Ludwig Koehler, "Hebräische Vokabeln II," *ZAW* 55 (1937) 165-66; see also *HALOT*, 167.

<sup>148</sup> P.W. Coxon, "A Note on 'Bathsheba' in 2 Samuel 12, 1-6," *Bib* 62 (1981) 247-50.

<sup>149</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 129.

has been obscured in the MT: David declares that the man in the parable should restore (שָׁלֵם, cf. Solomon)<sup>150</sup> “fourfold [אַרְבַּעַתִּים]” (12:6), to agree with Exod 21:37. However, as Garsiel further notes, LXX<sup>L</sup> reads ἑπταπλάσιον, which reflects שִׁבְעִיתִים (“sevenfold”) <sup>151</sup> a play on “Bathsheba.”<sup>152</sup> In either reading, however, Nathan baits David into pronouncing a “measure for measure” punishment on his own house.<sup>153</sup>

Alter notes that David’s “precipitously tak[ing] the tale as a report of fact requiring judicial action” is “puzzling,” given its clearly parabolic form.<sup>154</sup> Schipper, however, suggests that David does take Nathan’s story as a parable (rather than a law case), but understands Uriah to be the lamb and the rich man to be Joab, and then attempts to exculpate himself with his feigned anger against Joab, “the rich man.”<sup>155</sup>

The key term in the parable—as in Samuel’s warning on human kingship (1 Samuel 8)—is לָקַח (“take”). The name “Nathan” (נָתַן, “He [i.e., Yhwh] has given”) is a hypocoristic form of the name Jonathan (יְהוֹנָתָן, “Yhwh has given”). Nathan’s not-so-veiled criticism of David as the “rich man” who was “not willing **to take** לָקַחַת from his own

<sup>150</sup> There is additional wordplay on the name “Solomon” here, which I will address in chapter four.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Prov 6:31.

<sup>152</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 129.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Alter, *David Story*, 257.

<sup>155</sup> Jeremy Schipper, “Did David Overinterpret Nathan’s Parable in 2 Samuel 12:1-6?” *JBL* 126 (2007) 383-407.

flock and from his own herd ... **but took** [וַיִּקַּח] the poor man's lamb" (12:4) now becomes more explicit:

(7) Then **Nathan** [נָתַן] said to David, 'You are the man! Thus says Yhwh God of Israel: "I myself anointed you king over Israel and I myself snatched you out of Saul's hand. (8) **And I gave** [וָאֶתְּנָה] to you the **house** of your lord and the wives of your lord into your bosom, **and I gave** [וָאֶתְּנָה] to you the **house** of Israel and of Judah and if this were too little I would have added to you such and such more [כִּהְיִנָּה וְכִהְיִנָּה]. (9) Why **have you despised** [בְּזִיתָ] Yhwh by doing what is evil [רָעָה] in his sight? Uriah the Hittite you have stricken with the sword and his wife **you have taken** [לָקַחְתָּ] as a wife, and him you have murdered with sword of the Ammonites. (10) But now the sword shall not turn aside from your house forever because **you have despised me** [בְּזִיתַנִּי] and **you have taken** [וַתִּקַּח] the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. (11) Thus says Yhwh: I am already raising up **evil** [רָעָה] against you **out of your own house** and **I will take** your wives before your very eyes and give them to your intimate [לְרַעֲיָךְ] and he shall sleep with your wives before the eyes of this sun." (2 Sam 12:7-11)

The clustering of the verbs **נָתַן** (3 x) and **לָקַח** (5 x) in juxtaposition with the name **נָתַן** (3 x) in 1 Sam 12:1-12 suggests that the onomastic wordplay is intentional. Garsiel explains that it "creates ... a close tie between the prophet's name and the content of his prophecy."<sup>156</sup>

Yhwh's message to David via Nathan thus is: **Yhwh has given** David his kingdom and every blessing pertaining to it, including his family, but David has "taken" what was not his to take, violating Yhwh's covenant with mass-murder and what can only be charitably described as "adultery," an act akin to what we now regard as "rape."<sup>157</sup> From David's entry into Dtr's

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<sup>156</sup> Moshe Garsiel, "Word Play and Puns as a Rhetorical Device in the Book of Samuel," in *Puns and Pundits: Wordplay in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (ed. Scott B. Noegel; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000) 191.

<sup>157</sup> Considering David's and Bathsheba's respective social positions and the gender inequality in their society, it is hard to imagine Bathsheba having a great deal of choice in the matter. According to LXX<sup>L</sup> 2 Sam 11:4, David "took" Bathsheba and "came to her," as compared to MT and 4QSam<sup>a</sup>'s notice that Bathsheba

narrative the emphasis has been on Yhwh “giving” David (“beloved”) the kingdom (especially via Jonathan), a reflection of Yhwh’s “giving” to Israel out of “love” (see §3.1.2). David’s royal conduct has been the obverse of Yhwh’s. Now *Yhwh will take* from David and *give* to one close to him.

The “measure-for-measure”<sup>158</sup> punishment that Nathan pronounces against David and his house (“the sword shall never depart from your house **forever** [עַד-עוֹלָם],” 12:12)<sup>159</sup> is a key neutralization of the dynastic promise (2 Samuel 7), including the idea that David’s “house” (family and dynasty) would be “sure.”<sup>160</sup> How thorough-going this neutralization is, becomes evident throughout Judah’s later history.<sup>161</sup> David’s adulterous rape and murder had destroyed Uriah’s “house” (בֵּית, i.e., family, opportunity for posterity), not to mention the “houses” of possibly eighteen others (see LXX<sup>L</sup> 2 Sam 11:24). The punishment “required”

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“came to him.” Conceivably, the latter reading arose as an attempt to soften David’s crime by making Bathsheba a willing sexual partner, i.e., an adulterous partner versus the victim of rape. But cf. the penalty legislated in Deut 22:22. On the other hand, applying a hermeneutics of suspicion to Bathsheba’s actions, one could posit that Bathsheba’s washing herself in a place where she could be seen by the king was a calculated act (and perhaps this very idea is implicit in the MT reading of 11:4, “and she came to him”). Like Abigail’s social position following the death of her husband at the end of 1 Samuel 25, Bathsheba’s social position is ultimately advanced by the events of 2 Samuel 11–12 in spite of her losses.

<sup>158</sup> Garsiel, “Wordplay and Puns,” 191.

<sup>159</sup> Polzin (*David and the Deuteronomist*, 81) observes: “In 2 Samuel ... it is not accidental that the very next ‘forever’ after the eight forevers of 2 Samuel 7 is God’s promise of perpetual punishment for the house of David.”

<sup>160</sup> 1 Sam 25:28; 2 Sam 7:16; cf. 1 Kgs 11:38; 1 Sam 2:35.

<sup>161</sup> See, e.g., Athaliah’s slaughter of the “royal seed” (2 Kgs 11:1), Amon’s fate, and particularly Zedekiah’s end and Jehoiachin’s situation in the Babylonian court (see §3.6.2).

from his house for these sins will be commensurate, this because David had not simply “despised the word of Yhwh” (MT 2 Sam 12:9), but he had “despised Yhwh” himself.<sup>162</sup>

As Polzin observes, “it is significant that the only cases of despising (*bazāh*) the LORD in the entire History occur here and in 1 Sam. 2:30, in the midst of a programmatic prophecy about the history of royal Israel.”<sup>163</sup> Despite euphemizing scribes’ later attempts to make it otherwise, Nathan also emphatically declared that David had “**treated Yhwh with utter contempt** [נָאֵץ נִאֲצָה] by this deed.”<sup>164</sup> He, then, was not only guilty of violating Deuteronomy’s iterative command to “love” Yhwh (Deut 6:5; 11:1, etc.) and “love” the נָאֵץ (10:19), but also Joshua’s later charge to Israel to “take very great care to love Yhwh” (Josh 23:11; cf. 22:5).

Jobling believes that the David and Bathsheba episode “seems expressly designed to demonstrate how hideous sin can be and still not turn YHWH’s loyalty away from David’s

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<sup>162</sup> “You have despised [~~the word~~] of Yhwh” (2 Sam 12:9): LXX<sup>L</sup> and Theodotion lack “word,” which strongly suggests scribal euphemizing in MT in order to preclude Yhwh’s being the object of \*נִאֲצָה. The change is not only theological but ideological: David’s despising Yhwh presented a problem for post-exilic royalism/messianism (cf. the Chronicler’s cleaning-up of the David story). The phrase “you have despised me” in the next verse (Sam 12:10) preserved “me” because the term can be ambiguously understood as referring to either Yhwh or Nathan, the one voicing the oracle.

<sup>163</sup> Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist*, 129.

<sup>164</sup> Regarding the later glossing of “But because you have treated Yhwh with utter contempt [~~the enemies of~~, נִאֲצָה] Yhwh” (2 Sam 12:14), McCarter (*II Samuel*, 396) notes that “the primitive reading is reflected only in a single Greek cursive (c = 376). Indeed, most of the major witnesses attest the euphemistic reading (אֶת־אֲדֹנָי־יְהוָה). Importantly, however (as McCarter [*Ibid.*] also notes), 4QSam<sup>a</sup> uses a different euphemism (אֶת־[דָּ]בַר יְהוָה), the same one glossed into 12:9 (see note 161) in some witnesses: “the fact that independent textual witnesses employ *different* euphemisms shows that the primitive text had none.” Given the use of different euphemisms in the same text here, it is difficult to draw any other conclusion than that David really did “despise Yhwh” (12:9) and “treat Yhwh with utter contempt” (12:14).

house.”<sup>165</sup> What he and others overlook, however, is the issue that Eli’s rejection brings to the surface in 1 Sam 2:30: Eli’s house and “the house of his father” were intended to walk before Yhwh forever. However, Yhwh changes his mind (“far be it from me!”), because Eli had honored his sons more than Yhwh: “those that honor me I will honor, and those that despise me shall be cursed!” he declares. The fact of David’s “despising” Yhwh and “treating [him] with utter contempt” (12:9-10, 14) brings him under the same condemnation pronounced by the nameless “man of God” over Eli regarding those who “despise” Yhwh: “they shall be cursed” (1 Sam 2:30). The curse here incurred by David is itself only the first moment of the literary neutralization of the dynastic promise. The story of how the curse for despising Yhwh is brought to bear on David’s “house” (“the sword shall never depart from your house forever,” 12:10) constitutes much of the remainder of Dtr’s narrative history. David’s “house,” far from enjoying the promised “sure house,” is now very much in peril.

The imperiling of David’s house begins with the fruit of his “taking” Bathsheba for himself. “He is a son of death!” (i.e., he is worthy of death!) declared David concerning the rich man in Nathan’s parable (2 Sam 12:5). Yhwh, speaking through Nathan, in turn declares in 12:14 that the son of David’s illicit union with Bathsheba would die in place of the one who was truly deserving of death according to Deut 22:22. 1 Sam 12:18 records that this child died on “the seventh [הַשְּׁבִיעִי] day,” another ironic wordplay on “Bathsheba.”

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<sup>165</sup> Jobling, *1 Samuel*, 84. Conversely, he says, “The accounts of Saul’s rejection seem equally designed to demonstrate the smallness of the sin that ‘justifies’ the rejection.” In the final analysis, however, one house was clearly *punished* more severely than the other (see chapter six).



### 3.4.6 “And Yhwh Loved Him”: Solomon “Beloved” (2 Sam 12:24)

Having suffered immediate punishment for “taking” Bathsheba and the mass-murder that he had engineered for its cover-up via the death of his unnamed son, David “consoles” his new wife in her grief and sires a second son by her, appropriately named שלמה (“his replacement”; 2 Sam 12:24; on the etymology of this name see chapter four).

The etiological report concerning the name “Jedidiah” here in 2 Sam 12:24 is unconventional. The linkage of the phrase “and Yhwh loved him,” to the name שלמה (“Solomon”) does not explain “Solomon” at all. Instead, this phrase provides the etymological basis of the name-giving for the second name that follows: the only cogent interpretation for יהידי is “beloved” (יד) of Yhwh (יה). Wyatt notes how Jedidiah, “beloved of Yhwh,” serves to legitimate Solomon’s succession of his father David, whose name means essentially the same thing, both finding their analogues in the Egyptian use of *mry*-names (i.e., “beloved” [of the deity]),<sup>166</sup> and Akkadian *naram*-names (e.g., *Naram-Sin*, “beloved of the [divine] Moon”).

As Garsiel explains: “The writer implies the derivation by using the synonymous root <sup>3</sup>-*h-b* (אהב ; to love) instead of by repeating the root *y-d-d* (ידי).”<sup>167</sup> The wordplay involving יהידי and אהב “refers to the names of both father and son”<sup>168</sup> and creates a close

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<sup>166</sup> See Nicholas Wyatt, “‘Jedidiah’ and Cognate Forms as a Title of Royal Legitimation,” *Bib* 66 (1985) 112-25.

<sup>167</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 49.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

association of the *Leitwort* דָּוִד with both David and Solomon. Moreover, the etiological nature of the passage confirms that the thematic wordplay involving דָּוִד, “David” (previously) and Solomon-“Jedidiah” (to follow) is deliberate.

Whether or not “Jedidiah” actually constitutes a throne-name has been the matter of some debate. The issue, however, may not be whether the name constitutes a “throne name,” but rather *why* the name is mentioned in 2 Sam 12:24, but then only alluded to (rather than being directly mentioned) thereafter.<sup>169</sup> The fact that דָּוִדִּים does not occur outside of its present context appears less problematic if we consider the literary function of the semantically-related term דָּוִד in the later Solomon narratives. In any case, the cognomen “Jedidiah” is given “on behalf of Yhwh” (12:25), in a further play on “Jedidiah,” and with emphasis on the theophoric element. James Ackermann suggests that here “the reader is clearly told of God’s preferential love for Solomon, so we can guess that as unlikable as Solomon is as a character, the right contender ... perhaps come[s] to the throne.”<sup>170</sup> Whether the reader is intended to make this inference or not, Nathan will press the potential implications of Solomon’s surnaming (“Yhwh’s Beloved”) to his own advantage—or at least

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<sup>169</sup> Steven L. McKenzie (“Yedidyah,” in *Le Roi Salomon: Un héritage en question: Hommage à Jacques Vermeylen* [ed. Dany Nocquet and Claude Lichtert; Le livre et le rouleau 33; Brussels: Lessius, 2008] 87-97), noting that the name is not mentioned hereafter, suggests that it is a post-Deuteronomistic addition to the narrative. However, there are literary allusions to the name outside the present narrative that obviate the need to mention it directly subsequently (see §3.5.2, §3.5.4).

<sup>170</sup> James Ackermann, “Knowing Good and Evil: A Literary Analysis of the Court History in 2 Samuel 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2,” *JBL* 109 (1990) 53-54.

in a gambit to save his life, when he realizes the implications of his being left out by the Adonijah party (see §3.5.1).<sup>171</sup>

Bridging the narrative of David's sin, condemnation, and Solomon's naming with the subsequent story of David's punishment is the short sequel on the Ammonite war with which the whole sordid affair began. The incorporation of this episode is anything but an afterthought. Although its placement may seem odd to some readers, it is highly illustrative of David's evolving character. With David still tending to affairs at home, Joab wages battle against Rabbah and takes the royal citadel (12:26). In order to keep the embarrassing situation of having the victory attributed to him, and the city's thus being named after him, from reflecting poorly on David's leadership, Joab summons David to the besieged city. And so, under David's leadership, the army makes a final assault on the city: "And David gathered the whole company [עַם, a play on Ammon] together and went to **Rabbah** [רַבְבָּה], made war with it and conquered it." Then comes the jarring notice that David "took [וַיִּקַּח] Milcom's crown from off his head, the weight of it being a talent of gold with the precious stones, and it was placed on David's head, and he brought out the spoil of the city in **great abundance** [בְּרַבְרָב] (12:30).

As Flanagan notes, "the crown of Milcom, the state god of the Ammonites symbolizes headship of the kingdom."<sup>172</sup> But Israel is forbidden to covet or take idol gold. As with

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<sup>171</sup> Ackermann (Ibid.) favors the view that Nathan here "was simply going through the motions of royal protocol by bestowing a special name indicating divine favor on the child" rather than that "Nathan [here] was acting in an unusual manner as a result of a special divine directive."

<sup>172</sup> Flanagan, "2 Samuel," 157.

Gideon, whose full-blown descent into idolatry followed his “taking” of the Midianite gold, we are witnessing a transformative moment for the Israelite monarchy. In David’s case, the descent into idolatry is proleptically held in reserve for his son Solomon and subsequent posterity. The wordplay on “Rabbah” further emphasizes that this is the kind of “multiplying” of gold warned against by Deut 17:17. We thus see the covetous “taking” of Achan the Judahite refracted in David’s “taking” both Bathsheba and the crown of Milcom. David’s “house,” like Achan’s, will suffer the consequences. Fokkelman perceives an additional problem: “After [the Ammonite war] the king loses the initiative and finds himself permanently overtaken by events: he loses his grip on reality because others (especially his sons, who reproduce his own criminality through sex and violence) present him with one problem or another.”<sup>173</sup> The unceasing punishment of David’s house for his “despising” Yhwh and “treating him with utter contempt” has only begun.

#### 3.4.7 Amnon “Loves” Then “Hates” Tamar (2 Samuel 13)

Immediately on the heels of David’s “taking” of Bathsheba, the subsequent murder of Uriah and eighteen others in the cover-up, and David’s self-coronation with the crown of Milcom, Dtr makes a dramatic and ironic change in his use of the *Leitwort* אהב. The word that previously and so emphatically characterized David as “beloved,” now become a key term in describing the “un”-building of his “sure” house.

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<sup>173</sup> Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative*, 139.

Tamar begs Amnon, “Do not do this **destructive foolishness** [נבלה]” (2 Sam 13:12-13), echoing the “house”-destroying sexual misconduct enumerated in Deut 22:20-30, and the “house”-threatening נבלה-rape of the Benjaminite “worthless sons” (Judg 19:22-30; see below), and likewise reminding us of the figure of Nabal whose נבלה-behavior gave Yhwh an excuse to kill him and David a convenient opportunity to “take” his wife Abigail for himself, thus blotting out Nabal and his “house.”

Tamar’s words<sup>174</sup> reflect her awareness of the potential consequences of Amnon’s planned נבלה for both her and Amnon: “And I—where shall I make my shame go? And you—you shall become like one of the fools (Nabals!) in Israel.” Tamar not only understands that she—should Amnon rape her—will not be able to marry and have children, but also that Amnon himself will have no posterity. Her words here hint that Amnon will—like Abner previously—be the victim of violence, and like Nabal will come to an unhappy end with no “house.”

But Amnon, with Israel-like obduracy, “was not willing to “hear” her (13:14), rapes her and thus joins the ranks of the “fools” and “sons of destruction” who imperil their own houses and their fathers’ houses. By this act Amnon ensures that he will have no “house,” i.e., no dynasty (he will not succeed David), no family, and no posterity. Here the consequences of David’s “despising” and “spurning” Yhwh begin to bear fruit in fulfillment of Nathan’s curse.

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<sup>174</sup> On the narrative function of the dialogues in this pericope see Luca Mazzinghi, “La narrativa biblica: La storia di Amnon e Tamar (2Sam 13,1-22),” *PdV* 46 (2001) 45-47.

David's sins become the sins of his sons.<sup>175</sup> The full reversal of the positive characterization of David in terms of **בָּהֶם** could not be clearer here: "Then Amnon **hated her** [וַיִּשְׁנֶאֱ] with a very intense hatred [וַיִּשְׁנֶאֱ], such that the hatred with which **he hated her** [וַיִּשְׁנֶאֱ] was more intense **than the love** [מֵאֲהָבָה] with which **he loved her** [וַיֵּהָבֵהּ]" (1 Sam 13:15).

The verb **שָׂנֵא**, an emotionally stronger antonym of **בָּהֶם** than \***בִּזֶּה**, illustrates the ugliness of Amnon's sin and the ugliness that David's sins are producing in his own "house." To compound the problem, following the rape, Tamar begs Amnon not to send her away ("this evil in sending me away is even worse than the other one that you have already done to me"), but her words fall on deaf ears ("but he was not willing to hear her," 13:16; see 13:14). Amnon's "evil" not only mirrors his father's "evil" (11:27) but reinforces the link with the hideous **נבל** of the Benjaminite "sons of destructiveness" and the Benjaminites' unwillingness to "hear" when all Israel demanded their punishment (Judg 19:22–20:13). Amnon's ugly sin not only had its precedent in David's "taking" Bathsheba and other misuses of women, but just as the Benjaminites refused to take action against their "sons of destructiveness," we learn in 13:21 that David had long encouraged Amnon's destructive behavior by never taking corrective action against him (1 Kgs 1:6 notes that his parenting style was the same with Adonijah). Dtr makes an important comment which, while speaking of David's reaction to these events, also hints at their cause. Unfortunately missing from

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<sup>175</sup> Walter Dietrich, "David, Amnon und Absalom (2 Samuel 13): Literarische, textliche und historische Erwägungen zu den ambivalenten Beziehungen eines Vaters zu seinen Söhnen," *Textus* 23 (2007) 115-43.

MT,<sup>176</sup> it is attested in multiple witnesses of 2 Sam 13:21: “But he did not antagonize Amnon his son [LXX καὶ οὐκ ἐλύπησεν τὸ πνεῦμα Αμνων τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ] because he **loved** him, for he was his firstborn [ὅτι ἠγάπα αὐτόν, ὅτι πρωτότοκος ἦν= אהב[ה] בו כי בכורו הוּא= אהב[ה] בו כי, 4QSam<sup>a</sup>].” Not only does this versional plus suggest that Amnon’s poor character was due to David’s enabling “love” for him, but is also (possibly aside from 1 Sam 16:21; see §3.3.1) the first time that emotional “love” is attributed to David. Here we get a glimpse of David’s misapplied “love,” manifest in his poor parenting.<sup>177</sup>

The cycle that David set in motion now takes another ugly turn. 2 Sam 13:22 informs us that Amnon’s vicious rape and intense hatred of Tamar begets similar hatred in her full-brother Absalom for Amnon: “Absalom hated [אָבְסָלוֹם] Amnon on account of the fact he had raped Tamar his sister.” Where Amnon emulates his father’s “taking” and misuse of women, Absalom will now emulate his father’s treacherous murder of Uriah and the other soldiers (see above), and do away with Amnon (13:28-29). Hatred has begotten hatred and ugliness, which will now fructify in even more ugliness. Dtr’s inclusion of this episode further implies that David’s failures as a parent are worse than those of Eli whose own “house” is in the process of being destroyed. As Gilmour observes, “The cycle of David’s sin is being repeated

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<sup>176</sup> McCarter (II Samuel, 319-20) suggests that the loss of text in MT in 1 Sam 13:21 “was haplographic, a scribe’s eye skipping from *wl’* at the beginning of the lost passage (v. 21+) to *wl’* at the beginning of v. 22 (homoiarkton).”

<sup>177</sup> Halpern (*David’s Secret Demons*, 48) observes that David “sits by after Absalom’s sister is raped, not forcing the perpetrator to marry her as required in Exod. 22:16-17 and in normal ancient Near Eastern usage.”

among his sons at a progressively greater intensity.”<sup>178</sup> Yhwh has already “raised up evil in [David’s] house” as Nathan foretold, but these events are only the beginning.

#### 3.4.8 “You Love Your Haters and Hate Those Who Love You” (2 Sam 19:6)

David’s two emotive laments “My son, Absalom! My son! My son! Absalom! Would that I were dead in your place! Absalom, my son! My son!” (2 Sam 19:1 [18:33]) and “My son, Absalom! Absalom, my son! My son!” (19:5 [19:4]) evidently fail to move David’s nephew, general and hit-man, Joab. He comes to David at home [הבית] and accuses him thus: “You have shamed this day the faces of all your servants ... **by loving** [לִּאֲהָבָה] your **haters** [שֹׂנְאֵי] and by **hating** [וּלְשֹׂנְאֵי] **those who love you** [לִּיְהוָה]” (2 Sam 19:6-7).

Fokkelman suggests that the “reversals of love and hate” here evoke 2 Sam 13:15,<sup>179</sup> where Amnon’s passionate “love” becomes intense “hatred.” He further remarks that “this link with Amnon suggests that David has ruthless harshness in common with his son.”<sup>180</sup>

This is the second (possibly third) time in Dtr that David is the subject (rather than the object) of the verb אָהַב, i.e., he is said to “love.” Here too אָהַב is used to characterize David in a distinctly negative way. David’s ability to “love” is limited to parental overindulgence

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<sup>178</sup> Rachelle Gilmour, *Representing the Past: A Literary Analysis of Narrative Historiography in the Book of Samuel* (VTSup 143; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 202.

<sup>179</sup> Fokkelman, *Narrative Art I*, 271. He observes a chiasmic abcd-dcba structure in 1 Sam 13:15b, and a chiasm here in 19:7a.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid. “And here,” Fokkelman says (p. 272), “it is certainly hard for the army to find that their deserts (they have saved David and his throne) and need (at the very least recognition) are totally ignored by the lamenting father.”



(LXX, 4QSam<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam 13:21; cf. 1 Kgs 1:6) and (sometimes expediently) currying favor with or mourning for adversaries (Absalom, Amasa, Abner). Joab's sarcastic comment on this occasion is not unlike Michal's sarcasm in 6:20-23. Similar to his refusing to have children by Michal, David will respond to Joab and his killing of Absalom by removing him as his general.

There is a further reminiscence of Michal in David's treatment of the ten concubines that Absalom raped. If Absalom gave the concubines the Amnon-treatment by raping them "in the sight of all Israel," David gives his ten concubines the Michal-treatment when he returns to "his house" from exile and war: "Then David came to **his house** [בֵּיתוֹ] in Jerusalem and the king took [וַיִּקַּח] the ten concubine-wives whom he had left behind **to guard** [לְשֹׁמֵר] the house [הַבַּיִת] and he gave them [וַיִּתֵּן] to **the guard-house** [בֵּית מִשְׁמֶרֶת] and fed them, but with them he had no sexual relations and they became shut-ins until the day of their death, living in widowhood" (2 Sam 20:3). This passage plays at once on the senses שֹׁמֵר, and the ongoing binary of "take"/"give" as well as the "house" *Leitmotif* to illustrate David's heavy-handed and even cruel resumption of royal power. His reentry to Jerusalem is less festive than the entry described in 2 Samuel 6, but the occasion is again marked by the consignment of wife/wives to unreproductivity.

Both Amnon's rape of Tamar and Absalom's raping his father's concubines are, as Polzin states, "graphic images of the internal disintegration of David's enduring house."<sup>181</sup> By

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<sup>181</sup> Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist*, 126. He notes further, "they both form the two-edged sword that will never depart from that house [David's house]."

the end of 2 Samuel it is clear that David's sins—his failure to “love” Yhwh—have wreaked great havoc on his “house” (his immediate family): three of his sons and prospective heirs (Amnon, Absalom, and his unnamed infant son by Bathsheba) are dead. Dtr's inclusion of these events successfully undermines the image of David's “house” as a “sure house” (cf. 1 Sam 25:28; 2 Sam 7:16; cf. 1 Sam 2:35; 1 Kgs 11:28). Although David's descendants continue to occupy the throne, they will find no refuge from Nathan's pronouncement: “the sword will never depart from your house” (2 Sam 12:10).

### 3.5 Solomon, “Beloved of Yhwh”: Israel at Its Zenith

As discussed previously, the giving of the name “Jedidiah” to Solomon by Nathan in 2 Sam 12:24 reflects the possibility that Solomon, like David—and like Israel—may be the continuous object of Yhwh's “love.” The name “Jedidiah” thus serves to create a permanent onomastic link between father and son, articulating not only “royal” ideology, but also Deuteronomy's emphasis on Yhwh's love for Israel. Perhaps also implicit in this name-giving is the idea that Solomon should “love” Yhwh. In other words, this son (Solomon-Jedidiah) will not only evidence Yhwh's love for him personally, but his deeds might theoretically evidence his (and David's) “love” for Yhwh. Yhwh's “love” for Solomon (Jedidiah), as in the case of David, will be amply evident, but will that love be reciprocated? In the kingships of his predecessors Saul and David his father, early promise (manifest in positive traits) yields ere long to personal failings. Will Solomon succeed where they failed? Dtr uses the verb אהב to show that the יהוה-יהודה-narrative announced by Nathan for Solomon does not play out as scripted.

### 3.5.1 “Beloved” Son of “Oaths” (2 Samuel 12–1 Kings 2)

Just as the name and person of “Jonathan” are used as an extended etiological mediation on why David, a non-heir came to inherit Saul’s throne, the name and person of “Bathsheba” are used as an extended etiological meditation on why Solomon, rather than the heir apparent came to inherit David’s throne. Oaths are salient feature of the story of David’s accession (1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 5), but they constitute an even more central and critical aspect of the story of how the “beloved” son of the “Daughter of Oaths” improbably secures the throne as David’s tenth son<sup>182</sup> against the claims of his (half) brother Adonijah, David’s heir-apparent, and other competing interests. The wordplay on “Bathsheba” in the earlier narratives (e.g., in 2 Sam 12:1-6; cf. 3:35)<sup>183</sup> which stresses punishment for David’s sin has been previously noted (see §3.4.5). Dtr continues this wordplay in the ensuing narratives, but now with a focus on the “oaths”<sup>184</sup> that transformed Bathsheba’s son into the unnamed dynastic “son” mentioned in 2 Samuel 7.<sup>185</sup>

The ritual execution of seven of Saul’s heirs (2 Samuel 21) aids Solomon-Jedidiah’s accession to the throne. Yhwh calls Saul’s “house” a “bloody house” (21:1), reminding the

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<sup>182</sup> Marcus (“David the Deceiver and David the Dupe,” 166) writes: “Nathan and Bathsheba achieve by intrigue what they could not otherwise have expected to get in the normal course of events and it is their revolution, not Adoniyah’s which is described in the first book of kings ... David’s tenth son, Solomon was way down on the line of succession and Solomon himself admits his lack of seniority (1 Kings 2:22).”

<sup>183</sup> David “swears” what some see as a hypocritical oath in response to Abner’s death (2 Sam 3:35), given that David directly benefits from this death.

<sup>184</sup> Garsiel (*Biblical Names*, 195) writes: “In the struggle between Adonijah and Solomon for the throne ‘Bath-sheba’ is glossed in terms of ‘oath.’”

<sup>185</sup> For similar examples of wordplay on the name Beersheba (“well of oath”), see Gen 21:28-33 and 2 Sam 3:9-10. Cf. Garsiel, “Biblical Names,” 130.

reader of Shimei's accusation that David was "a bloody man" (2 Sam 16:7-8), an accusation that seems to have in view the events detailed here (see below). The Gibeonites claim that they do not want silver or gold from Saul or his "house" (21:4), but instead the ritual execution of seven of Saul's "sons": "**Let seven** [שבעה] **men from his sons** [מבניו] **be given** [ינתן] to us" (21:6). David agrees: "**I will give** [אני אתן] them" (21:6).

The narrator reiterates that David spared Mephibaal because of his "oath": "But the king had compassion on Mephibaal son of **Jonathan** [יהונתן] son of Saul on account of **the oath** [שבועה] of Yhwh which was between them" (2 Sam 21:7; cf. 1 Sam 20:8), but also makes clear that survival of Saul's "house" hangs in doubt. The narrative plays immediately on the terms "seven" (שבעה) and "oath" (שבועה),<sup>186</sup> but the placement of this story suggests that the wordplay on "seven" and "oath" also has Bathsheba and Solomon's accession in view. The "seven ... of [Saul's] sons" evokes the name meaning "daughter of an oath," just as the "giving" of Saul's "sons" (ינתן, אני אתן, ויתנם) calls to mind the names "Jonathan" and "Nathan."

By 1 Kings 1, the picture of Nathan has decidedly changed from 2 Sam 12:1-15. Where he had once boldly described David's "taking" of Bathsheba and subsequent murder of Uriah and his fellow soldiers as "despising Yhwh" and "treat[ing] Yhwh with utter contempt"

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<sup>186</sup> Gotthard G.G. Reinhold, "Die Zahl Sieben in Verbindung mit alttestamentlichem Bundesschluss, Bundesbruch und Unterwerfung," in *Die Zahl Sieben im Alten Orient: Studien zur Zahlensymbolik in der Bibel und ihrer altorientalischen Umwelt* (ed. Gotthard G.G. Reinhold; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008) 59-63.

and declared that “the sword [would] never depart from [David’s] house,” he here appears as a cunning counselor (see chapter two), scheming to have Solomon placed on the throne.

Nathan’s new role is perhaps intimated in 2 Sam 12:25, where Nathan is said to be the agent in the giving of Solomon’s other name, Jedidiah (“Beloved of Yhwh”). It is here that Nathan’s connection with Solomon-Jedidiah is first established. In 1 Kgs 1:8 we learn that Nathan was not “with” Adonijah, i.e., did not support Adonijah as David’s successor. Consequently Nathan (like Solomon) was not invited to Adonijah’s party (1:10). 1 Kgs 1:11 indicates that Nathan approached Bathsheba and warned her that Adonijah already “reigned” due to—he alleges—David’s senility. He then offers Bathsheba some unsolicited “advice”:

“But come now, let me **offer you some counsel** [נָא עֲצֵךְ נָא עֲצֵה], so that you may rescue your own life and the life of your son Solomon: Come, go to king David and say to him, ‘Surely you yourself, O lord king, **swore** [נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ] to your maidservant, saying “Indeed your son Solomon shall reign after me and he shall sit on my throne.” Why then has Adonijah become king?’” (1 Kgs 1:13).

Since Adonijah will, Nathan anticipates, kill the members of David’s court who are not “with” him, Nathan’s “counsel” is calculated not only to save Bathsheba and Solomon’s lives, but his own. It is not clear, however, that David had ever actually “sworn” any oath to Bathsheba that Solomon would succeed David. In suggesting that Bathsheba invoke what seems to be a previously unmentioned “oath,” Nathan may subtly allude to the giving of Solomon’s cognomen יְדִידִיָּה—“beloved of Yhwh” (2 Sam 12:25), this making wise use of what he believed that name implied. Nathan was, after all, Yhwh’s agent on that earlier naming errand. But this name-giving can hardly be said to constitute an “oath” per se, by David, let alone Yhwh. Ironically, Solomon may then have been Nathan’s, rather than Yhwh’s or David’s choice, to succeed David.

At Nathan's behest Bathsheba goes into the king's audience chamber to "remind"<sup>187</sup> him of his "oath" and to apprise him of Adonijah's "rebellion" (1 Kgs 1:15-21). *How* she follows Nathan's instructions about recalling the alleged oath is noteworthy: "My Lord [אֲדֹנָי], **you swore** [נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ] by Yhwh to your maidservant: 'Surely Solomon your son shall reign after me and he shall sit on my throne.' But now, lo, Adonijah reigns and you, my lord [אֲדֹנָי], do not know." (1 Kgs 1:17-19) Playing on her own name, Bathsheba cunningly makes the "oath" an "oath of Yhwh." Likewise, her use of the title אֲדֹנָי cleverly plays on "Adonijah," stressing his alleged role as usurper and immediate threat to David (who has, after all, been down this road before).

At the end of her speech, Nathan (almost on cue) comes in to add his two bits. His question to David is carefully phrased "O my lord [אֲדֹנָי] king, did you ever say, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne'?" (1:24). His speech too plays on "Adonijah" and corroborates Bathsheba's insinuation of rebellion. David now summons Bathsheba again: "Then the king **swore** [וַיִּשְׁבַּע] and said, 'The life of Yhwh who has ransomed my soul from all distress: just as **I swore to you** [נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי] by Yhwh, God of Israel, saying: 'Solomon your son shall rule after me and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' even so I enact it this day'" (1:29-30). Here we have the real oath that makes Solomon, the son of

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<sup>187</sup> Yael Ziegler, *Promises to Keep: The Oath in Biblical Narrative* (VTSup 120; Leiden: Brill, 2008) 250.

“the daughter of oath,” the son of 2 Samuel 7—an oath based on a (seemingly) fictitious oath.<sup>188</sup>

The necessary arrangements are then made: Solomon’s allies are summoned and Zadok anoints Solomon king (1:23-48), while Adonijah and his supporters are caught off guard. The scene is punctuated with David’s pious pronouncement from his bed: “Blessed be Yhwh, God of Israel, who **has given** [נתַן] today one to sit on my throne, my eyes seeing it” (1:48). Noting the proliferation of the first person pronoun in David’s speech, Gunn observes: “Any sense of the gift being Yahweh’s to give has in fact been almost totally subordinated. The dominant view of the king is clear: the kingdom is *his* to give.”<sup>189</sup> Here too we have another clear instance of wordplay on the name “Nathan.” Even more than Jonathan as Yhwh’s instrument in “giving” David the kingdom, Nathan (“He has given”) is the player responsible for “giving” the kingdom to Solomon. It much less clear that Nathan acted with Yhwh’s support in doing so, however.

No longer the heir-presumptive, Adonijah, from the horns of the altar in the tabernacle, ironically *adjures* Solomon in a bid to save his life: “Let king Solomon swear to me [שבע־לִי] this day ...” (1 Kgs 1:51) Solomon, of course, will not swear an oath to Adonijah that will leave Adonijah as an abiding, protected threat to his throne. Solomon’s moralizing speech in 1:52 (“If he shall be a valiant son, none of his hairs shall fall to the earth;

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<sup>188</sup> David M. Gunn (*The Story of King David: Genre and Interpretation* [JSOTSup 6; Sheffield: JSOT, 1978] 106) writes: “The strong possibility exists ... that we are witnessing an act of deliberate deception, an ingenious ploy by the Solomonic party. Where David in his senility imagines that he is bestowing the kingdom, in actuality it is being taken from him, not by violence this time (as in Absalom’s case), but *taken* all the same.”

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

but if evil [רע] is found in him, he shall die”)—which recalls David’s own moralizing speeches<sup>190</sup>—is essentially a death sentence held in abeyance. Gunn notes that the “apparent simplicity” of the conditions that Solomon lays out is “totally deceptive,” i.e., “what precisely might constitute worthiness and wickedness, and who is the arbiter?”<sup>191</sup> The arbiter is Solomon, of course, and he holds all the cards. Solomon’s ordering Adonijah, “Go to your **house!**” (1:53) is all the more ominous in light of this fact and the destruction and near-destruction of “houses” that Dtr has been recounting.

The senile David of 1 Kings 1 suddenly returns to menacing lucidity in 1 Kgs 2:1-9 as David gives his final instructions to Solomon. Notably here, David voices the dynastic promise in conditional, Deuteronomistic terms (2:3-4). With this speech, Dtr juxtaposes David’s impious instruction (2:5-9) to Solomon on how to commit the very same kinds of murders which the earlier narratives explicitly state that he himself *did not* commit. Now though, there are enemies and potential rivals to the throne that needed to be eliminated. In particular, David’s former general and enforcer, Joab, had thrown his support to Adonijah (1 Kgs 1:7, 41; 2:22, 28)<sup>192</sup> and as David’s nephew is himself a potential rival to the throne and thus calls for elimination.

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<sup>190</sup> E.g., 1 Sam 25:36; 26:3; 2 Sam 3:39.

<sup>191</sup> Gunn, *Story of King David*, 106. He further observes, “The reader has been too much made aware of the complexity of moral perspectives to be taken in by the sham simplicity of the utterance.”

<sup>192</sup> As Alter (*David Story*, 377) notes, Adonijah himself “was not included in David’s list of enemies to be eliminated because he is Solomon’s problem, not David’s.”



Contrastively, David instructs Solomon to show “lifesaving grace” (חסד) to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead (i.e., not to slaughter them or their “houses”) because of Barzillai’s giving life-saving assistance to David during Absalom’s rebellion (2:7; see 2 Sam 17:27-29; 19:31-34, 39; contrast Nabal’s and Barzillai’s respective receptions of David, and their respective rewards). But there is still the pesky matter of the oath that David had sworn to Shimei son of Gera, the Benjaminite who had cursed David to his face when David was at his most vulnerable: “I swore to him by Yhwh, ‘I will not kill you with the sword’” (1 Kgs 2:8). David means to circumvent this oath (and now appears to have meant to do so all along): “bring his grey head down to the grave with blood!” (2:9). The “wisdom” that David uses and encourages his son to use is the obverse of the philanthropic wisdom that Solomon reportedly “asks” from Yhwh and receives in 1 Kings 3. As Cogan notes, “here it is astuteness, even guile, that is being called for.”<sup>193</sup> It is now clear where David will build his sure “house”: upon the offspring of a marriage born from the illicit taking of Bathsheba and a murderous cover-up; and how he will build it: by violence.

When Adonijah puts in a “request” (2:16-21, see chapter two) for his father’s concubine through Bathsheba, Solomon has more than the pretext he needs to impose the death penalty on Adonijah that he had held in abeyance (1:52). The oath to protect Adonijah’s life that Solomon would not “swear” (1:51-52), he now swears as an oath *against* Adonijah’s life: “Then Solomon swore [וַיִּשְׁבַּע] by Yhwh saying, ‘May God do such-and-such to me and may he do such-and-such more, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own throat’”

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<sup>193</sup> Mordecai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001) 173.

(1 Kgs 2:23). Solomon's use of this oath, and all the "oaths" that play on the name Bathsheba (interpretively, "daughter of oath") in the foregoing narratives, suggests that Solomon not only sees himself as the dynastic "son" of Yhwh's eternal "oath" (the "son" of 2 Samuel 7), but also regards his chosen *modus operandi* of securing his "house" through oaths of violence as an appropriate means of perpetuating the nascent dynasty (cf. 2:4), just as David's "taking" secured his.

1 Kgs 2:26-27 reports the removal of Abiathar from the priesthood. Solomon declares Abiathar "worthy of death," but forbears killing him (2:26; on the remaining enemies on David's hit-list, see chapter four). Though not destroyed, the continued existence of the "house of Eli," like the house of Saul, now hangs in doubt. This image of a "dethroned" house (cf. our initial view of Eli on his "throne," 1 Sam 1:9) in possession of an "eternal" promise that is subsequently revoked to the house's peril will prove to be a key one for Dtr at the end of his history.

After Joab's death and Abiathar's removal, Solomon, as one might expect, installs his supporters Benaiah and Zadok as his general and priest, respectively (2:35). Then Solomon turns to the business of disposing of Shimei as his father David instructed. Solomon, of course, could have dispatched Shimei at a word. However, he clearly wants to avoid incurring bloodguilt, i.e., bringing "innocent blood" upon himself, so he finds a way to *make* Shimei guilty. Solomon summons Shimei and orders him, ironically, to "build [himself] house in Jerusalem" and to "reside there, and not go out from there anywhere" (2:36). The penalty for doing so will be death and Solomon will be (theoretically) absolved of Shimei's blood.

Shimei, according to Alter, “has no alternative but to agree”<sup>194</sup> (“The word is good,” 1 Kgs 2:38). Although it is not clear that Shimei actually swears an oath here, the LXX indicates that Solomon himself “swore” an oath on this occasion: καὶ ὥρκισεν [=שבע] ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ (LXX 1 Kgs 2:38). Solomon has cunningly set a kind of “perjury” trap for Shimei, knowing that sooner or later Shimei will fall into it.

After “many days” (2:38), Shimei falls into this “perjury” trap when two of his slaves (conveniently enough)<sup>195</sup> escape to David’s old allies the Philistines. Shimei is “informed” that his slaves are in Gath. When Shimei goes to Gath to retrieve them, Solomon is “informed” that Shimei had left Jerusalem and had returned (2:41), possibly by the same nameless informants. Solomon immediately has Shimei brought to him for sentencing. There, presumably in Solomon’s royal halls (Israel’s *de facto* Supreme Court), where Shimei would have had no friendly witnesses to contradict Solomon’s version of events, Solomon cleverly changes his own oath-taking (LXX 2:41) into an act of Shimei’s: “Did **I** not **make you swear** [השבעתיך] by Yhwh ...? Why then have you not kept **the oath** [שבעתך] of Yhwh ...?” (1 Kgs 2:42-43). We never get to hear Shimei’s answer, but that does not matter: he is a dead man, whatever his answer. Solomon thinks he has cleverly avoided bloodguilt and continues with a moralizing speech (2:44-45) that the rest of Dtr’s history will manifestly contradict.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Alter, *David Story*, 382: “better virtual confinement in the capital city than death.”

<sup>195</sup> Halpern (*David’s Secret Demons*, 98) observes, “It does not take much in the way of imagination to realize that the slaves’ escape, and their choice of Gath as a refuge, are convenient for Solomon.”

<sup>196</sup> The substance of this speech will be treated in depth in chapter four.

Gunn asks, “Why does Yhwh love Solomon? Why should the gift of an heir be made the issue of the most compromised episode in David’s life?”<sup>197</sup> One must, however, distinguish between the cunning acts of Nathan, Bathsheba, and David and Solomon themselves done under the presumption that Solomon as “Jedidiah” (“Yhwh’s Beloved”) was Yhwh’s choice and the acts and will of Yhwh.<sup>198</sup> The “oaths” that place Solomon on David’s throne (rather than Adonijah or some other potential heir) were not oaths that Yhwh swore, but the cunning machinations of Nathan, Bathsheba (“Daughter of oath”) and “wise” Solomon himself. While Jonathan and Michal aid David (“Beloved”) in his bid for Saul’s throne *against* their family’s own interests out of “love” for David, Nathan and Bathsheba (“Daughter of Oath”) aid Solomon’s succession to David’s throne by a “wise” manipulation of “oaths.”

### 3.5.2 “Solomon Loved Yhwh” (1 Kgs 3:3)

On the heels of the gory narrative of Solomon’s “wise” elimination of his rivals to the throne (1 Kings 1–2; see later discussion this chapter), 1 Kings 3 is something of a literary “new beginning” for Solomon and the house of David. Unfortunately for both, this new beginning also represents a further stage in Solomon’s and Israel’s later failure to “love” Yhwh.

1 Kgs 3:1 reports that “Solomon made a marriage alliance [וַיִּתְּחַתֵּן] with Pharaoh, king of Egypt and he took [וַיִּקַּח] the daughter [בַּת] of Pharaoh and brought her to the city of

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<sup>197</sup> Gunn, *Story of King David*, 110.

<sup>198</sup> Solomon is never actually said to have been chosen by Yhwh, except in an ironic way by Adonijah in 1 Kgs 2:15.

David until he had finished building his own house [בֵּיתוֹ] and the house of Yhwh [בֵּית־יְהוָה] and the wall of Jerusalem all around.”<sup>199</sup> Cogan believes that “the placement of this verse in its present position is not immediately clear, because it is poorly connected to its context.”<sup>200</sup> The literary placement of the notice that Solomon began his reign and his monarchic wife-taking with a foreign marriage makes perfect sense, however, when we consider that monarchic wife-taking and foreign marriages are two of the most important contributing factors to Solomon’s failure to “love” Yhwh and eventual apostasy (a third contributing factor will be cited in 3:3).

Since 1 Kings 3–11 is not merely a dry rendition of the annals of Solomon’s life, but part of a broader attempt to answer the question of why Israel’s history turned out the way it did (i.e., why Israel and Judah went into exile) and since 1 Kings 3–11 also shows the spiritual trajectory of Solomon’s life in particular, the information on a foreign marriage as the beginning of Solomon’s monarchic wife-taking provided in 1 Kgs 3:1 is in fact a fitting starting point. It is also significant that Dtr gives this marriage information in the context of a reference to “house”- building. Solomon is indeed building “houses” as physical structures (his own residence and the house of Yhwh)—but Dtr is also underscoring the way in which Solomon builds his “house” (i.e., his family and dynasty): through foreign marriages.

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<sup>199</sup> Jerome T. Walsh (*I Kings* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996] 70) notes the omission of the expected לוֹ (“for himself”) and לְאִשָּׁה (“as a wife”) in the above לְקַח marriage-idiom. He suggests that “this wording is significant, because it points up clearly that in reality the union is a political alliance between Solomon and the king of Egypt; it is not primarily a relationship between Solomon and a foreign woman.”

<sup>200</sup> Cogan, *I Kings*, 184.

Rehoboam, Solomon's heir, will be the son of Naamah an Ammonite woman (1 Kgs 14:31).

Dtr's emphasis on Solomon's building a "house" for the "daughter of Pharaoh" (evident in his resumption of the play on "daughter" and "house" from 2 Samuel in 1 Kgs 3:1; 7:8; 9:24) underscores Solomon's foreign priorities.

1 Kgs 3:3 states: "And Solomon loved [יְיָ] Yhwh, to walk in the decrees of David [דָּוִד] his father, except he offered sacrifice and burnt incense in the high places." Here again Dtr plays on the name "David." Garsiel suggests that Solomon's "other" name, Jedidiah (יְדִידְיָהּ, see §3.4.6, 3.5.1), is also being alluded to here: "In the text the name Jedidiah is absent, but nevertheless the verb *'hb* expounds it" and "expounds the name David as well."<sup>201</sup>

The force of the wordplay here is to associate Solomon, and secondarily David,<sup>202</sup> with actively "loving" Yhwh. Heretofore they have been characterized as the passive objects or recipients of Yhwh's (and Israel's) love. But even here Dtr avoids expressly stating that David "loved" Yhwh: indeed, David has "despised" Yhwh and "treated Yhwh with utter contempt" (2 Sam 12:9, 14) in the recent memory of the narrative. Dtr's notice here arguably softens his judgment on David's failure to "love" Yhwh, albeit slightly. This is the closest that Dtr ever comes to saying that David loved Yhwh, but even as he states that David's son "Solomon loved Yhwh" he alludes in the same sentence to practices that, in Dtr's view, will

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<sup>201</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 49.

<sup>202</sup> According to Garsiel (*Ibid.*), "the writer praises Solomon for loving the Lord as David did; hence both names contain synonyms of the verb *'hb* (יָהַב ; to love)." The text however never explicitly states that David "loved" Yhwh; instead it declares that he "despised" Yhwh and "treated Yhwh with utter contempt" (2 Sam 12:9-10, 14). This must be important. The fact that it is explicitly stated that Solomon "loved" Yhwh may, in fact, mark him for greater condemnation by Dtr. If his loyalty and affection for Yhwh were at one point greater than David's, then his later apostasy is all the more egregious.

ultimately compromise and lead to the invalidation of that love: “except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places” (1 Kgs 3:3). Later, Dtr specifically notes that “Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, horror of Moab ... and to Moloch [or Milcom<sup>203</sup>], horror of the Ammonites” (11:7). So, although “Solomon’s love” may *as yet* be “whole-heartedly directed at Yahweh,”<sup>204</sup> two of the main ingredients for disaster are mentioned here in the same breath with his “love” for Yhwh: foreign marriage and the use of “high places.” 1 Kings 10 will enumerate others, including Solomon’s multiplication of gold.

### 3.5.3 “One Who Loved David” (1 Kgs 5:15): The Foreign Builder of the Davidic “House”

At the head of the account of the building of the temple (1 Kgs 5:15–9:24),<sup>205</sup> i.e., the building of Yhwh’s “house,” in 1 Kgs 5:15, Dtr briefly describes the “historical” relationship between David and the chief builder of David’s **palace** (“house”)—the most visible and iconic symbol of David’s emergent **dynasty** (“house”): “Then Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, because he had heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram had always been **one who loved** [חַסֵּדָה] David [לְדָוִד].”

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<sup>203</sup> LXX<sup>L</sup> reads Μέλχομ. Solomon thus ironically builds a high place to the very god whose crown David took and wore on his head (2 Sam 12:30).

<sup>204</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 70.

<sup>205</sup> On the two primary biblical temple-building accounts (Exodus 25-29; 39:42-43; Leviticus 9 and 1 Kgs 5:15-9:24) and how they compare to other temple-building accounts in the ancient Near East, see Victor Hurowitz, “The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle,” *JAOS* 105 (1985) 21-30.

Hiram, “had been loving David”<sup>206</sup> primarily in the political sense of אהב,<sup>207</sup> i.e., they were “political allies,”<sup>208</sup> whatever personal “friendship” or affection may have existed between the two. In addition to the technical meaning of אהב, the idiom ל אהב, as used here, may also have the sense of “beneficial/helpful,”<sup>209</sup> i.e., “Hiram was always one who was beneficial [or helpful] to David.” Dtr adroitly works in “a standard political euphemism”<sup>210</sup> into his ongoing play on the meaning of “David” as “beloved,” with the use of אהב here recalling the many benefits that came to David even before his accession as the object of the one-sided “love” of others (e.g., Jonathan, Michal). The term thus emphasizes “that like his father, Solomon has gained the **love** of Hiram.”<sup>211</sup> Solomon is now the beneficiary of the same one-directional love that served David’s interests and ambitions.

If, as Jeffrey Kuan argues, the LXX version of 1 Kgs 5:15, which describes Hiram’s sending servants “to anoint Solomon king in place of David his father” (+ καὶ χρῖσαι τὸν Σαλωμων ἀντὶ Δαυιδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, LXX<sup>BL</sup>) represents the original reading vis-à-vis

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<sup>206</sup> The Hebrew idiom literally reads “Hiram had been loving David,” according to Walsh (*1 Kings*, 94).

<sup>207</sup> See Moshe Weinfeld, “The Significance of a Political ‘Friendship Treaty’ in Israel and the Ancient Near East,” in *Homage to Shmuel: Studies in the World of the Bible* (ed. Zipora Talshir, Shamir Yona, and Daniel Silvan; Jerusalem: Bialik, 2001) 179-83.

<sup>208</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 94.

<sup>209</sup> Abraham Malamat, “‘Love Your Neighbor as Yourself’: What It Really Means,” *BAR* 16 (1990) 50-51.

<sup>210</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 94.

<sup>211</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 50.



MT,<sup>212</sup> then Hiram is the builder of David's "house" (dynasty) in still another sense. The embarrassment of such a "foreign anointing of Solomon"<sup>213</sup> is at least two-fold: Solomon's relationship with Hiram is not as equal as the term "brother" (𐤁𐤍, 9:13) would imply; Solomon's kingship over Israel essentially becomes a "foreign" kingship under "foreign" authority (rather than Yhwh's authority), i.e., Israel's king is now the king who will make Israel "like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:5, 20; Deut 17:14). Dtr will describe Solomon's kingship as a violation of Deuteronomy (17:14-20), *exceeding* the worst aspects of Samuel's warning on human kingship.

Solomon enlists Hiram's help (1 Kgs 5:16-20) in his own "house"-building project: Hiram thus becomes a builder also of Yhwh's "house." Hiram responds by supplying Solomon with materials (5:22-24; cf. 9:11). Solomon pays for these supplies by "giving" up a large food supply for Hiram's "house" (5:25)<sup>214</sup> and twenty cities in Galilee which are described as "Cabul" ("as nothing," see 1 Kgs 9:10-14 and below), trickery which, as Robert Miller notes, is "a showcase of the consequences of immorality."<sup>215</sup> Solomon's building his

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<sup>212</sup> Jeffrey K. Kuan, "Third Kingdoms 5.1 and Israelite-Tyrian Relations During the Reign of Solomon," *JSOT* 46 (1990) 31-46. The MT lacks this notice entirely. It is easy to see how later copyists may have seen this foreign anointing as theologically problematic, especially since it comes well before Solomon's infamous apostasy and so omitted this.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>214</sup> Ephraim Sand ("Two Dialogue Documents in the Bible: Genesis Chapter 23:3-18 and 1 Kings Chapter 5:15-25," *ZABR* 8 [2002] 88-130) suggests that 1 Kgs 5:15-25 constitutes a "dialogue document" like Gen 23:3-18, where Abraham haggles with the Hittites for the cave at Machpelah as a burial-place for Sarah.

<sup>215</sup> Robert D. Miller, "Solomon the Trickster," *BibInt* 19 (2011) 499.

“house” through fraud hints at the personal and cultic apostasy that Dtr will detail in 1 Kings 11.

Upon the completion of Yhwh’s “house” and the “house” of the king (Solomon’s royal palace, 1 Kgs 9:1) Yhwh appears to Solomon again, just as he had done at Gibeon (9:2; cf. 3:5). This time Yhwh comes bearing a message for Solomon, of the kind that we might expect a Deuteronomistic prophet or man of God to deliver. Very significantly, however, it is *not* a prophet, messenger, or an intermediary of any kind, but Yhwh himself who delivers the message. Yhwh states that he has “heard” Solomon’s prayer and has sanctified the “house” that Solomon has built (Yhwh’s eyes and heart will even be there, 9:3)

1 Kgs 9:10 indicates that twenty years on, the two houses—the “house” of Yhwh and the king’s “house”—are still Solomon’s signature building achievements. They stand as an unimpeachable double-testimony to David’s “everlasting” dynasty. In return for Hiram’s supplying him with every luxury (cedar trees, gold, etc.) for his “house”-building, Solomon gives Hiram twenty “worthless” communities in the Galilee area (9:11).

This brief “Cabul” etiology speaks volumes about both Solomon’s and Hiram’s regard for the Israelite inhabitants of this region. In 1 Kgs 9:7, Yhwh had invoked the gift of the land (“the land which I have given [Israel]”—a form of the “Yhwh has given,” formula) from Deuteronomy. As Walsh observes, Yhwh had “specified separation of Israel from the land as the ultimate punishment for covenant infidelity (9:7),” and so “Solomon’s readiness to sell off what Yahweh himself bestowed on the people foreshadows a disastrous destiny for the

nation.”<sup>216</sup> We bear in mind here that Solomon exchanges “Cabul” for the *building* of Yhwh’s “house.” Whether or not Dtr implies the gifting of Cabul to Hiram added to the growing dissatisfaction among the northern tribes, his inclusion of this incident hints at northern secession, and thus a divided “house”—the separate houses of Judah and Israel.<sup>217</sup> Dtr’s description of David’s and Solomon’s relations with Hiram of Tyre—Hiram’s “love” for David and its consequences—causes his audience to reflect on how the Davidic “house” (dynasty) was built. Solomon is building “houses” on Hiram’s “love” for David, but is he also building with wholehearted “love” for Yhwh?

#### 3.5.4 “Because Yhwh Loved Israel” (1 Kings 10:9): Solomon and Israel at the Zenith

The brief tale of the Queen of Sheba’s visit links the theme of David and Solomon as “Beloved” with Deuteronomy’s emphasis on Israel as Yhwh’s “beloved” more explicitly. After being left “breathless” (10:5) by Solomon’s “wisdom” and the scene of splendor before her, the queen exclaims: “Blessed be Yhwh your God who delights [יִפְתֵּחַ] in you **to set you** [lit., **give you**, לָתֵת] upon the throne of Israel **because Yhwh loved** [בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ] Israel forever and has appointed you king to perform justice and righteousness” (1 Kgs 10:9).

Solomon, and the “prosperity” that has attended him in his “house”-building would now seem to be a sure signs<sup>218</sup> of Yhwh’s favor to Israel—the language of Yhwh’s “giving” out of “love” to Israel is evident here. However, against the backdrop of Solomon’s corvée

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 10:6: “And the queen said, ‘True [אמת] is the word which I have heard ...’”

levies and intensive labor projects (later called Solomon's "yoke" upon Israel, 1 Kgs 12:4, 9-11, 14), the Queen of Sheba's words almost seem to constitute a warning. Indeed, the mention of "justice and righteousness" here "on the lips of a foreigner," as Walsh notes, "sounds more like a reminder to Solomon of his duty than a praise of his deeds."<sup>219</sup> "Justice" and "righteousness" had in some measure characterized David's pre-Bathsheba period (2 Sam 8:15) *à la* Abraham (Gen 18:19),<sup>220</sup> Israel's archetypal royal figure and prototype heir of the covenant blessings. These are the models that Solomon is being admonished to imitate.

1 Kings 10:10 reports that the Queen of Sheba "gave [וְהָתַן] to the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold and spices in **great abundance** [הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד]. Never again did anyone one bring **so much** [לֹרֵב] spice as the queen of Sheba gave [נָתַןָהּ] to king Solomon." The cognates הַרְבֵּה and רַב recall the "increase" or "multiplication" promised in Deuteronomy 7, promises predicated on Israel's reciprocating Yhwh's "love" by utterly separating themselves from idolatry—so far, so good for Solomon on that point. And yet, amid the "breathtaking" (cf. 10:5) description of Solomon's gilded stage, "there is no mention of the people's benefit ... all the wealth Solomon amasses goes to decorate the palace complex."<sup>221</sup> In other words, Solomon has built Yhwh's "house" as a counterpart to his own "house" (i.e., dynasty), and he is building his "house" (i.e., palace) by multiplying gold (cf. Deut 17:17) that would have

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<sup>219</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 132.

<sup>220</sup> Olivier Artus, "La question de l'interprétation de la figure d'Abraham comme 'figure royale'" in *Le Roi Salomon: Un héritage en question: Hommage à Jacques Vermeylen* (ed. Dany Nocquet and Claude Lichtert; Le livre et le rouleau 33; Brussels: Lessius, 2008) 149-64.

<sup>221</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 131-32.

been more “justly” and “righteously” used to build up the whole “house of Israel”—both Israel and Judah. The direct result of Solomon’s building methods will be the un-building, i.e., the division of the unified “house of Israel,” and eventually the destruction of both divided “houses.” Solomon’s multiplication of gold is the prelude to his, and then Israel’s, full-blown idolatry.

### 3.6 Solomon’s Failure to “Love” Yhwh and its Aftermath: 1 Kings 11

When Dtr reports in 1 Kgs 3:3 that “Solomon loved Yhwh” it is with a full knowledge of the course of Solomon’s later life. Just as Dtr used the verb **אָהַב** to create a positive picture of David’s early career (1 Samuel 16, 18), but then sharply shifts in his use of that verb to negatively characterize both David and relations within his house (2 Samuel 13, 19), so too Dtr uses **אָהַב** not only to praise Solomon—Solomon, not David, “loves” Yhwh!—but to portray his reign (initially) as a realization of the bounty promised to Israel in Deuteronomy (1 Kgs 10:19; cf. Deut 7:12-13). Thereafter, however, as before, he sharply shifts in his use of **אָהַב**. Here Dtr begins to show that the sins of David and his house, rooted in their failure to “love” Yhwh, have long-term, disastrous consequences for Israel.

#### 3.6.1 “But King Solomon Loved Many Women” (1 Kgs 11:1-2)

Immediately upon concluding his description of Solomon’s grandeur, Dtr indicates why that grandeur almost immediately began to ebb, and why Israel and Judah were in perpetual decline thereafter: “But King Solomon **loved** [**אָהַב**] many foreign women [**נְשֵׁים** **נְכַרִּיּוֹת רַבּוֹת**] and the daughter of Pharaoh.” Garsiel observes that the wordplay on Solomon

as Jedidiah (“Beloved of Yhwh”) and “as a king who loves God and is loved by a king like Hiram reaches an ironic turning point when Solomon degenerates into a lover of alien women.”<sup>222</sup> The negative use of the *Leitwort* אהב here links Solomon’s degeneration back to his father David and David’s “despising” Yhwh (2 Sam 12:9), and to the subsequent fall-out in David’s immediate family (his “house”), particularly Amnon’s misdirected “love” toward Tamar which turns to cruel hatred, and David’s coddling, enabling “love” for Amnon (4QSam<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam 13:21).

The legislation of Deuteronomy 7—the אהב requirements, but especially the ban on intermarriage with foreigners, and the reiteration of the injunction to “love” Yhwh (as in 6:5)—was designed to separate Israel from idolatry. Solomon’s “love” for many women was already a grave danger (Deut 17:17), but when he took wives “from the nations which Yhwh said ‘you shall not go in among them and they shall not come in among you ...’” (1 Kgs 11:2), he compromised his earlier “love” for Yhwh (1 Kgs 3:3). Dtr, of course, is paraphrasing Deut 7:3-4 here<sup>223</sup>: “And you shall not make marriages with them: your daughter you shall not give to his son and his daughter you shall not take for your son” (Deut 7:3-4). King Solomon thus models behavior for Israel that it was most definitely *not* to emulate.

True to the Yhwh’s warning that Dtr sees implied in the marriage legislation of Deut 7:3-4 (“surely they will stretch your heart out after other gods,” 1 Kgs 11:2; see also Deut 17:17), Solomon worships his foreign wives’ foreign gods: “to these [אֱלֹהֵי] Solomon clung in

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<sup>222</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 50.

<sup>223</sup> Cogan, *I Kings*, 326.

love [לֹאֲהַבָהּ]” (11:2). It is frequently assumed that this phrase refers back to the women mentioned in 11:1. However, this reading makes the phrase needlessly tautological. If the reference were to the foreign women in 11:1, we would expect the prepositional form בָּהֶן (preposition + third person feminine plural suffix) rather than the prepositional form בָּהֶם (preposition + third person masculine plural suffix). Two (grammatically) more likely referents for בָּהֶם are “nations” (גוֹיִם) and “gods” (אֱלֹהִים). In the text בָּהֶם is appositional to the latter term (אֱלֹהִים), which seems to make “gods” the best candidate for the intended referent. To be sure, Josh 23:12 shows that “nations” can be the object of “cleave,” but more often in Dtr, Yhwh—the אֱלֹהִים—is the object (Deut 4:4; 10:20; 11:22; 13:5; 30:20; Josh 22:5; 23:8). Solomon was to “cling” to Yhwh in “love”; he chose instead to “cling” to foreign gods in “love,” and Israel would follow suit.

Solomon makes a full reality the nightmare scenario envisioned in Joshua’s repeated admonitions (Josh 22:5). The conditional promises enumerated in Deut 11:22 (22-24) of Israel’s being able to “drive” out nations greater than itself, and of a land-inheritance stretching from the southern wilderness and Lebanon (in the north) to the Euphrates in the east—promises predicated on its “loving” Yhwh—would not now be realized, at least not under any human king.

The notice in 1 Kgs 11:6 that “Solomon did evil in the sight of Yhwh,” has its antecedent in the notice that accompanied David’s taking Bathsheba: “the thing which David did was evil in Yhwh’s eyes” (2 Sam 11:27). 1 Kgs 11:6 will be the second of many such notices regarding David’s “house.” Dtr will hereafter demonstrate the “unsurety” of the

“houses” (structures) that Solomon built for Yhwh, for himself and his father’s dynasty, for the “Daughter of Pharaoh”<sup>224</sup> and the high places that he built for his wives’ gods.

3.6.2 “*His Heart Was Turned Away from Yhwh*” (1 Kgs 11:9): *The Legacy of Solomon’s Failure to Love Yhwh*

“Love” is the ideal verb to express (dis)loyalty precisely because the “heart” as seat of the emotions is susceptible to turn away from Yhwh. Dtr’s statement that “[Solomon’s] wives turned his heart away after other gods” (1 Kgs 11:4), is the clearest possible statement that Solomon’s erstwhile “love” for Yhwh (3:3) had not only been compromised, but totally invalidated.

Apart from the covenant blessings promised to the patriarchs in Genesis, arguably no grant in the Bible is more generous than what Yhwh gives Solomon in 3:12, making him the greatest of all kings in Dtr: “I hereby do according to your words: I hereby give you **a wise and understanding heart** such that **there has not been anyone like you before you and after you none shall rise like you**” (1 Kgs 3:12). Dtr uses similar incomparability statements for the preeminent figures Moses (Deut 34:10),<sup>225</sup> Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:5-6), and Josiah (2 Kgs 23:25).

The case of Josiah is particularly relevant to what is said about Solomon here. Solomon’s “wise and understanding heart” ultimately did not keep him from idolatry and appalling apostasy. Rather, it was Solomon’s heart that was susceptible and was thus “turned

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<sup>224</sup> Possibly the daughter of Siamun, 6<sup>th</sup> pharaoh of the 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty: see Jacques Briand, “Les relations du roi Salomon avec les pays voisins,” in *Le Roi Salomon: Un Héritage en Question: Hommage à Jacques Vermeylen* (ed. Dany Nocquet and Claude Lichtert; Le livre et le rouleau 33; Brussels: Lessius, 2008) 27-35.

<sup>225</sup> Assuming this notice and the surrounding material is not post-Deuteronomistic.



aside” by his wives (1 Kgs 11:3-4; cf. Deut 17:17). Josiah seems to fare better in this regard:

“And like him, there was no king before him who **turned to Yhwh with all his heart** and with all his soul and with all his might in accordance with the instruction of Moses, nor did any arise afterward like him” (2 Kgs 23:25).<sup>226</sup> The kind of incomparability that *should have* characterized Solomon (1 Kgs 3:12), here characterizes Josiah. But not even Josiah’s incomparable wholeheartedness could ensure him and his people a good end.<sup>227</sup>

The rest of Dtr’s history is largely the narrative of the destruction of “houses”: the “houses” of Israel and Judah, the “house” of Yhwh (the temple), and royal “houses” (dynasties). 1 Kings 11 moves immediately from Solomon’s apostasy to the fulfillment of Yhwh’s pronounced punishment with the division of the unified “house of Israel.” Solomon leaves a legacy of “clinging” to foreign gods “in love” in both kingdoms, with few exceptions, e.g. Hezekiah.<sup>228</sup> But Hezekiah’s son Manasseh emerges as a worse evildoer than any of his

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<sup>226</sup> Here I differ markedly from Walter Vogels (“Salomon et la sagesse: une image contrastée (1 R 2–11),” in *Le Roi Salomon: Un héritage en question: Hommage à Jacques Vermeulen* [ed. Dany Nocquet and Claude Lichtert; Le livre et le rouleau 33; Brussels: Lessius, 2008] 229–46) who argues that Solomon’s apostasy did not negate his wisdom. On my view that his apostasy led to an entirely different kind of “wisdom” (foreign, or at least what Dtr. would have considered non-“Yahwistic”); see the discussion that follows in §2.6.7. I do think that 1 Kgs 11:1–13 is Dtr’s commentary on Solomon’s wisdom, i.e., that he forsook Yhwh’s wisdom in favor of wisdom of another kind.

<sup>227</sup> The incomparability ascribed to Solomon and Josiah and the subsequent outcomes allotted to them in the narrative constitutes a telling commentary on Dtr’s view of the foibles of human kingship. In chapter four I shall examine Josiah’s actions in response to Huldah’s prophecy that he would be “gathered to his grave **in peace**” (2 Kgs 22:20) and Solomon’s boast that there would be “peace” upon him, his house, and his throne “forever from Yhwh” (1 Kgs 2:33).

<sup>228</sup> For example, 2 Kgs 3:3 reports the Jehoram, the son of Ahab, removed his father’s baal-idol but “clung [לְבָקַעַם] to the sins of Jeroboam,” sins precipitated by Solomon’s own. Dtr can report only a few exceptions, e.g., Hezekiah “clings” (לְבָקַעַם) to Yhwh (2 Kgs 18:6), the implication being that Hezekiah faithfully “loved” Yhwh according to the requirements of Deuteronomy. Dtr appends this incomparability statement to his foregoing description of Hezekiah: “He trusted in Yhwh God of Israel, such that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah or among his predecessors” (2 Kgs 18:5).

predecessors, so much so that in 2 Kgs 21:10, Dtr feels compelled to offer a summary judgment of Manasseh through unnamed prophets (“my servants the prophets”) that “provides the background for understanding the whole remaining course of Judah’s history.”<sup>229</sup>

The deliverance pattern evident in Judges has ceased by this point.<sup>230</sup> Yhwh “gives” Israel and Judah into the hands of spoilers and enemies without raising-up a מוֹשִׁיעַ: they have their king.<sup>231</sup> The failure of the Davidic dynasty at this stage is particularly evident when Yhwh’s words (as voiced by Abner) regarding David are recalled: “By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of **all their enemies** [כָּל־אֹיְבֵיהֶם]” (2 Sam 3:18). Yhwh, fed up with the sins of Manasseh and his predecessors, announces the Davidides’ punishment in an ironic return to the “Yhwh has given”-theme: “**I will give them** [וְנָתַתִּי] into the hand of their **enemies** [אֹיְבֵיהֶם]” (2 Kgs 21:14). As Begg notes, with this announcement “Judah’s fate is fixed, even though the realization will take almost a century.”<sup>232</sup> Yhwh had caused David (and Israel) to “rest from all ...enemies” (2 Sam 7:1), an ideal situation that Israel will never enjoy again under human monarchy.

<sup>229</sup> C.T. Begg, “2 Kings,” NJBC (ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 184.

<sup>230</sup> Yhwh “raising up”/sending a judge, whom Yhwh is with, and by whom Yhwh saves Israel out of the hands of its “haters,” Judg 2:16, 18; 1 Sam 12:11.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Judg 2:14; but now he will not raise-up a savior since they have their kings to go out in front of them to battle (1 Sam 8:20).

<sup>232</sup> Begg, “2 Kings,” 184.

Unfortunately, the breakdown of “houses” in Judah—Yhwh’s “house” and the “house” of David only accelerates.<sup>233</sup> After Manasseh’s unforgivable reign, Dtr reports that “Amon abandoned Yhwh” (2 Kgs 21:22; cf. Judg 2:12-13; 10:6; 1 Sam 12:10; 1 Kgs 9:9) with disastrous results for, and *in*, his “house”: “Then Amon’s servants conspired against him, and killed the king **in his own house**” (21:23), again recalling Nathan’s prophecy to David regarding his posterity: “the sword will never depart from your house” (2 Sam 12:10). Amon’s young son Josiah, out of his “whole-hearted” devotion to Yhwh, also undertakes to “repair” Yhwh’s house (2 Kings 22). While Josiah’s whole-heartedness merited the incomparability statement that Dtr allots him (2 Kgs 23:25; see above), even this did not induce Yhwh to revoke the destiny decreed for Manasseh’s deeds. The “breaches” (cf. פְּרָצִים)<sup>234</sup> in the Davidic “house”<sup>235</sup> were now more irreparable than any “breach” (בִּדְקָה)<sup>236</sup> in the temple.

In further harrowing fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy regarding David’s “house,” Zedekiah sees his sons slaughtered before his very eyes which are then put out as he is hauled

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<sup>233</sup> As the house of Rahab the harlot had served as a protection for her father’s “house” (Josh 2:18-19), so too the “house” of Yhwh (i.e., the temple) had served as a protection for the infant Joash when Athaliah wiped out the royal seed, i.e., almost all of those belonging to the Davidic “house” or line. Rare efforts were made to repair Yhwh’s “house” as it fell into disrepair throughout Judah’s history. Ironically, one of those attempts at repair was made by Joash himself (2 Kings 12), the one whose life (and thus his posterity) had been preserved by that “house,” but who was subsequently forced to give its sacred implements to Hazael in tribute (12:18; see chapter five).

<sup>234</sup> On the connection between פְּרָץ and David’s family, see Jeffrey C. Geoghegan, “Israelite Sheepsheering and David’s Rise to Power,” *Bib* 87 (2006) 55-63; see also the discussion in David A. Bosworth, *The Story within a Story in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (CBQMS 45; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2008) 101-2.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. the use of פְּרָץ in Isa 58:12 in a building context.

<sup>236</sup> Cognate with Ugaritic *bdqt* (“breach”) and Akkadian *batqu* (“damaged, breach”); cf. *HALOT*, 111.

away into exile (2 Kgs 25:7). He was at least (apparently) spared the sight of Nebuzzaradan and his forces burning the “house of Yhwh” and “the king’s house”—the two great architectural symbols of the “surety” of David’s house—to the ground. Dtr’s record suggests that the “house of Yhwh” had been more a symbol of Davidic than of Yhwh’s rejected kingship.

Considering Yhwh’s beneficence toward them, David and Solomon-Jedidiah (both named “beloved” of Yhwh) should have reciprocated Yhwh’s “love” even more than did Hezekiah or Josiah, the two kings that the text mentions as wholehearted in their devotion. Instead we read that David “despised” Yhwh and “treated Yhwh with utter contempt” (2 Sam 12:9-10, 14) and that Solomon “clung” to foreign gods “in love” (1 Kgs 11:2) The consequences of their sins were ruinous to David’s house in the short and in the long run, and ruinous to the house of Israel, which had had also been the recipient, but not a reciprocator, of Yhwh’s love.

### **3.7 Conclusion: A House of David/House of Israel Covenant Parable**

While it is true that “God’s support for David suggests a more positive evaluation of him” than of his sons,<sup>237</sup> Dtr makes clear that David’s sins—indicative of his failure to “love” God (“you have despised me,” “You have treated Yhwh with utter contempt”)—had long term consequences for his own “house” and for the “houses” of Israel and Judah. David’s sons’ emulation of his example especially with regard to women and to “taking” not only had

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<sup>237</sup> Gilmour, *Representing the Past*, 204.

a very direct and catastrophic effect on their own “houses”, but also on the “house” of Israel. The pattern of Solomon’s life is particularly illustrative in this regard. Like David, Solomon was “loved”—especially by Yhwh (he was “Jedidiah”). What began as Solomon’s reciprocal “love” for Yhwh, became, however, a “love” for and misuse of women, especially foreign women and then a “love” for their gods.

Thus, in Dtr’s description of David as a pious, but self-seeking king who is himself the beneficiary of so much “love,” but who not only fails to properly reciprocate that love, but even “despises” and “treats” his benefactors, and the ultimate source of that love “with utter contempt” (2 Sam 12:9-10, 14) exilic Israel is to recognize a parable of itself: “But **they will treat me with contempt** [׀ַןִּלְלָנִי] and frustrate my covenant” (Deut 31:20).<sup>238</sup> The exiles know that they, like David, **have treated Yhwh with utter contempt** and have frustrated his covenant. Israel is also to see a reflection of its history in the life of Solomon, “loved” of Yhwh and himself an initial “lover” of Yhwh, whose heart was “turned away” by *other* attractions.

Dtr’s collection of stories about “houses” in peril—some of them previously thought to have been “sure” houses, now teetering on the very brink of destruction—which are preserved through “lifesaving grace” (׀ַחֲסֵד) takes on much deeper significance for these exiles—some of whom have seen “houses” destroyed in part or in whole, and all of whom are weighing the future of their own houses and how their survival can be ensured. Having seen what happened to “those that hate” Yhwh (Deut 5:9; cf. Judg 5:31), can they now see

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<sup>238</sup> Cf. Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist*, 129-30.

themselves as the collective “thousands” mentioned in Deut 5:10 (“Enacting lifesaving grace for thousands **who love me** [לְאַהֲבָנִי] and keep my commandments”) and the individual of 7:9 (“keeping **the covenant of life saving grace** [וְהַחֲסֵד<sup>239</sup>] **for the one who loves him** [לְאַהֲבָנִי]—for the one who keeps his commandments”). In the end, Dtr’s story of the monarchy, David and his posterity in particular, constitutes a compelling paraenesis of the Decalogue and Deuteronomy as a whole for Israel in exile.

When viewed in the context of the literary meaning of David’s name (“Beloved”), David’s biography (especially 2 Sam 12:9-10), and Deuteronomy’s insistence that Yhwh’s “love” be reciprocated, Yhwh’s declaration that “those who despise me shall be cursed” (1 Sam 2:30) emerges not only as Dtr’s most important narrative formulation of the Deuteronomic warning against “hating” God (Deut 5:9; 7:10), but also as a prophecy regarding the houses of Israel and Judah and their royal houses, including—and especially—David’s own house. It is David’s and Solomon’s sins in their role as kings who have been “beloved” of Yhwh that are the most consequential for Israel.

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<sup>239</sup> I take the Hebrew phrase as a hendiadys.

## Chapter Four

*“If you return at all in peace, Yhwh has not spoken through me” (1 Kgs 22:28)*

### 4.1 Absalom, Solomon, and the Monarchies—“Proverbs” of Failed Deuteronomic “Peace”

As argued in chapter one, Dtr uses the term **שאל** as a *Leitwort* and as an ongoing play on the names “Saul” and “Samuel” to focus attention on Israel’s “asking” for additional human intermediaries (see especially Deut 18:16; 1 Samuel 8–12) and the overall failure of its human leadership to “ask” for Yhwh’s guidance at crucial junctures in Israel’s history (see, e.g., Josh 9:14). In chapter two, I described a similar phenomenon involving **אהב** (“love”) and the name “David” (“Beloved”) by means of which Dtr correlates the one-directional “love” that preserved David’s life and allowed him to eventually accede to the throne—a “love” that he failed to reciprocate, just as Israel failed to reciprocate Yhwh’s “love” as required by Deuteronomy. David himself failed to reciprocate Yhwh’s love (2 Sam 12:9-10; 14), a failure exacerbated by those of his sons. In particular, the “love” that brought Israel to its religious, cultural, and military apex under Solomon-Jedidiah (“Beloved of Yhwh”) was quickly abandoned when he “loved” many foreign women and clung to their gods in “love,” Judah and Israel following suit.

In this chapter, I will show that Dtr employs a similar narrative technique, playing on

- the names of David’s sons, Absalom (**אבשלום**) and especially Solomon (**שלמה**), and the noun **שלום**—a rich word that ranges in meaning from “completeness,” “intactness” (primary), to “peace,” “wellbeing,” “welfare,”

and “to “deliverance, salvation” (secondary)<sup>1</sup>— as well as verbal forms of the root \*שלם.

- “Solomon” and שלמה, a biform of שמלה (“cloak”);
- “Solomon” and the verb משל (“rule”) and the homonymous noun משל

(“proverb”), terms particularly connected with Solomon’s monarchic activities.

I will show how Dtr chronicles a history of Israel and Judah in which a covenant “peace” with Yhwh is gradually compromised, which in turn causes Israel’s integrity or “peace” as an entity (or “house”) to disintegrate or “erode”<sup>2</sup> over time.

I will further demonstrate how David’s destruction of the שלום of numerous figures in his acquisition and consolidation of power, culminating in an act described by Dtr as “despising” Yhwh (2 Sam 12:9-10) creates an absence of שלום between Yhwh and Israel’s nascent monarchy (and between Israel and Judah). This damaged שלום is only apparently repaired with David’s “restitution” (שלם, 2 Sam 12:6) for this sin during Absalom’s rebellion. Solomon, David’s heir, who at first appears to inaugurate and embody Israel’s greatest שלום, emerges as the one most responsible for the destruction of שלום between Yhwh and Israel, and between Israel and Judah. Yhwh “repays” David, Solomon, and their successors in both kingdoms for their failure to keep his covenant. Even the “good” kings

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *HALOT*, 1506-1510.

<sup>2</sup> As Walter Bruggemann (*Deuteronomy* [AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001] 94) puts it, “when the covenant with YHWH is eroded or compromised the very survival of the community is placed in jeopardy.” Dtr aims to show how and why the community was left in tatters by the time of the exile.



Hezekiah and Josiah only obtain a שלום that fits into Yhwh's wider program of exiling Judah and ending its monarchy. Dtr uses this *Leitwort* to articulate a negative evaluation of monarchic performance and of Solomon in particular.

#### 4.1.1 "He Will Repay Him to His Face" (Deut 7:10; 23:22): Yhwh's Punishment of Israel and Its Monarchs

As Brueggemann observes, "Deuteronomy anticipates that a land rightly ordered by Torah will become fruitful, blessed by the *shalom* anticipated already in the doxologies of creation."<sup>3</sup> Numerous Deuteronomic texts imply a variety of ways in which Israel was to maintain an "intact" relationship (שלום) with Yhwh.<sup>4</sup> Of these, several pertain directly to the monarchy and its impact on Israel's relationship with Yhwh.

For example, Moses portrays Yhwh himself as the one "repaying [ומשלם] the one who hates him to his face by destroying him; he does not hesitate regarding the one who hates him—to his face he repays him [וישלם לו]" (Deut 7:10). Saul Olyan maintains that שלם in the Piel stem used in this text "describes a process only necessary when the state of *šālôm* is

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., the maintenance of Israel's שלום with Yhwh, required vows to Yhwh to be "repaid" quickly and in full: "You shall not hesitate **to repay it** [לשלמו], because Yhwh your God will certainly require [דרוש] it from you and it shall become sin with you" (Deut 23:22); Israel's שלום was to be with Yhwh and not foreign nations (see Deut 23:7 [6]; cf. the rules on covenant-making in 7:2). This prohibition is due, in part, to Moab's failure to accept Israel's "words" or "terms of peace" in Israel's time of need (see, e.g., Deut 2:26-36). To the towns of peoples not under חרם, Israel could proclaim "peace" (שלום), i.e., terms of "surrender" (Deut 20:10-12), but not offer a ברית. The requirement for the use of "whole stones" (אבנים שלמות) for the offering of burnt offerings and "peace" offerings may also allude to the maintenance of an exclusive "peace" with Yhwh (Deut 27:6-7).

absent.”<sup>5</sup> Israelites were obligated to “repay” what they have vowed when Yhwh blesses them according to their petition (Deut 23:22). Conversely, when Yhwh “repays” or “requites” Israel collectively or individually, this action is due to Israel’s collective or individual violation of Israel’s שְׁלוֹם, a breach of Yhwh’s covenant.

Weinfeld calls the immediate “repayment” promised in Deut 7:10 “a radical deviation” from Deut 5:9,<sup>6</sup> where Yhwh is said to “punish the one who hates him to the third and fourth generation.” However, Dtr seemingly did not consider immediate “repayment” (שְׁלוֹם) and transgenerational “punishment” (פְּקָדָה) mutually exclusive concepts. In fact, we find both concepts at work in Dtr: David, Solomon, Ahab, and others experience Yhwh’s “repayment” for sins committed within their lifetimes, while the offspring of Solomon, Ahab, and Manasseh, as well as of other rulers undergo the transgenerational פְּקָדָה after these kings’ deaths.

With regard to Manasseh, one notes the promised “repayment” of Deut 7:10 is mysteriously held in abeyance. The king who by Dtr’s own report was in every respect worse than any of his predecessors (see 2 Kgs 21:2-17) was evidently not “repaid” to his face. This paradox was too much for the Chronicler who, given the theology of Deut 7:10 (cf. 24:14), felt compelled to explain Manasseh’s long life in the face of Yhwh’s immediate justice, rehabilitating Manasseh after his unprecedented sinfulness (2 Chr 33:2-10) by reporting an Assyrian deportation of and subsequent repentance by him that are unknown to Dtr (2 Chr

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<sup>5</sup> Saul M. Olyan, “Hăšālôm: Some Literary Considerations of 2 Kings 9,” *CBQ* 46 (1984) 661.

<sup>6</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 371.

33:11-19).<sup>7</sup> For Dtr, the concept of individual responsibility and immediate “punishment” is not as absolute as it will be, for instance, for Ezekiel.<sup>8</sup> As Jeremy Schipper has noted, the exile comes upon Judah in the fourth generation after Manasseh,<sup>9</sup> a fact which suggests Dtr’s interest in the fulfillment also of Deut 5:9 and may hint at why Manasseh’s “repayment” was held in abeyance. His particular interest in the “repayment” promised in 7:10 will nevertheless surface at important moments throughout the history of the monarchy.

#### 4.1.2 “You Shall Become a Proverb” (Deut 28:37): Israel and Its Ill-fated Monarchies

Deut 28:36 knows the end of Israel’s history in the land: “The Lord will cause you and the king which you will have raised up [מֶלֶךְ] over yourself to go to a nation [גֵּר] unknown to you and your ancestors, and there you shall serve other gods—stone and wood!” Moses here attributes the monarchy to Israel’s own initiative, and the exiling of Israel to Yhwh’s resultant retribution. Yhwh is “the active agent who intervenes in the life of Israel to cause every aspect of the life of Israel to fail”<sup>10</sup> but the “king” which Israel “raised up” over itself seems to be the source of the conditions which trigger Yhwh’s harsh response.

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<sup>7</sup> On the Chronicler’s theology of immediate repayment and reward, see C.T. Begg, “‘Seeking Yahweh’ and the Purpose of the Chronicles,” *LS* 9 (1982) 128-42; Raymond B. Dillard, “Reward and Punishment in Chronicles: the Theology of Immediate Retribution,” *WTJ* 46 (1984) 164-72.

<sup>8</sup> On Ezekiel’s view of individual responsibility for sin and individual punishment, see Gabriel Witaszek, “Sprawiedliwosc społeczna a odpowiedzialnosc indywidualna (Ez 18),” *Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny* 49 (1996) 154-64.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremy Schipper, “Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Dynastic or Transgenerational Punishment,” in *Soundings in Kings: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship* (ed. Klaus-Peter Adam and Mark Leuchter; Soundings 1; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010) 81-105.

<sup>10</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 256.

Not only does the king seem to prompt Yhwh's sending Israel into exile and its cultic predicament there, but king and people together constitute a cautionary tale: "You shall become there an object of horror, a proverb [משל]" (28:37). A "proverb" (משל) will also be ambivalently or negatively used of Saul in 1 Sam 10:12 (cf. 19:24) and 24:13. The משל will be particularly and positively associated with Solomon as a high watermark in Israel's literary-cultural tradition (1 Kgs 4:32) as a wordplay on his name, but then negatively when Yhwh himself reiterates Moses's prophecy in Deut 28:37 and threatens Solomon that he (Yhwh) himself will be the active agent in "mak[ing] Israel a proverb [משל] ... among the nations" (1 Kgs 9:7). Dtr will also use the homonymous verb משל to anticipate and evaluate Solomon. According to Deuteronomy, Israel was to "rule [ומשל] over many nations," but those nations were "not [to] rule [לֹא יִמְשֹׁל] over" Israel (Deut 15:6). Solomon's negative impact on that ideal will be a matter of particular importance for Dtr.

#### 4.1.3 "I Shall Have Peace though I Walk in the Obstinacy of My Heart" (Deut 29:18)

Deut 29:17 returns to the issue of Israelites, whether "man or woman or tribe whose heart turns away ... from Yhwh ... to go serve the gods of these nations." Deut 17:19 suggested that the king's "heart" was particularly susceptible to "turning way" and that his wives might be the cause or instrumentality of its turning away. Deut 29:18 particularly warns regarding the Israelite who, in spite of Deuteronomy's repeated warnings, "bless[es] himself in his heart" and boasts, "I shall have **peace** [שלום] though I walk in the obstinacy of my heart."

Brueggemann believes that “the risk” envisaged here “is a heart turned away to other gods, on which see 1 Kgs 11:3”<sup>11</sup>; in other words, a heart like Solomon’s, a heart which Dtr will ironically describe as “not completely” [לֹא ... שָׁלֵם] with Yhwh (see 1 Kgs 11:4).

Brueggemann further suggests that “the most likely candidates for such seduction are precisely those who are comfortable and complacent in Yahwism and who congratulate themselves over their *shalom* [שָׁלוֹם].”<sup>12</sup> Such persons, he notes, “are the most susceptible and ... [sure] to bring disaster upon all of the community.”<sup>13</sup> Nobody in Israel would have been more likely to become “comfortable and complacent” than its king, who was Yhwh’s “chosen”<sup>14</sup> and who lacked no earthly comfort and few, if any, of the goods and services of that epoch. If the people’s notion of their intrinsic “chosenness” (cf. Deut 4:37; 10:15)<sup>15</sup> could contribute to Israel’s apostasy from Yhwh, the idea of monarchic “chosenness,” while in a certain sense legitimate (1 Sam 10:24; 1 Kgs 8:10), represented an equally grave danger for the king and his posterity’s remaining faithful to Yhwh.

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<sup>11</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, 261. He further observes, astutely, that “Verses 17-19 are a psychologically acute analysis of how seduction from covenant happens among those who turn a little at a time away from YHWH because they are not vigilant. Their lack of vigilance is rooted in their self-congratulations, in which they presume upon their special status, and in their presumption bring disaster upon the entire community.”

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 261-2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Sam 10:24; 2 Sam 6:21; 1 Kgs 8:16; 11:34.

<sup>15</sup> The teaching that Israel was “chosen” was intended to draw Israel nearer to Yhwh. Unfortunately, it often had the opposite effect. This tragic development is at the heart of Dtr’s illustration of Israel’s “rejection.” See 1 Kgs 9:3-7; 2 Kgs 17:20-23; 23:27.

## 4.2 Early Israel's "Peace" (Joshua 8–1 Samuel 7)

In Joshua 8:30-31, Dtr records that "Joshua built an altar to Yhwh, God of Israel, on Mount Ebal" and that Joshua acted in accordance with what "Moses the servant of Yhwh commanded the Israelites, as is written in the book of Moses's instruction: 'An altar of **whole stones** [אבנים של מות] over which nobody has hefted an iron tool.' And they offered upon it burnt offerings to Yhwh and sacrificed **peace offerings** [שלמים]." Dtr demonstrates here that Joshua carried out the directives of Deut 27:5-7, for the maintenance of Israel's "peace" with Yhwh. Apart from Achan's חרם-violation, Joshua's efforts to preserve Israel from "Canaanization" have been successful thus far, and Israel's "peace" with Yhwh has remained intact. It is precisely at this moment of near perfect obedience, however, that Dtr makes use of a narrative that describes how that perfect "peace" was compromised and how Israel's journey down the road to Solomon's foreign alliances and the worship of foreign gods—the story of Israel's idolatry—began.

### 4.2.1 *And Joshua Made Peace with Them ...* (Josh 9:15): The Gibeonite "Peace"

In chapter two (§2.2.4) it was noted that Israel's treaty with the Gibeonites amounted to a leadership failure on Joshua's part—a failure to "ask" Yhwh's guidance—which anticipated Saul's defective leadership. Solomon's leadership, however, is also anticipated here. The text pointedly states that the Gibeonites used old, worn-out שלמות ("cloaks," Josh 9:4, 13) in a ruse which resulted in "Joshua mak[ing] peace [שלום] with them, and cut[ting] a covenant with them [ברית כרתוֹלֵהֶם], and the leaders of the congregation swore [i.e., an

oath] to them” (Josh 9:15). Hawk suggests that the Gibeonites here “demonstrate a community and integrity that has heretofore marked the Israelite community.”<sup>16</sup> The Gibeonites and Israelites apparently “share the distinctive” of not being led by a king.<sup>17</sup> Hawk notes further that “the sense of Gibeonite unanimity becomes more striking when contrasted to Israelite decision-making in the story.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, the Gibeonites had an internal “peace” that should have characterized Israel itself.

Deut 23:6 forbids seeking the “peace” (שָׁלוֹם) or “welfare” of nations like the Ammonites and Moabites who themselves had sought Israel’s hurt. Deut 7:1-3 enumerates seven nations (the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites) greater than Israel, whom Israel was to subject to חָרַם and with whom they were to make no treaty of any kind (לֹא-תִכְרַת לָהֶם בְּרִית), because “peace” (שָׁלוֹם) and a “treaty” (בְּרִית) with these nations would endanger Israel’s own “peace” and “covenant” with Yhwh, given its inevitable adoption of their gods and cults.

Just as the verb שָׁאַל anticipates “Saul” and the problems of Israel’s monarchic leadership’s failure to “ask” Yhwh, the wordplay on שָׁלוֹם and שָׁלוֹם in Josh 9:13-15 looks forward to the disintegration of Israel’s “peace” brought about by Solomon’s foreign

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<sup>16</sup> L. Daniel Hawk (*Joshua* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000] 139) further observes, “As rendered by the narrative, the Gibeonites look more like the Israelites than they do the other peoples of the land.”

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

marriages and his worship of his wives' gods. Like שאל,<sup>19</sup> both שלמות and שלום serve as key terms in the story of Solomon's splendor at its peak and his subsequent apostasy.

Polzin suggests that "the Gibeonite story is a deliberate literary allusion to Deuteronomy 29 or vice versa"<sup>20</sup> and that Josh 9:3-27 is "a brilliant meditation" upon Deut 29:1-21 in particular.<sup>21</sup> If so, "the community of Israelites and Gibeonites that results from the treaty they enter into in Joshua 9 is, in a sense, already present before Moses during his third address in Deuteronomy."<sup>22</sup> Entangled in the Gibeonite "peace," Israel will begin to learn the truth of Deut 29:18-19 and its threat of punishment for turning away from Yhwh to foreigners' gods and their cults: "and it shall be when he hears the words of this curse and blesses himself in his heart and says: 'I shall have **peace** [שלום] even when I walk in the obstinacy of my heart ... Yhwh will not be willing to pardon him, but at that time the anger of Yhwh and his zeal will smoke against that man and all the curses that are written in this book will crouch down [ורבצה]<sup>23</sup> against him and Yhwh will blot out his name from under heaven."

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<sup>19</sup> See §2.6.6.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History. Pt. 1: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) 117. "The direction of the influence is not meaningful from a compositional point of view."

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Gen 4:7.



The entangling nature of “peace” with forbidden nations is demonstrated immediately in Joshua 10–11. Its “peace” treaty with the Gibeonites here embroils Israel in further war on behalf of a nation that was supposed to be subjected to **חָרֵם**. When Adoni-zedek, the Jebusite king of Jerusalem (**יְרוּשָׁלַם**) hears that the Gibeonites “made peace” (**הָשֵׁל יָמֵן**) with Israel (Josh 10:1), he fears its consequences for his city: Dtr already here anticipates the city’s eventual conquest, and the establishment of the Israelite cult there. Accordingly, Adoni-zedek implores four other kings (Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon), “Come up to me and help me, so that we may strike Gibeon because it has it has **procured peace** (**הָשֵׁל יָמֵן**) from Joshua” (10:4). Joshua (**יְהוֹשֻׁעַ**) is then compelled by the “treaty” (**בְּרִית**) to become the “savior” (**וְהוֹשִׁיעָה לָנוּ**, “save us”)<sup>24</sup> of the Gibeonites by bringing Israel to their aid.<sup>25</sup>

The end result of the slaughter perpetuated by the Israelites, as 10:21 indicates, is that “the army returned to the camp, to Joshua in peace [**בְּשָׁלוֹם**], and nobody moved his tongue against any of the Israelites.” Israel and Gibeon’s “peace” treaty and the military victory and the “peace” that resulted from this with Yhwh’s aid, temporarily restores Israel’s own “peace.” The Gibeonite problem, however, will surface again.

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<sup>24</sup> On the wordplay on “Joshua” in the passage, see Yair Zakovitch, “The Synonymous Word and the Synonymous Name in Name Midrashim [Hebrew],” *Shnaton* 2 (1977) 100-101.

<sup>25</sup> There follows the famous battle in which the sun and moon stand still (10:12-13) and in which Yhwh himself participates decisively (10:8-14). Adoni-zedek and his fellow kings end up holed-up in a cave at Makkedah, while Joshua and company finish off their armies (10:16-20).

Joshua does not repeat his leadership error with respect to the other nations under the חוק. Joshua 11:18-20 sums up Joshua's (and Yhwh's) efforts to keep Israel free of foreign "peace": Joshua "waged war for a long time" with the kings of the nations (11:18), with the result that "there was not a city that **made peace** לַיְהוָה with the Israelites, except for the Gibeonites" (11:19). To this notice Dtr appends a theological remark about why events have transpired thus: "because it was from Yhwh to harden [the nation's] hearts, so that they would come against Israel to battle that he might subject them to the ban" (11:20). The nations' hearts were hardened and as a result they were destroyed by war. Israel has been warned about what kind of "peace" (שָׁלוֹם) awaits it should it "walk in the obstinacy of [its] heart" (Deut 29:18; see also 1 Sam 2:25!) and Yhwh now furnishes the lesson of the "nations" to Israel as proof. The pericope Joshua 9–11 closes with the notice that "the land rested from war" (Josh 11:23), a rest that will be only too temporary.

#### 4.2.2 "He Creates Peace": Yhwh-Shalom and the "Rule" of Proto-kings (Judges 6, 8)

In Judg 6:1, Dtr states that Israel's continued apostasy ("Israel did evil in Yhwh's sight") resulted in seven years of Midianite oppression. The oppression is so severe that the Israelites "cry out" to Yhwh (6:6), and in response Yhwh sends a nameless prophet who chides Israel for its worship of the Amorite gods and for its persistent refusal to "hear" Yhwh from the time of the exodus on (6:9-10). This short segment frames several key issues that

follow in the Gideon and Abimelech story,<sup>26</sup> including illicit worship (e.g., idolatry) and Israel's breached relationship with Yhwh due to its unwillingness to "hear."

Gideon's lack of confidence in the overtures of Yhwh's "messenger" exemplifies the fractured nature of the Yhwh-Israel relationship (Judg 6:13-18),<sup>27</sup> even as the "messenger" offers assurances that Yhwh will again "save" Israel as in times past. Cultic imagery comes to the foreground in the narrative when Gideon insists on giving Yhwh's "messenger" a "present" or "offering" (מנחה) in order to ascertain his identity. Gideon's מנחה (the young goat, the ephah of flour in the form of matzot, the meat, and the broth) is a cultic offering, and the rock (סלע) serves as altar (6:19-20). When the "messenger" puts forth his staff and touches the meat and the unleavened bread, "fire" springs up from the rock and "consumes" them (6:21), whereupon the messenger vanishes. By this, Gideon knows that he has witnessed a theophany, and like Isaiah during his temple theophany (Isaiah 6) and Israel at Horeb (Deuteronomy 5; see chapter two),<sup>28</sup> Gideon is terrified lest he die. Gideon then responds, in words that echo the theophanic "Peniel" etiology of Genesis 32: "Alas my Lord Yhwh—because I have seen Yhwh's 'messenger' face-to-face" (Judg 6:22). For his part,

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<sup>26</sup> See Lee Roy Martin, "The Intrusive Prophet: The Narrative Function of the Nameless Prophet in Judges 6," *JSem* 16 (2007) 113-40.

<sup>27</sup> See Bernon Lee, "Fragmentation of Reader Focus in the Preamble to Battle in Judges 6.1-7.14," *JSOT* 97 (2002) 65-86.

<sup>28</sup> Dtr's inclusion of this theophany and accompanying etiology may be more significant than appears at first blush. Gideon does not just "hear" Yhwh's voice (Deut 5:22-26) but sees his form (*contra* Deut 4:12), here called his מלשן. Gideon's preservation may be another indictment of Israel, which refused to hear Yhwh's actual voice for fear of dying, and subsequently refused to hear (obey) his voice as mediated by Deuteronomic law and the intermediary prophets. Israel went on to "die" anyway with its being exiled by the Assyrians and Babylonians.

Yhwh takes it upon himself to remove Gideon's fear: "Then said Yhwh to him, 'Peace [שלום] be to you. Do not fear. You will not die'" (Judg 6:23). As happened with the angelic "atoning" (תכפר) of Isaiah's "sin" during his throne vision (Isa 6:7), Yhwh himself creates the conditions necessary for Gideon to survive the theophany. In other words, Yhwh has *created* "peace" between himself and Gideon, thus generating the etiological naming of this cultic site: "And Gideon built an altar there to Yhwh and it is called Yhwh-Shalom [יהוה־שלום] *שלום*, "He creates peace"].<sup>29</sup> To this day it is in Ophirah of the Abiezrites" (6:24). Robert Boling suggests that יהוה־שלום is "a name in which the name Yahweh still retains its original verbal force as in *yhwh šēbā'ōt*,"<sup>30</sup> i.e., "he creates the (heavenly) hosts."<sup>31</sup> In other words, Cross's suggestion that the name יהוה represents an archaic causative form of היה, meaning ("He creates ..."), is key to understanding the point of Dtr's etiology: not "Yhwh is peace," but "Yhwh *creates* peace." Yhwh's use of היה in his declaration "I will be [אֶהְיֶה] with you" (Judg 6:16; cf. especially Exod 3:12-14) further suggests the narrator's interest in the relationship between יהוה and היה. Dtr's etiologizing notice on this cult site, then, continues Dtr's theme of cult sites and altars that either contribute to or diminish Israel's

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<sup>29</sup> Robert G. Boling, *Judges: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 6A; New York: Doubleday, 1975) 134.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Boling (Ibid.) draws on Frank Moore Cross's persuasive arguments on the origin and meaning of the name-title יהוה־צבאות. See Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) 65-71.

“peace” with Yhwh, even as it looks forward to the centralization of worship, the building of the temple at Jerusalem, and Israel’s “peace” with Yhwh at its apex.

Not only does Dtr have Jerusalem in view here, but the figures of David and Solomon as well. As Schneider indicates, Gideon’s claim to be the youngest son in an unimportant family links him to David<sup>32</sup> (cf. David’s words in 1 Sam 18:18: “Who am I? And what is my clan [or] my father’s family in Israel that I should be the king’s son-in-law?”). Other details link him to Solomon. As was also noted in §2.2.6, a key term in Israel’s first dynastic request is מִשַׁל (“to rule”): “Rule [מִשַׁל] over us, both you and your son and your son’s son, since you saved us from the hand of Midian” (Judg 8:22). Gideon’s response (“I myself will not rule [לֹא-אֶמְשַׁל] over you, nor shall my son rule [לֹא-יִמְשַׁל] over you—Yhwh shall rule [יִשְׁמַל] over you,” 8:23) may be both a merely apparent repudiation of human kingship,<sup>33</sup> and a self-abnegating acceptance of the offer that he rule as king,<sup>34</sup> especially given Gideon’s subsequent kinglike behavior, particularly his Solomon-esque idolatry (8:27) and polygamy (8:30). Gideon’s “ephod” at Ophrah (8:27) undermines the “peace” that Yhwh had re-created at Yhwh-Shalom. The arc of Gideon’s “rule” thus anticipates that of Solomon’s “rule.”

When attempting to persuade the “baals [citizens] of Shechem” to enthrone him as his father’s successor, Abimelech (“my Father is king”) judiciously uses the verb מִשַׁל, instead of

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<sup>32</sup> Tammi J. Schneider, *Judges* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999) 105.

<sup>33</sup> Frank Crüsemann, *Der Widerstand gegen das Königtums: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat* (WMANT 49; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) 42.

<sup>34</sup> Katie M. Heffelfinger, “‘My Father is King’: Chiefly Politics and the Rise and Fall of Abimelech,” *JSOT* 33 (2009) 284-87, see esp. 286.

מלך, in this recalling Gideon’s conversation with the “men of Israel.” His speech also employs wordplay on Gideon’s surname “Jerubbaal” and a concealed play on Abimelech’s and Solomon’s names:

- (1) Then **Abimelech** son of **Jerubbaal** [יְרוּבְעֵל] went to Shechem ... and said,  
 (2) “Please speak in the ears of all the **baals** [בַּעַלִּים] of Shechem, ‘Which is better for you, to have seventy men **rule** [מָשַׁל] over you—all the sons of **Jerubbaal** or to have one man **rule** [מָשַׁל] over you? And remember that I am your flesh and bone’” (Judg 9:1-2).

Apart from Gideon and Abimelech, the verb מָשַׁל is used of only one other Israelite king and of him only one time: “And Solomon [שְׁלֹמֹה] ruled [מָשַׁל] over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines” (1 Kgs 5:1). The verb מָשַׁל represents a metathesis of the root letters of Solomon’s name (שְׁלֹמֹה < שֶׁל מֶה). 1 Kings 5 describes the high point of Israel’s “rule” over the nations and its cultural apex, the same context in which Solomon’s literary achievements, specifically his three thousand proverbs (מִשְׁלֵי [ים], 5:12), are mentioned. Thus, in Judg 8:22-23 and here in 9:1-2, Dtr creates a subtle verbal connection among Gideon, Abimelech, and Solomon, the dynastic “son” of 2 Samuel 7 who—unlike Gideon—*would rule* over Israel (as would his son’s sons) over Judah. Abimelech’s diplomatic use of the verb מָשַׁל replaces the more evocative verb מָלַךְ (“reign,” “be king”), the second of the two roots evident in his name. Conversely, Jotham will use מָלַךְ in a pejorative play on “Abimelech” to criticize kingship in general.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See chapter five.

Taking advantage of family connections through his mother (9:1-3), Abimelech procures seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-of-the-Covenant (9:4) to hire scoundrel henchmen to aid his monarchic gambit (9:4). In 9:5 he and they murder the corresponding number (seventy) of Gideon's sons, setting an important precedent for subsequent royal purges: David will slaughter the members of Saul's family (his in-laws); Solomon will eliminate his older half-brother and anyone else deemed a rival to the throne (1 Kings 2); there are several purges in the northern kingdom, including Baasha's purge of the house of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 15:25-30), Zimri's purge of the house of Baasha (1 Kgs 16:11-12), and Jehu's slaughter of Ahab's "seventy sons" (2 Kgs 10:6-7); and Athaliah will nearly exterminate the "royal seed" of Judah (i.e., nearly all Davidides, 2 Kgs 11:1).

Only Gideon's youngest son, Jotham, survives (9:6). O'Connor suggests that the name Jotham ("Yhwh is perfect") also functions as a pun in the narrative: with his father Gideon dead, יוֹתָם is a יָתוֹם, a "fatherless child."<sup>36</sup> Certainly it is Jotham's particularly tenuous and vulnerable situation occasions his well-known fable (i.e., a מַשָּׁל) that "criticizes monarchy in general while condemning this manifestation of kingship in particular"<sup>37</sup> in 9:7-15. Jotham himself, the almost brother-less "orphan," is a living proof to Israel of the potential dangers of kingship and its disastrous effect on the "houses" (families) of Israel.

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<sup>36</sup> Michael P. O'Connor, "Judges," NJBC (ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 134.

<sup>37</sup> See Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2008) 114.

The mini-epic of the proto-kings Gideon and Abimelech begins with Yhwh's creation of "peace" between himself and Gideon (Israel), and Yhwh's "salvation" of Israel through Gideon, but takes a downward spiral when Israel insists on the dynastic "rule" of Gideon and his offspring that ends unhappily with Abimelech's "royal" oppression—his "rule" of Israel followed by his ignominious death, and Israel's own turning from Yhwh to Baal, a defeated god.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4.2.3 "Go in Peace: Your Way is לְךָ Yhwh" (Judg 18:6)

Israel's ways were rarely, if ever, Yhwh's (2 Kgs 17:13; cf. Isa 55:8-9), and Dtr's description of the Judges period gives us a sense that things have gone awry. Perhaps nothing in that period better illustrates the dysfunction—and even absence—of Israel's "peace" with Yhwh than the vow uttered by Jephthah in hope for his own return "in peace" (בְּשָׁלֹוֹם) from war with the Ammonites (Judg 11:31), and the delayed, abominably illicit burnt offering of his חִידָן to meet the "repayment"-without-delay requirements of Deuteronomy (לֹא תִאָּחֵר לְשִׁלּוֹם, Deut 23:21). In Judg 17:6, the formula "In those days, there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own sight" occurs for the first time.<sup>39</sup> The formula may

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<sup>38</sup> See Judg 10:6. Vincent Endris ("Yahweh versus Baal: A Narrative-Critical Reading of the Gideon/Abimelech Narrative," *JSOT* 33 [2008] 174) believes that Yhwh's "harsh response" to Israel in Judg 10:13, 16 "makes sense if we read the narrative as an all-out fight between the deities, a conflict that Yahweh wins. Yahweh gets fed up with the Israelites because they turn back to a deity whom Yahweh has already defeated."

<sup>39</sup> My view is somewhat in line with Boling's (*Judges*, 256): "This important verse is not a sign that the book once concluded at this point ... The supplementary stories that conclude the book deal with the cultic manifestation of the anarchy which preceded the careers of Samuel and Saul."



lament the “lack of acknowledgment of Yhwh’s kingship in Israel,”<sup>40</sup> rather than the absence of a human, especially a Davidic king. (The reasons for this suggestion will emerge more clearly in §4.2.5.)

At this juncture, Dtr includes a brief pericope about a man named Micah (“who is like [God]?” who, in addition to silver sufficient to make a “carved image” and “molten image” (Judg 17:4, cf. “an ephod and teraphim,” 17:5) awarded him by his mother, has a **בֵּית־אֱלֹהִים** (“house of God/gods,” 17:5).<sup>41</sup> Elsewhere Dtr associates these items with idolatry.<sup>42</sup> Micah’s private **בֵּית־אֱלֹהִים**<sup>43</sup> is said to be in the hill country of Ephraim (17:8), clearly an allusion to and play on the name of the cult site Bethel.<sup>44</sup> As one might expect in a Dtr narrative, this private “Bethel” will be associated with idolatry and will further diminish Israel’s “peace” with Yhwh.

The Danites, having received (Josh 19:40-48) but having not yet fully secured their territorial allotment (Judg 18:1), set forth in search of new land. When they pass through the Ephramite hill country and come to Micah’s private “Bethel,” they apparently recognize from

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>41</sup> Polzin (*Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 195) sees Judg 17:5 as the “kernel of Judges 17 ... which forms a perfect summary of what proceeds and follows in the chapter. Boling (*Judges*, 256) calls it a “collector’s comment anticipating the story that begins with vs. 7 and extends to the end of ch. 18.”

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., Gideon’s “ephod” (Judg 8:27) and the “iniquitous teraphim” associated with Saul (1 Sam 15:23).

<sup>43</sup> Wordplay involving the phrase **בֵּית־אֱלֹהִים** features prominently in the Bethel etiology of Gen 28:10-22 (see especially 28:17, 22).

<sup>44</sup> See Yairah Amit, “Hidden Polemic in the Conquest of Dan: Judges XVII-XVIII,” *VT* 60 (1990) 4-20.

the priest's accent that he hails from Judah, near whence they have come themselves, and beseech him to "ask [שאל-נא] God on their behalf "so that we may know whether our way shall be prosperous on which we are going" (18:5). The priest responds, "Go in peace [לכו לשלום], your way is נכח יהוה" (18:6).

As Polzin notes, "his response, or better yet the narrator's report, rivals a Delphic oracle in ambiguity."<sup>45</sup> Used as a preposition, נכח can mean "opposite" or "in front of."<sup>46</sup> Thus one is left to work out for oneself the metaphoric possibilities of the phrase נכח יהוה. The Danites, in any case, now presume they "know," not only that they will have "peace" (שלום) and that their way will be prosperous, but also that Yhwh "approves" their course of action. The Deuteronomic legislation of Deut 17:9-13 was designed to discourage the Israelites from acting presumptuously, particularly in judicial matters. But what if the counsel "asked" for is not provided or only "delphically" answered, or if Israel's human intermediation otherwise fails? Acting presumptuously is a problem to which Saul will be particularly prone (see 1 Samuel 13, 15). Micah presumed that Yhwh would "do [him] good" because he had the Levite as his priest (Judg 17:13), only to see the Danites show up again and "ask his peace [וישאלו לשלום]" with six hundred men bearing "their weapons of war [כל יימל חמתם]" (18:15-16).

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<sup>45</sup> Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 198.

<sup>46</sup> See *HALOT*, 698-99.

Not only was there “no king in those days,” but “in those days there was no vision breaching forth” (1 Sam 3:1), nor “peace.” The question “asked” by the Danites in this episode, then, is posed on behalf of all Israel: “Shall our way be prosperous on which we are going?” The Danites’ seem to enjoy שלום and their endeavors seem to prosper, even as they cart off Micah’s priest along with his “idolatrous” cult paraphernalia (Judg 18:11-30).<sup>47</sup>

Yet Dtr does not leave us entirely in the dark on the question of the long-term שלום of the Danites and Israel, mentioning in 18:31 the eventual “exile of the land” [גלות ארץ]. The Danites’ “way” and Israel’s way, after all, will still lead *through* a presumptuously “demanded” monarchy (cf. שאל) and Solomon’s presumptuous “peace” in particular to just such an exile. The final notice in this pericope about Micah’s carved image being set up “as long as the house of God was at Shilo” (18:31, RSV), as O’Connor indicates, “leads into 1 Sam 1, which concerns Shilo.”<sup>48</sup> As Bodner observes, “scandalous as it may sound, the possibility exists that Micah’s carved image remains in Shiloh even under the stewardship of the house of Eli.”<sup>49</sup> This is not the last time that the temple (“house of God” or “house of Yhwh”) will be associated with idolatry. Dtr already here has his eye on Solomon and his northern and southern successors.

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<sup>47</sup> Boling (*Judges*, 267) concludes: “There can be no doubt that the record of Micah and the Danites illustrates the spiraling anarchy and ineffective tribal organization that led to the Samuel compromise, that is, the elevation of Saul and the transition to monarchy in Israel.”

<sup>48</sup> O’Connor, “Judges,” 143.

<sup>49</sup> Keith Bodner, *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (HBM 19; Sheffield: Sheffield/Phoenix, 2009) 14.

#### 4.2.4 “Peace Be with You” (Judg 19:20)

Judges 17–21 certainly casts the tribe of Benjamin in a negative light in anticipation of the Benjaminite Saul’s imminent kingship, but the *נבלה*-rape perpetrated by the Benjaminite “sons of destruction” anticipates the rape *ascribed to David and his house*, rather than Saul’s (see 2 Samuel 11–16). Judah’s subsequent leadership failure (Judg 20:18–21) and the near-destruction of Benjamin portray the awful condition of Israel’s “peace” or “intactness” that has resulted from Israel’s abandonment of Yhwh (Deut 28:20; Judg 2:12–13; 10:6, 10). As noted previously (§2.2.7), the “no kings” formula (Judg 17:16; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) that the events of Judges 17–21 inspire,<sup>50</sup> is not a wistful lament over the absence of a Davidic king, but rather reflects the non-acknowledgment and imminent rejection of Yhwh’s kingship, and the consequent absence of peace with Yhwh and peace among Israel’s constituent tribes.

The story of the nameless Levite and his nameless concubine is a story of failure on the part of every male character described therein. The concubine’s alleged sin (characterized as “playing the whore” against the Levite, or perhaps rather on his “behalf”<sup>51</sup>), while fitting in

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<sup>50</sup> Niditch (*Judges*, 180) asserts that “this line is not, as some have suggested, an indictment of early times of chaos, but an accepting commentary on a romantic, battle-ridden foundation period in the history of the nation. The phrase is a reflection on power itself.” This claim is only partly tenable. Judg 17:6 is not, as some commentators believe, an indictment of a non-Davidic Israel (although it does implicitly condemn Israel’s idolatry), but neither is it an “accepting” or “romantic” characterization of this period. It is indeed concerned with “power” (or more accurately a “power” vacuum), but in particular with the ongoing leadership situation. Divine leadership and its gradual supplanting by human intermediation is very much the focus of all the books constituting Dtr. To suggest that 17:6 does not bear on the issue of Israel’s later monarchy is to ignore the implications of the Gideon-Abimelech complex for the rest of Judges, not to mention the literary connections between these figures and Israel’s later monarchs.

<sup>51</sup> On the possible meaning of *נבל* with the preposition *על*, see Pamela Tamarkin Reis, “The Levite’s Concubine: New Light on a Dark Story,” *SJOT* 20 (2007) 129. Reis suggests that the concubine may have been prostituting on the Levite’s behalf, in other words, the Levite was pimping her out. The Levite would then be culpable for her *נבל*, in addition to his other hideous acts.

with the ongoing theme of זָנָה in Judges (Judg 2:17; 8:27, 33; 11:1; cf. 16:1), pales in comparison to the sins of the men in this story. As Schneider states, “a woman was thrown to a gang of thugs and raped, possibly to death. Neither her husband, her father, nor the person who brought them into his home protected her.”<sup>52</sup> What happens is נִבְלָה (“destructive foolishness”) or עֲנָה (“rape”), the kind of sin that a king, as guarantor of justice among his people, would be expected to prevent or redress (2 Sam 7:10!). In 2 Samuel 11–15, however, we will witness Israel’s most venerated human king not preventing this kind of sin (נִבְלָה, עֲנָה) within his own “house” and even instigating it.

The Ephraimite old man in Gibeah who sees the Levite, his slave, and his concubine lodging in the public square on account of the total lack of hospitality in that city, invites them to lodge with him: “Peace be with you [שְׁלֹום לָךְ] ...” (19:20). The old man’s greeting and implied offer of שְׁלֹום here ironically contrasts with total disorder (the lack of שְׁלֹום) in Israel during the time period this story illustrates.

The old man’s offer of lodging saves the Levite and his servant from what would have otherwise happened in the public square, but it does not save the concubine. When the Benjaminite “destructive sons” besiege the old man’s house and demand to “know,” i.e., rape his Levite guest, the old man proposes sending out his daughter or the Levite’s concubine as a replacement: “Rape them [עֲנוּ אוֹתָם]! Do with them what is right in your eyes” (19:24). He

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<sup>52</sup> Schneider, *Judges*, 245. She rightly calls this episode “one of the most distressing stories in the entire Bible.”

invites the “destructive sons” to do the very thing the text’s refrain “every man did that which was right in his own sight”<sup>53</sup> has been lamenting. The Levite is equally culpable,<sup>54</sup> thrusting out the woman for whose safety he was responsible to the rapists,<sup>55</sup> and then remaining within the שלום (safety) of the old man’s house. Dtr is sympathetic to the concubine’s plight.<sup>56</sup>

As Niditch notes, “the author does not condone the men’s behavior;” they “emerge as cowardly, and their complicity in the rape and murder of the woman is a clear and reprehensible violation of the covenant.”<sup>57</sup> The “worldview in which women are regarded as disposable and replaceable”<sup>58</sup> is not only the one held by the Levite, his Ephraimite host, and the Benjaminite “sons of destruction,” but it is precisely the Judahite *David’s* worldview, and the paradigm within which he operated before, during, and after his ascent to the throne. It was the worldview perpetuated among his sons and discernible in the actions of Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah, and (of course) Solomon (cf. his 700 wives and 300 concubines, 1 Kgs 11:3).

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<sup>53</sup> Judg 17:16; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25.

<sup>54</sup> Schneider (*Judges*, 263) writes: “The text indicts the Levite man. The text draws the picture of an abused raped woman collapsing on the doorstep of the house just as the sun was rising. The narrator then notes that it is the house where the man was. On one level the reference simply defines which house was intended, but it reminds the reader that while the woman was suffering gang rape and abuse the man was safe inside the house.”

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Reis (“The Levite’s Concubine,” 136) puts it well: “I see a woman, pitied and respected by the text, who has been silenced by an intolerable predicament, and whose torment cannot be relieved but will be required.”

<sup>57</sup> Niditch, *Judges*, 193.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Polzin suggests that “perhaps the most outrageous thing of all is that neither the story itself nor the following story within a story clarifies for us whether the concubine is dead when the Levite dismembered her,”<sup>59</sup> the gloss attested in LXX Judg 19:28 (LXX A: ἀλλὰ τεθνήκει / LXX B: ὅτι ἦν νεκρά) and the Levite’s later “self-serving,”<sup>60</sup> “dissimulating,”<sup>61</sup> speech in 20:4-5 notwithstanding. Either way, the Levite’s perversion is on par with or worse than that of the בני-בל-יעל of Gibeah or their counterparts in Sodom.<sup>62</sup> If she was alive, his treatment of his concubine is even more akin to the pious perversion of Jephthah.

The dismemberment of his concubine and his sending her members out to Israel is possibly the most transparent implicit treaty curse in Dtr (if not anywhere in the Bible). Niditch calls it a “macabre parallel to Saul’s divvying up his father’s oxen and sending the pieces abroad to the territories of Israel with a stated threat that they must join him in battle lest he slaughter their cattle (1 Sam 11:7).”<sup>63</sup> The idea here, however, is that unless Israel joins

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<sup>59</sup> Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 200.

<sup>60</sup> Reis (“The Levite’s Concubine,” 144-45) notes the Levite’s narcissistic repetition of first-person singular pronominal forms in his speech.

<sup>61</sup> Regarding the unreliability of the Levite’s report of the events, Niditch (*Judges*, 202) writes: “The Levite dissimulates. He does not mention the threat of rape directed at his own person, nor does he admit that he himself threw his wife to the mob to save his own skin. He implies that the miscreants sought to kill him and somehow took his wife, who was then raped and killed. His misrepresentation of the events contributes further to a negative portrayal of the Levite; readers and hearers of this tale already know about his despicable treatment of his wife and her body.”

<sup>62</sup> Reis (“The Levite’s Concubine,” 140) writes: “By the time of Judges, however, the Israelites possess teachings that demand righteous behavior toward the weak, the poor, the unprotected—including those laws that repeatedly adjure them to love the stranger, to feed the stranger, to afford the stranger equal justice, and not to vex the stranger. For the Levite from Ephraim, the father-in-law from Bethlehem, the old host, and the citizens of Gibeah to match and surpass the Sodomites in wrongdoing shows the thorough and pervasive regression of the congregation of Israel. The biblical author holds up the mirror of Sodom, and the reader sees Israel reflected.”

<sup>63</sup> Niditch, *Judges*, 193.

with the Levite in redressing the horrific נבלה of these Benjaminite “sons of destruction,” the same thing will happen to the *body* of Israel, and perhaps to all of the concubines in Israel.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the Levite, in the most grotesque and inhumane way imaginable, appeals to the covenant that binds Israel together and Israel to Yhwh—a covenant that he himself has violated.<sup>65</sup> He is alleging that Israel’s peace is at stake, but in reality Israel’s שלום with Yhwh has already been thoroughly compromised, and the forthcoming military assault against the tribe of Benjamin will only damage the שלום among Israel’s tribes further.

#### 4.2.5 “Go in Peace” and “May Yhwh Repay You a Posterity” (1 Sam 1:17; 4QSam<sup>a</sup> 2:20)

Forms of שלום are used at two key points in the story of Samuel’s birth that hint at later developments in the David story and beyond. As noted previously, Dtr establishes a strong literary link between Hannah’s “begging” for Samuel, and Israel’s earlier “asking” for a prophet and later “asking” for kingship, this involving the verb שאל and the names שאול and שמואל (see §2.2.8). Yhwh met Israel’s first “request” for intermediaries with Moses (and prophets). He meets this request again and Hannah’s “begging” for a son—a son who

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<sup>64</sup> Stuart Lasine, “Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot’s Hospitality in an Inverted World,” *JSOT* 29 [1984] 42) surmises that “if the Levite *did* intend to use the ‘symbolism’ of the dismemberment in *exactly* the same way as Saul, he would be telling Israel that their concubines would be chopped up if they did not respond to his message! Something very close to this does happen to some of the women of Jabesh-gilead, the one town which did not respond.”

<sup>65</sup> Reis (“The Levite’s Concubine,” 140) rightly observes that this story and the Sodom story in Genesis 19 are less about hospitality than “They are about the brutish depths to which people sink when God’s laws are flouted and no civil authority legislates their observance.”



anticipates the granting of dynastic “sons”<sup>66</sup>—with Samuel (1 Sam 1:20). When Israel makes its second (the first being Judg 8:22-23) “demand” for dynastic rule (1 Samuel 8–12, Yhwh meets the “demand” with kings, beginning with Saul (“Demanded”). Eli’s response to Hannah (“Go in peace [לְשָׁלוֹם], and may the God of Israel give the begging that you have begged from him,” 1 Sam 1:17) suggests that Yhwh’s granting of this begged-for “son”—like the granting of dynastic “sons” later—was intended as a blessing of “peace.” Solomon, as the dynastic “son” par excellence (cf. 2 Samuel 7), was himself supposed to be a blessing of “peace” in perpetuity from Yhwh (1 Kgs 2:33).<sup>67</sup>

Later, when Hannah and Elkanah return to Eli at the Shiloh temple to lend Samuel back to Yhwh in fulfillment of Hannah’s vow, Eli blesses both Hannah and Elkanah: “Then Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, saying: ‘**May Yhwh repay** [לְשָׁלוֹם] you a posterity from this wife in place of the loan that you have lent on request to Yhwh’” (4QSam<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam 2:20). Hannah will go on to have “three [more] sons and two daughters” (1 Sam 2:21). This divine “repayment” is the exact obverse of the divine “payback” that we will witness with David and his posterity.

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 25.

<sup>67</sup> However, Eli’s priestly blessing (cf. Num 6:24) echoes the rogue Levite priest’s words to the Danites in Judg 18:6 (which comes in response to their insistence that he **שִׁאֵל** Yhwh on their behalf): “Go in peace, your way is **נְחָה** Yhwh.” The “peace” that the rogue priest offers is uncertain at best and will prove to be anything but peace in the long run, while he himself is a literary anticipation of Eli and his sons at Shiloh, but also of the idolatrous Solomon (cf. 18:31). Israel’s and Hannah’s fortunes, by contrast, are improved by the granting of this son, Samuel.

### 4.3 “Father is Peace”: Rape, Murder, and the “Peace” of the House of David

With Yhwh’s “rejection” of Saul and his house, Israel has a king “after [Yhwh’s] own heart” (1 Sam 13:14). The intended purpose of this development is a “multiplication of [a] rule and peace [of which] there is no end” (Isa 9:7) or “peace forever from Yhwh” (1 Kgs 2:33). Unfortunately, the life of King David will unfold differently. Little will differentiate David and his sons from the “sons of wickedness” whose “raping” of Israel (רָעָה, 2 Sam 7:10) David’s kingship and the dynastic rule of his sons was supposed to bring to an end (see chapter three).

One principle that David’s biography will illustrate is that of immediate “recompense” or “payback” for showing hatred to Yhwh in return for his love (Deut 7:10; cf. 2 Sam 12:9-10, 14). The crimes for which Yhwh “repays” David have deep roots, as Dtr will also illustrate. From the events of 1 Samuel 11 forward, Dtr will illustrate the two sides of Yhwh’s justice: the swift-working repayment to the face of the individual whose failure to love him merits corrective, if not mortal punishment (Deut 7:10) versus the slower-working third-to-fourth generational “visitation” or “punishment” of the posterity of those whose acts of hatred against Yhwh are so egregious and have infected the people to such a degree that Yhwh is induced to bring total devastation upon both king and kingdom alike (Deut 5:9; 1 Sam 12:25). While David himself, Solomon, and others of his descendants will be confronted with the former, some of his descendants (most notably Manasseh) will seem to escape punishment in their lifetimes in virtue of the latter principle.

#### 4.3.1 “Peace both to You and to Your House”: Nabal’s “Peace” (1 Sam 25:6, 35)

In chapters two and three (§2.4.4, §2.6.1, §3.5.2, §3.5.2), the literary foreshadowing of Uriah in Nabal was noted. The clearest indication in this regard is David’s “taking” Abigail Nabal’s wife as his second wife (1 Sam 25:39-43)<sup>68</sup> which inaugurates a wife-“taking” spree<sup>69</sup> that reaches its highpoint with David’s “taking” Bathsheba in rape (2 Sam 11:4) and then as his wife (11:27). Both Nabal and Uriah in their own ways refuse to be pawns in David’s plans.<sup>70</sup>

On one level, Nabal’s characterization as a churlish “fool” establishes him as a cipher of Saul and his foolish, self- and dynasty-destroying behavior; hence the transparent paronomasia juxtaposing נָבַל with נָבַלָה (1 Sam 25:25). At first sight, this wordplay on his name seems to reinforce the narrator’s prior characterization of Nabal (25:3). However, the noun נָבַלָה with its “negativity and unfavourableness [that] is very much stronger” than that of נָבַל,<sup>71</sup> is “used of a category of serious sins of the kind that are ‘not done in Israel.’”<sup>72</sup> On the lips of Abigail, the characterization of Nabal’s behavior as נָבַלָה (25:25) suggests that this behavior is endangering the existence of his whole “house” (בֵּית), i.e., his family and

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<sup>68</sup> Assuming that Michal is David’s first (and heretofore only) wife, David’s “multiplication” of wives (contra Deut 17:17) and his “taking” of the kingdom (cf. 1 Samuel 8) begins here.

<sup>69</sup> Abigail, 1 Sam 25:39-43; Ahinoam (Saul’s wife[?]), 25:43; Michal (again, via Abner and Ishbaal), 2 Sam 3:12-16; “more wives and concubines,” 2 Sam 5:13; and Bathsheba, 2 Sam 11:3-4, 27. Abishag, whether as an official concubine or merely a royal bed-warmer, might also be added to this list (1 Kgs 1:2-4).

<sup>70</sup> See 1 Sam 25:10-12 and 2 Sam 11:8-13.

<sup>71</sup> James Barr, “The Symbolism of Names in the Old Testament,” *BJRL* 52 (1969) 27.

<sup>72</sup> David A. Bosworth, *The Story within a Story in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (CBQMS 45; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2008) 81.

posterity, of whom he will have none.<sup>73</sup> That the narrative has Nabal's "house" in view is confirmed by David's "greeting" (25:6) of Nabal's servants and Abigail's "prediction" that Yhwh will build David a "sure house" (25:28). In his own "house," Nabal empties himself like an animal-bladder **wineskin** (cf. נֶבֶל יַיִן in 25:18)<sup>74</sup> and becomes like a stone.

"Foolish" Saul, who "rewards" David evil for good (1 Sam 24:17; 25:21), is not the only king the narrative has in view here, however.

As noted in chapter three, the term נֶבֶל gets attached to David and his house due to Amnon's rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13:12),<sup>75</sup> an event precipitated by David's own "taking" (sc. rape) of Bathsheba and ultimately by his "taking" Abigail and Ahinoam (cf. 2 Sam 3:2). In their own high-handed use of women, Amnon and Absalom had their father's unfailing example. In Deut 22:21 נֶבֶל characterizes the crime of a new bride who is found to be a non-virgin, but *in the next verse* (22:22) a crime more similar to David's is adumbrated, i.e., a

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<sup>73</sup> That is if Nabal is not Jether/Ithra (2 Sam 17:25; 1 Kgs 2:5, 32) and Amasa is not his son and Abigail (David's half-sister) is not the Abigail whom David marries, *pace* Steven L. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 171-72.

<sup>74</sup> The wordplay (paronomasia) on Nabal (נֶבֶל) in the pericope begins in 1 Sam 25:18 when Abigail hastens off and procures "two hundred loaves of bread and two skins of wine [נֶבֶל יַיִן]" and extends to "Nabal" (i.e., "wineskin") urinating his wine away after his long bout of drinking (25:36-37). Jon D. Levenson ("1 Samuel 25 as Literature and History," in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* [2 vols.; ed. K. R. R. Gros Louis; Nashville: Abingdon, 1982] 2:22) observes that Nabal "is equated with his bladder"; Peter J. Leithart ("Nabal and his wine," *JBL* 120 [2001] 525-27) suggests that "Abigail tells Nabal about the David encounter while he is emptying his bladder, that is, while he is urinating after a night of heavy drinking" (i.e., "while the wine was going out of Nabal").

<sup>75</sup> It is probably significant that narrator opts to continue to refer to Abigail as "the wife of Nabal" (1 Sam 30:5; 2 Sam 3:3). Amnon, David's "firstborn" is born to Ahinoam, Saul's former wife (2 Sam 3:2; cf. 1 Sam 14:50; 1 Sam 25:43), while Chileab, "the second" is born to Abigail, with whom Ahinoam is often paired (see below). The narrator's mention of the births here provides a narrative bridge in which he looks back to the Nabal story and forward to Amnon's נֶבֶל.

man having sexual relations with a married woman.<sup>76</sup> Tamar's words in 2 Sam 13:12 represent the act spoken of in Deut 22:25 (i.e., a man raping a [betrothed] woman) as נבל ה',<sup>77</sup> this suggesting that all the sexual misconduct cited in Deut 22:20-30 pertains to this category.<sup>78</sup> Thus David's violation of Bathsheba was a foolish deed that destroyed Uriah and his "house"—a נבל ה' that begot נבל ה' in his own house and made it "unsure," has its precedent in his taking of נבל the נבל ה's wife.

Here I pause to return to Barr's suggestion<sup>79</sup> that "Nabal" may derive from a Semitic word cognate to Akkadian *nablu(m)*<sup>80</sup> and Ugaritic *nblt* ("fire," "flame"). This, as he suggests, would make the name "analogous to several other well-established Hebrew names connected with fire, flame, and light, such as Uriel, Uri, **Uriah**, Jair, Neriah, Ner, Baraq [Barak], Lapidoth"<sup>81</sup> (emphasis mine). If the name "Nabal" is then not simply a literary pseudonym

<sup>76</sup> Deut 22:22: "If a man is found lying with a woman—the wife of a husband [בעל-הבעל]—they shall die, both of them: the man who was lying with the woman and the woman, so that you may eradicate evil [הרע] from Israel." With the social position/power issues evident in the case of David and Bathsheba, their "sexual relations" are hardly removed from the realm of forcible sexual relations, i.e., rape.

<sup>77</sup> 2 Sam 13:23: "No, my brother, do not rape me! Because such ought not to be done in Israel, do not do **this foolishly destructive act** [הנבלה הזוה]."

<sup>78</sup> In other words, the characterization of the first case as a נבל ה' need not be repeated in each subsequent instance, in order for the following, related cases be seen as נבל ה' as well.

<sup>79</sup> Barr, "Symbolism of Biblical Names," 25.

<sup>80</sup> *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (ed. Jeremy Black, Andrew George and Nicolas Postgate; SANTAG 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000) glosses *nablu(m)* as "flash of fire, flame; fire arrow"; CAD (N I, 27-28) has "flame," "fire" and lists several instances in which *nablu* is used as an epithet of gods or kings (e.g., Marduk, Esarhaddon).

<sup>81</sup> Barr, "Symbolism of Biblical Names," 25; See also Bosworth, *A Story within A Story*, 80.

meaning “fool,” but also suggests the meaning “[The god is a] flame,” Dtr may also be subtly playing on the idea of “Yhwh is my flame,” the Hebrew meaning suggested by Uriah’s name.

Another important link to future events in David’s life is his “peaceable” greeting of Nabal and request for support that emerges as anything but peaceable: “To my brother: to you, peace [שלום]; and to your house, peace [שלום]; and to all that you have, peace [שלום]!” (25:6). David’s veiled demand here alludes to a kind of *pax Davidica* (see §2.4.4).

Nabal understands that agreement to David’s demands means submission to David’s authority, and possible treason against Saul (cf. 25:10). David’s violent anger at Nabal’s foolish (or foolhardy) refusal to lend him support is a telling comment on the nature of monarchic “peace.”

The superficiality of David’s “peaceable” greeting, not to mention his kinglike pride and petulance, are evident in his violent reaction to Nabal (1 Sam 25:22).<sup>82</sup> Abigail, like the reader, anticipates that Yhwh will make David king ere long, and seeks to assuage David’s wrath by addressing him as if he were already king, i.e., with courtly (“wise”) language. Since her own survival, the potential for posterity and thus a better life for herself is her endgame, it is hard to argue that she does not act wisely in prostrating herself before David and “flattering” him: “may your enemies [אֹיְבֶיךָ, haters] and those that seek to do my lord evil be as Nabal” (1 Sam 25:26).

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<sup>82</sup> 1 Samuel 25:13 further stresses David’s anger, with the word “sword” occurring three times, this ironically anticipating Uriah’s fate (see §3.5.5).

Abigail, like Rahab<sup>83</sup> who aids the Israelite spies contrary to the wellbeing of her own people in Jericho, has an interest in ensuring her own future rather than her husband's. As has been noted,<sup>84</sup> her statement "anticipates" Nabal's death, a statement which for many *ipso facto* raises the issue of her complicity in a death that is laconically described as follows: וַיִּנָּף יְהוָה אֶת־נָבָל וַיָּמָת ("And Yhwh struck Nabal so that he died," 25:37). David's later question regarding Abner's death ("Shall Abner die like Nabal/a fool?"; 2 Sam 3:33, see discussion below)<sup>85</sup> further complicates matters in this regard.

Abigail continues in a "vein of flattery"<sup>86</sup>: "Yhwh will certainly make my lord a sure house" (1 Sam 25:28). As Bodner notes here, "the rationale for God granting David a 'sure house' is that he fights the battles of the LORD ..." According to Abigail's speech, David's "sure house" is further predicated upon the notion that "evil will never be found in [his] hand," which Dtr knows and shows will not be the case (2 Sam 11:27; 12: 9-11).<sup>87</sup> David, responds to her entreaty with the ironic words: "Go up [עַל־י] to your house in peace [לְשָׁלוֹם]" (1 Sam 25:35). Her "house" will soon be his "house."

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 208.

<sup>84</sup> McKenzie, *King David*, 100.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>86</sup> David M. Gunn, *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (JSOTSup 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980) 98.

<sup>87</sup> Regarding Abigail's assertion "evil will never be found in your hand," Bodner (*1 Samuel*, 267) writes: "I assume she says this without blushing, but surely the reader cringes, since this staggering thesis will not be borne out in the text. At this point a brave argument might be that Abigail's conduct here prefigures the Bathsheba dalliance later in 2 Samuel 11, when David acquires another man's wife and *certainly does* incur bloodguilt in the process. Not only is evil found in David's hand in 2 Samuel 11, but events are set in motion that result in someone other than Abigail becoming the queen mother."

The pericope closes with the notice that David “takes” Abigail as one of two additional wives, an event described in detail in 1 Sam 25:39-40. David also “takes” Ahinoam (1 Sam 25:43) who is, evidently, the same Ahinoam mentioned previously in 1 Sam 14:50 as Saul’s wife. Saul’s “giving” of Michal to Palti(el) (1 Sam 25:44) should probably be understood as retaliation for David’s taking Ahinoam.<sup>88</sup> The emphasis here is on David’s (proactive) “taking” these wives, even if Yhwh has in some sense “given” them to him (cf. 2 Sam 12:8). Dtr thus establishes a backdrop of behavioral and literary precedents for understanding David’s later wife-taking<sup>89</sup> and the “taking” that Nathan will denounce as “despising” Yhwh and “treating Yhwh with utter contempt” (2 Sam 12:9-10, 14).

Nabal is the one character in 1 Samuel 25 who is, in the end, bereft of “peace” (making David’s greeting to him all the more ironic). His wife will “go up in peace,” rather to David’s house as David’s wife. Abigail’s destiny is not “to wash the feet of her master’s servants,” but neither is it to be the queen-mother. She will have at least one son by David (Chileab). Whether he met a violent end like Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah, the text never says. Clearly, however, he never enjoys the glory or “peace” that awaits “Solomon” and we are left with the question: did Abigail manage to preserve herself a posterity, as Bathsheba will later? The noun שָׁלוֹם, used five times in this pericope, illustrates a “peace” which eludes

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<sup>88</sup> Jon D. Levenson and Baruch Halpern (“The Political Import of David’s Marriages,” *JBL* 99 [1980] 514) observe: “Literarily, this construction explains the position of 1 Sam 25:44: the compiler has juxtaposed Saul’s reaction with the initial report of David’s usurpation (25:43).”

<sup>89</sup> In conjunction with David’s accession to the kingship of Judah, Dtr will catalogue his sons born to various wives (Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, and Abital; 2 Sam 2:3-5), two of whom (Ahinoam and Abigail) are mentioned in this narrative (1 Samuel 25). The inclusion of this notice correlates David’s gathering or multiplying of power, with his multiplying of wives. David’s later securing of power over Israel is accompanied by a similar notice on his wives (2 Sam 5:12-13).



Nabal—or he eludes it. However, David too and subsequently Solomon will find ways to squander Yhwh’s generously-proffered peace.

#### 4.3.2 David’s Traitorous “Peace” with the Philistines (1 Sam 29:7)

The inclusion of stories detailing David’s dalliances with the Philistines is an argument against classifying these stories—particularly in their present literary form—as “royal propaganda” or “royal apologetic.” The final chapters of the Saul saga also detail David’s careful use of his connections with Israel’s archenemy, the Philistines, to accomplish Saul’s defeat and thus achieve his monarchic aims. As Miscall observes, here “David shows no concern for the Lord’s or God’s role in events; he says neither ‘Lord’ nor ‘God’ in the narrative of his stay with Achish”<sup>90</sup> even though the latter mentions both God (1 Sam 29:9) and the Lord (29:6).<sup>91</sup>

Achish, unaware of David’s self-serving duplicity (cf. 1 Sam 27:9-12), gives him the town of Ziklag (27:6), which David will use as a base from which to expand his power. Achish “believes” in David (27:12). When the Philistines gather to Aphek for battle against Saul and Israel, David and his forces remain in the rearguard with Achish (29:2), but the Philistine leadership doubts his intentions: “What are these Hebrews doing here?” they ask (29:3), their use of the term עִבְרִיִּים (“Hebrews”) accentuating their allusion to the possibility

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<sup>90</sup> Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986) 173. “Why,” he writes further, “is open to debate. The omission may be intentional on the part of a deliberate and self-centered David, or it may be due to his present distress and haste.”

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

of treachery (i.e., “crossing over” [עבר]; cf. 27:2).<sup>92</sup> Achish is compelled by the other Philistine leaders to send David away: “But now return!—go in peace [בשלום] and do not do anything evil in the eyes of the Philistine overlords” (1 Sam 29:7). David protests that he has done nothing against the Philistines that should prevent him from going “to war with enemies of my lord the king,” i.e., against Saul (29:8).

David departs, still “at peace” with the Philistines, with the added benefit of not having to fight Saul directly. David knows that the Philistines will accomplish his (and Yhwh’s) designs against Saul. David’s double-dealing is a delicate game: he cannot help Saul at all or Saul will continue as king and David will not thus ascend to the throne; at the same time, although he expresses his willingness to do so (29:8), he also cannot directly aid his Philistine allies against Saul or all Israel will be a witness to his treachery. And so, as an expression of David’s furtive alliance (“peace”) with Israel’s archenemy, the term שלום here highlights David’s “soft” treachery: he is willing to fight against Saul and Israel. Here שלום anticipates, in turn, the treachery of Absalom and Sheba against David, who does not aid Saul, abandoning him to defeat, and will not commit himself to avoiding רע in the eyes of the Philistines. This episode will not be Dtr’s final word on David’s relationship with the Philistines: only when David, as king of Judah, makes his final move for the throne of Israel will the Philistines realize how badly they have played their hand. 1 Sam 27:1, for its part,

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. the earlier wordplay on “Hebrews” and עבר in the story of Jonathan’s heroics against the Philistines (1 Samuel 14).

offers a rare glimpse<sup>93</sup> into David's psychology: "Then David said in his heart, 'One day I shall come to an end [אספח] at Saul's hand.'" Beside the narrative's need to explain his traitorous "crossing over [ויעבר]" to Achish, king of the Philistines (27:2), David's monologue expresses little confidence in his previous anointing (1 Samuel 16) and Yhwh's "lifesaving grace" (חסד) or in Yhwh's "giving" him the kingdom in advance via Jonathan. David now begins to exhibit a Saul-like tolerance for "destructive men" (1 Sam 30:22; cf. 10:27; 11:12-13).

In sum, David's departure "in peace" from the Philistines results in no peace for Saul and his sons, who die violent deaths (1 Sam 31:2-6) and whose bodies are subjected to postmortem desecration (31:8-13), and no peace for the Israelites who die in battle (31:1) and lose many towns (31:7). David's departure "in peace" also eventuates in a lack of peace between Israel under David and the Philistines (their letting him go comes back to bite them). The one person who clearly benefits from this "peace" is David, and by extension his heirs (Solomon, et al.).

#### 4.3.3 Abner's "Peace" (2 Sam 3:21-23)

David had sworn to preserve Saul's house and sworn to destroy Nabal's house.

Bodner incisively observes: "If David breaks his vow to destroy Nabal's house, then we

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<sup>93</sup> As Robert Alter (*The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* [New York: Norton, 1999] 168) observes, "This is the first actual interior monologue given for David. The decision to 'cross over' (verse 2) to the enemy is a momentous one, and the writer wants to make it perfectly clear that David had definitely realized Saul was bound to kill him sooner or later ... unless he moved to the safety of enemy territory."

wonder about the long-term viability of the oath sworn to Saul.”<sup>94</sup> At the end of the “long war between the house of Saul and the house of David” (2 Sam 3:1, 6), Ishbaal accuses Abner of bedding Rizpah his father’s concubine—in effect, seeking Saul’s throne. However, instead of moving openly against Ishbaal, Abner responds by switching his allegiance to David (3:10), this reminiscent of David’s own “crossing over” to Achish and the Philistines (1 Sam 27:2).<sup>95</sup> Just as David’s move cost Saul his life and kingship by weakening Saul’s strength, Abner’s move will cost Ishbaal his throne and arguably his life. Ironically and unfortunately for Abner however, this tactical move will not benefit him at all: it will only bring about his own demise.

The intrigue described in this episode anticipates the intrigue that will surround Solomon’s accession, as suggested by several verbal cues. Abner takes the initiative and makes an overture for peace, sending an embassy to David, requesting a *ברית*, and offering to bring all of Israel to David (2 Sam 3:12). When Abner finally meets David at Hebron, David makes a feast for him. As McKenzie notes, “the text states three times that Abner left his meeting with David “in peace” (*בשלום*),<sup>96</sup> but it also says nothing about Abner obtaining the *ברית* that he sought. Abner’s “peace” is an illusory one.

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<sup>94</sup> Bodner, *1 Samuel*, 266.

<sup>95</sup> The root *\*עבר* occurs in both passages and recalls the wordplay on *\*עבר* and “Hebrew” in 1 Samuel 13:7; 14:1; 4, 6, 8, 23.

<sup>96</sup> McKenzie, *King David*, 119.

After Abner has gone forth to gather Israel to David so that they will cut a ברית with him, Joab shows up, and after learning that Abner has gone “in peace,” angrily declares: “You [David] know [ידעת] Abner son of Ner, that he has come to know [לדעת] all that the king does” (2 Sam 3:26). Joab then tricks Abner into coming to the well of Sirah where he assassinates him, “but David did not know [לא ידע].” Halpern rightly notes the direct link between this text (2 Samuel 3) and the pretext on which Joab is later executed (1 Kgs 2:5; see §4.4.1),<sup>97</sup> but this is not merely an apologetic attempt to give David an alibi for Abner’s killing. In fact, the statement “David did not know” looks forward to Solomon’s accession and his instrument in securing “peace” for himself, i.e., Benaiah ben Jehoiada (יהוידיע): “you are wise and know what to do to him” (1 Kgs 2:9). It is, rather, the first salvo in a broader, unfavorable commentary on the two-sided coin of the Davidic *modus operandi*: the ruthless use of wisdom and plausible deniability.

In the end, Abner’s “peace” is a violent death, and David feels compelled to mourn and publically declare: “should Abner die as נבל [Nabal/a fool] dies?” (2 Sam 3:33). The reader is left to wonder, not only whether David is referring here to Nabal himself or to any “fool” like the בן-בל-יעל (“destructive son”) who commits נבלה (or both!) and dies violently, but also whether David means that Abner should not have died like Nabal because he helped David’s royal ambitions where Nabal had not,<sup>98</sup> or whether Abner should not have

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<sup>97</sup> Baruch Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001) 97.

<sup>98</sup> D. Rudman, “David’s Lament for Abner (2 Samuel 3:33-34),” *IBS* 22 (2000) 91-94.

died like Nabal “through violence”<sup>99</sup> in a Freudian slip-of-the-tongue moment. Dtr’s narrative provokes these disquieting questions as a prelude to the “destructive foolishness” (נבלה) of David and his sons. “May Yhwh render to every man according to his righteousness and faithfulness [אֱמִנָּה],” David piously proclaimed to a delegitimated Saul (1 Sam 26:23). (He will ironically name his own son “Amnon” [אֲמֹנִי]). To his own violent nephews who assassinated Abner David similarly moralizes: “May Yhwh reward the evildoer according to his evil” (2 Sam 3:39). But it is here in the narratives of David’s accession that we begin to wonder about the “surety” (cf. נֶאֱמָן) of any “house” and the viability of any “oaths” calculated to preserve it. We also begin to wonder just what kind of “peace” and “reward” awaits David.

#### 4.3.4 *The Peace of the War: Uriah’s “Peace” (2 Sam 11:7)*

When David offers “peace” offerings (שְׁלָמִים) upon his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (יְרוּשָׁלַם) with the ark (2 Sam 6:17), he does so to promote “peace” within his new capital, within his dynasty, and within Israel. At this moment, it is said that Michal, David’s reclaimed wife, “despised” him (6:16). However, worse breaches of the “peace” in David’s “house” and within Israel are imminent as David “despises” Yhwh (2 Sam 12:8-9) in his treatment of Uriah.

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<sup>99</sup> McKenzie, *King David*, 122.

The term שלום bodes ill for Uriah just as it did for Abner and Nabal before him.

Having already taken, violated and impregnated Uriah's wife, David summons Uriah and "demands"<sup>100</sup> to know "the peace [שלום] of Joab, the peace [שלום] of the company [lit. people, עם], and the peace [שלום] of the war" (2 Sam 11:7). The threefold repetition of שלום underscores the wellbeing ("peace") that David is about to permanently take from Uriah and the peace that David's act will destroy in his own house and throughout Israel. As Firth notes, "The irony is that *šālôm* is the one thing with which [David] is not concerned."<sup>101</sup>

The repetition of שלום in the context of David's "taking" Uriah's wife for himself is also a teasing reminder to the reader of the one whom this "taking" will eventually produce—an anticipatory wordplay on the name "Solomon," who will be the son of Bathsheba, but not of Uriah. The oxymoronic phrase "peace of the war" also alludes in an ironic way to "the blood of war in peace" (1 Kgs 2:5) the pretext on which David will urge Solomon to have Joab executed. Joab kills Abner, an act from which David benefits and Joab executes David's plan on Uriah. The "peace of Joab" will be like the eternal dynastic "peace" for which David aims and that Solomon boasts will belong to the Davidides (1 Kgs 2:33): an ironic absence of "peace."

Uriah's pious refusal to go down to his house and "wash [his] feet" (i.e., sleep with his own wife) gave David the pretext he needed to hasten what would have happened to Uriah

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<sup>100</sup> See §2.6.1.

<sup>101</sup> David G. Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Apollos Old Testament Commentary 8; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009) 418.

sooner or later anyway.<sup>102</sup> Nabal's rebuff of David may have been "churlish," and Uriah's refusal of David pious, but both ended up like Saul: dead on stage with David in possession of their wives. Abigail and Bathsheba (and Ahinoam!) all improved their fortunes over against their ex-husbands, but the offspring of only one of them would know the "peace" that eluded Saul and everyone else who in any way stood in the way of David's and Solomon's destiny.

#### 4.3.5 "His Replacement": "He Shall Repay" Fourfold/Sevenfold (2 Samuel 12)

David's "taking" Bathsheba (1 Sam 11:4) and subsequent murder of Uriah her husband along with eighteen of his fellow soldiers (LXX<sup>L</sup> 2 Sam 11:24) constituted an egregious failure on David's part to "love" Yhwh ("you have despised Yhwh," "you have treated Yhwh with utter contempt"; 2 Sam 12:9, 14; see chapter three, esp. §3.5.5). The destruction of Uriah and his familial "peace," marks the beginning of Yhwh's removing "peace" from David and his house, of Yhwh's immediately "repaying" (יָשַׁלְתִּי לּוֹ, מִשָּׁלָם) David "to his face" (Deut 7:10), and of David's own "repayment."

When confronted with his evildoing in the form of a parable, David declares to Nathan concerning the pitiless rich man: "A son of death is the man who does this! And he shall make sevenfold [LXX<sup>L</sup>; "fourfold" in MT] payment [יָשַׁלְתִּי] for the lamb because he did this thing and because he had no compassion." Donatella Scaiola suggests that story of the deaths of four of David's sons (his unnamed baby with Bathsheba, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah) in the ensuing narratives (2 Samuel 12–20; 1 Kings 1–2) is essentially a working out of the

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<sup>102</sup> Firth (*1 & 2 Samuel*, 418-23) suggests that David had already been seeking a "legal pretext" to execute Uriah (e.g., by getting Uriah to sleep with his wife while on duty). Cf. Deut 23:10 [ET 23:11]; Exod 19:15.



punishment that David unwittingly pronounces upon himself in accordance with the fourfold law of retribution (Exod 21:37).<sup>103</sup> As attractive as this reading is, others have noted (and I previously noted in §3.5.5) that David's original pronouncement (שבעת"ם = ἑπταπλάσιον, "sevenfold," LXX<sup>L</sup> 2 Sam 12:6) may have been revised in MT to harmonize with Exod 21:37, which prescribes fourfold restitution for illicit taking.

Timo Veijola's suggestion that "Solomon" means "his replacement,"<sup>104</sup> has become widely accepted in recent years, since this suggestion is grammatically sound and makes sense in the context of the narrative. The MT Ketiv suggests that David named Solomon (וַיִּקְרָא, 1 Sam 12:24). However the Qere is וַתִּקְרָא, i.e., she (Bathsheba) named him, which finds support in some Hebrew manuscripts and in both the Targum (וַתִּקְרָא) and the Peshitta (ܘܬܝܩܪܐ).<sup>105</sup> This reading is consistent with the idea that it was "the mother's prerogative to name a newborn child"<sup>106</sup> as we find elsewhere in the Books of Samuel (e.g., 1 Sam 1:20; 4:21).<sup>107</sup>

Solomon's naming presents an additional conundrum: Does the possessive ׀(׀) in שלמה refer to Solomon's deceased elder brother (the unnamed infant who perished), to

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<sup>103</sup> See Donatella Scaiola, "Pagherá quattro volte! (2Sam 13-21)," *PdV* 46 (2001) 31-37.

<sup>104</sup> Timo Veijola, "Salomo: Der Erstgeborene Bathsebas," in *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament* (ed. J.A. Emerton; VTSup 30; Leiden: Brill, 1979) 230-50.

<sup>105</sup> The LXX and Vulgate are ambiguous, since Greek and Latin do not mark verbs for gender.

<sup>106</sup> McCarter, *II Samuel*, 303.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

Bathsheba's murdered husband,<sup>108</sup> or to both? Furthermore, is the possessive suffix possibly theophoric, i.e., "his [i.e., Yhwh's] recompense" or "his repayment"? It is significant that, in contrast to the name יְהוֹיָדָד ("Beloved of Yhwh" < "Yhwh loved him"/"because of Yhwh," 2 Sam 12:24-25)<sup>109</sup> the narrative seems to deliberately eschew glossing Solomon's name for the audience with a transparent etiology. What the narrative does cite is David's earlier pronouncement ("he shall make sevenfold [fourfold] repayment [שָׁלַם]," 2 Sam 12:6) and the consequent death of his son, thereby evoking the issue of David's self-pronounced "repayment" and Yhwh's "repayment" for despising him (cf. Deut 7:10). And it may not be coincidental that the issue of repayment and the giving of the name "Solomon" come together against the backdrop of Bathsheba's losses.

Several commentators—even while recognizing the possibility that Bathsheba named Solomon and the possible reasons—fail to fully consider just what she has *lost*: David has "taken" her from her house and had her husband murdered, acts which in turn lead (according to Nathan) to the loss of the child with which David has impregnated her, and David's attempt to "comfort" her by impregnating her again.<sup>110</sup> In view of these losses and an inevitable purge

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<sup>108</sup> One need not necessarily assume, with Halpern (*David's Secret Demons*, 401), that "Solomon was the son of a father who died before his birth" in order for the name to make "perfect sense." The name also makes "perfect sense" as the name of a younger brother of a child who died before the younger brother's birth.

<sup>109</sup> See chapter three; Halpern's assertion (*David's Secret Demons*, 401) that the name Jedidiah "implies, not too subtly, that he was the love child of David, *dwd*, 'the beloved'" is not strictly grounded in the text and, I think, misses the point of the narrative's association of David and Solomon with יְהוֹיָדָד.

<sup>110</sup> David Bosworth ("David Comforted Bathsheba' [2 Sam 12:24]: Gender and Parental Bereavement," in *Seitenblicke: Literarische und historische Studien zu Nebenfiguren im zweiten Samuelbuch* [ed. Walter Dietrich; OBO 249; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011] 250) writes: "Bathsheba may have found David's 'comfort' deeply discomfiting. David may have desired sex largely for his own benefit and mistakenly imagined that Bathsheba would find sex as comforting and desirable as he did. Like other bereaved

on the part of Adonijah, Bathsheba's conniving with Nathan to have *Solomon* succeed David can be viewed as her attempt at gaining a measure of "recompense" (שלם) and "wellbeing" (שלום).<sup>111</sup>

#### 4.3.6 Absalom's and His Father's "Peace" (2 Samuel 13–18)

The name "Solomon," however, is not the only שלם-name that bears on the issue of Yhwh's "repayment" of David (Deut 7:10) and David's "repayment" for his crimes (2 Sam 12:6). As misdirected "love" turns to extreme "hatred" in the house of David with Amnon's rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13:14–15, 22), the narrative introduces us to Absalom (or Abishalom), whose name transparently means "Father [god] is peace," or more likely, "My father [god] is peace" (=Abishalom).<sup>112</sup> The name is also a prayer that the father of the son so named will not only enjoy שלום, but also that the son will be an unfailing conduit of שלום for the father.

No Israelite could fail to appreciate the irony in the meaning of this name, and the narrator intends from the beginning to exploit that irony to the full. It is no accident that Absalom appears in the narrative at the very moment that "peace" disappears from David's house. As the narrative begins to actively play on the name Absalom "expectation is

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mothers, Bathsheba may have preferred to eschew sexual relations and suffered heightened anxiety during and after her second pregnancy."

<sup>111</sup> In this sense, Solomon becomes "*her* [Bathsheba's] recompense" and the preservation of her life from a potential purge by Adonijah ("her [Bathsheba's] peace").

<sup>112</sup> On the basis of a plene spelling אבִישָׁלוֹם (see 1 Kgs 15:2, 10) and LXX's Αβεσσαλωμ, P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 9; New York: Doubleday, 1984] 101) argues that the name is Abishalom, and uniformly spells it thus. I will continue to use the traditional, "mispronunciation" here.

accordingly built that ‘peace’ will reign between the ‘father,’ King David, and his son, Absalom.”<sup>113</sup> But this “peace” is precisely what fails to materialize, “the ironic point being that the entire story witnesses to the absence of peace between father and son.”<sup>114</sup>

Absalom avenges Tamar’s rape by killing Amnon, this resulting in Absalom’s exile to Geshur (2 Sam 13:22-38), after which Joab schemes to have Absalom reconciled to David with apparent success (2 Samuel 14). However, the issue of “repayment” soon becomes a departure point for the further dissolution of the “peace” between father and son, when Absalom asks David for permission to “pay” his vow: “Then **Absalom** [אַבְשָׁלוֹם] said to the king ‘Let me go and **so that I may repay** [וְאֵשְׁלַם] my vow which I have vowed to Yhwh, at Hebron’” (2 Sam 15:7), this ostensibly in accordance with Deut 23:22 (“when you vow a vow to Yhwh your God you shall not hesitate **to repay it** [לְשַׁלְּמוֹ], because Yhwh will certainly require it from you and it will become sin with you”). Absalom piously adds that his vow was made in hopes that Yhwh would “bring [him] again to **Jerusalem** [יְרוּשָׁלַם], so that [he] might serve Yhwh” (2 Sam 15:8). David replies to Absalom (as Achish did to himself years earlier, 1 Sam 29:7), with an irony that is not lost on the audience, “Go **in peace** [בְּשָׁלוֹם]” (2 Sam 15:10), thus sending Absalom away to launch a rival kingship at the very place where David’s kingship began (3:11), i.e., Hebron (15:11).

As Garsiel notes, “David does not sense the oddity of the request (since if Absalom wishes to return from his exile in Geshur to Jerusalem, what prevents him from ‘paying’ his

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<sup>113</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 226.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

vow in Jerusalem itself?).”<sup>115</sup> Instead, David “rapidly discovers that Absalom has not gone ‘in peace’ at all but with an intention of rebellion which is actualized with alarming speed.”<sup>116</sup> Instead of experiencing “peace,” David finds that he is still “paying” (cf. 2 Sam 12:6) for his crime against Uriah et al. and is being “repaid” to his face.

As David becomes aware of Absalom’s insurrection, he perceives that Absalom will move quickly against Jerusalem where he himself will be a sitting duck, a realization which spurs him to flee with his supporters (2 Sam 15:14), minus the ten concubines he leaves to “keep” the house (where they will be the sitting ducks). Once outside of the city, David submits himself to Yhwh’s will. He sends the priests Zadok, his son Ahimaaz, and notably Jonathan son of Abiathar on a dangerous quest (cf. 15:25-26) back into the city as his agents: “Return to the city in peace [בשלום]—you and your two sons with you: Ahimaaz your son and Jonathan the son of Abiathar” (15:27). Ironically, Abiathar’s willingness to send his son in perilous “peace” back into Jerusalem on this occasion will save his own life later on when Solomon moves to eliminate all of the followers of Adonijah (see 1 Kgs 2:26), and thus preserve an Elide remnant.

Meanwhile, Ahithophel advises Absalom to pursue after David immediately and deal him a death blow “while he is weary” and volunteers to do the job himself (2 Sam 17:1-2). The result that Ahithophel foresees is that he will be able to gather to Absalom all of those who currently support David and thus “all the people shall be at peace [יְהִיָּה שְׁלֹמֶם]” (2 Sam

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

17:3). Ahithophel here provides Absalom with a roadmap for “peace.” Unfortunately for Absalom, he does not heed Ahithophel’s quasi-“divine” counsel (2 Sam 16:23), and instead listens to Hushai, David’s agent. Absalom is not destined to enjoy “peace,” but neither is the rest of the house of David.

In a tragic, but sublime wordplay on the name Absalom (“My Father is Peace”), Ahimaaz, following the death of Absalom, greets David with a single word שלום (“peace,” i.e., “all is well,” 2 Sam 18:28). In ordinary circumstances, this ordinary greeting would draw little attention and might even be too pedestrian to include in character dialogue—not so here, however. The audience recalls David’s angry judgment that the rich man in Nathan’s parable is to “repay” (שלם) sevenfold (or fourfold), and Nathan’s subsequent prophecy that “the sword [would] never depart from [David’s] house forever” (2 Sam 12:10). “Peace” has vanished from the house of David.

As at the death of his unnamed son by Bathsheba (see 2 Sam 12:18-19), David senses the reality: “Is the youth Absalom safe? [הַיְּלִיד אֲבִישָׁלוֹם לְנֶעֶר]” (18:29). To David’s query (18:28), Ahimaaz does not give a straight answer (18:29). Then Cushi comes in, declaring to David in similarly euphemistic terms: “Glad tidings, my lord! For Yhwh has avenged you today of all those who rose up against you.” David asks again, “Is the youth Absalom safe? [הַיְּלִיד אֲבִישָׁלוֹם לְנֶעֶר].” Cushi is now more forthcoming: “May the enemies of my lord the king and all that rise up against you, be as that youth is” (2 Sam 18:32).

Garsiel calls the wordplay on Absalom here “the most striking irony of all,”<sup>117</sup> because here at the completion of the “ironic circle latent in ‘Absalom’” in this pericope,<sup>118</sup> “the father can derive no satisfaction from the course of events from the day he sends away his son ‘in peace’ to the moment when he receives the bitter news that it is not well with him – that Absalom has no ‘peace.’”<sup>119</sup> At this moment, David is the most wretched man in the history of Israel. The reader knows that the father for whom the death of a son means the “peace” of his house/dynasty (cf. 1 Kgs 2:33) or “glad tidings” is a man to be pitied by all, and envied by none.

#### 4.3.7 The “Peace” of Amasa and Sheba (2 Sam 20:9, 19)

Following the report of David’s return “in peace” and Mephibaal’s perilous interview with him (2 Sam 19:25, 31),<sup>120</sup> Dtr’s use of שלום as a *Leitwort* throughout the remainder of

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<sup>117</sup> Garsiel, “Biblical Names,” 227.

<sup>118</sup> In addition to Garsiel’s (Ibid.) observations, I would suggest that the irony of the “Absalom” story extends well beyond the boundaries of this particular story.

<sup>119</sup> Garsiel, “Biblical Names,” 227.

<sup>120</sup> If life was precarious for Mephibaal eating bread at David’s table under the latter’s watchful eye (2 Samuel 9), it became more precarious during Absalom’s temporary seizure of the crown, and more precarious still when David returned to the throne and could not be sure of the loyalty of many. Mephibaal knew that as a Saulide his loyalty would be among the first to be questioned. Consequently, he prepared a public display of mourning as proof of his loyalty—just as David had made a public display of his “sorrow” over Abner’s murder. Dtr reports: “Then Mephibaal son of Saul came down to meet the king, but he had not washed his feet, trimmed his beard or washed his clothes from the day that the king went away until the day he came back in peace [שלום]” (2 Sam 19:24). The narrator mentions David’s “peace,” but Mephibaal’s “peace” is the issue that gives this story its tension: will Mephibaal survive? Mephibaal comes from Jerusalem to convince David of his loyalty (2 Sam 19:25-26). Mephibaal is lame (one of those “hated of David’s soul,” 2 Sam 5:8), and even though Mephibaal presents no real threat to his throne, David demands to know of Mephibaal why he did not ride out with him (19:26). Mephibaal protests that Ziba has slandered him (see 16:1-4), citing his lameness, rather, as the reason he stayed behind (19:27-28). He places himself completely at David’s mercy, using flattering courtly language, and contrasting his own good treatment by David with David’s slaughter of the Saulides (19:29). Weary of the Ziba-Mephibaal dispute and Mephibaal’s talk, David decides that they shall halve Saul’s old estate.

his account of David evidences yet another ironic turn in the brief stories of Joab's assassination of Amasa and the "wise woman" of Abel-beth-maacah. Joab murders Amasa in much the same fashion as he had assassinated Abner (2 Samuel 3), i.e., Ehud-style. This time, however, he murders not out of revenge for a lost brother, but for his own lost position (17:25; 19:13). At Gibeon Joab executes his plan against Amasa: "Then Joab said to Amasa, 'Peace [הַשְׁלֹום], my brother?' And his right hand took hold of Amasa's beard as if to kiss him, but Amasa was not aware of the sword which was in Joab's hand and he stabbed him under the fifth rib ..." (20:9-10). Joab's question ("peace ...?") not only looks back on the bloody wars between Absalom and David, and between David's house and Saul's house, but also on the "peace" that has eluded Israel from the time they cut a covenant of peace with the Gibeonites (Judg 9:15) in violation of Deuteronomy's prohibition (Deut 7:2; cf. 23:6). This question also looks forward to Solomon's "peace" that will involve Joab's own execution (1 Kgs 2:33-34) and a "peace" that Solomon will fail to preserve. "Peace" is likewise an open question that will be posed repeatedly by several characters in 2 Kings 9, a question that Dtr ultimately leaves open for his exilic audience.

After murdering Amasa, Joab pursues the rebel Sheba all the way to Abel-beth-maacah and besieges the city. A "wise woman" from the city knows what to do. She entreats Joab directly, apparently claiming "I am one **seeking the peace** [שָׁלֵמָה] of the faithful of Israel, or perhaps as LXX has it ἐγὼ εἰμι εἰρηνικὰ τῶν στηριγμάτων, i.e., "I am one of the

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Mephibaal is reduced to groveling over getting back half of what was once his: "Let him take it all, now that my lord the king has returned in peace to his own house" (19:31). Absalom ("Father is Peace") is dead and David has returned in "peace"; that is, his personal safety is assured. "His own house," however, is very far from being "peace." Mephibaal, however, seems to have escaped death again. He lives. And his house, however precarious its condition, survives. (Aside from a brief notice in 2 Sam 21:7, no further mention of Mephibaal is made.)



supporters of Israel who is ready for peace.”<sup>121</sup> The wise woman has in view the immediate “peace” of Abel-beth-maacah more than the long-term “peace” of Israel. She and Joab both believe that the death of the insurrectionist Sheba is necessary for “peace” between David’s Judah and Israel. The death of Sheba will mean “peace” in the short term for David and the elimination of a potential threat to his heir, who will shortly emerge as Solomon (שלמה).

This incident, then, looks back on the “peace” that David’s sins have eroded in his house and throughout Israel. It also looks forward to the illusory “peace” that will be reestablished under Solomon, a “peace” that his sins, like his father’s, will subsequently destroy.

#### 4.4 “The Blood of War in Peace”: Solomon’s “Peaceful” Accession to the Throne

Walter Vogels observes that forms of חכם are used to describe Solomon at least twenty times in 1 Kings 2–11.<sup>122</sup> In 1 Kings 1–2, Dtr uses the verb ידע repeatedly, while in 1 Kings 2 he connects “knowing” with both חכמה (“wisdom”) and שלום (“peace”). In particular, he describes how Solomon ruthlessly uses wisdom/knowledge (i.e., cunning) to eliminate potential rivals, which, he assumes, will ensure “peace forever from Yhwh” for himself and his dynastic heirs (1 Kgs 2:33).

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<sup>121</sup> HALOT, 1534.

<sup>122</sup> Walter Vogels, “Salomon et la sagesse : une image contrastée (1 R 2-11),” in *Le Roi Salomon: un héritage en question: Hommage à Jacques Vermeylen* (ed. Dany Nocquet and Claude Lichtert; Le Livre et le Rouleau 33; Brussels: Lessius, 2008) 229-46.

4.4.1 “The Blood of War in Peace” (1 Kgs 2:1-9): David’s Final Instructions to Solomon

The David of 1 Kings 1 is a dotard (to put it generously). Not only do Bathsheba and Nathan use an arguably fictitious oath and other apparent fabrications to coerce David into making Solomon, rather than Adonijah, his heir, the narrative even pokes fun at the once-virile king’s lost sexual prowess: “The king did not know her [לֹא יָדָעָהּ]” (1 Kgs 1:4).<sup>123</sup> The narrative transmutes David’s inability to “know”<sup>124</sup> Abishag into uncertainty about whether David “knows” the reality of affairs in his own house (1:11, 18).<sup>125</sup> The repetition of יָדָע here also reminds the reader of David’s earlier plausible deniability regarding Joab’s murderous activities (“But David did not know [לֹא יָדָע]” 2 Sam 3:26; cf. 3:25).<sup>126</sup> This new repetition of יָדָע and the allusion to Abner’s murder are important for reasons that will emerge (see below).

Suddenly the cunning David of the earlier narratives reemerges, albeit briefly, in 1 Kgs 2:1-9 where he provides some final instructions to Solomon under the pretext of helping the latter secure his throne. Perhaps no Dtr narrative—apart from David’s taking Bathsheba

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<sup>123</sup> Alter (*David Story*, 364) calls this a “sad image of infirm old age,” but also notes that “this vignette of geriatric impotence is a pointed reversal of the Bathsheba story that brought down God’s curse on the house of David, triggering all the subsequent troubles of dynastic succession.”

<sup>124</sup> Halpern (*David’s Secret Demons*, 398) suggests that “the text stresses that David did not have intercourse with Abishag to make [Adonijah’s subsequent] request more credible.”

<sup>125</sup> Jerome T. Walsh (*1 Kings* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996] 5) writes, “Since the good of the kingdom depends on the king’s health and energy, David’s frailty points up the pressing importance of determining the dynastic succession.”

<sup>126</sup> The verb יָדָע serves as a *Leitwort* in reprising the story of Abner’s murder at the hand of Joab, and David’s considerable efforts to exculpate himself from that crime.

and murdering Uriah (2 Samuel 11–12, and his defection to the Philistines (1 Sam 27:19)—undermines David’s piety with such economy as does this one where David inculcates Deuteronomic law and gives Solomon a mafia-style<sup>127</sup> hit-list in practically the same breath.<sup>128</sup>

David’s words in 1 Kgs 2:3–4 subtly neutralize the “unconditional” dynastic oath of 2 Samuel 7.<sup>129</sup> Solomon is to keep the Deuteronomic legislation not only so that he may “prosper” in every undertaking, but also so that “Yhwh may raise up [קִיָּם], i.e., perform] his word which he promised regarding me [David] saying ‘If your sons keep their way by walking before me in truth with their whole heart and their whole soul there shall not be cut off for you a man from upon the throne of Israel.’” In other words, David acknowledges that the “surety” of Solomon’s throne (and thus David’s house) depends on Solomon and his successors’ wholehearted observance of Deuteronomy.

But David has further recommendations for Solomon on how he is to secure his throne. Paradoxically, David’s moves from enjoining strict piety to instigating impious murder (the mafia analogy is not inappropriate here). David continues: “But now **you** yourself

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<sup>127</sup> Walter Brueggemann (*Great Prayers of the Old Testament* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008] 48) writes: “Solomon’s ascent to power is orchestrated by a series of killings that parallel the violent choreography of *The Godfather*.”

<sup>128</sup> Benjamin Edidin Scolnic (“David’s Final Testament: Morality or Expediency?” *Judaism* 43 [1994] 19–26) attempts to square this incongruity. He argues that, in ordering Solomon to eliminate old enemies, David “acts with a strong sense of morality and justice” from an ethos “now strange to us” (p. 26) in order to secure Solomon’s kingship. David may in fact, believe he is acting morally as well as expediently, but character point-of-view and narrator point-of-view may be entirely different. The fact that gangsters and godfathers sit in pews does not sanctify their lawless deeds.

<sup>129</sup> This feature led Cross (*Canaanite Myth*, 287) to conclude that 2:4 is an interpolation by his exilic Dtr<sub>2</sub>.

**know** [יָדַעַתָּה] that which Joab son of Zeruiah did to me [לִי]: what he did to two of the captains of the hosts of Israel—to Abner son of Ner and to Amasa son of Jether, namely he killed them and incurred [וַיַּשֶּׁם]<sup>130</sup> the blood of war **in peace** [בְּשָׁלוֹם] and gave innocent blood [αἶμα ἄθῶνον]<sup>131</sup> upon the waistcloth about my<sup>132</sup> loins, and upon the shoes which are on my feet. You, however, act in your wisdom and do not bring his gray hair **in peace** [בְּשָׁלוֹם] to Sheol” (2:5-6). Halpern writes: “Thus 1 Kgs. 2:5-6 very much pick up the thread of 2 Sam. 3 both explicitly and implicitly, contrasting killing in peace with killing in battle.”<sup>133</sup> The hypocrisy of David’s counsel, of course, is that this merely perpetuates the cycle of peacetime killing. Dtr means us to see the irony that Solomon’s (שְׁלֹמֹה) own kingship is founded on killing in peace (בְּשָׁלוֹם), not upon peace itself, or peace with Yhwh (as Solomon himself believes; see below). His descendant Manasseh will perfect the art of peacetime killing, “shed[ding] innocent blood abundantly until he had filled Jerusalem [יְרוּשָׁלַם] from gate to gate” (2 Kgs 21:16).

If David is not squeamish about bloodshed, he is squeamish about bloodguilt. Joab’s murders have benefitted him politically, and he apparently acknowledges the fact that innocent blood is on his *own* clothing (reading with LXX<sup>L</sup> and the Old Latin against MT; see

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<sup>130</sup> Following MT versus LXX<sup>L</sup>. Cf. Deut 22:8; see Mordecai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 10; New York: Doubleday, 2001) 173.

<sup>131</sup> Reading with LXX<sup>O</sup> and LXX<sup>L</sup> versus MT.

<sup>132</sup> Reading first person singular possessive suffixes on the nouns with LXX<sup>L</sup> and the Old Latin.

<sup>133</sup> Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons*, 98.

n.132). The statement that Joab put blood there (“gave” it) partly explains David’s rationale for having him killed: to get rid of Joab and get rid of the bloodguilt ascribed to David and his house. The other (rather clear) reason for David’s directive is that Joab belongs to the pro-Adonijah party and represents an immediate threat to Solomon’s throne and person. The wordplay on **שלום** and **שלמה** in David’s counsel emphasizes the idea that the future “peace” of Solomon and the Davidic “house” depends on the elimination of this real and present danger who had been more than willing to “shed the blood of war in peace” to promote a Davidic “peace,” i.e., the same kind of “peace” that David envisages for Israel under Solomon: a “peace” built upon the violent elimination of potential threats to Solomon and the Davidic house. But now Joab, given his association with Adonijah, finds himself in the way of David’s will, and so will die by the hand of a Davidic “tool”—fittingly the same role in which he had himself always been so serviceable.

Unfortunately for David, absolution from bloodguilt is not as simple as executing an executioner. David himself is a murderer. Joab may have “incurred the blood of war **in peace** [**בשלום**],” but David himself had incurred bloodguilt, specifically by his dissimulating demand to know “**the peace** [**לשלום**] of Joab, **the peace** [**ולשלום**] of the company [**עם**], and **the peace** [**ולשלום**] of the war [**המלחמה**]” (2 Sam 11:7) from Uriah the Hittite even as he is plotting the death of the latter, and “taking” the one who will be the mother of Solomon [**שלמה**] for himself. David has exhibited no concern for the “peace” of innocents, aside from his first son by Bathsheba. Shimei’s charge that David is a “bloody man,” i.e., a bloodguilty man was far truer than David is ready to admit. David’s own sins had overthrown the “peace”

in his household (cf. Yhwh had caused him to “rest” from all his enemies 2 Sam 7:1) and made impossible the “peace” that should have existed between him and Absalom (“My father is peace”).

This fact does not stop David from taking his hypocrisy even further, since Joab is only the first on David’s “hit-list.” He will also cleverly evade the oath that he swore to Shimei by having Solomon kill him: “And now do not absolve him, for you are a wise man [אִישׁ חָכָם] and **you will know** [וַיֵּדַעַת] what to do with him in order to bring down his gray hair with blood to Sheol [שְׁאוֹל]” (1 Kgs 2:9). The trick<sup>134</sup> will be for Solomon to murder him without technically incurring additional bloodguilt, Yhwh’s commandment “you shall not kill” notwithstanding (Deut 5:17), the commandment that is to be cleverly evaded like the oath itself. Solomon indeed “knows” what to do: he will utilize a new “Joab,” Benaiah ben **Jehoiada** (יְהוֹיָדָע). David’s use of יָדַע here calls his plausible deniability in the matter of Abner’s death (further) into question: What did, in fact, this David, the cunning David, “know”?

#### 4.4.2 “Do You Come with Peaceful Intentions?” Adonijah’s “Peace” (1 Kings 2:13)

Dtr continues the wordplay on “Solomon” and שָׁלוֹם in the pericope that follows David’s final counsel. Here שָׁלוֹם serves as a *Leitwort* as Dtr describes Solomon’s “peaceful” elimination of his enemies and threats to his power. In the aftermath of having lost the throne,

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<sup>134</sup> On Solomon’s trickery as a unifying narrative device in this cycle, see Robert D. Miller, “Solomon the Trickster,” *BibInt* 19 (2011) 496-504.

Adonijah approaches Bathsheba who is rightly suspicious. “Do you come with **peaceful intentions** [בשלום]?” she asks, to which Adonijah responds, “with **peaceful intentions** [בשלום].” Noting this wordplay, Walsh suggests that the שלום “at issue in this episode is reconciliation between brothers,” but “it remains to be seen whether the wordplay signals harmony between the two terms or opposition, as it did in the first chapter.”<sup>135</sup> The “peace” that prevails in the house of David at this point is more apparent than real.

When Adonijah gives his speech laying out the grounds for his “request,” he begins reciting recent history with the verb form “You know ... [ידעת],” this recalling the negative use of the term in 1 Kings 1 in reference to the dotard David (1:4, 11, 18) and subsequently by a resuscitated, godfather-like David (“You know ... what he did”/“You know what to do to him,” 2:5, 9), while also hinting at Solomon’s imminent dispatching Benaiah ben **Jehoiada** (יהוידע, see above) to eliminate these enemies. Unfortunately for Adonijah, Bathsheba does “know.”

Adonijah claims “peaceful intentions,” but given the history of the monarchic use of wives and concubines thus far,<sup>136</sup> the content of his “one request” might suggest otherwise: “Give me Abishag the Shunamite for a wife.” According to Walsh, Adonijah’s “roundabout approach to Bathsheba and his dithering diffidence in voicing his request suggest that he is aware of some danger in his course of action, but he may not realize its full extent.”<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 48.

<sup>136</sup> See 1 Sam 18: 27-28; 25:39-44; 2 Sam 3:6-10, 12-16; 6:20-23; 11; 16:21-22; 20:3.

<sup>137</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 51.

According to Adele Berlin, one can “feel a twinge of jealousy pass through [Bathsheba] as she silently notes the presence of a younger, fresher woman,” i.e., Abishag, replacing her in David’s bed and suggests that jealousy may have motivated Bathsheba to seize “the opportunity to have Abishag at the center of a troublesome case.”<sup>138</sup>

Nothing in Bathsheba’s initial reaction suggests that she detects ulterior motives on Adonijah’s part. However, when she approaches Solomon with Adonijah’s “one request” she subtly changes his words to “one little request” which sends Solomon flying into a rage (see chapter two), this perhaps suggesting that she had anticipated and even encouraged Solomon’s reaction. After swearing an oath against Adonijah’s life (2:22) and boasting about Yhwh’s “establishing” him, “enthroning” him upon David’s throne, and “making a house” (i.e., dynasty) for him, Solomon dispatches Benaiah ben Jehoiada (בְּנֵיָהוּ בֶן־יְהוֹיָדָע) for the first of several murders. Adonijah’s “peace” is to die a violent death (cf. “the sword will not depart from your house forever,” 2 Sam 12:10).

#### 4.4.3 “But David and his Posterity and his House and His Throne Shall Have Peace Forever” (1 Kgs 2:33): Joab’s “Peace” and Solomon’s Boast

With Adonijah out of the way, Solomon turns his attention to the other men on his father’s hit-list. His first business is to remove Abiathar, in spite of the latter’s loyalty to David (2:6), from his position as Yhwh’s priest in fulfillment of the earlier prophecy regarding Eli’s “house” (see 1 Sam 2:31-36; 1 Kgs 2:27). Solomon first claims that Abiathar is “a man of death [אִישׁ מוֹת]” (2:26, a sentence that Solomon’s father David had earlier

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<sup>138</sup> Berlin, “David’s Wives,” 74-75.



passed upon himself; see 2 Sam 12:5), but Solomon relents on carrying out this sentence literally. Thus the house of Eli, like Mephibaal and the house of Saul, is in dreadful peril—hanging by a thread as it were (cf. Rahab’s father’s house). The house of Eli, like the house of Saul, is now deposed, removed from office but not destroyed—for Dtr’s exilic audience this is a significant datum (see chapter six).

Solomon then dispatches Benaiah ben Jehoiada against Joab. The latter, knowing that his life is now in danger, flees like Adonijah to the presumed safety of the horns of the altar in the tabernacle (2:29). Solomon’s executioner, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, is reluctant to slaughter Joab in the sanctuary (2:29), but Solomon has no such compunctions and orders him to be killed there on the spot (2:31). The speech in which Solomon pronounces his moralizing death-sentence against Joab (2:31-33) expresses confidence that Joab’s death will expiate bloodguilt from the “house of David” (i.e., “...that you may take away the innocent blood from the house of my father”) as if the deaths of Uriah and those men who died with him could be so easily expunged. Solomon’s pronouncement that “blood” will be “upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his posterity forever” rather than his own is the pronouncement of one who sees dynastic promises as unconditional and unlikely to be revoked, and views himself as “Yhwh’s beloved.” Solomon then boasts, “but David and his seed and his house and his throne shall have peace [יְהוָה שְׁלוֹמָם] forever from Yhwh” (2:33). This assertion, which *should have been true*, will not even hold true for the remainder of Solomon’s life—let alone in the lives of his successors.

Benaiah ben Jehoiada (יְהוֹיָדָע) executes the sentence in 2:34. Solomon’s assertion that David “did not know” (2:32), i.e., had no prior knowledge of Joab’s murders, appears at

best ironic and at worst disingenuous, in view of the earlier uses of ידע in this chapter (2:5, 9, 15), especially in connection with David's counsel that Solomon be חכם and one who "knows" what to do to his enemies. But this does not end Solomon's executions or his moralizing speeches. As he cunningly essays to kill Shimei without bloodguilt, he informs Shimei that if he crosses the Wadi Kidron he "must know for certain [ידע תדע] that [he] shall die" (2:37). Shimei eventually does this, and Solomon is apprised by informants (2:41). Solomon then summons Shimei for the execution of sentence: "Did I not solemnly warn you, saying 'on the day you go out and travel abroad anywhere, you must know for certain [ידע תדע] you shall surely die?'" (2:42). Solomon is not finished: "**You** yourself **know** [ידעת] all the evil [הרעה] that your heart **knows** [ידע] which you have done to David my father, but Yhwh will return your evil [רעתך] upon your head" (1 Kgs 2:44). Then Solomon boasts again: "And King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before Yhwh forever [על־עולם]" (2:45). He then gives "Benaiah son of Jehoiada" the order and he cuts down Shimei on the spot. Solomon has acted "wisely." David is now free of his encumbering oath to Shimei (2 Sam 19:23) and the kingdom is now (apparently) "secured in Solomon's hand" (1 Kgs 2:46).

As Walsh observes, "Solomon (*šlōmōh*) claims that his ultimate purpose in executing Joab is to guarantee the *šālōm* of the Davidic throne."<sup>139</sup> Garsiel writes: "In this context, 'peace' points to the ultimate objective which Solomon has set himself through the overthrow

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<sup>139</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 59.

of his enemies: the securing of his rule in the future.”<sup>140</sup> However, this “peace” is precisely what Solomon will ultimately fail to secure for himself and for the Davidic “house.” The key point for Dtr is *why* he fails.

#### 4.5 “Peace” from Yhwh Forever? Solomon’s “Rule” of Israel at Its Zenith (1 Kings 3–5)

Dtr’s ironic sense of humor comes through in 1 Kgs 3:7 when he reports Solomon’s self-effacing declaration to Yhwh: “I am a little child. I do not know [לֹא אֲדָעָה] how go out or come in.” Even as he leaves David behind, Dtr does not let the reader forget the portraiture of a cunning Solomon, challenged by his father David to “show himself a man” and deal wisely (2:6, 9) as one who “knows” (2:9) what to do with his enemies, and by whom to do it (Benaiah ben Jehoiada [יְהוֹיָדָע]).

With his throne secure, Solomon turns to the “House”-building authorized by Yhwh in 2 Samuel 7. Unfortunately Solomon’s marriage alliance with Egypt by “taking” Pharaoh’s daughter (1 Kgs 3:1) provides an ominous hint at how Solomon intends to “house”-build (e.g., by foreign marriages; see 1 Kings 11). Since there is yet “no house built to Yhwh’s name” (3:2), Solomon makes full use of the infamous high places, especially the high place at Gibeon (3:3-4), with whose inhabitants Israel had long ago made an illicit “peace” (שָׁלוֹם, Josh 9:14-16). Solomon offers there “one thousand” burnt offerings, a number denoting “completion,” i.e., שָׁלוֹם. This number matches that of the illicit wives and concubines that Solomon will take (1 Kgs 11:3). Several such numbers will be used to describe Solomon, both

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<sup>140</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 205.

to acknowledge the incomparability of his achievements and to emphasize the magnitude of his later apostasy.

#### 4.5.1 Solomon's "Peace," "Rule," and "Proverbs" (1 Kgs 3:1–5:14)

1 Kgs 3:15 records that following the dream-theophany at Gibeon in which Yhwh offered Solomon incomparable "wisdom," Solomon offered "peace"-offerings in Jerusalem (3:15). Garsiel notes that "this verse lays stress on the status held by Jerusalem" and that the force of its wordplay on Solomon, Jerusalem, and "peace"-offering is to "restore to Jerusalem the importance which has briefly been impaired by the events at Gibeon."<sup>141</sup>

Garsiel also observes that "the extent of his [Solomon's] dominion is given prominence"<sup>142</sup> through an additional play on his name and the verb מָשַׁל: In 1 Kgs 5:1 (ET 4:21), Dtr states: "And Solomon [וְשֹׁלֹמֹה] was ruler [מֹשֵׁל] over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, and as far as the border of Egypt they were paying tribute and serving Solomon all his days." The use of מָשַׁל here is a metathetical paronomasia on Solomon's name. The use of מָשַׁל (versus מָלַךְ) also recalls Gideon's response to Israel's demand that he and his sons "rule" (מָשַׁל) over them as a dynasty, but also Abimelech's oppressive "rule" (Judges 9). This text further describes Solomon as having achieved the ideal extent of Israelite dominion as set out in Deut 11:22-24; 15:6. The question of what kind of

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<sup>141</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 205: "While it is true that Solomon has gone to Gibeon to sacrifice and has there been accorded a divine revelation, he afterwards returns to Jerusalem and offers *šlmym*."

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

“rule” this dynastic son will have, intimated already in Judges 8–9, has yet to be answered, however.

The security of Solomon’s kingdom is emphasized by further wordplay on his name in the material that follows. He not only has rest from his enemies (cf. 2 Sam 7:1), but also “peace [שלום] on all sides around him” (1 Kgs 5:4 [ET 4:24]). Dtr also depicts Solomon as establishing Israel’s cultural and literary high watermark at this time. The king’s particular accomplishments that Dtr cites are important for reasons that will only fully emerge later: “And he [Solomon] spoke three thousand **proverbs** [משלֵים] and his songs were a thousand and five” (1 Kgs 5:12). As Garsiel has observed, Solomon’s “wisdom and the scope of his cultural activity are also stressed through wordplay which focuses in particular on his creative personality.”<sup>143</sup> Ironically, the same term משלֵים (“proverb”) will later prove to be an important term as Dtr spells out Solomon’s negative legacy.

#### *4.5.2 Solomon’s and Hiram’s “Peace” (1 Kgs 5:26)*

As previously noted in chapter three ([3.6.3]), 1 Kgs 5:15 describes a longstanding “love” relationship between David and Hiram of Tyre, playing on the name of David as “beloved” (“Hiram had always been one who loved [אהב] David”), which also had implications for Solomon as “Yhwh’s Beloved” (Jedidiah). Throughout the latter half of 1 Kings 5, Dtr describes how the strength of this relationship was reinforced. 1 Kgs 5:26 restates the nature of the relationship, this time playing on Solomon’s name: “And there was

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

peace” [שלום] between Hiram and Solomon [שלמה].” In this wordplay, Dtr further emphasizes the “the peace which [Solomon] enjoys in in external affairs.”<sup>144</sup> The description of Solomon’s and Hiram’s mutual “peace” is important in Dtr’s overall characterization of the nature of Solomon’s “peace,” which had every appearance of incomparability and permanence, and yet was built outside the framework established by Deuteronomic law: Solomon builds his dynasty (“house”) on foreign marriages, foreign alliances, and worse.

It is not insignificant, then, that in midst of Solomon’s building of Yhwh’s “house” a reiteration of the dynastic promise of 2 Samuel 7 comes from Yhwh himself. This promise, already rearticulated by David in 1 Kings 2 as conditional, is again expressed in conditional terms: “Then the word of Yhwh came to Solomon, saying: ‘If you will walk in my decrees, and perform my [judgments], and keep all of my commandments by walking in them then I will raise up my word which I spoke to David your father; and I will reside with the children of Israel and will not abandon my people Israel” (1 Kgs 6:11-13). There are several messages for Israel-in-exile in this oracle:<sup>145</sup> Israel’s “peace” with Yhwh was perishable to the degree that the legislation of Deuteronomy was not observed. The “peace” between Solomon and Hiram that had facilitated the building of the “house” which had every appearance of permanence, was anything but a guarantee of Israel’s “peace.”

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>145</sup> According to Frank Moore Cross (*Canaanite Myth*, 287) this is another interpolation by his exilic Dtr<sub>2</sub>. However, much more of the following material is conceivably aimed at an exilic audience as well (see below).

#### 4.6 “Let Your Heart ... Be Completely with Yhwh Our God” (1 Kgs 8:61): Solomon as a Cautionary “Proverb”

The notices in 1 Kgs 6:7 that “rough-hewn stone” or “whole stone”<sup>146</sup> (אבן־של־מה) from the quarry was used to build the temple and that “no hammers or ax or any tools of iron were heard in the house while it was being built” recall the theme of altars properly built with “whole stones,” which earlier functioned as a symbol of Israel’s שְׁלֹם (“wholeness,” “unity”) and its שְׁלֹם with Yhwh (see Deut 27:5 and Josh 8:31). As Cogan notes, Dtr “emphasizes that only whole stone was used in the temple; with no preparation beyond what had been done at the time of removal.”<sup>147</sup> By following proper cultic protocol as stipulated by Yhwh with use of “whole stone,” Solomon and Israel evidence their “wholehearted” obedience and loyalty to Yhwh (cf. 1 Kgs 8:61) over against foreign gods, especially the gods of Canaan.

Thus, with his use of the expression אבן־של־מה, Dtr here creates another wordplay on the name “Solomon” (של־מה) that fully identifies Solomon with “wholehearted” loyalty and uncompromised cultic orthodoxy. So far so good for Solomon and Israel: with the completion of the temple, Israel now finds itself at its apex. How though will Solomon and Israel handle the unprecedented success that comes from Yhwh’s benevolent beneficence?

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<sup>146</sup> As Cogan (*I Kings*, 239) notes, “the present description is contradicted in Chronicles, where David prepares ‘hewn (i.e., dressed) stone’ for the Temple (1 Chr 22:2), apparently following 1 Kgs 5:32.”

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.6.1 *“The Whole Work which Solomon Made was Completed” (1 Kgs 7:51)*

Dtr’s account of the building of the temple concludes with a summary notice that stresses the appropriateness of Solomon’s name as the one “completing” the temple building: “**And all the work was completed** [וְהִשְׁלֵם] which King **Solomon** [שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ] had done for the house of Yhwh, and Solomon brought the holy things of David his father, the silver and the gold and the vessels he gave [נָתַן] into the treasuries of the house of Yhwh” (1 Kgs 7:51). Dtr gives Solomon due credit for his building achievement, but the greatness and “completeness” of Solomon’s achievements is precisely what will make Solomon’s personal lack of a “heart completely with” Yhwh so egregious in Dtr’s view. This is the tragic irony that the reader begins to grasp: for all the splendor and grandiosity of the building achievements that Solomon (שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ) manages to “complete” (cf. וְהִשְׁלֵם), he will not keep his heart “completely” (שֶׁלֵּם) with Yhwh (11:4).

#### 4.6.2 *“Let Your Heart Be Completely with Yhwh” (1 Kgs 8:61)*

In 1 Kings 8, Solomon finally brings the ark into the “house” that he has built for Yhwh. The chapter’s content, following its account of the enshrining of the ark (8:1-11), can be divided up into Solomon’s initial “speech” (8:12-13), an initial “blessing” upon Israel declaring the fulfillment of the dynastic grant with the accompanying permission for the dynastic son to build Yhwh’s house as cited in 2 Samuel 7 (1 Kgs 8:14-21), and a long dedicatory “prayer” to Yhwh in Deuteronomistic language which acknowledges the



conditionality of the dynastic promise<sup>148</sup> and expounds the function of the temple (8:22-54). There follows a second “blessing” (8:55-61) and a report on the concluding dedicatory rites with their “peace” offerings and a pan-Israelite feast (8:62-66).

Yair Hoffman sees a particular message to the Babylonian exiles in Solomon’s initial “speech” and subsequent “blessing” (8:12-53), of a people who are no longer able to go to the temple.<sup>149</sup> Additionally, the irony of a prayer dedicating the temple offered by one whose sins will eventuate in destruction of the temple and the exile is noteworthy, to say the least.

The content of the last line of Solomon’s second “blessing” is particularly significant and ironic: “... [so that] all the people of the earth may know that Yhwh is God and none else” (8:60). Thereafter, Solomon exhorts Israel as follows: “Therefore, let your heart **be completely** [שלם] with Yhwh our God by walking in his decrees and by keeping his commandments as at this time” (8:61). This admonition plays on Solomon’s name, suggesting that he, like his father, embodies “complete” or full obedience to Deuteronomic law and full-hearted loyalty to Yhwh (cf. Deut 6:5). But herein lies the great question: will Solomon take his own advice or will his sins go beyond those of his father? Solomon pays particular attention to the “heart” (לב/לבב), used eleven times in 8:17-61) in his speech, prayer, and

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<sup>148</sup> Again, for Cross (*Canaanite Myth*, 287) this is an indication of an insertion by his Dtr2. However, even Solomon’s asking that Yhwh keep his promise to David (2 Samuel 7) in 1 Kgs 8:25 implicitly acknowledges the possibility of Yhwh’s non-fulfillment of the promise; also implicit is covenant violation on the part of the recipient as the basis for a non-fulfillment of the promise.

<sup>149</sup> Yair Hoffmann, “Patterns of Religious Response to National Crisis in the Hebrew Bible and Some Methodological Reflections,” in *Religious Responses to Political Crises in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. Yair Hoffmann and Henning Graf Reventlow; LHB/OTS 444; New York: T & T Clark Continuum, 2008) 18-35.

blessings. In the ensuing chapters we find out just how susceptible to aberration Solomon's own heart is.

The temple dedication closes with Solomon's offering dedicatory sacrifices, including "peace" offerings (שלמים, 1 Kgs 8:63-64) and a feast for "all Israel." In 1 Kgs 3:15, the burnt offerings, "peace" offerings, and ensuing feast had the function of "re-legitimizing" Jerusalem after Solomon's cultic offerings and theophanic experience at Gibeon. Now, Jerusalem is the place where Yhwh has placed his "name" in every sense—it has finally achieved full cultic legitimacy and primacy. The "peace" offerings in 8:63-64 further stand as a symbol of the שלום that has thus far eluded Israel, this giving the appearance that "all is well" (שלום) amongst the tribes of Israel, between Israel and the monarchy, between Yhwh and Israel, and between Yhwh and the monarchy. And all of this is brought about by Yhwh (cf. Judges 6) through Solomon (שלמה), the apparent embodiment of "peace."

#### 4.6.3 Solomon "Completes" the House (1 Kgs 9:25)

As Solomon completes the building of Yhwh's house and his own house (palace), and his other building projects (9:1), Yhwh appears to him again (as in 1 Kings 3) and declares that he has "hallowed" the house which Solomon has built for him "to put [his] name there forever" (9:3) because his "eyes and ... heart shall be there perpetually" (9:3). Then Yhwh himself reiterates the conditional version of the dynastic promise in 9:4-9.<sup>150</sup> Solomon is

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<sup>150</sup> Cross (*Canaanite Myth*, 273) relegates 1 Kgs 9:4-9 to his Dtr<sub>2</sub>. It would be odd, however, to have Yhwh appear to Solomon to deliver such a short speech, if 9:3 were the sum total of the original oracle (cf. Yhwh's first appearance to Solomon in 1 Kings 3).

already famous for his “proverbs” (משל, 5:12, ET 4:32), but if he and Israel or their descendants apostatize from Yhwh, Israel shall be cut off from the land, Yhwh’s “house” (the temple) which he “has hallowed for [his] name [לשמי]” will be cast out of his sight, and “Israel shall become a proverb [למשל] ... among all people” (1 Kgs 9:7). The eventuality of the exile is thus tied to Solomon’s own performance and that of his successors in the north and the south.

It is significant that Dtr here in 1 Kings 9 also mentions the forced labor that Solomon had to levy to accomplish his building projects with its allusions to Egypt’s Pharaoh. 1 Kings 9:16 would powerfully evoke the cultural memory of slavery in Egypt for Dtr’s exilic audience.<sup>151</sup> Moreover, the mention of Solomon’s building “storage cities” (9:19) is a reminder of Pharaoh’s building projects in Exod 1:11, while the reference to “all the land of his rule [ממשלתו]” (9:19) is an allusion to מושל in 5:1 (ET 4:21).<sup>152</sup> Solomon’s (שלמה) “dominion” (ממשלה) is rapidly evolving into an oppressive Egypt, and Solomon is becoming the king that Deut 17:14-20 warns against. The list of nations whose remnants Solomon enslaves (1 Kgs 9:20) alludes back to Deut 7:1.<sup>153</sup> If the Israelites themselves (9:21) have not

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<sup>151</sup> While I am not a proponent of Karl van der Toorn’s (“The Exodus as Charter Myth,” in *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition* [ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Anton J.W. Houtepen; STR 3; Leiden: Brill, 2001] 113-127) appraisal of the exodus story as “charter myth”—at least as some would understand that term—in view of its parallels to 1 Kings 9–12, seeing Solomon as a either a reflection or a refraction of the pharaoh of the exodus is inescapable (some would see pharaoh as the reflection). In any case, Dtr does not occlude the parallels.

<sup>152</sup> See Walsh, *1 Kings*, 123.

<sup>153</sup> See Walsh, “1 Kings,” *NJBC*, 167.

yet felt the full bite of Solomon's "rule" (משל; cf. Solomon's corvée levies in 5:27; 9:15), the situation will change dramatically by the end of 1 Kings 11 and the beginning of 1 Kings 12. Israel has the dynastic "son" that it asked for (Judg 8:22) and the king that they "demanded" in 1 Samuel 8–12—first for the better but from now on for the worst.

The importance of the newly-built temple and the cycle of cultic festivals with the regular offering of "peace" offerings for the maintenance of "peace" with Yhwh is emphasized in 1 Kgs 9:25: "Three times per year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings [ושלמים] upon the altar that he built for Yhwh ... thus he completed [ושלם] the house." The "completion" of the house is marked here by the institution of a regular cult in compliance with Deut 16:16; 27:7. The wordplay between "Solomon," שלם and שלמים emphasizes Solomon and his activity as the embodiment (so far) of the "peace" that Yhwh had designed for Israel, but which had thus far largely eluded it. As Walsh observes, the verb used for "completing" (שלם, i.e., "finishing," "completing") the house here (9:25) and in 7:51a is different from the one used elsewhere in 1 Kings 1–11 (i.e., בלה, see 6:9, 14, 22, 38; 9:1; cf. 7:1), and "at two points in the narrative where 'finishing' is particularly noteworthy: the completion of all the Temple construction (7:51a) and the completion of the entire section of the Solomon story that is concerned with the construction of the Temple (9:25b). It is also a wordplay on the name Solomon."<sup>154</sup> Dtr's use of wordplay to create a transparent literary link between Solomon's name and the "completion" or "perfection" of the temple, and thus

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<sup>154</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 104 n. 2.

Israel's "peace" with Yhwh at its apex thus explains the switch from כָּל־הָ (kl-ha) to שָׁלֵם (shalēm) in 7:51 and 9:25.

Ironically, Solomon's efforts at "perfection" or "completion" succeed everywhere, apart from one notable exception. He has counseled Israel, "Let your heart be completely with Yhwh" (8:61), but will Solomon keep his own counsel? Dtr reports that "the whole earth sought an audience with Solomon" to hear his divine wisdom (1 Kgs 10:24) and that "they brought tribute," which included large quantities of silver, gold, and horses (10:25-29) in violation of Deut 17:16, 17b, this as a prelude to Solomon's own multiplication of wives (1 Kgs 11:1-10) contrary to Deut 17:17a. This catalogue of luxurious abundance also includes "cloaks" or "clothing" [וְשָׁלִמוֹת] as both a wordplay on the name of Solomon and a symbolic hint of the losses that Solomon is about to incur to his whole kingdom's disadvantage.

#### 4.6.4 Solomon's "Incomplete" Heart (1 Kgs 11:4)

In the previous chapter, I noted the change in Dtr's positive use of the verb אָהַב (ahav) to a negative one in his characterization and evaluation of Solomon (Jedidiah) that comes with the notice that Solomon "loved" many women in 1 Kgs 11:1. Solomon's doing this follows the narrative pattern of his father David's life—David who began his career as "beloved" of Yhwh, of Saul's family, and all of Israel, but then "despised" and "treated Yhwh with utter contempt" (2 Sam 12:9-10, 14). In 2 Samuel 13, Dtr begins to use אָהַב negatively to characterize David and his house. In spite of the fact that Solomon at first "loved" Yhwh (1 Kgs 3:3), the degree to which Solomon's wives "turned" his susceptible heart "away" is

further highlighted by the notice that “Solomon clung to [his wives’ gods] in love [לְאַהֲבָה]” (11:2). Thus אָהָב, at first used so positively of David and Solomon in Dtr—both “beloved” of Yhwh—is later used pejoratively of both. The above occasion also marks a pejorative turn in Dtr’s use of the word שָׁלֵם. The figures given in 1 Kgs 4:31 made a point of Solomon’s incomparable literary attainments: “three thousand proverbs” and “a thousand and five” songs. In the same way, the figures cited in 11:3 emphasize the depth of Solomon’s apostasy (the “turning away” of his heart) with mention of the number of wives and concubines he is said to have taken: “He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned away his heart” (1 Kgs 11:3). The numbers of wives (7 x 10 x 10) and concubines (3 x 10 x 10) and the combined figure of 1000 ([3 + 7] x [3 + 7] x [3 + 7]) are probably hyperbolic, but they do stress “completeness” (i.e., שְׁלֹמָה).

The wordplay on שְׁלֹמָה and שָׁלֵם in 11:4 further emphasizes the totality or “completeness” of Solomon’s apostasy: “his heart **was not completely** [שָׁלֵם ... וְלֹא־הָיָה] with Yhwh” (11:4), this in violation of the charge he himself had laid on Israel: “Let your heart be perfect with Yhwh our God, by walking in his decrees and keeping his commandments” (8:61). For Dtr, Solomon is the embodiment of completeness, both positively and negatively—but all the more the latter given the grandeur and incomparability of his positive achievements. Solomon’s foreign marriages and cultic apostasy resulted in a breaking of Yhwh’s “peace” that Solomon’s reign, achievements, and even his name were all supposed to imply, such that Yhwh will now “repay him to his face” (Deut 7:10).

4.6.5 “I Will Tear the Kingdom Away from You” (1 Kgs 11:11): Tearing of the “Peace”/ “Cloak”

Following Solomon’s apostasy, Dtr records that Yhwh speaks again to Solomon, though no messengers are named: “I will certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your slave” (1 Kgs 11:11). This announcement begins to come to fulfillment in 11:29 when the prophet Ahijah approaches Jeroboam, the newly-appointed administrative official with stewardship over “the work force of the house of Joseph,” as the latter is “going out **from Jerusalem** [מִירוּשָׁלַם].” Ahijah is said to have previously donned a new **שלמה** (a metathesis of the more usual **שמלה**).<sup>155</sup> Here, the thematic *Leitwort* **מעיל** of 1 Samuel 3, 15, 28 becomes a **שלמה** (**שמלה**), a paronomasia on the names **שלמה** (Solomon) and Jerusalem,<sup>156</sup> as part of an inversion of the scene between Samuel and Saul in 1 Samuel 15, wherein Ahijah “lay[s] hold on [וַיִּתְּפֶשׂ] the **שלמה**” and “tear[s] it into twelve pieces (11:30), thereafter pronouncing a version of the oracle given previously by Yhwh to Solomon himself: “Take ten pieces for yourself, because thus says Yhwh, God of Israel: ‘I am tearing [הֲנִי] **קרע** the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon [שלמה]” (11:31).

The **שלמה** (**שמלה**) is not just a symbol of the kingship (like the **מעיל** of the Samuel-Saul narratives), but also of Solomon (**שלמה**) and of the “peace” (**שלום**) that should have

<sup>155</sup> The metathesized form (**שלמה**) occurs also in Exod 22:8; cf. *HALOT*, 1332.

<sup>156</sup> Garsiel (*Biblical Names*, 206) writes: “The play upon *šlmh* (Solomon) and *šlmh* (garment) throws into prominence the link between the new garment which has been torn and the kingdom of Solomon, most of which is to be torn from his son. Thus the wordplay which in 10:24-25 stresses his greatness is here used to prophesy the future loss of dominion.”

belonged to the house of David (1 Kgs 2:33) and Israel forever. The **שלמה** (שְׁלֹמֹה), as a perishable, tearable item (Josh 9:5; 1 Sam 15:26-27), is the perfect metonym for human kingship, and for Solomon's and Israel's "peace."

Dtr's source notice that mentions Solomon's wisdom (1 Kgs 11:41), far from being an indication of Solomon's continuous, lifelong wisdom despite his apostasy,<sup>157</sup> is a sad reminder of what Solomon had failed to amount to, and the "wisdom" that his successors by-and-large would also fail to exhibit. Solomon began to see the disintegration of his empire in his own lifetime (11:14-27), with Yhwh already "repaying him to his face" (Deut 7:10).

#### **4.7 The Disintegration of Solomonic "Peace" and Yhwh's "Repayment" of Israel and Judah (1 Kings 12–2 Kings 25)**

Yhwh's "repayment" of Solomon continues after his death with the full "tearing" of the kingdom and punishment of his son (cf. 2 Sam 7:14).<sup>158</sup> Two "legitimate" heirs to Solomon's kingdom emerge in the latter part of 1 Kings 11 and the beginning of 1 Kings 12;<sup>159</sup> where Jeroboam is promised kingship over ten tribes, and Rehoboam will hang on to Judah and at least part of Benjamin as Solomon's dynastic heir.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Cf. Vogels, "Salomon et la sagesse," 229-46.

<sup>158</sup> Dtr ultimately holds Solomon, rather than the northern tribes, responsible for the breakup of the united kingdom. See Claudio Balzaretto, "Lo scisma dei due regni," *PdV* 46 (2001) 11-16.

<sup>159</sup> See Elena di Pede, "Roboam et Jeroboam, héritiers de Salomon (1 R 12)," in *Le Roi Salomon: Un héritage en question: Hommage à Jacques Vermeylen* (ed. Dany Nocquet and Claude Lichtert; Le Livre et le Rouleau 33; Brussels: Lessius, 2008) 282-99.

<sup>160</sup> See Yigal Levin, "Joseph, Judah and the 'Benjamin Conundrum,'" *ZAW* 116 (2004) 223-41.



#### 4.7.1 Abijam's "Incomplete" Heart and Asa's "Complete" Heart (1 Kgs 15:3, 14)

The post-Rehoboam age in Judah begins with the notice of Rehoboam's burial and succession by his son Abijam ("My Father is Yamm"). Rehoboam's mother, the text makes clear, was an "Ammonitess" (1 Kgs 14:31), this again recalling Solomon's foreign marriages and his heart that was "not completely with Yhwh" (11:4). 15:2 then states that Abijam (אַבִּיָּם) "reigned for three years in **Jerusalem** [בִּירוּשָׁלַם]" and that his mother was "Maachah the daughter of **Ab[i]shalom** [אַבְיִשָׁלֹם]" (15:2), presumably a granddaughter of David, thus making Abijam *doubly Davidic* as Solomon's son and as Absalom's grandson. This fact then makes Dtr's critique in 1 Kgs 15:3 of Abijam all the more devastating: "And he walked in all the sins of his **father** [אַבִּיָּו] and his heart was **not completely** [לֹא ... שָׁלֵם] with Yhwh his God like the heart of David his father [אַבִּיָּדָו]." The wordplay<sup>161</sup> on שָׁלֵם here evokes the names Jerusalem, Absalom and especially Solomon, as well as the lack of שָׁלֵם that existed between Israel and Judah because of the sins of Absalom and Solomon.

The term אַבִּיָּו can also be seen as a wordplay on the name אַבְיָם and the first element in the name אַבְיִשָׁלֹם. The first instance of אַבִּיָּו ("his father") in 15:3 can have multiple referents: Rehoboam, Solomon,<sup>162</sup> and Absalom, all of whom failed to have a heart that was

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<sup>161</sup> Walsh (*1 Kings*, 210) cites the use of שָׁלֵם in 1 Kgs 15:3 as another example of wordplay that has the name "Solomon" in view.

<sup>162</sup> Walsh (*Ibid.*) calls 1 Kings 15:3 a "camouflaged genealogy," with allusions to both Rehoboam and Solomon: "The genealogy not only evokes the continuity of the Davidic line but also retraces the degeneration of their fidelity." To his list I would add Absalom (see the mention of "Absalom" in 15:2, which brings his name directly into the ensuing wordplay).

“completely” (שלם) with Yhwh and all of whose sins harmed the שלום between Israel and Judah. 15:7 suggests that a legacy of Solomon’s deeds—deeds born out of a heart that was “not completely” (11:4) with Yhwh—was “war” (מלחמה), i.e., an absence of “peace” between the competing kingdoms. Abijam’s deeds only served to exacerbate these problems, problems generated by the sins of his “fathers.”

In contrast to Abijam, and most of his descendants, Asa is one of the few kings who earns high marks from Dtr. He reportedly cleans up the cult (15:12) and even removes his grandmother Machaah from her position as גבירה (“queen-mother”), cutting down the “lewd image” (מפלצת) which she made for an asherah and burning it in the Wadi Kidron (15:13). His only fault is not removing the high places; “nevertheless, Asa’s heart was **completely** [שלם] with Yhwh” (1 Kgs 15:14). Asa succeeds precisely where Solomon and Abijam fail.<sup>163</sup> Under Asa’s son Jehoshaphat the inimical relationship between Judah and Israel will change—there will be “peace” between the two “houses.” What kind of “peace” it will be and whether or how it will involve Yhwh constitutes Dtr’s topic in the ensuing narratives.

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<sup>163</sup> And yet, Asa cannot escape the legacy of Solomon’s deeds: there continues to be “war” (מלחמה), rather than שלום, between Israel and Judah (1 Kgs 15:16). When Baasha, king of Israel (who is later said to have exterminated Jeroboam’s “house,” 15:29), lays siege to Jerusalem, Asa feels compelled to take (וייקח) “all of the silver and gold that remained in the treasuries of Yhwh’s house” and hand them over to Ben-Hadad of Aram (15:18) as a bribe to get him to break his ברית with Baasha (15:19). This bribe does result in Baasha’s retreat and leaving behind building materials at Ramah for the construction of Geba in Benjamin and Mizpah (15:20-22), but the sanctity of the sacred things had been violated by Asa.

#### 4.7.2 Ahab and Jehoshaphat's "Peace" (1 Kings 22)

The narratives of 1 Kings 16–20 amply prepare the reader for the dramatic downfall of Ahab in 1 Kings 22. In 1 Kings 20, the focus of the prophetic opposition to Ahab and Jezebel shifts from Elijah to unnamed prophetic disciples (one of whom dupes Ahab into pronouncing a death sentence upon himself for his failure to execute מַרְדַּךְ on Ben-Hadad, 20:42) and then back to Elijah in 1 Kings 21. Having already depicted Ahab and Jezebel as unsurpassed in their idolatry and evil (see, e.g., 1 Kgs 16:33), Dtr here pauses to tell the story of their “final straw” sin: their suborning perjury from “sons of destruction” (בְּנֵי־בַלְיָעַל) to destroy Naboth and take his vineyard for themselves (1 Kgs 21:9–16). In response to this atrocity, Elijah announces commensurate punishment: Yhwh will “exterminate [Ahab’s] posterity,” including every male (the one who “pisses against the wall”) and will “make” (literally, “give” [וַיִּתֵּן]) Ahab’s “house” like the “houses” of Jeroboam and Baasha, i.e., his dynasty will be dethroned like theirs (21:21–22). Ahab and Jezebel will themselves be subject to postmortem consumption by dogs and fowl (21:23–24). The fasting and mourning that this pronouncement evokes from Ahab only leads to the slightest mitigation of his punishment from Yhwh (“In the days of his son I will bring the evil upon his house,” 21:29).

In 1 Kings 22, the focus shifts again and the narrative presents Micaiah<sup>164</sup> as the lone prophetic opponent of Ahab.<sup>165</sup> The term שָׁלוֹם here becomes a *Leitwort* in the narrative

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<sup>164</sup> The resemblance between Micaiah and Elijah in the surrounding narratives is hard to miss (cf. Saul and Nabal in 1 Samuel, especially chapters 24–26). Micaiah is almost a literary stand-in for Elijah. David G. Firth (“Backward Masking: Implicit Characterisation of Elijah in the Micaiah Narrative,” *OTE* 13 [2000] 174–185) argues that the former is presented as a literary anticipation of the latter.

describing Yhwh's punishment of Ahab (as it will in the account of the punishment of his house in 2 Kings 9). The prophets of Ahab's court are essentially royal "yes-men," whose oracles are expected to support the already-determined royal policy (1 Kgs 22:6, 13), Micaiah—the one remaining prophet of Yhwh in the court—being the lone exception: "I hate him [Micaiah], because he does not prophesy good regarding me, but evil," Ahab complains to Jehoshaphat (22:8). When Micaiah is first pressed to give a favorable oracle supportive of Ahab's pre-determined policy of attacking Ramoth-gilead, he lies initially: "Go, and succeed, because Yhwh will give it into the king's hand" (22:15). However, because of Micaiah's track-record,<sup>166</sup> Ahab does not accept this pronouncement: "How many times must I adjure you to tell me nothing but truth in the name of Yahweh?" (22:16).<sup>167</sup> To this Micaiah responds with a true oracle from Yhwh: "I saw all of Israel scattered upon the like sheep which have no shepherd, and Yhwh said 'These have no master, let each return to his house in **peace** [בשלום]" (22:17). Micaiah subsequently proceeds to report his vision of Yhwh on his throne

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<sup>165</sup> Ahab is not mentioned by name until 1 Kgs 22:20 when Micaiah describes his (Micaiah's) throne vision. On the narrative intent behind this non-mention, see Robert Hubbard, "'Old What's His Name': Why the King in 1 Kings 22 Has No Name," *God's Word for Our World. Volume I, Theological and Cultural Studies in Honor of Simon John De Vries* (ed. Isaac Kalimi, Rolf P. Knierim, et al.; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 294-314.

<sup>166</sup> See Nobert Clement Baumgart, "'Wem betört Ahab?' Täuschung und Selbsttäuschung in der Erzählung 1 Kön 22,1-38," in *Ein Herz so weit wie der Sand am Ufer des Meeres: Festschrift für Georg Hentschel* (ed. Christina Niessen, Annett Giercke, and Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher; Erfurter Theologische Studien 90; Würzburg: Echter, 2008) 73-95.

<sup>167</sup> Ahab understands the implications of Micaiah's negative prophecies; but nevertheless (like Saul) tries to evade the will of Yhwh. On Ahab's understanding of prophecy, see Eep Talstra, "The Truth and Nothing but the Truth: Piety, Prophecy, and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion in 1 Kings 22," in *The Land of Israel in Bible, History, and Theology: Studies in Honour of Ed Noort* (ed. J. Cornelis de Vos and Jacques van Ruiten; VTSup 124; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009) 355-71.

in the divine council, noting that Yhwh had determined to put a delegitimizing<sup>168</sup> “spirit of falsehood”<sup>169</sup> in the mouths of Ahab’s prophets to “entice” him to attack Ramoth-gilead and thus to his death (22:19-22).<sup>170</sup> Micaiah’s oracle earns him a punch in the face from Zedekiah, the spokesman of the 400 other prophets of Ahab’s “earthly council” (vis-à-vis Micaiah as the spokesman for Yhwh’s heavenly council, 22:24).<sup>171</sup>

Had Ahab heeded Micaiah’s true oracle and repented, presumably he would have lived. As it was, Ahab still believed he could bend or force the will of Yhwh (and the divine council) through the unanimity of his council of prophetic counselors, hence Ahab’s messenger’s (almost begging) attempts to get Micaiah to toe the party line (see 1 Kgs 22:13). A major point of this pericope—and of Dtr as a whole—is that neither Israel or its king can have “peace” on its (or his) own terms (cf. Deut 29:19), any more than the divine will can be dictated or legislated from below.

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<sup>168</sup> The function of the “spirit of falsehood” is analogous to the function of the “evil spirit” that comes upon Saul as a sign of his rejection and ultimately facilitates the playing-out of events according to Yhwh’s will (see chapter two). Wolfgang Oswald (“Ahab als Krösus : Anmerkungen zu 1 Kön 22,” *ZTK* 105 [2008] 1-14) compares Ahab’s attempts to evade the divine will to Croesus’s response to the oracles of Apollo at Delphi and Amphiaraus (see Herodotus 1.53).

<sup>169</sup> For an in-depth treatment of the שֵׁקֶר רִיחַ, see Esther J. Hamori, “The Spirit of Falsehood,” *CBQ* 72 (2010) 15-30.

<sup>170</sup> The theological conundrum of Yhwh as a God of truth who deceives is more apparent than real. See P.J. Williams, “Lying Spirits Sent by God?: The Case of Micaiah’s Prophecy,” in *The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (ed. Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) 58-66. Cf. also John J. Pilch, “A Window on the Biblical World: God and Lying Spirits,” *BT* 40 (2002) 112-16.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Hedwige Rouillard, “Royauté céleste et royauté terrestre en 1 R 22,” in *Le Trône de Dieu* (ed. Marc Philonenko; WUNT 2:69; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993) 100-107. Rouillard sees an intertextual relationship between 1 Kgs 22:19-23 and Isaiah’s throne-vision in Isaiah 6.

Ahab orders that Micaiah be fed minimum prison rations—the bread and water of affliction, i.e., a diet barely sufficient to sustain life—until he (Ahab) “returns again in peace” (1 Kgs 22:27). Rather than retracting his words, Micaiah boldly places his credibility and career as a prophet on the line: “If you return at all **in peace** [בְּשָׁלוֹם], Yhwh has not spoken through me” (22:28). Ahab’s desire to have “peace” (i.e., “safety, and “peace” with Yhwh) on his own terms will prove impossible as he suffers the death that Micaiah foretold (22:38). Fittingly, Ahab’s determination to go to war at all costs destroys any “peace” he might have otherwise had.<sup>172</sup>

The afterword of the above pericope includes the summary notice that “Jehoshaphat **was at peace** [וַיֵּשֶׁלֶם] with the king of Israel” (22:44). As Walsh notes, this is a “situation already reflected in the coalition between Ahab and Jehoshaphat described in 22:1-4”<sup>173</sup> and the subsequent narrative. Walsh further observes that the verb וַיֵּשֶׁלֶם “plays on the name of Solomon” (שְׁלֹמֹה),<sup>174</sup> this recalling the one whose failure to have a “heart completely” (לִבּוֹ שָׁלֵם) with Yhwh fractured Israel’s communal “peace” and its “peace” with Yhwh.

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<sup>172</sup> On the inadequacy of war as an instrument for bringing about greater peace in this pericope (1 Kings 22) and elsewhere (e.g., 1 Kings 12), see Otto Bächli, “Verhinderung von Kriegen: Ein Beitrag zur Prophetie im Alten Testament,” *TZ* 52 (1996) 289-98. Eben Scheffler (“War and Violence in the Old Testament: Various Views,” in *Animosity, the Bible, and Us: Some European, North American, and South African Perspectives* [ed. Harry F. Van Rooy, Fika J. van Rensburg, John T. Fitzgerald; SBL Global Perspectives on Scholarship; Atlanta: SBL, 2009] 1-17) sees 1 Kings 22 as a text with a negative view of war (cf. Lev 19:17-18; Isa 30:15-17; 2 Chr 28:12-15).

<sup>173</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 366.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

In addition to the above allusions to Solomon and Israel's fractured "peace," the notice that Jehoshaphat "was **at peace** [וְשָׁלֵם] with" Ahab (22:44) also sets the stage for Ahaziah and Jehoram's alliance, in which "peace" becomes the key term in the narrative's description of Yhwh's annihilation of the house of Ahab. "Peace" in the subsequent narrative, rather than involving a restoration of the "peace" and splendor of Solomon's rule, becomes an instrument through which Yhwh continues to punish both houses of Israel and Judah and their monarchs.

#### 4.7.3 "Peace?" Jehu, Jezebel, Jehoram, and Ahaziah's "Peace" (2 Kgs 9:11, 17-31)

Walter Eisenbeis first noted the root שָׁלַם serves as a *Leitwort*<sup>175</sup> in the story of Jehu's anointing and slaughter of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Jezebel. Saul Olyan has further observed how שָׁלַם as a *Leitwort* in 2 Kings 9 serves to unify the pericope, particularly with the recurrent question הֲשָׁלֵם, "peace?"<sup>176</sup> In 2 Kgs 9:7-10,<sup>177</sup> Yhwh orders Jehu to wipe out the house of Ahab. The extermination of Ahab's "house" is spoken of in language similar to David's threat to exterminate Nabal and his house: "the whole house of Ahab will perish, and I will cut off from Ahab him who pisses against the wall" (9:8; cf. 1 Sam 25:22, 34). The "house of Ahab" will end up "like the house of Jeroboam and the house of Baasha" (2 Kgs

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<sup>175</sup> Walter Eisenbeis, *Die Wurzel ŠLM im Alten Testament* (BZAW 113; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969) 108-11.

<sup>176</sup> Olyan, "Hăšālôm," 652-68.

<sup>177</sup> C.T. Begg ("2 Kings," NJBC, 178) writes: "These words go beyond Elisha's instructions about what Jehu is to be told (cf. 9:3). In addition they are reminiscent of the prophetic speeches in 1 Kgs 16:2-4 and 21:21-24 and as such are generally seen as a deuteronomistic insertion making clear that Jehu's bloody elimination of the reigning house was divinely mandated (contrast Hos 1:4)."

9:9) and, just like Nabal and his “house,” eliminated. Ahab’s “peace” will be Nabal’s “peace” (cf. 1 Sam 25:6, 35).

Elisha’s “disciple,” having anointed Jehu and delivered his message, flees the scene as instructed (2 Kgs 9:10; cf. 10:3). Afterward, Ahab’s servants come to Jehu and ask “Is there Peace? [Or, “is all well?”, **השלום**] Why did this madman [**המשגע**] come to you?” (2 Kgs 9:11); Jehu responds, “You know the man and his speech [**שׂיחו**].” But Ahab’s servants insist: “False. Please tell us!” Jehu then recounts what the prophet said to him and adds: “Thus said Yhwh ‘I have (hereby) anointed you king over Israel’ (9:12). Ahab’s servants immediately switch their loyalty to Jehu, who then conspires to kill Ahab’s heir, Jehoram, and take the throne.

Jehu moves against Jehoram at Jezreel where the former is recovering from wounds sustained in battle against Hazael and the Arameans at Ramoth-Gilead. When a watchman sees an army approaching the city, Jehoram responds by sending a horseman to ask “Peace?” [**השלום**], “Is all well?” (2 Kgs 9:17). When the horseman queries, “Thus asks the king: ‘peace?’ [**השלום**],” Jehu replies “what business do you have with peace? [**מה־לך ולשלום**] Get behind me” (i.e., fall in line with me; 9:18). When this messenger does not return, Jehoram sends a second horseman who similarly asks, “thus says the king: ‘Peace?’” [**שלום**] and is likewise told, “What business do you have with peace? [**מה־לך ולשלום**] Get behind me.” The narrative plays on **המלך** (“the king”) and **מה־לך** (“What business is it of yours?”) to emphasize Jehu’s undermining of the fragile loyalty of Jehoram’s subjects. The repetition



of שלום here, particularly in the question השלום, creates a growing sense that all will not be well for Jehoram: his “peace” will be the same as that of his father Ahab, i.e., a violent death.

When the second horseman does not return, the watchman can only report that the “driving” of the approaching army is “like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi when he drives in his madness [בשגעון]” (2 Kgs 9:20). The word שגעון (“madness,” “fury”) here plays on מגשע (“madman”) in 9:11,<sup>178</sup> this suggesting that the earlier word of the prophetic “madman” (מגשע) to Jehu is hastening “madly” (בשגעון) to fulfillment. By the time Jehoram becomes aware of his own predicament, it is much too late. Jehoram and Ahaziah, king of Judah, together ride out to Jehu’s approaching troops to ascertain the situation for themselves. Ironically, they meet Jehu “near the field of Naboth the Jezreelite” (2 Kgs 9:21) where they encounter their common fate: “When Jehoram saw Jehu he said, ‘Is there peace [השלום], Jehu?’ But Jehu responded, ‘How can [מה] there be peace [השלום], while the whoredoms of your mother Jezebel and her many witchcrafts persist?’” (9:22). Jehu here expresses Dtr’s evaluation of Ahab and Jezebel as gross idolators whose sins Yhwh is still punishing—there will be no “peace” for their descendants. At the same time, however, Dtr is

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<sup>178</sup> Robert L. Cohn (2 *Kings* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000] 68) writes: “Interestingly, the same Hebrew word meaning ‘crazy’ that Jehu’s comrades associated with the prophet’s disciple who anointed him is associated with Jehu himself.” Olyan (“Hāšālôm,” 663) further observes: “We should take a moment to examine the officers’ description of the young prophet as *meššugā*. The root *sg*, in all its forms, is rare in the Hebrew Bible, with only ten occurrences in all. What comes to mind immediately is the use of the same root to describe Jehu in v. 20! It seems fairly apparent that the writer of this passage is using the root *sg* to associate Jehu and the Elijah-Elisha school in a subtle and artful manner. Though representatives of that school do not appear again in the story, the reader is reminded of their presence in v. 20 when Jehu’s riding is described as *bēšiggā’ôn*.”

also intimating a similar question here for exilic Israel: “How can peace exist while your hearts remain not completely with Yhwh?”

Jehoram flees at Jehu’s response, screaming “Treason, Ahaziah!” in warning to the latter (9:23),<sup>179</sup> but to no avail: Jehu draws his bow and shoots Jehoram “between the shoulders,” killing him in his chariot (9:24). In what follows, Dtr makes clear that Jehu’s killing of Jehoram is an extension of Yhwh’s punishment of Ahab and Jezebel:

(25) Then he [Jehu] said to Bidkar his third man, “pick him up and toss him onto the lot of the Naboth the Jezreelite’s field, because I remember that when you and I were riding together after Ahab his father (26) ‘[Such-and-such] if I did not see the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons yesterday evening—oracle of Yhwh—and **I will repay you** [ושלמתי לך] on this very lot—oracle of Yhwh.’ And now, take and toss him onto the lot according to Yhwh’s word” (2 Kgs 9:25-26).

The purpose of Elijah’s oracle (1 Kgs 21:19)—given here in an alternative version<sup>180</sup>—against Ahab is articulated in the phrase “I will repay you on this very lot” (2 Kgs 9:26).

Olyan suggests that this phrase “is the key to the interpretation of the *šlm* motif which runs through the whole chapter”<sup>181</sup> and that this motif “finds its fulfillment and ultimate interpretation” here.<sup>182</sup> Through Jehu, Yhwh restores “peace” or “order” to Israel with the

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<sup>179</sup> As Begg (“2 Kings,” 178) observes, “Now, at last, J[eh]oram is fully enlightened concerning the identity of the one first glimpsed by the watchman (cf. 9:17).”

<sup>180</sup> Begg (Ibid.) writes: “Jehu cites an alternative version of the word attributed to Elijah in 1 Kgs 21:19, where there is no mention of Naboth’s sons as here. Once again, Jehu’s ‘treason’ is presented as fulfilling a divinely announced doom.”

<sup>181</sup> Olyan, “Hāšālôm,” 659.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

deaths of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and particularly Jezebel,<sup>183</sup> a שלום which had been lost through the sins of her and her husband.

Finally, Yhwh's "payback" comes to Jezebel herself. As Jehu rides to Jezreel to kill Jezebel, Dtr describes her, in Cohn's words "primping in her boudoir,"<sup>184</sup> (see 1 Kgs 9:31). She, knowing what Jehu has already done, in words dripping with irony and sarcasm, addresses him as "Zimri" from a window as he rides through the gate: "Peace, Zimri, murderer of his lord?" (9:31). Her use of this name is a Janus pun: Zimri can be taken to mean "my hero,"<sup>185</sup> but Jezebel, of course, is alluding to Zimri's assassination of Elah, his purge of the house of Baasha, and his usurpation of the throne as detailed in 1 Kgs 16:8-13.<sup>186</sup>

At least two other scenes are recalled here as well. First, when Jezebel, whom Jehu previously characterized as a whore ("How can there be peace while the whoredoms of your mother Jezebel ... persist?" 9:32), calls sarcastically to Jehu from the window, she presents a refraction of the (unwillingly) celibate and desolate Michal who watches David entering Jerusalem from her window (an occasion marked by David's offering of "peace" offerings,

<sup>183</sup> Olyan (Ibid., 662) writes: "The key to understanding the story in 2 Kings 9 is the recognition that underlying it exists an intellectual framework which views community/personal relations in terms of 'completeness'/'order' (= things being right, in step) and 'incompleteness'/'disorder' (= things being out of step and therefore in need of correction, the restoration of *Sälom*). As the story unfolds, the reader is informed gradually that community relations in Israel are very much out of step, (a) because of Ahab's murder of Naboth (v. 26), and (b) because of Jezebel's continuing influence at court (v. 22). The situation is one where the state of *Sälom* is lacking."

<sup>184</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 69.

<sup>185</sup> See Burke O. Long, *2 Kings* (FOTL 10; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 129; Cohn, *2 Kings*, 70. See III זמר\* in *HALOT*, 274.

<sup>186</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 70.

שלמון) and subsequently mocks him for his indecent self-exposure (2 Sam 6:16-23). Both women are witnessing divinely-legitimated usurpers (David and Jehu) destroy their families. David will purge most of what is left of Saul's family (2 Samuel 21), while Jehu will go on to purge the remainder of the house of Ahab (2 Kings 10). Secondly, this scene recalls Solomon's "peaceful" purge of perceived threats to his throne (1 Kings 2).

For David and Solomon as well as Jehu, the royal purge that was supposed to "wisely" promote the lasting "peace" and security of the dynastic "house," does nothing of the sort. Athaliah (Ahab and Jezebel's daughter) nearly wipes out the house of David (2 Kings 11) and Shallum (שלום, "replacement" or less likely "replaced";<sup>187</sup> "recompense") the son of Jabesh, dethrones and replaces Jehu's great-great-grandson Zachariah (15:10) "in the fourth generation" (cf. 2 Kgs 10:30), before Assyria and Babylon respectively make a permanent end of both thrones. For all his disdain for Jezebel, Dtr himself hints at a note of truth in her question השלום ("peace ...?"). The answer for the royal houses of Israel and the royal house of Judah is "no!" And the fault, in no small part, is Solomon's (שלמה).

#### 4.7.4 "Peace and Security in My Lifetime": Hezekiah's "Complete" Heart and Incomplete "Peace" (2 Kgs 20:3, 19)

Hezekiah is one of the few kings that Dtr can single out for his almost-uniformly good conduct and, arguably, Dtr holds no king other than Josiah in higher esteem (see 2 Kgs 18:5-7). And yet at it is at the feet of the exemplary Hezekiah that Dtr will lay part of the blame for

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<sup>187</sup> Cf. *HALOT*, 1510-11.

the disaster of the exile. Dtr reports that Hezekiah gave Sennacherib “all the silver which could be found in the house of Yhwh and in the treasuries of the king’s house” (2 Kgs 18:15) as well as the gold “cut” from the temple doors and pillars which Hezekiah had previously overlaid (18:16) when the Assyrian king threatened Jerusalem with a full-scale military assault. Still, Hezekiah in his prayer to Yhwh when he is sick and dying, claims for himself a “complete heart” (“I have walked before you in truth **and with a complete heart** [שלם וכל לבב, i.e., full-heartedly],” 2 Kgs 20:3). “Walk[ing] before Yhwh in truth with all of their heart and with all their soul” (1 Kgs 2:4) was what David had stipulated for Solomon and his descendants as Yhwh’s condition for the maintenance of the eternal dynasty and “sure” house (“there shall not be cut off to you a man from the throne of Israel,” 1 Kgs 2:4).

Hezekiah’s prayer meets with Yhwh’s approbation: “Thus says Yhwh, God of David your ancestor, ‘I have heard your prayer and have seen your tears—I am going to heal you’” (2 Kgs 20:5). In contrast to Jeroboam, Ahaziah, and Ben-Hadad when they are sick and dying,<sup>188</sup> Yhwh promises to give Hezekiah an additional fifteen years of life and to defend Jerusalem from the Assyrians “for my own sake and the sake of my servant David” (20:6). But there then follows Dtr’s further neutralization of Hezekiah’s merits. The Babylonians hear of Hezekiah’s illness and send “letters” and a “gift” to him (20:12). Hezekiah, of course, is flattered and responds by “showing” the Babylonians all of the riches of his “house” (20:13-15)—a critical blunder. The punishment pronounced on Hezekiah by Isaiah for the complete

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<sup>188</sup> See Robert L. Cohn, “Convention and Creativity in the Book of Kings: The Case of the Dying Monarch,” *CBQ* 47 (1985) 603-16.

and total exposure of his house (palace) is commensurate: ““The days are coming when everything which is in your **house** and everything which your ancestors **have treasured up** until this day shall be carried off to Babylon and nothing shall be left over [לֹא־יִתֵּר],’ says Yhwh, ‘And some of your own sons which shall issue forth from you—which you sire—shall be taken and become officers in the palace of the king of Babylon” (2 Kgs 20:17-18). Jeremy Schipper rightly observes that text here directly assigns at least some of the culpability for the exile to Hezekiah himself.<sup>189</sup>

Hezekiah’s “sons” (dynastic descendants) will be “officers” or “eunuchs in the in the palace of the king of Babylon” (2 Kgs 20:18) rather than sitting perpetually on the throne of Judah-Israel (like the dynastic “son” of 2 Samuel 7). These “sons” will include Jehoiachin, Shealtiel, and Zerubbabel. Isaiah’s use of the verb יָרָה fits nicely into Dtr’s ongoing theme of dethroned, imperiled houses, like the house of Eli (cf. Abiathar), that are on the brink of destruction, but nevertheless survive. With Hezekiah, the house of David is in the process of becoming like the house of Eli.

Hezekiah’s response to Isaiah, in fact, is much like Eli’s response to Samuel’s announcement of Yhwh’s punishment on his house (“It is Yhwh: let him do what is good in his sight,” 1 Sam 3:18), with Hezekiah replying as follows: “The word of Yhwh which you have spoken is good ... Surely there will be peace [שְׁלֹוֹם] and surety [וַאֲמֵנָה] in my days [or “peace and security in my lifetime”]” (2 Kgs 20:19). Eli’s acquiescence to announced doom aside, the normal pattern in Dtr (including Hezekiah’s own early life) is for persons to try to

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<sup>189</sup> Schipper, “Hezekiah, Manasseh, and Dynastic or Transgenerational Punishment,” 81-105.

escape punishment through an appeal or intercession, as Begg observes.<sup>190</sup> However, in “striking contrast to [Dtr’s] presentation of the whole preceding period, the Dtr’s account of Judah’s last century of existence in 2 Kings 21–25 nowhere cites an appeal or intercession being addressed to Yahweh during these last hundred years.”<sup>191</sup> As the house of David becomes like the house of Eli, David’s descendants (“sons”) and Judah will resemble Eli’s “destructive sons” more and more, and Judah will become like the ark in 1 Samuel 4, destined for exile (see chapter five).

Cogan and Tadmor suggest that “the resignation to divine will is here [to be] interpreted as based, not upon humility, but upon Hezekiah’s self-concern: ‘At least I will be spared the stern consequences of my act.’”<sup>192</sup> In Hezekiah’s response, there seems to be a distinct change from the Hezekiah that Dtr initially presents, with the king now reflecting something of Neville Chamberlain’s infamous “peace in our time”<sup>193</sup> approach to leadership.

Unfortunately, early piety followed by diminished faithfulness later on was typical of Israelite kingship from the beginning (Saul, David, Solomon). Hezekiah’s statement reflects both a modification and continuation of the Davidic doctrine of the “sure” house, reflected in Solomon’s boast: “...but David and his posterity and house and his throne shall have **peace**

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<sup>190</sup> C.T. Begg, “2 Kings 20:12-19 as an Element of the Deuteronomistic History,” *CBQ* 48 (1986) 36.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>192</sup> Mordecai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings* (AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988) 260.

<sup>193</sup> Cohn (2 *Kings*, 144) writes: “The Hezekiah that emerges from this strange little encounter is not the openly pious, sincerely repentant follower of YHWH that we have seen heretofore ... When the Assyrian invaders prophesied doom for Jerusalem, Hezekiah was down on his knees praying to YHWH for deliverance. But now he does not pray at all; he only affirms Isaiah’s words, saying ‘the word of the LORD that you have spoken is good.’ And the narrator reveals his interior voice, calculating that the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem must mean ‘peace in our time.’ For this Hezekiah that is enough.”

[שָׁלוֹם] forever from Yhwh” (1 Kgs 2:33). If he can presume his own “house” to be “sure,” Hezekiah—like Solomon, David, and other predecessors—need not worry about the consequences of his actions on future generations: after all, there will be “peace and security in my lifetime.” This statement is especially damning when we consider that Hezekiah’s own son Manasseh will commit the very sins that Yhwh regards as so severe that he refuses to revoke the decreed annihilation of Judah under any circumstances. Dtr incorporates the above events here, especially Isaiah’s prophecy (20:17-18),<sup>194</sup> in anticipation of Jehoiachin’s destiny in the Babylonian court (25:27-30).<sup>195</sup> The house of David is being punished.<sup>196</sup> Exilic Israel—particularly any surviving Davidides in Babylon—would have found Hezekiah’s final words bitterly ironic.

#### 4.7.5 “Gathered to Your Grave in Peace”: Josiah’s “Peace” (2 Kgs 22:20)

After Manasseh’s reign, “the sword” strikes the house of David again in fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy (“The sword will never depart from **your house**,” 2 Sam 12:10). Dtr reports that Amon “did evil in Yhwh’s eyes as his father Manasseh did” (2 Kgs 21:20), “served the idols his father served and worshiped them” (21:21) and “abandoned Yhwh” (21:22). If it is possible to exceed Solomon’s apostasy, Manasseh did so by actually “set[ting] up [אֲשֵׁרָה] the carved image of the asherah in the house, concerning which Yhwh had said to

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<sup>194</sup> As Begg (“2 Kings 20:12-19,” 29) has noted, “it is not necessary to regard [Isaiah’s prophecy] as a *vaticinium ex eventu*.” In fact, it carries more literary weight as an older prophecy that was incorporated *because* it fit Dtr’s programme of illustrating the monarchic contributions to the exile.

<sup>195</sup> See Meik Gerhards, “Die beiden Erzählungen aus 2.Kön.20 und 2.Kön.20,18 als Ankündigung der Begnadigung Jojachins (2 Kön. 25,27-30),” *BN* 98 (1999) 5-12.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*



David and to Solomon [לשלמה] his son, ‘In this house, and in Jerusalem ... will I put my name [אשים את־שמי] forever [לעולם]’ (2 Kgs 21:7).

Manasseh also manages to outdo Solomon in peacetime killing: “Manasseh shed innocent blood abundantly until he had filled Jerusalem [ירושלם] from gate to gate” (2 Kgs 21:16). There is no indication in Dtr, however, that Manasseh suffered at all for his conduct. Judah will be fully wiped out in the fourth generation, but Yhwh will begin to punish the second generation, and even the Josiah will not escape punishment (פקד) in the third.

As an apparent consequence of the evil conduct of Manasseh and Amon, his son and successor, “Amon’s servants ... killed the king **in his own house**” (21:23). This leads to Amon’s young son Josiah being placed on the throne. When, in the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign, Hilkiah finds “the book of the law” in the house of Yhwh (22:3-11), Josiah sends a delegation of five prominent persons (Hilkiah, Ahikam ben Shaphan, Achbor ben Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah, one of the king’s servants) to “go enquire of Yhwh [לכון]” on his behalf (22:12-14). Josiah does not specify through whom this inquiry is to be made. Hilkiah (or another member of the delegation) seems to have selected Huldah, a prophetess. What follows is a scene that evokes Saul’s visit to the medium of Endor.

Saul’s disguising himself and his visiting the medium with two of his men (1 Sam 28:8) is a scene not unlike the wife of Jeroboam’s visit to Ahijah (1 Kgs 14:2) and Joab’s use

of the “wise woman” of Tekoa (2 Sam 14:2).<sup>197</sup> Perhaps most importantly, however, the figure of the medium in 1 Samuel 28 is also later refracted in Huldah (2 Kgs 22:12-20). While Saul himself goes to the medium in disguise, Hilkiah and the rest of the delegation effectively serve as Josiah’s “disguise.” As Adele Reinhartz observes, the medium of En-Dor, the “wise women,” of Tekoa and the “wise woman” of Abel-beth-maacah “share similarities that ... justify considering them as a group.”<sup>198</sup> In Huldah we meet the final appearance of—or, more accurately, a grim refraction of—the figure of the “wise” woman in Dtr. Dtr calls her a נְבִיאָה, a title that he has heretofore only accorded Deborah (Judg 4:4). Unlike the life-saving machinations of Abigail, Bathsheba, and the wise woman of Abel-beth-macaah, nothing that Huldah says or does will provide any lasting aid or comfort to the house of David and Solomon. Huldah the wife of Shallum [שָׁלּוּם] is, rather, a “prophetess of doom.”<sup>199</sup>

Much attention rightly has been given to Yhwh’s words to Josiah through Huldah, especially the promise of a “peaceful” death: “I am gathering you to your ancestors and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace [בְּשָׁלוֹם] so that your eyes do see all the evil which I am bringing upon this place” (2 Kgs 22:20). On one level, Huldah’s oracle about Josiah’s being “gathered” to his ancestors (אֲבֹתָיו) in Sheol is a disquieting reminder of Saul’s

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<sup>197</sup> On Dtr’s use of the king-in-disguise motif, see Richard Coggins, “On Kings and Disguises,” *JSOT* 50 (1991) 55-62.

<sup>198</sup> Adele Reinhartz, “Anonymity and Character in the Books of Samuel,” *Semeia* 63 (1993) 117-41.

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Michael Pietsch, “Prophetess of Doom: Hermeneutical Reflections on the Huldah Oracle (2 Kings 22),” in *Soundings in Kings: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship* (ed. Klaus-Peter Adam and Mark Leuchter; Soundings 1; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010) 71-80.

encounter with the medium (בעל־תְּאוֹב, one who consults אֲבוֹת [“ancestral spirits”], 1 Sam 28:7-9) and Samuel’s prophecy that Saul and his sons would be joining him there (1 Sam 28:19). Indeed, there are a number of verbal parallels between the two episodes.<sup>200</sup> More disquieting, however, is Huldah’s seemingly unfulfilled promise of “peace” for Josiah.<sup>201</sup> Given Dtr’s description of Josiah’s incomparable faithfulness and piety (see especially 2 Kgs 23:25), no Davidide or Solomonide was more worthy of “peace.” The best explanation is that Huldah’s promise of “peace” is ironic and fits Dtr’s program of “eternally” punishing the house of David (see 2 Sam 12:10) and a pointed comment on Solomon’s dynastic peace (cf. 1 Kgs 2:33; see below).

Cohn calls the words of Huldah’s oracle “a remarkable promise of personal salvation”;<sup>202</sup> that is, Josiah is assured “a peaceful death before the curses take effect,”<sup>203</sup> while Cogan and Tadmor call it “a striking example of unfulfilled prophecy.”<sup>204</sup> But as Begg observes: “the expression need not mean that Josiah is to die a natural death, as in fact he does not (cf. 23:29). Even though he was killed in combat, Josiah can still be said to have died

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<sup>200</sup> See Matthew L. Bowen, *Rejective Requests and Deadly Disobedience: The Literary Utilization of Deut 18:15-17 in 1 Samuel and Its Function within the Deuteronomistic History* (MA Thesis; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2009) 101-06.

<sup>201</sup> LXX<sup>O</sup> attests the variant בִּירוּשָׁלַם (=ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ) for MT’s בְּשָׁלוֹם, which is probably best explained as an attempt to rectify the problem presented by Josiah’s violent death.

<sup>202</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 155.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 295.

peacefully, since he was spared witnessing the annihilation of his nation.”<sup>205</sup> P.S.F. van Keulen goes farther, arguing that the phrase “you shall be gathered to your grave in peace” in fact suggests that Josiah would die “in a violent way,” i.e., that his body (bones) would have to be gathered up and “integrally buried,” a merciful fate that many casualties of war, “ungathered and unburied,” did not enjoy.<sup>206</sup> Thus, Josiah’s “peace” is the obverse of the fate of Saul and his sons (1 Samuel 31), of the Levite’s hapless concubine (Judg 19:29), and of many in Zedekiah’s Jerusalem.

Huldah’s prophecy is good example of Dtr’s use of irony rather than a “surprisingly” overlooked textual “incongruity.”<sup>207</sup> Dtr uses this prophecy of שְׁלוֹם to extend his negative narrative evaluation of Solomon. The word שְׁלוֹם here recalls at least two important texts regarding the destiny of David’s and Solomon’s dynasty. First, Nathan had promised David that “the sword [would] not depart from [his] house forever [עַד־עוֹלָם]” (2 Sam 12:10). It must have been significant for Dtr that Josiah,<sup>208</sup> even with his incomparable cultic piety (2 Kgs 23:25-26), was not spared death by the sword in fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Begg, “2 Kings,” 184.

<sup>206</sup> P.S.F. van Keulen, “The Meaning of the Phrase *WN’SPT ’L-QBRTYK BŠLWM* in 2 Kings XXII 20,” *VT* 44 (1996) 256-59.

<sup>207</sup> According to Cogan and Tadmor (*II Kings*, 295), “the late rewriting surprisingly did not eliminate this incongruity, which runs contrary to the historiographic view point of the Deuteronomistic circle, for whom the fulfillment of prophecy played a key role.”

<sup>208</sup> See Leslie J. Hoppe, “The Death of Josiah and the Meaning of Deuteronomy,” *LASBF* 48 (1998) 31-47. While I agree with Hoppe that Josiah’s death is a moment of inestimable import for Dtr, I do not agree with his assessment that Dtr consciously avoids offering any guarantee of “peace” to exilic Israel. Dtr is more preoccupied with Solomon’s (and the monarchy’s) failure to obey (see 1 Kgs 2:3-4, 33) and the consequences that this had even for a small obedient minority (i.e., Josiah and company).

Second, we again recall that Solomon presumptuously boasted that “David and his posterity and his house and his throne [would] have **peace** [שלום] forever [עַד־עוֹלָם] from Yhwh” (1 Kgs 2:33), in his personal articulation of the dynastic promise of 2 Samuel 7, this playing on his own name (שלמה). To Josiah fell the impossible task of undoing the damage to the שלום between Yhwh and Israel that had been caused by Solomon’s cultic apostasy (“his heart was not שלם with Yhwh”). Thus, while שלום between Yhwh and Josiah himself was restored (“you shall be gathered to your grave in [שלום]”), the “sword [would] never depart from [David’s] house” and the eternal “peace” that Solomon envisaged for all future Davidides would not be achieved under any human monarchy.

Also frequently overlooked is Josiah’s role in his own death. Did Josiah, like Croesus against the Persians (see §4.7.2), go recklessly into battle against the king of Egypt presuming that Huldah’s oracle was a promise of personal success (שלום) for him? Huldah’s prophecy is not “unfulfilled prophecy,” but a *Delphic*, self-working kind of prophecy. Its ambiguity recalls the priest’s pronouncement in Judg 18:6 (“Go in peace [לָכוּ לְשָׁלוֹם]: your way is נכח Yhwh”). Had Josiah *not* gone into battle, he might have indeed seen the ruin Yhwh was bringing, a ruin which his sons, in fact, saw. Josiah’s “peace” was ironic, bitter, but perhaps strangely merciful.

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<sup>209</sup> Begg (“2 Kings,” 185) observes that “Dtr hastens to make clear that all Josiah’s good deeds could in no way nullify the previous divine word against Judah evoked by Manasseh’s misdeeds (cf. 21:10-10) and reiterated by Huldah (cf. 22:16-17).”

So, while in a narrow, ironic sense Josiah can be said to have had a “peaceful” end, one is forced to conclude that incomparably pious Josiah’s violent death and the similarly violent deaths of the royal seed (at the hands of Athaliah), Amon and later Zedekiah’s sons are hardly the “peace” that Solomon boasted would forever belong to his throne and “house.” Dtr seems to have recognized the “peace” that Yhwh “created” (i.e., brought to pass) for Solomon and the “house” of David was rather a “payment” or “recompense” (cf. Deut 7:10), even if that recompense did not come upon each Yhwh-“hater” (i.e., Manasseh) to his face.

After Josiah’s “peaceful” death, Judah is in an even worse predicament than before his reign. Josiah’s son Jehoahaz, whom “the people of the land” install in Josiah’s place, returns to the time-honored Davidic tradition of “doing evil in Yhwh’s sight” (2 Kgs 23:32; see 2 Sam 11:27; 12:9; 1 Kgs 11:6; 14:21-23; 2 Kgs 8:26-27; 21:2, 16, 20). Jehoahaz’s “peace” is to be shackled at Riblah “so that he might not reign in Jerusalem” (2 Kgs 23:33). Instead of the land enjoying peace or “rest,”<sup>210</sup> 2 Kgs 23:33 records that Pharaoh Necho had “the land put to tribute [עָנָשׁ].” Pharaoh Necho then installs Eliakim, the son of Josiah, Jehoahaz’s half-brother, as king and renames him Jehoiakim (2 Kgs 23:34). In spite of all of this, Jehoiakim continues the tradition of doing “evil in Yhwh’s sight” (23:37), as do Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:9) and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24:19).

## Conclusion

Dtr insists throughout his work that שְׁלוֹמִים with Yhwh and Israel’s “intactness” (שְׁלוֹמִים) cannot exist apart from faithfulness to Yhwh’s covenant and Deuteronomy. As the

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<sup>210</sup> Cf. Josh 11:23; 14:50; Judg 3:11, 30; 5:31.

Gibeonite episode illustrates, a covenant or treaty (ברִית) with the nations from whom Israel was to remain separate, is an entangling “peace” that leads quickly to war. Like Solomon’s marriage alliances, these illicit covenants compromised Israel’s “peace” with Yhwh. Dtr further shows that even when Israel abandons Yhwh for the gods of the nations, Yhwh himself might take the initiative to “(re-)create peace” (יהוה שלום) between himself and Israel (see Judges 6). Yet when Israel persists in a path that is “contrary” to or “opposite” (נכח) Yhwh (Judg 18:6), destruction (Judges 19–21) and exile (Judg 18:30) are the only “promises” that remain. Israel and its human monarchy are thereafter fated to become a “proverb” (משל, Deut 28:37; 1 Kgs 9:7).

David and his house are an object lesson for Israel in exile. Not only did David violate Yhwh’s covenant (Deut 5:17-18, 21; cf. the נבלה-sins catalogued in Deut 22:21-30), he also destroyed the “peace” of Uriah and his fellow-soldiers. Yhwh’s immediately-working requital (Deut 7:10) of David for his misdeeds begins with the death of an infant son, then quickly focuses on his son Absalom (“Father is peace”) who kills Amnon (אמנון, “faithful,” “sure”) the heir to David’s “sure” (נאמן) house and throne, and does not cease even after Solomon (“his replacement”/“his recompense”) outmaneuvers another son (Adonijah) for the throne and has him executed. In the context of David’s biography and the destiny of the monarchy, the name of his son Absalom stands as a supreme literary irony.

The *modus operandi* of David’s rule was the “shedding the blood of war in peace” (2 Samuel 3; 1 Kgs 2:5-6): it was used to secure David’s throne, as it was used to secure Solomon’s. Although Solomon’s “completion” of the temple in all its glory and his political

“peace” seemed to portend the “eternal peace” of which he boasted (1 Kgs 2:33), the everlasting punishment of David’s house via the sword (2 Sam 12:9-10) continues its work even after Solomon’s demise, with Israel soon being torn from Judah like pieces of a שלמה (“cloak”), precisely because Solomon failed to keep his heart “completely” (שלם) with Yhwh (1 Kgs 11:4).

Ultimately, Israel and the northern monarchy’s שלום is to offer tribute to Shalmaneser (שלמנאסר), king of Assyria (2 Kgs 17:3). When Hoshea withholds tribute and appeals to Egypt for military help, however, Shalmaneser (שלמנאסר) “arrests him [ויַעצֶרֶהוּ] and binds him [ויֹאסֶרֶהוּ] in prison” (17:3-4).<sup>211</sup> These “cardinal sins”<sup>212</sup> committed against a human overlord, were essentially the same sins that Israel and Judah had committed against Yhwh, their divine overlord throughout history via their idolatry and illicit “peace” with the nations (cf. Josh 9:14-15; 1 Kings 11). The outcome for the northern tribes will be exile, and the “peace” of Judah will be similar: both monarchies “followed after vanity [וַהֲבִל] and became vain [וַיִּהְיֶה בֶלִי]” (2 Kgs 17:15). Even the righteous Davidic kings Hezekiah and Josiah find a “peace” (2 Kgs 20:19; 22:20) that fits within Yhwh’s punishment of Judah and David and Solomon’s “house.”

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<sup>211</sup> Garsiel (*Biblical Names*, 47) notes the paronomasia on “Shalmaneser” (שלמנאסר), עצר and אסר.

<sup>212</sup> Begg (“2 Kings,” 181) calls these offenses “a vassal’s two cardinal sins.”



## Chapter Five

*“Yhwh your God is devouring fire” (Deut 4:24)*

*“What is your name, that when your words come to pass, we may glorify you?” (Judg 13:17)*

### 5.1 Introduction: The Glory, Fire, and Revelation of Yhwh

In the preceding chapters, I have examined Dtr’s literary treatment of the names of Israel’s first full-fledged kings—Saul, David, and Solomon—in terms of the verbal roots **שאל**, **אהב**, and **שלם** respectively, and the significance of Dtr’s use of these *Leitworte* in wordplay on these kings’ names. These thematic wordplays not only emphasize the gravity of Israel’s misstep in “demanding” kingship (Saul), but also the illustrate the catastrophic impact of David and Solomon’s subsequent monarchic sins: their failure to “love” Yhwh, and particularly the failure of the latter and most of his successors to keep their hearts “completely” with Yhwh.

In the present chapter I further explore Dtr’s literary use of names in connection with *Leitworte*, lead words or key terms through which he articulates his most important points. Here, I will thus examine:

- The significance of the name “Ichabod” and its literary treatment in terms of the verb **כבד** and its cognates, the centrality of the “Ichabod” etiology (1 Samuel 4) and Yhwh’s “glory” versus Davidic “glory” for Dtr’s overall message; and the correlation of **כבד** (and its antonym **קלל**) with **גלה** (“uncover,” “exile”) in Dtr.;
- The name “Tiglath-pileser” and its literary treatment in terms of verb **גלה**;

- The literary treatment of “Josiah” in Dtr in terms of “fire” (שֵׁן) and the depiction of Josiah in terms reminiscent of the “man of God” (אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים) figures like Elijah.

As has been noted, Dtr’s description of Israel’s leadership situation from Horeb to the exile is largely a negative one. Dtr’s evaluation of the post-Solomonic northern kings is almost uniformly so, though “with surprising variation and nuance”<sup>1</sup> when the stated theological reasons are closely examined. While Dtr sees merits in a few of the southern Davidic kings,<sup>2</sup> none of his royal presentations are unqualifiedly positive,<sup>3</sup> except in the case of Josiah, the one figure whom Dtr single out for irreproachable conduct after his repentance (in 2 Kgs 18:14-16 and 20:12-19, Dtr draws attention to faults on Hezekiah’s part despite the “incomparability” notice of 2 Kgs 18:5). Given Dtr’s concentration on the rise and development of the Israelite monarchy and the roles of individual kings in the eventuation of the exile, it is perhaps fitting that Dtr also emphasizes the role of two foreign kings—kings of “the nations” (cf. Deut 17:14; 1 Sam 8:5, 20)—in Yhwh’s punishment and removal of the disobedient kings of Israel and Judah.

But Dtr is not just a “leadership” story. Every “leadership” story is also, to one degree or another, a “people” story—the story of *the led*. Dtr thus describes the movement of a people initially lacking faith to enter Yhwh’s “presence” (i.e., the land; Deut 1:32) and

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<sup>1</sup> See Walter Brueggemann, “Stereotype and Nuance: The Dynasty of Jehu,” *CBQ* 70 (2008) 16-28. He writes: “Given that consistent and uniform rejection of northern kings, it is nonetheless the case that the uniform dismissal of the northern kings is articulated in the Dtr with surprising variation and nuance.”

<sup>2</sup> Asa (1 Kgs 15:11), Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs 22:43), Joash (2 Kgs 12:2), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:3), Azariah (2 Kgs 15:3), Jotham (2 Kgs 15:34), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3-5), Josiah (2 Kgs 23:25).

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Kgs 15:14; 1 Kgs 22:4 (see also 2 Kgs 3:7), 43-44; 2 Kgs 12:3; 14:3-4, 8-14; 15:4-5; 15:35.

rejecting Yhwh's immediate "presence" (Deut 5:24-25) to their eventual entry into Yhwh's "presence"—the land (Joshua)—and then to their being expelled from his "presence," i.e., exile from the land (2 Kings 17–25). Israel's refusal to endure Yhwh's presence—his theophanic "glory" or "fire"<sup>4</sup>—at Horeb was Israel's history in the land in microcosm. The consumption of the Jerusalem temple—the "architectural embodiment" of Yhwh's mountain (Sinai-Horeb)<sup>5</sup> and Israel's experience there<sup>6</sup>—by "fire" was the capstone event of Israel and Judah's exile. In this light, the story Eli and his sons' death and the birth of "Ichabod" becomes the most important etiological report in Dtr.

As noted previously, the event that gave rise to Israel's evolving leadership situation was Israel's experiencing Yhwh's theophany at Horeb (Deuteronomy 5). After experiencing Yhwh's nearness, Israel declares: "Lo, Yhwh has shown us his glory [כבודו] and his greatness, and his voice we have heard from the midst of the Fire [באש] this day. We have seen that God converses with humanity and he [ambiguously God or humanity] lives" (Deut 5:24). Israel's fear of death results in the institution of permanent intermediary leadership—prophets, judges, kings. Israel's fear of death and desire for distance from Yhwh was indeed

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<sup>4</sup> Aaron Soviv ("About Some Scriptural Divine Designations," *Dor Le Dor* 15 [1986/87] 29-37) shows that Yhwh's כבוד is frequently an allusion to the "pillar of fire and cloud"; see Exod 14:24).

<sup>5</sup> John M. Lundquist, "What Is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall* (ed. Herbert B. Huffmon, Frank A. Spina, and Alberto R. W. Green; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 207.

<sup>6</sup> See John M. Lundquist, "Temple, Covenant, and Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration* (ed. Avraham Gileadi; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988) 293-305.

rooted in a lack of faith (cf. Deut 1:32), but also reflected Israel's seemingly innate unwillingness to endure Yhwh's "presence."

Deuteronomy envisions the covenant "land" as itself sacrosanct—like the future temple precincts. Both the land and the temple are Yhwh's "rest,"<sup>7</sup> and his ritual "presence" (1 Kgs 9:7; 2 Kgs 13:23; 17:20; 21:2; 23:27; 24:20; cf. Jer 7:15; 15:1).<sup>8</sup> As such, the land was also Israel's "rest" (Deut 12:9; 28:65; 1 Kgs 8:56; cf. Isa 11:10). Israel was to make and keep the land "holy," a concept which partly stands behind the  $\square\Gamma\Gamma$  practice. The "fire" with which Israel was to destroy the carved images and asherahs of the nations under  $\square\Gamma\Gamma$  (Deut 7:5, 25; 12:3), was to be a ritual extension of Yhwh's own theophanic fire or glory: "But know today that Yhwh your God, he is the one crossing over before you: he is **a consuming fire** [אש אכלה] and he will annihilate them and he will subjugate them [יכניעם] before you, and dispossess them, and destroy them swiftly just as Yhwh has spoken" (Deut 9:3). If the force of אכלה here is that Yhwh "will consume all adversaries,"<sup>9</sup> then Israel itself is being admonished not to become his adversary.

Israel as Yhwh's "chosen" people—his special possession—was to safeguard the sanctity of Yhwh's "name" and "glory." Prohibitions against child sacrifices by "fire" (Deut

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Alexander Vella, "To Enter or not to Enter: A Literary and Theological Study of Psalm 95," *Melita Theologica* 42 (1991) 77-94. Cf. Ps 95:11; 132:8:14; Isa 11:10; 66:1.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the phrase  $\square\Gamma\Gamma$ , which seems to imply a cultic/ritual setting wherever and whenever it is used. See Menachem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985) 26.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004) 925.

12:31; 18:10) occur in proximity to legislation that not only reemphasizes the “fire” (אֵשׁ) of Yhwh’s glory (18:16), but also Israel’s responsibility to subject the cults of the “nations” to Yhwh’s “fire” (12:5; cf. 9:3). One reason child sacrifices seem to have been so offensive to Dtr’s Yhwh, setting aside the issue of their horrific cruelty (Ezek 20:26), is that in their performance, Israel travestied Yhwh’s “fire” and glory.<sup>10</sup> The offering of Israelite children by “fire” was an affront to the vision and aim of Deuteronomy (“You are children to Yhwh your God,” Deut 14:1; cf. 12:31).

Deuteronomy further conceived of the divine realm as Yhwh’s “good treasury”: “Yhwh will open for you his good treasury—the heavens—by giving rain on your earth in its season and by blessing every doing of your hand and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow” (Deut 28:12; cf. Job 38:22; Bar 3:15;<sup>11</sup> cf. also Gen [7:21]; Ezek 1:1). Ideally, the royal and especially the temple treasuries would be an “on-earth-as-it-is-in-heaven” representation of Yhwh’s “good treasury,” the bounty below reflecting the bounty of Yhwh’s beneficence above, the former as impregnable as the latter. Unfortunately, this ideal that began well under Solomon failed under his successors. This chapter will thus also illustrate how Judah and its Davidic monarchy failed to safeguard Yhwh’s “glory” by safeguarding (“keeping” שָׁמַר) of his covenant (Yhwh’s glory and covenant being Israel’s *true* treasures). As a result, instead of Yhwh “honoring” (or “glorifying”), Israel and Judah

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. the distinction between “strange fire” Lev 10:1; Num 3:4; 26:61 and “fire from Yhwh,” Lev 9:24; 10:2; Num 16:35; cf. also Gen 19:24.

<sup>11</sup> C.T. Begg (“Access to Heavenly Treasures: The Traditionsgeschichte of a Motif,” *BN* [1988] 15-20) traces the biblical and post-biblical development of the motif.

and their kings, Yhwh “cursed” or treated them lightly (1 Sam 2:30), bringing upon them all of the curses written in Deuteronomy (see Deut 28:15, 45).

## 5.2 Ichabod: “The Glory” and Its “Exile”

Yhwh’s “glory” and Israel’s failure to safeguard it are alluded to in subtle and unsubtle ways throughout Dtr. For example we see “glory” (כבוד) frequently linked with “exposure” or “exile” (גל) <sup>12</sup> in Dtr’s account of the delegitimation of the Elides and the loss of the Ark (1 Samuel 2–4), and the later account of the Ark’s being brought to Jerusalem by David (2 Samuel 6). At different moments in Dtr—at the threshold of the monarchy and at the threshold of the exile, the names “Ichabod” (“Where is the glory?”) and “Tiglath-pileser” (around which a paronomasia involving גל “exile” is created) emphasize Israel’s tragedy: Dtr shows Israel that it lost Yhwh’s glory, why it lost that glory, and just how significant this loss was.

The ascription of “glory” to the divine was not unique to ancient Israel. The term *kbd* is attested as a divine appellative at Ugarit. <sup>13</sup> For Dtr, however, there was only one God of glory (Deut 5:24; 28:58; cf. Ps 29:3; Isa 48:11). As we will see, an important aspect of Dtr’s

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<sup>12</sup> The terms גל (“uncover”) and גל (“exile”) may originally represent two originally separate roots (See F.A. Gosling, “An Open Question Relating to the Hebrew Root glh,” *ZAH* 11 [1998] 125-39).

<sup>13</sup> See Freddy de Meyer, “kdb comme nom divin en éblaïte, ougaritique et hébreu,” *RTL* 11 (1980) 225-28.

use of \*כבוד is his exploitation of the contrast between כבוד and קלל—“glory,” “honor,” “weight” versus “shame,” “curse,” “treat lightly.”<sup>14</sup>

Israel’s loss of the ark to foreign “exile” serves as a stark foreshadowing of Israel’s eventual exile and the loss of the “glory” of Yhwh’s “presence” (i.e., the land), as symbolized by the name “Ichabod” [אִי־כָבוֹד], a name that not only comments on the fortunes of the Eli and his house, but also on Israel’s long-term fortunes. Using the root כבוד and its antonyms, particularly קלל, Dtr will carefully tie the fate of the Davidic dynasty to the fate of the Eli priestly “dynasty.” Additionally, Dtr’s use of גל as a *Leitwort* later culminates in wordplay on the name “Tiglath-pileser,” the king who initiates a policy of exile vis-à-vis Israel. The combined use of these two *Leitworte* will mark some of the most important moments in Dtr, and some of the most important commentary on human monarchy that he has to offer.

#### 5.2.1 “Yhwh Our God Has Shown Us His Glorious Greatness” (Deut 5:24)

Deuteronomy 4 emphasizes that Israel did not see Yhwh’s “form” (contrast Exod 24:9-11), but rather heard Yhwh’s voice (Deut 4:12, 15-16), although Deut 4:36 allows that Israel saw his “great fire” (see §5.4.1). Deuteronomy 5, on the other hand, emphasizes that the Israelites were witnesses to his “glory”: “Yhwh our God has shown us [הָרָאָנוּ] **his glory** [כְּבוֹדוֹ] and his voice we have heard from inside the [theophanic] **fire** [הָאֵשׁ]—this day we have seen [רָאִינוּ] that God speaks with humanity and that he [ambiguously God or

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Isa 22:18 (קלון vs. כבוד); Hab 2:16 (קלון/קיקלון vs. כבוד); Ps 4:2 (לכלמה vs. כבוד); Prov 3:35 (קלון vs. כבוד); 13:18 (same). Cf. also “glorifying” or “honoring” father and mother (Deut 5:16) vs. “cursing” or “lightly esteeming” father and mother (Deut 27:16).

humanity] lives. And so now why should we die? Indeed, this great fire [עשן] will consume us if we hear the voice of Yhwh any longer and we shall die; for who of all flesh is there that has heard the voice of a living god speaking from inside **the fire** [עשן] like us and lived?” (Deut 5:24-26; see also 18:16).

Dtr narrates a number of Israel’s birth/rebirth moments. Israel’s initial “birth” from the Red Sea during the exodus is everywhere implied,<sup>15</sup> but Horeb is a defining moment for Yhwh and Israel’s relationship. Israel’s entry into the land and circumcision at Gilgal will be another, and Yhwh’s granting Israel “dynastic sons” (1 Samuel 1–12) still another. E.S. Giménez-Rico notes the significance of Deut 5:24’s use of a hiphil form of עשן with כבוד as the object,<sup>16</sup> and what this implies for Israel’s initial, ideal relationship with Yhwh: institutional intermediaries only enter the picture after the people’s words in Deut 5:25. He discerns in 5:24 a message regarding the immediacy of Yhwh and his “glory,” particularly relevant to Israel in exile,<sup>17</sup> i.e., that his “glory” does not need to be safeguarded by intermediaries. Israel at Horeb rejects Yhwh’s immediacy: not so much out of concern to safeguard the sanctity of Yhwh’s glory, but rather to *safeguard themselves from his glory*. This moment will define Israel’s relationship (a prophet-mediated relationship) with Yhwh

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<sup>15</sup> E.g., Deut 1:27; 4:20, 37; 5:6, 15; 6:12, 21; 7:8; 9:12, 26; 13:5, 10; 16:1; 20:1; 26:8; 29:25; Judg 2:1, 12; Judg 6:8; 1 Sam 8:8; 10:18; 12:6, 8; 2 Sam 7:6; 1 Kgs 8:16, 21; 9:9; 10:28; 2 Kgs 17:4, 7, 36.

<sup>16</sup> Enrique Sanz Giménez-Rico, “La Gloria de Yahveh en Dt, 24,” *EE* 79 (2004) 323.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.



until the birth of the monarchy, and set Israel's course (one of ever-increasing distance from Yhwh) until the exile.

*5.2.2 Undoing the Exodus: Not "Fearing This Glorious and Fearful Name, 'Yhwh Your God'" (Deut 28:58)*

Deut 28:58-59 warns Israel plainly: "If you will not take care to perform all the words of this law that are written in this book by fearing this **glorious** [הַנִּכְבָּד] and fearful name, 'Yhwh Your God,' then Yhwh will make your plagues marvelous and the plagues of your posterity great and constant—sicknesses bad and constant." Not only will Israel be subjected to the "diseases of Egypt" (28:60) and "every sickness and plague" written in Deuteronomy (28:61), but Israel will also be "torn away" (וְנִסְחָתָם) from the land (28:63), and Yhwh "will scatter [Israel]" from one end of the earth to the other (28:64) and what is left of Israel will be left to continue its idolatry among the nations in exile.

Israel's existence in or exile from the land hinges on its response to Yhwh's glory, i.e., their treatment of his "glorious and fearful name," as evident in their observance or non-observance of the legislation of Deuteronomy. Thus Israel's non-observance or "infidelity involves a reversal of exodus and of the Abrahamic promise,"<sup>18</sup> i.e., the "dazzlement of the Exodus will be undone" such that "the promise made to the ancestors to be like the stars in the heavens, a promise celebrated as fulfilled in Deut 10:22 will be reversed [and] Israel will

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomy," NJBC (ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 106-7. See also Peter M. Head, "The Curse of Covenant Reversal: Deuteronomy 28:58-68 and Israel's Exile," *Churchman* 111 (1997) 218-26.

again be few in number.”<sup>19</sup> The loss of the land and the temple would be the loss of Yhwh’s “presence” and “glory,” i.e., his glorious and fearful “name.”

### 5.2.3 “Those Who Safeguard My Glory, I Will Glorify” (1 Sam 2:2-3):

Dtr’s account Israel’s movement toward monarchy abounds with suggestions that this was also a movement toward exile. Abimelech, rather than being royally “glorified” (cf. **וַיִּקְלָלוּ**) by oil from the olive-tree (Judg 9:9), is swiftly “treated lightly” or “cursed” (**וַיִּקְלָלוּ**) by his Baalist subjects at “the house of their god” (**בֵּית אֱלֹהֵיהֶם**, 9:27, a fore-echo of Bethel), this as a beginning fulfillment of Jotham’s curse (**קָלַלְתָּ יוֹתָם**) upon him. The Davidic dynasty will similarly make itself and Judah a “curse” (2 Kgs 22:19; Deut 28:15, 45).

As the period of the Judges begins to devolve into chaos, Dtr’s story in Judges 17–18 about a private “Bethel” (17:5) which concludes with the founding of “Dan” at Laish (Judg 18:30), and a “Bethel” (18:31) at Shiloh has numerous literary functions beyond its anti-Northern polemic. The notice that follows in 18:31 is arguably one of the most important in Dtr: “Then the Danites set up for themselves [Micah’s] carved image and Jonathan son of Gershom the son of Moses—he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the exile [**גִּלְוָתָא**] of the land.” This notice not only looks forward to Jeroboam and the cultic “sin” of the north at Bethel and Dan, but also sets up the whole arc of Dtr’s subsequent narrative. Moreover, the idolatry at Dan and Bethel is inextricably tied to Shiloh: “And they retained for themselves the carved image which Micah had made in the house of God in

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<sup>19</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy* (AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2001) 258.

Shiloh” (Judg 18:32). Dtr here establishes a narrative backdrop for the fall of Eli and his sons, the cultic situation from which Eli will tumble from his throne at the news of his sons’ death and the “exile” [גלות] of the ark (1 Sam 4:12-22). Shiloh is the departure point for Israel’s first “exilic” experience. The events of 1 Samuel 4–6 will foreshadow what will happen to the Davidides and Israel.

Deuteronomy (as a whole) emphasizes that Yhwh was “heard” at Horeb rather than seen. Deut 5:24, however, grants that Israel saw Yhwh’s “glory”: “Yhwh our God has shown us his glory [כבודו] [and his greatness] and his voice we have heard [שמענו] from the midst of the fire—this day we have seen that God speaks with humans and he lives [or, they live].” Yhwh’s “glory” becomes the sign of his presence among them (see 1 Kgs 8:11; cf. Exod 29:43; 33:22; 40:34-35; 14:10, 21-22, etc.)

Beginning in 1 Samuel 2, Eli and his sons become the focal point of Dtr’s sub-narrative of the removal of Yhwh’s “glory”—resident over the ark—from Israel. Several details suggest that Dtr has the exile in view in this chapter.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the placement of this story on the threshold of the narrative of Saul and the monarchy is deliberate. Although Dtr is writing about the fate of the Elide priesthood, Dtr is also taking a broader and forward view on the monarchy and its demise in exile. Eli’s failure to rein in his unhearing sons despite his criticism of them, occasions the arrival of a nameless “man of God” on the scene:

(27) Then a man of God came to Eli [עלִי] and said to him, “Thus says Yhwh: ‘Did I not **truly reveal myself** [הנגלה נגלתי] to the house of your father when they were

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<sup>20</sup> See Tiziano Lorenzin, “L’arca dell’alleanza (1 Samuel 4–6; 2 Samuel 6),” *PdV* 46 (2001) 39-44.

in Egypt in the house of Pharaoh (28) and chose him out of all the tribes Israel for myself as a priest to offer burnt offerings [לַעֲלוֹת] upon my altar, to burn incense, to take up the ephod? And did I not give to the house of your father every fire-offering of the Israelites? (29) Why do you all maliciously kick at my sacrifice and my gift which I have commanded, and **you honor** [תִּכְבֹּד] your sons more than me by fattening yourselves [לְהַבִּירֵי אַפְסֵיכֶם] with the best of every gift of Israel my people?” (1 Sam 2:27-29)

This text plays on the meaning of כִּבֹּד, which as a Piel verb form means to “honor” or “glorify.” Eli and his sons have taken “honor” or “glory” to themselves, and Eli has seated himself upon a “throne” (cf. the “throne of glory” of 1 Sam 2:8). However, the use of the Hiphil of II בִּרֵא “make oneself fat”<sup>21</sup> in the same context suggests that the text is also playing on the “make heavy” sense of כִּבֹּד: Eli literally makes himself “heavy” (cf. 2:30) for his own demise, as we soon see in 4:18.

This passage also serves to link together the roots גִּלָּה and כִּבֹּד which serve as *Leitworte* throughout Dtr in key passages that stand both prior to and following the Ark narrative as a kind of *inclusio*. Yhwh had “truly revealed [him]self [גִּלָּה נִגְלָה יְיָ]” (1 Sam 2:27), i.e., his “glory” to Eli’s ancestral house when they were in Egypt, just as he would do with Israel at Horeb (Deut 5:24). Eli and his sons, however, had no interest in safeguarding Yhwh’s glory, i.e., glorifying or honoring him. Hence Yhwh’s pronouncement that follows in the next verse, one of the key texts in all of Dtr: “Those who honor me [מִכְבֹּדִי] I will honor

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<sup>21</sup> HALOT, 154.

[אֲכַבֵּד], but those who despise [וְבוֹזִי] me shall **be cursed** [יִקְלַן], i.e., “be treated lightly” (1 Sam 2:30).

Eli’s (and Israel’s) actions and inactions are proof as to what they consider “important” or “weighty” (כָּבֵד). Eli and his sons’ abuse of Yhwh’s sacrificial system to enrich themselves suggests that they ascribed more importance or “weight” to themselves than to Yhwh. Similarly, Israel’s abuse of Deuteronomy’s requirements suggested that they attached more worth or “weight” to what did not pertain to Yhwh. Dtr considered this “despising” Yhwh or regarding Yhwh lightly (קָלַל; see 1 Sam 3:13 where Eli’s sons are described as מְקַלְלִים אֱלֹהֵי הָאָדָם, God-cursers).<sup>22</sup> To glorify or honor oneself (נִכְבֵּד) is to “despise” Yhwh, to whom כְּבוֹד (“weight” > “honor,” “glory”) properly belongs. Appropriately, the divine punishment for failure to safeguard Yhwh’s glory (by ascribing overmuch “weight” to oneself) is to be “treated lightly” (קָלַל), a word with a range of meaning that shades into “curse.” It is in this extended sense that the term is used throughout Deuteronomy (“blessing” versus “curse”; see, e.g., Deut 11:26). Thus, when Israel and its leadership despised Yhwh, the punishment was not only to be “treated lightly” (the opposite of being ascribed “weight,” “honored” or “glorified”), but also to “be cursed,” even to become a “curse” (קָלַל הָאָדָם, 2 Kgs 22:19) and to be exiled. Just as Yhwh rolled away (גָּלוּתִי, Josh 5:9)

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<sup>22</sup> As P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. (*1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980] 96) notes, the reading מְקַלְלִים לָהֶם (“they cursed for themselves”) in MT 1 Sam 3:13 is clearly a “deliberate scribal distortion for pious reasons, the passage being among those few recognized in rabbinic sources as well as Masoretic lists as belonging to the so called ‘emendations of the scribes’ (tiqqune soperim).”

the reproach that faithless wilderness generation had become, he will roll away Eli's sons, the dynastic "sons" of Saul, and finally the dynastic "sons" of David along with the faithless (2 Kgs 17:14) "sons" of Israel.

Eli's priesthood was intended to be "forever" (עַד־עוֹלָם, 1 Sam 2:30), but now his house will be "judg[ed] ... forever" (עַד־עוֹלָם, 3:13) a condign punishment for his failure as Israel's "judge." As Steussy notes, Yhwh's "sense of insult prompts the overriding of a promise that had been supposed to last 'forever' (2:30)."<sup>23</sup> Eli's priestly replacement will, like David, have a "sure house"<sup>24</sup> and "do according to what is in my heart and in my mind" (2:35; see also 1 Samuel 13). Eli, like Saul later, is having his house replaced. David as Saul's replacement, however, is not merely the promised recipient of a "sure house" and the one who is meant to do according to Yhwh's heart, but is also the recipient of an "eternal" but (as we see here) revocable promise. As Miscall observes, the "most problematic and a central concern of the reading [i.e., the ensuing story] is whether David does or does not act according to what is in the Lord's heart and mind."<sup>25</sup>

Polzin writes: "This rise, fall, and rise of priestly houses foreshadows exactly the repetitious rise and fall of kingly houses in the history to follow."<sup>26</sup> He further notes that "the

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<sup>23</sup> Marti J. Steussy, *Samuel and His God* (Studies on the Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010) 59.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 1 Sam 25:28; 2 Sam 7:16; 1 Kgs 11:38.

<sup>25</sup> Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading* (ISBL; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986) 23.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 48.

royal implications of the oracle of the LORD incline ... toward the instability of the ‘sure house’ of Eli’s successor, whoever he may be, and foreshadow his unfaithfulness as certainly as the sins of Eli’s sons disrupted and destroyed their father’s house. It is as though hope must spring eternal in the divine breast. Given the dishonor, the burden, the heaviness that will characterize Israel and its kings to the very end, how can the Glory keep on promising all his forever?”<sup>27</sup> As Eli’s sons disrupted and destroyed their father’s house, so will David’s. The glory of the house of David will be heaviness—heaviness that Yhwh will no longer bear after Manasseh.

#### 5.2.4 “Where is the Glory?” (1 Samuel 3–4)

Variations of the *Leitwort* \*כבוד are finally grounded in a formal etiology in 1 Samuel 4, with the naming of “Ichabod” (“Where is [the] glory?” or “Alas for the Glory”<sup>28</sup>). The earlier wordplay involving כבוד from 1 Samuel 2 is resumed when Eli receives tidings off the loss of the ark to the Philistines: “And it happened that when he made mention of the ark of God, he fell off of [מֵעַל] the throne [cf. the “throne of glory,” 2:8] backwards into the gateway, and his neck broke because the man was so old and heavy [וְכָבֵד]. Now he had judged Israel forty years” (1 Sam 4:18). Eli’s death due to a broken neck incurred by his being “heavy” [וְכָבֵד] recalls the pun initiated in 1 Sam 2:28.<sup>29</sup> As Gilmour notes, “The repetition

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. LXX A Οὐαὶ χάβωθ; LXX B Οὐαὶ Βαρχαβώθ. See also McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 116.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Miscall, *1 Samuel*, 29.

of על־הכסא from 1 Sam 1.9 demonstrates Eli's fall from leadership through complacency and inaction."<sup>30</sup> The punishment is also retributive. Eli, by honoring his sons (and by extension himself) above Yhwh by fattening himself with Yhwh's sacrifices, has played an unwitting role in Yhwh's initiative to "dethrone" him and his sons.

In 1 Sam 3:7, Dtr indicates that the "word of Yhwh was not yet revealed [נגלה]" to Samuel, Eli's prophetic-priestly replacement, but in the act of so saying also intimates that the word of Yhwh will soon be "revealed" to Samuel. Whereas Yhwh had "revealed himself" (הנגלה נגלה יתי) to Eli's ancestral house, there is now "no vision [i.e., of Yhwh's glory] breaching through" (אין חזון נפרץ; 1 Sam 3:1) such that any "word of Yhwh" at all becomes "precious" (i.e., rare; 3:1).

The situation changes with Samuel's prophetic call while he is serving as Eli's priestly understudy (1 Sam 3:2-18) and Eli's own sons are treating Yhwh lightly (אלהים ליה, or "cursing God," 3:13). The episode concludes with the notice that "Yhwh **was again seen** [להראות] ... [ויסך] in Shiloh" and that "Yhwh revealed himself [נגלה] to Samuel [according to] the word of Yhwh" (3:21). Samuel sees Yhwh (and presumably his "glory" resident over the Ark). Yhwh has revealed himself to Samuel in the same way that he "truly revealed himself" to Eli's ancestors. These events signify that Eli is now not only

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<sup>30</sup> Rachelle Gilmour, *Representing the Past: A Literary Analysis of Narrative Historiography in the Book of Samuel* (VTSup 143; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011) 59.



delegitimated, but replaced (“Yhwh was with [Samuel] and let none of his words fall to the ground,” 3:19).

When Eli subsequently falls from his “throne,” we see that “the leader who might be supposed to represent Israel’s glory exhibits only deadly heaviness.”<sup>31</sup> Thus Eli and his sons become not only a foreshadowing of Saul and his sons, but also of the dynastic “sons” of Israel and of Davidic Judah. Eli’s monarchic “heaviness” will find an analog in the “heavy” yokes imposed by Solomon and Rehoboam upon Israel.

The news of the deaths of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas triggers childbirth for Phinehas’s wife, the bearing of another “dynastic” son. At this dramatic moment, Dtr includes an etiology that is—like his earlier inclusion of the Samuel-Saul double-etiology—laden with meaning. In a birth scene that echoes that of Ben-oni/Benjamin,<sup>32</sup> the dying wife of the deceased Phinehas gives her son a plaintive name: “And she called the lad **Ichabod** [אִיכָבֹוד] saying ‘**The Glory** [כְּבוֹד] **has gone into exile** [גָּלוּה] from Israel’ on account of the taking of the ark of God and on account of her father-in-law and her husband. And she said, ‘**The Glory** [כְּבוֹד] **has gone into exile** from Israel,’ because the ark was taken” (1 Sam 4:21, a refrain repeated in 4:22). As Jobling points out, Phinehas’s wife’s apparent concern is not with the death of the

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<sup>31</sup> Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: Norton, 1999) 26.

<sup>32</sup> David Jobling (*1 Samuel* [Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998] 185) writes: “The story evokes the death of Rachel (Gen 35:16-20). Both the dying women give their sons sad names. Rachel’s husband Jacob adjusts the name to something less negative. Phinehas has no opportunity to do the same.”

men, “the only bad thing that has happened is the loss of the ark.”<sup>33</sup> What would normally be a joyful occasion, the birth of a dynastic “son,” is far from a happy occasion here. The devastation of Eli’s house offers a stark foreshadowing of what will happen to the royal houses of Saul, David, and to the house of Israel itself. The “glory” will go into exile from Israel and the “place” of Yhwh’s “rest” (the temple) will burn, the monarchy will collapse, and the survivors taken into exile. The thrust of the above etiology would not at all have escaped Dtr’s exilic audience.

As Brueggemann observes, the repetition of the refrains “the ark of God has been captured” and “the Glory has gone into exile” stresses the momentousness of the event and the degree of Israel’s loss.<sup>34</sup> Israel has lost Yhwh’s “glorious” presence and history will assuredly repeat itself.

#### 5.2.5 “The Glory” in Exile (1 Samuel 5–6)

Wordplay on כָּבוֹד follows the ark on its journey into and through exile, this suggesting that “the Glory” has not merely “departed” from Israel, but has “gone into exile.” As McCarter observes, “Yhwh was using the disaster for his own purposes,” i.e., “not only to remove the ark from Shiloh and its wicked priests ... but also to demonstrate his power in the

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<sup>33</sup> Jobling (Ibid.) observes how “the narrator is at pains to suggest that she [Phinehas’s wife] really did care about the death of the men, her father-in-law and her husband ... but she does not mention them. She knows that they were not worth much. Phinehas was an embarrassment of a husband and Eli was at best ineffectual. She knows too that the disaster is their fault. Dying, she laments the fate of the nation into which her son is born but not the death of her menfolk.”

<sup>34</sup> Walter Brueggemann, “(I)chabod Departed,” *PSB* 22 (2001) 115-33.

land of his enemies.”<sup>35</sup> This would have been a particularly important lesson for the Israelites to apprehend when they experienced their own exile and found themselves in the land of their enemies.

The impact of “the Glory” of Yhwh, resident over the ark is immediate and catastrophic for the Philistines: “And the hand of Yhwh **was heavy** [וַתִּכְבֹּד] against the Ashdodites and he devastated them and struck them with hemorrhoids, Ashdod and its vicinity” (1 Sam 5:6). In 5:4, the narrator notes that Dagon had “fallen upon his face to the earth before Yhwh’s ark,” i.e., in proskynesis, and that “Dagon’s head and both palms of his hands were cut off [כַּרְתוּתָה].” Eslinger observes that “Yahweh’s hand is subject of the active verb *wattikbad*, while Dagon’s palms are governed by the passive *kerutot*; Yahweh acts, Dagon is passive.”<sup>36</sup> The language here is similar to Isa 51:9-10 where Yhwh’s “arm” acts against Yamm, Rahab (Egypt) and Tannin. Just as Yhwh wages an ongoing war against Baal, he also triumphs over Dagon—even in exile.

When the ark comes to Ekron, the results are predictably similar. As the ark is brought into the city the Ekronites cry out, “Why have brought around the ark of the God of Israel to us to kill us and our kinsfolk?” (5:10).<sup>37</sup> They send pleas to the Philistine “overlords” (סַרְנִיִּים), demanding that it be sent away: “Send the ark of the God of Israel so that it may

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<sup>35</sup> McCarter, *I Samuel*, 126. He sees the narrator drawing a deliberate analogy with the exodus traditions, particularly Exod 9:15-16.

<sup>36</sup> Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12* (BLS 10; Decatur, GA: Almond, 1985) 193.

<sup>37</sup> Reading with 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and LXX.

reside in its place and not kill us and our kinsfolk” (5:11), doing this because (according to the narrator) “there was the panic of death upon the whole city, the hand of God being very **heavy** [כבדה] there” (5:12). Yhwh is enhancing his reputation—his glory—in exile.

Dtr develops the play on כבוד/כבד further in 1 Samuel 6. After the ark is in Philistine territory seven months (1 Sam 6:1), the Philistines have had enough and consult with their religious leaders on what is to be done *for* Yhwh’s ark and “with what shall [they] shall send it to its place?” i.e., “with what kind of offering ...?” (6:2). The Philistine priests and diviners (קסמים) perceive that some kind of atonement (4QSam<sup>a</sup>; LXX) is necessary, and direct the people to make “images,” not of Yhwh or their own gods, but tokens of the manifestation of Yhwh’s power upon them: “You shall make images of your hemorrhoids and images of your mice which are destroying the land, and give **glory** [כבוד] to the God of Israel. Perhaps **he will lighten** [יקל] his hand off you and off of your gods and off of your lands” (1 Sam 6:5). Ironically, the Philistines, in their own rudimentary way, know how to “give glory” to Yhwh, a God who is not their own, whereas Israel whose God Yhwh is, does not. They even understand the principle that Yhwh is not to be approached “empty” (ריקים), 6:3; see Deut 16:16).

Like Rahab the prostitute (Josh 2:9-12), the priests and diviners perceive Yhwh’s intervention in history better than do the Israelites themselves, as indicated by their allusion to Yhwh’s causation of Egypt’s and Pharaoh’s destruction at the time of exodus: “So why **do you make** your hearts **heavy** [תכבדו], i.e., “harden your hearts”] just as Egypt and Pharaoh

**made** their hearts **heavy** [כבדו]?" (6:6). McCarter notes the allusion to Exod 10:1 ("I have made his heart heavy and the heart of his servants," ואת־לִבּוֹ ואת־לִבֵּי עַבְדָּיו),<sup>38</sup> while Miscall points out that the Philistines "again draw a lesson from the events of the Exodus, the necessity of respecting the Lord and his power ... a lesson that Israel is reluctant or unable to draw."<sup>39</sup> Here again Dtr reminds Israel of the disastrous consequences of failing to "give Yhwh glory" (Josh 9:17; i.e., to safeguard his glory) and the deadliness of Eli-like obduracy, i.e., becoming too "heavy" (1 Sam 2:29-30; 4:18). Unfortunately, the lesson of Eli's "house" and Yhwh's "glory" going into exile will be lost on Israel as they burden themselves (and Yhwh) with monarchic heaviness.

#### 5.2.6 David "Glorifies" and "Exposes" Himself (2 Sam 6:20)

In 2 Samuel 6, Dtr resumes his earlier interplay of the terms כב"ד and גל"ה, this time giving it a new and ironic twist. As in the story of the death of Eli and his sons, where we last met the combination of כב"ד and גל"ה, the ark is present. In spite of Yhwh revealing himself (1 Sam 2:27) to Eli's forefathers, Eli and his sons glorified themselves rather than Yhwh. As a result Yhwh's "glory," as resident in the ark went into exile (1 Samuel 4). Green makes the important point that the ark was "not simply a surrogate for the deity, a sort of stand-in tremendum, nor simply a people's valued palladium."<sup>40</sup> Instead, she notes, "the ark is a

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<sup>38</sup> McCarter, *I Samuel*, 134.

<sup>39</sup> Miscall, *I Samuel*, 32.

<sup>40</sup> Barbara Green, *King Saul's Asking* (Interfaces; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003) 21.

tangible meeting place of God and people, a site where their mutual and intersecting fidelity (or the lack of it) will be put to the test”<sup>41</sup> (cf. Exod 29:42; 30:36; Num 17:4).

On the occasion of his bringing the ark into Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6), David dons a linen “ephod” (אֶפֹּד, 6:14), which as Firth notes, is “a garment typically associated with priests (see, e.g., 1 Sam. 2:18, 28).”<sup>42</sup> Citing R.D. Bergen,<sup>43</sup> Firth avers that this act “suggests that David acquired a priestly role with Jerusalem’s capture, a theme hinted at in Ps. 110:4.”<sup>44</sup> However, not only has David now stepped into the role of the priest-kings of Jerusalem (e.g., Melchizedek), but also *into the priestly role of Eli and the Elides* (see 1 Sam 2:28; 14:3). The role of Yhwh’s priestly “surrogate,” had been filled by Eli and his sons, a role in which they failed. As Dtr shows, David and his sons have now stepped into this role. Accordingly, what Yhwh has pronounced against Eli and his house, he has also pronounced against David and his sons (“**Those who honor me, I will honor** [אֲכַבֵּד מְכַבְּדִי], but those despise me **shall be cursed** [יִקְלָל],” 1 Sam 2:30; 2 Sam 12:9-10).<sup>45</sup>

It is in the context of priestly and royal intermediation with the divine on behalf of Israel that David’s entry into Jerusalem with the Ark, including Michal’s subsequent

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> David G. Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Apollos Old Testament Commentary 8; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009) 377.

<sup>43</sup> Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel* (NAC 7; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996) 329-30.

<sup>44</sup> Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 377.

<sup>45</sup> The first literary echo of the curse on Eli in the David story comes in 1 Sam 17:42-43, Goliath “despises” David and “curses” him “by his gods.” Still, later it will be David “despising” Yhwh (2 Sam 12:9-10) and subsequently himself will be “cursed,” or “treated lightly” (cf. 2 Sam 16:5-13; 19:21 [cf. 19:44]; 1 Kgs 2:8).

conversation with David, should be understood. Michal's "despising" David (2 Sam 6:16) is a prelude to David's own "despising" Yhwh (12:9-10). After watching David "dancing before Yhwh" from a window as the Ark is brought into the city, she does not hesitate to confront him and express her displeasure with his deed: "How has the king of Israel **glorified himself** [נִכְבַּד] today, who **has exposed himself** [גַּלְהָה] today to the eyes of his servants' slave girls, as when one of the idiots **brazenly exposes himself** [כְּהַגְלֹת נַגְלֹת]!"

That the linen ephod might easily leave the "nakedness" of the sacred officiant exposed in the presence of the ark stands behind the legislation requiring priests to wear linen pants when wearing the ephod in Exod 28:41-43.<sup>46</sup> The ritual "presence" or "glory" of Yhwh was to be safeguarded from human nakedness. Human eyes, in turn, were to be safeguarded from Yhwh's "glory." The question Michal raises is thus multifaceted: was David safeguarding Yhwh's "glory" from his own? Was David, as Yhwh's earthly surrogate, safeguarding his own "glory" from the eyes of the commonest elements of Israelite society?

Bruce Rosenstock writes:

When Michal speaks of how the king of Israel 'got himself glory' that day by revealing himself fully to all around him, she is contrasting David's glory with YHWH's glory. In bringing the ark and, therefore, the throne of YHWH into Jerusalem, David was enacting the divine analog of his own enthronement, and Michal points to this with her address to him as 'king of Israel'. But unlike YHWH whose glory remains hidden, David uncovered his nakedness. Thus, Michal's taunt is precisely directed at David's pretension to bring the divine glory into Jerusalem by the very reversal of YHWH's self-concealment."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Exod 39:28; Lev 6:10; 16:4; Ezek 44:18.

<sup>47</sup> Bruce Rosenstock, "David's Play: Fertility Rituals and the Glory of God in 2 Samuel 6," *JSOT* 31 (2006) 70.

David's response is as self-righteous as Michal's statement is acerbic: "Then David said, '—before Yhwh who has chosen me above your father and above his house to appoint me captain over Yhwh's people—over Israel—and I shall be merry before Yhwh and **I shall abase myself** [בִּוּנָקְלִי] even more than this, and I shall be base in your eyes but with the slave girls of which you have spoken I shall be **honored** [אֶכְבֹּדָה, "weighty"]'" (2 Sam 6:21). David's words here are more than an expressed willingness to "abase himself" further, however. The double-voiced expression וַיִּנְקֵלֵנִי subtly alludes back to Yhwh's decree to Eli: "those who glorify me [honor me], I will glorify; but those who despise me shall be cursed [i.e., treated lightly וַיִּקְלֵנִי]" (1 Sam 2:30). David thus, wittingly or unwittingly, here invokes Yhwh's curse on Eli and his sons. David who, like Eli, despises Yhwh (2 Sam 12:9-10; cf. 1 Sam 2:30) will also be "treated lightly" or "cursed." The example that Yhwh made of Eli and his sons (his "house"), is a lesson that David and his sons will largely ignore.

Polzin observes that the dialogue between David and Michal in 2 Sam 6:20-23 also involves a "thematic play" on קָלַל/כָּבֵד: "... just as 1 Samuel 4–6 continues to do in the sorcerers' counsel to the Philistines" (see 1 Sam 6:5-6).<sup>48</sup> "What unites these contrasts," he continues, "between honoring and cursing is the Deuteronomist's introductory meditation on kingship as honoring or cursing God."<sup>49</sup> Of the קָלַל/כָּבֵד statements found in 1 Sam 2:30; 3:13; 6:5 and 2 Sam 6:22, only the last of these "is obviously spoken by a king in defense of

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<sup>48</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 69.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.



his actions as king; the other statements never refer directly to royal performance, yet this is their main subject matter.”<sup>50</sup> Just as Eli and his sons’ glorifying themselves at Yhwh’s expense, i.e., “despising” Yhwh, incurred Yhwh’s curse, so too David and “sons” will fail to safeguard Yhwh’s glory, this activating the curse of 1 Sam 2:30 (see chapter three). Like the “baals” (Baalists)<sup>51</sup> of Shechem and Abimelech (Judg 9:56-57), Israel and Judah, along with their dynastic monarchies, will have their collective “evil” (רַעַה)<sup>52</sup> returned upon their heads, as a “curse” (קָלָל, Judg 9:57; 2 Kgs 22:19; the story of Abimelech’s fate showed how *literally* this could happen), for having themselves “cursed God” or having “treated” Yhwh “lightly” by their conduct (cf. esp. 1 Sam 3:13). The “curse” that Judah and its monarchy become (2 Kgs 22:19) by “cursing” and “despising” Yhwh (1 Sam 2:30; 3:13; 2 Sam 12:9-10) is the very outcome that Deuteronomy warns against (Deut 28:15, 45).

#### 5.2.7 “The Glory of Yhwh Had Filled the House of Yhwh” (1 Kgs 8:11)

After securing his throne, Solomon asks Yhwh for a “hearing heart to discern between good and bad, because who can judge your heavy people [עַמְךָ הַכֶּבֶד]?” (1 Kgs 3:9), a description which recalls Moses’s own word regarding his inability as a leader to fully govern Israel (cf. Exod 18:18; Num 11:14), and perhaps also an allusion to the people’s obduracy.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Bludorn, *Yahweh versus Baalism: A Theological Reading of the Gideon and Abimelech Narrative* (JSOTSup 329; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 182-247, see esp. 247.

<sup>52</sup> רַעַה\* in its various forms is the key term Dtr’s evaluation of monarchic evil-doing, beginning with David (2 Sam 11:28) and continuing all the way to Zedekiah.

Yhwh grants Solomon's request for wisdom, but Solomon's allusion to Moses's word raises doubt as to whether even this wisdom—and his leadership—will be sufficient.

Yhwh does not stop at granting Solomon wisdom. Yhwh also promises Solomon earthly incomparability among kings as King of Israel: "I have given to you—even wealth, even **glory** [כבוד] such that there shall not be any among kings like you all your days" (1 Kg 3:13), thereby making Solomon's glory an earthly analog of his own. Solomon's reign here is the very embodiment of Yhwh's favor toward Israel at its height and in all its bounty. Solomon's כבוד will befit the king of such an עם הכבד (a "heavy"—and "obdurate!"—people).

Where David thought "to bring the divine glory into Jerusalem by the very reversal of YHWH's self-concealment,"<sup>53</sup> Solomon subsequently succeeds in building a Sinai/Horeb-like sanctuary (Yhwh's "mountain") in which Yhwh deigns to reveal his glory. Where Yhwh legitimated David with his spirit (1 Sam 16:13), Dtr describes how Yhwh legitimates Solomon's temple with theophanic fire: "And it so happened that when the priests came forth from the holy place that the cloud filled the house of Yhwh, but the priests could not stand to minister in the presence of the cloud because Yhwh's glory [כבוד] filled the house of Yhwh" (1 Kgs 8:10-11). This description alludes to Exod 40:34-35, where Moses cannot enter the אהל מועד, because of Yhwh's "glory." It is also reminiscent of descriptions of Yhwh's

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<sup>53</sup> Rosenstock, "David's Play," 70.

glory elsewhere in the exodus story<sup>54</sup> and at Horeb (Deut 5:24). Solomon's kingship and royal acts are legitimated in a way that even David's kingship and legacy never are. For Dtr, "the Temple is the culmination and synthesis of all that has gone before in Israel's history."<sup>55</sup>

The כבוד of Yhwh (resident in the temple) together with Solomon's Yhwh-given כבוד, attract the monarchs of the nations. The queen of Sheba comes to see Solomon "with a very glorious entourage [army]" [בהיל כבוד מאד] bringing wealth (1 Kgs 10:2).

Unfortunately for Israel, the gradually "departing" glory of Yhwh's and Solomon's houses will also attract other, less amicable foreign visitors such as the important officials "the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh" (NRSV 2 Kgs 18:17), who "with a glorious army [בהיל כבוד]" (2 Kgs 18:17), will arrive in later years. On behalf of Sennacherib, these armies will come to despoil Israel and Judah's monarchic wealth, rather than augment it (see §5.3).

#### 5.2.8 Rehoboam's Even More "Glorious" Yoke (1 Kings 12)

1 Kings 12 clarifies the nature of Solomon's rule. Here Dtr further removes the "all is well" (שלום) veneer that begins to come off in 1 Kings 11. Jeroboam, no longer a political refugee in Egypt, comes to Rehoboam with a delegation from the northern tribes (12:3). They describe Solomon's "yoke" and "servitude" as "harsh"/"made harsh" (הקשה). They implore

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<sup>54</sup> See Exod 16:7, 10; 24:16-17; 29:43; 33:18, 22; Num 16:19, 42; 20:6.

<sup>55</sup> Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996) 112.

Rehoboam to now “lighten” (הקל) Solomon’s “heavy” (הכבד) yoke, promising that in return the northern tribes will continue to “serve” Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12:4).

Rehoboam wishes to know how to “answer” the people.<sup>56</sup> The advice of the “older men” among Rehoboam’s advisors is that he “become a servant to the people [עם] (a play on Rehoboam and Jeroboam), i.e., become a king in the mold of Deut 17:14-20. But instead of listening to the voice of reason, Rehoboam heeds the advice of the “young men” among his advisors: “You say to this people who spoke to you saying, ‘your father **made** our yoke **heavy** [הכבד], but you lighten it [הקל] off of us!’—thus shall you say to them: ‘my little member is thicker than the loins of my father! And now, whereas my father has imposed a heavy yoke upon you, I will add to your yoke: my father disciplined you with whips, but I shall discipline you with scorpions.’” (1 Kgs 12:10-11). When Jeroboam and the people come to Rehoboam for his official response (12:12), Rehoboam “answer[s] the people harshly,”<sup>57</sup> abandoning the wise counsel of his older advisors. He repeats the words of the young men (minus their preamble), threatening to add to the people’s “heavy” yoke under Solomon (12:14).

Rehoboam’s leadership as king of Israel and later only of Judah-Benjamin was a near-total, if not a total, failure. His refusal to lighten the monarchic “heaviness” of his father would make an end of the unity of the Israel and Judah, Yhwh’s עם סגל, who in turn,

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<sup>56</sup> Walsh (Ibid., 163) sees a pun in the word ענייתם which in pre-Masoretic texts could have been read both *‘anītām* (“answer them”) or *‘innītām* “afflict them” or (even more graphically) “rape them!” David and his sons were supposed to prevent the “sons of wickedness” from afflicting or raping Israel (see 2 Sam 7:10). So far, so bad (cf. also 2 Samuel 11, 13, 16; see chapter three).

<sup>57</sup> Walsh (Ibid., 164) also sees ייע (“and **he** [Rehoboam] **answered** the people harshly”) as “hinting” at “and he afflicted the people harshly,” or worse (see above).

would subsequently fail to safeguard Yhwh's glory, such that both kingdoms ended in forced exile. The monarchic heaviness of Solomon and Rehoboam becomes increasingly burdensome to Yhwh himself as Judah and its Davidic kings by-and-large "treat Yhwh lightly" by not only following in the ways of Jeroboam, but also in the ways of Ahab and Jezebel's Baal-worship (see 1 Kgs 16:31, "Is it a light thing ...?). If it had only been a matter of the king's "enjoying [his] glory" at home with heart lifted up (2 Kgs 14:10), Judah might have avoided exile. As it was, the kings mostly refused to "hear."

#### 5.2.9 Tiglath-pileser III: Exiler (2 Kings 15–16)

Dtr describes the beginning of the exile of the northern kingdom in a paronomasia that ties the names Tiglath-pileser (III) and Galilee to the root גל"ה: "uncover," "exile": "In the days of Pekah, **Tiglath**-pileser [תגלתי פלאסר] king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and **Galilee** [הגליל] and the whole land of Naphtali **and he exiled them** [וַיִּגְלֶם]" (2 Kgs 15:29). Cohn writes: "In a single word, without further explanation, the narrator names the policy that was to have such far reaching implications for Israel: *wayagglēm*, 'he exiled them.'"<sup>58</sup>

The name "Tiglath-pileser" is a hebraization of the Akkadian name *Tukultī-apil-Ešarra* ("my trust is in the heir of Ešarra"). Dtr shows no interest in the actual origin and meaning of this name—if indeed he was aware of it. He is, however, interested in its midrashic potential in Hebrew. Garsiel sees the name-element Tiglath [תגלתי] being

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<sup>58</sup> Robert L. Cohn, *2 Kings* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000) 108.

“exploited” here in connection with גל” (‘‘to exile’’).<sup>59</sup> Tiglath-pileser, at least as far as Israel and (later) Judah are concerned, is the instigator of the policy of ‘‘exile,’’ the midrashic wordplay on his name suggesting the idea of ‘‘exiler.’’ The inclusion of Galilee in this wordplay recalls Gilgal as the site of Yhwh’s ‘‘rolling away’’ the generation of faithless Israelites (‘‘the shame of Egypt’’) whose doom it was to remain outside the land (Josh 5:9; Deut 1:32; cf. Amos 5:5). Yhwh is now ‘‘rolling’’ Israel away into exile, like a shameful foreskin from his ‘‘presence.’’

Thus Dtr creates a paronomasia involving the names Tiglath-pileser, Galilee, and גל” thereby making the Assyrian king’s *nomen* an *omen*, not only of what is happening to the outlying areas of Israel, but also of what is about to happen to all of Israel and Judah. The promised exile has arrived, and neither Israel nor Judah will escape (cf. Amos 5:5).

Reinforcing his role as ‘‘exiler,’’ Dtr brings Tiglath-pileser back into the narrative in 2 Kgs 16:7, when he reports that Ahaz king of Judah, threatened by the alliance of Rezin (king of Syria) and Pekah of Israel, submitted himself to Tiglath-pileser as his vassal (‘‘I am your servant and your son’’) in order to procure his help in fending off the Israel-Syria alliance. Ahaz goes so far as to empty the treasury of Yhwh’s house of its sacred contents and send these to Tiglath-pileser as tribute (see §5.3.8). The wordplay on ‘‘Tiglath-pileser’’ then resumes: ‘‘And the king of Assyria listened to him and ... went up to Damascus and captured it and he exiled it [גל”], but Rezin he killed. Then Ahaz went out to meet Tiglath-pileser

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<sup>59</sup> Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* (trans. Phyllis Hackett; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991) 47–48.

[תגלת פלאסר] ...” (2 Kgs 16:9-10), at which point Ahaz sees Assyrian cultic practices at Damascus that he will adopt for Judah. This tendency toward foreign-inspired cultic innovation, begun under Solomon (1 Kgs 11:1-10), will reach its highpoint with Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:2-11) whose sins ensure Judah’s own “exile” and the end of its monarchy.

#### 5.2.10 Yhwh “Exiles” the Remainder of Israel out of His “Presence” (2 Kings 17–18)

The exile of the remainder of the north proceeds in 2 Kings 17 during the reign of Hosea son of Elah when Shalmaneser comes up against Israel, when the former proves a disloyal “servant” (i.e., vassal): “Shalmaneser [שלמנאסר] came up against him [Hosea] ... because the king of Assyria discovered a conspiracy in Hosea ... and he did not bring up tribute to the king of Assyria yearly, and so the king of Assyria shut him up [ויעצר] and bound him [ויאסר] in prison” (2 Kgs 17:3-4). As Garsiel indicates, the text plays on the name “Shalmaneser” in light of the verbs אסר and עצר: “Two synonyms,  $wy^{\prime}srhw$  and  $wy^{\prime}srhw$ , are employed to create an equation between the king’s name and the action which he commits in arresting the king of Israel.”<sup>60</sup> As with the name Tiglath-pileser and “exile,” the name “Shalmaneser” is the sign of what must happen to Hoshea: being “shut up” and “bound.” Dtr will deploy the same technique with the name “Nebuchadnezzar” (see §5.3).

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 47.

Subsequently, a king of Assyria (whether Shalmaneser or Sargon II)<sup>61</sup> besieges Samaria; a three-year siege ensues, at the end of which he proceeds to implement the imperial policy that Tiglath-pileser crafted, upon the remainder of Israel: “In the ninth year of Hosea, the king of Assyria conquered Samaria **and exiled** [וַיִּגְלֶה] Israel to Assyria and he forced them to dwell in Halah and at the Habor a river of Gozan and in the cities of the Medes” (17:6). The imperial policy of “exile” (גִּלָּה), begun under Tiglath-pileser, is now fully implemented on Israel under his successors.

Dtr states that among its sins Israel “ascribed to Yhwh their God things that were not so, and built high places for themselves in every city, from the watchtower (settlement) to the fortified city” (17:9). He here underscores the weight of the sins of sacrificing at the high places in the context of Israel’s entry into the land and dispossession of “the nations,” i.e., Yhwh’s “exiling” the nations whose practices Israel has adopted: “They burned incense there in all the high places just like the nations which Yhwh **exiled** [וַיִּגְלֶה] from their presence and they did evil things to vex Yhwh” (2 Kgs 17:11). On this view, Israel’s history is a repetition of the nations’ history in the land. What those “nations” did to merit “exile” Israel has also done: “they have served pieces of dung [גִּלְלִים], about which Yhwh said to them, ‘You shall not do this thing’” (17:12).

Just as Israel demanded kingship to be “like the nations,” Israel’s exile, Dtr makes clear, makes them “like the nations” that they emulated (cf. 2 Kgs 17:15). Israel was not,

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<sup>61</sup> See K. Lawson Younger Jr., “The Fall of Samaria in Light of Recent Research,” *CBQ* 61 (1999) 461-82. The identity of the “historical” king of Assyria at this point would have made little difference to Dtr.



however, the only object of the imperial policy instituted by Tiglath-pileser. In 17:24, Dtr indicates that the king of Assyria resettled people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim in the emptied towns of Samaria. He further notes that these dislocated persons did not, of course, fear (i.e., reverence) Yhwh at the beginning, and that consequently Yhwh sent “lions” which were killing them (17:25). And so, the Assyrians spoke to the king of Assyria thus: “the nations whom **you have exiled** [הַגָּלִיּוֹת] and settled in the cities of Samaria do not know the manner of the God of the land ...” (2 Kgs 17:26) According to Dtr, the king of Assyria provides a solution, namely, to send back one of the exiled Israelite priests to instruct the foreign “exiles” in the ways of the Bethel cult (17:27). This solution is carried into effect just as decreed by the king: “Then one of the priests whom **they exiled** [הַגָּלִיּוֹת] from Samaria came and resided at Bethel and he was the one instructing them how to fear [revere] Yhwh” (2 Kgs 17:28). As a result, “they became Yhwh-fearers but were servants to their own gods after the manner of the nations” (2 Kgs 17:33). Tiglath-pileser’s state policy of “exile” proves to be the tool Yhwh used even after the former’s death to remove Israel from his “presence.” Ironically, however, the “nations” transplanted to the land in place of Israel turned out to be little different from the latter: fearers of Yhwh, yet “serv[ants] of other gods, wood and stone” (Deut 28:36, 64). Unless Israel wholeheartedly turns to Yhwh and wholly keeps his covenant, little distinguishes Israel from those “nations.”

Dtr offers a summary notice of the Assyrian exile of Israel in 2 Kgs 18:11-12: “And the king of Assyria **exiled** [וַיִּגָּל] Israel ... because they did not hear [לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ] the voice of Yhwh their God, but transgressed his covenant—all that Moses, Yhwh’s servant

commanded—and would not hear [וְלֹא שָׁמַעַן] or do.” Israel had perpetually failed to “hear” Yhwh’s voice, just it had requested not to have to do at Horeb (Deut 18:16) and had failed to “hear” Yhwh’s “servants the prophets” (2 Kgs 17:13-14), prophets “raised up” (Deut 18:15-22) in response to Israel’s rejection of Yhwh’s immediate presence and voice, particularly the “raised up” Samuel (1 Sam 1:23) whom Israel refused to hear (1 Sam 8:19) and from whom Israel had “demanded” (8:10) a king as an additional intermediary.

Significantly, Dtr gives the above notice on Israel’s exile in the context of Hezekiah’s tribute to the Assyrians (2 Kgs 18:13-16), and subsequent narrow escape from them (18:17–19:35), his display of his treasuries to a visiting Babylonian embassy (20:12-15; see §5.3.9) and Isaiah’s subsequent prophecy of Hezekiah’s dynastic “sons” becoming eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (20:17-18), this forecasting the exile of Judah and the end of its Davidic monarchy. Israel’s failure to “hear” Yhwh, Samuel, and the other “raised up” prophets is finally “required” (Deut 18:19) of Israel in the form of exile, and the same failure will be “required” of Judah in the same way.

#### 5.2.11 “And Thus Judah was Exiled from Its Own Land” (2 Kgs 25:21)

The policy of גִּלְהָה instituted by Tiglath-pileser and executed by him upon Israel outlives both him and Assyria. Decades after Assyria’s ruin, Nebuchadnezzar will adopt this policy and use it to make an end of the kingdom of Judah. In spite of Josiah’s “sick” heart, Yhwh condemned Judah to “become a desolation and a curse [נֶלְקָלָהּ]” (2 Kgs 22:19),<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Mordecai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor (*II Kings* [AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988] 248) link the phrase וְהָיְתָה לְשִׁמְהָ לְמַשַּׁל וּלְשִׁנְיָנָה back to the language of Deut 28:37: וְהָיְתָה לְשִׁמְהָ וּלְקָלָהּ.

because his ancestors (especially his own grandfather) and Judah had despised Yhwh (see especially 1 Sam 2:30; 2 Sam 12:9-10). The fact that Huldah's oracle to Josiah (2 Kgs 22:18-20) offered him no hope of averting Judah's destruction, does not deter him from initiating reforms. And yet, Josiah's own sons do not sustain those reforms.

As Begg notes, "Dtr represents the preliminary Babylonian incursions as a first realization of Yahweh's announced resolve to destroy Judah for Manasseh's sins (cf. 22:16-17; 23:16-27)."<sup>63</sup> 2 Kgs 24:3 emphasizes that Manasseh's shedding of innocent blood put the monarchy, Judah, and Jerusalem beyond the bounds of Yhwh's forgiveness. Nevertheless, Dtr does not belabor that point afterward. Cohn writes, "Considering that Nebuchadnezzar's siege, conquest, and deportation mark the culminating event in the death throes of the kingdom, one might expect great drama. Instead the story is told as though there were a certain inevitability to it."<sup>64</sup> After all, this was the part of Israel and Judah's story with which the exiles themselves were most familiar, many of them personally.

When the forces of Nebuchadnezzar come calling (2 Kgs 24:10-11), the young, evil-doing Davidide, Jehoiachin (24:9), can only hand himself over. The strength of the royal covenant is, as regarding the kingdom of Judah, now entirely exhausted. Yhwh, who has preserved deteriorating pieces of Solomon's kingdom "for David's sake" (1 Kgs 11:12-23, 32, 34; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19; 19:34; 20:6), does so no longer. Dtr states that Jehoiachin and his entire retinue (mother, servants, officers, officials) "went forth [סָרְחוּ] to the king of Babylon" and

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<sup>63</sup> C.T. Begg, "2 Kings" (NJBC; 2nd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 185.

<sup>64</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 166.

that the latter “took him” and “brought forth [וַיֵּצֵא]” all of the contents of the temple and royal treasuries (see §5.3.10). The wordplay on the Qal and Hiphil forms of צֵא here is noteworthy given these forms’ importance in the “exodus formula” (variations on “[Yhwh] brought [you/us] forth out of Egypt”).<sup>65</sup> Here it signals the total undoing of the exodus.

Dtr next stresses the thoroughness of the exile through the repetition of גָּלַה. He states that Nebuchadnezzar “**exiled** [וַהֲגִילָהּ] all Jerusalem and all the leadership and all the valiant warriors—ten thousand were **her** [Jerusalem’s] **exiles** [גִּלְתָּהּ\*] (vs. MT גִּלָּהּ)—and every craftsman and smith, none were left except the poor of the people of the land. **And he exiled** [וַהֲגִילָהּ] Jehoiachin to Babylon and the king-mother and the king’s wives and his officers” (2 Kgs 24:14).

Jehoiachin’s uncle and Babylonian-appointed successor, Mattaniah-Zedekiah, fares far worse. After rebelling against his Babylonian overlord, Zedekiah flees during the siege of Jerusalem and is subsequently captured. He is taken to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, and the king of Babylon passes sentence upon him (25:5-6). Zedekiah watches as the Babylonians slaughter his sons before his very eyes and then his own eyes are put out (25:7). After destroying the temple with fire (see §5.4.14), the Babylonians exile the rest of Jerusalem: “then the remainder of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who fell away to the king of Babylon and the remnant of the rabble [הַמְּנוֹן; see §6.3] Nebuzaradan, captain of

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<sup>65</sup> See, e.g., Deut 1:27; 4:20; 6:12; 8:14; 16:1; 26:8; 29:25; Judg 6:8; 1 Sam 12:8; 1 Kgs 8:16; 9:9.

the guard, exiled [הגל]” (25:11). The policy of exile instituted under Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, is completed under Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Dtr concludes his גל-theme with this notice: “So Judah was exiled [ויגל] off of [מעל] their own land” (2 Kgs 25:21). Like the unfaithful wilderness generation that found themselves outside the land (Deut 1:32) and died there, the exiles of Judah witnessed that Yhwh had also “rolled [them] away” (Josh 5:9). Dtr mentions “exile” a final time in 2 Kgs 25:27, noting a change in—but not a reversal of—the fortunes of Jehoiachin (see chapter six). Here Dtr hints that “exile” for Israel, though thoroughgoing, need not be any more permanent than its ill-advised monarchy.

### 5.3 Nebuchadnezzar and the Despoliation of Yhwh’s “Good Treasury”

The story of the Davidides in the latter part of Dtr (1–2 Kings) is one of their varying degrees of loyalty of Yhwh. At best, the story of David’s house is one of mixed performance, just the story of David himself. Janzen observes, “The figure of David foreshadows the failure of his house to lead perfectly, and thus points exilic readers to the logical explanation of their trauma, which will centrally involve the failed leadership of the Davidides.”<sup>66</sup> One theme Dtr uses to illustrate the way in which Davidic leadership failures and mixed performances resulted in consistent trauma for Judah in particular, leading up to the time of the exile, is his *Leitmotif* of the royal and temple treasuries and their repeated despoiling.

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<sup>66</sup> David Janzen, *The Violent Gift: Trauma’s Subversion of the Deuteronomistic History’s Narrative* (LHB/OTS 561; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2012) 157.

The *Leitwort* in this *Leitmotif* is **אֵצֶר** (“treasure, treasury”), a theme which culminates in a paronomasia on the name Nebuchadnezzar, whom Dtr will reveal as the treasury-despoiler *par excellence*. Nebuchadnezzar’s final despoiling of the royal and temple treasuries will be a significant part of the trauma that he inflicts on Judah, as he brings to conclusion the greatest trauma of Israel’s existence (to that point).

### 5.3.1 “He Will Open to You His ‘Rain’ Treasure” (Deut 28:12)

Deuteronomy promises Israel that in consequence of, and reward for<sup>67</sup> Israel’s diligent obedience to “the voice of Yhwh your God by being careful to perform all of his commandments” (i.e., Deuteronomy), Yhwh would “give Israel to be the highest [על־יָי] above all the nations of the earth” (Deut 28:1) . Among the other numerous blessings for its obedience, Deuteronomy promises Israel that “Yhwh will open for you **his good treasury** [אֵצֶר הַטוֹב]—the heavens—by giving you rain upon your land in its season and by blessing every work of your hand and you shall bind many nations but you shall not be bound” (Deut 28:12).

The image of the heavens as Yhwh’s impregnable “treasury,” from which he dispenses blessings at his own initiative, would have been especially plaintive for Judahites in Babylon, some of whom had experienced Nebuchadnezzar’s exile and perhaps even seen the sacred vessels in the latter’s palace, unimpeachable testimonies of the final despoiling of the royal and temple treasuries in Jerusalem on the Babylonian king’s initiative.

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<sup>67</sup> Brueggemann (*Deuteronomy*, 256) notes that the blessings enumerated in Deut 28:1-4 suggest “blessing first as ‘natural’ *consequence* and second as intentional *reward*” (emphasis in original).

Mitchell Dahood has argued that the word מַטְוֶה in a number of instances connotes “rain” in particular (versus a more general “good”),<sup>68</sup> pointing to the cognate Ugaritic word *ṭbn*. This “good treasury” or “rain treasury” of the heavens as the source of life-sustaining precipitation (28:12; Job 38:22) could, however, be “shut up” (עָצַר, Deut 11:10-18; 1 Kgs 8:35, evidently a play on צָרָה) on account of Israel’s persistent disobedience and idolatry (cf. 1 Kgs 17:1; 18:1). On the other hand, if Israel honored Yhwh through covenantal obedience, the land that Yhwh gave Israel would be full of the good things produced by the rain from Yhwh’s “good treasury” (cf. Deut 7:13-14). Unfortunately, Israel and its kings opt for disobedience and idolatry with the result that there will instead be “famine”<sup>69</sup> and constant despoliation of the royal and temple treasuries of Judah.

### 5.3.2 “The House of Yhwh’s Treasury” (Josh 6:19, 24)

Regarding Israel’s impending subjection of Jericho to חֲרָם, Joshua instructs Israel that “all the silver and the implements of bronze and of iron [are] holy to Yhwh” and are to “be brought<sup>70</sup> into **Yhwh’s treasury** [הַיְּהוָה אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף]” (Josh 6:19). The items listed here, notably, are the very items that will be plundered from Yhwh’s treasury repeatedly under the ever-weakening Judahite monarchy, and despoiled a final time by Nebuchadnezzar, king of

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<sup>68</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1-50: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 16; New York: Doubleday, 1966) 23-25; idem, *Psalms II: 51-100* (AB 17; New York: Doubleday, 1973) 283.

<sup>69</sup> 1 Kgs 18:1; 2 Kgs 6:25; 8:1; 25:3; cf. 1 Kgs 8:37; 2 Kgs 7:4.

<sup>70</sup> Reading with LXX and the Targum.

Babylon. Solomon will fill Yhwh's treasury with these items, but Judah's kings will not be able to retain them.

Josh 6:24 records that when Jericho was finally "burned ... with fire and everything which was in it," Israel (with the sole exception of Achan) obediently "gave up" the "silver and the gold and the implements of bronze and iron to the treasury of Yhwh's house [אוצר בית יהוה]." The mention of "the house of Yhwh's treasury," i.e., "the treasury of the Lord's temple" is not a scribal anachronism,<sup>71</sup> but rather a literary device: it identifies Yhwh's treasury under Joshua's stewardship with the treasury of Yhwh's house under the stewardship of the Davidides. It also perhaps suggests that just as the earlier treasury of Yhwh was sacrosanct and not to be plundered or misappropriated for personal use, the later treasury of Yhwh was also sacrosanct and not to be plundered since they are the same treasury.

### 5.3.3 *Solomon and the "Treasuries" of Yhwh's House (1 Kgs 7:51)*

According to Dtr, at the time of the completion and dedication of Solomon's temple, Israel had not only a king greater than those of the nations (not merely "like the nations"), but also a temple and a temple treasury that were worthy earthly representations of the heavenly: Yhwh's "good treasury" (Deut 28:12). Solomon's "completion" (שלם) of the temple is marked by his bringing in "the holy things of David his father: the silver, the gold, and the (sacred) implements and plac[ing] [literally, giving, נתן] them into the treasuries of Yhwh's

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<sup>71</sup> See B.Z. Luria, "What is the Treasury of the Lord's Temple in Josh 6:24? [Hebrew]" *BM* 37 (1991-1992) 238-40.



house” (1 Kgs 7:51). The bounty within “the treasuries of Yhwh’s house” is a reflection of Yhwh’s having opened his “good treasury” above upon Israel.

The splendor of Solomon’s temple and Solomon himself—all was well, safe, and secure within Israel. In the history that follows, however, Dtr makes the temple and the temple treasury in particular a symbol of Israel and Judah’s decay—one of the truest measures of how endangered Yhwh’s “heritage” really was.

Paul S. Evans writes, “a close look at instances of Judahite monarchs despoiling the temple in the DH has shown that the actions are not criticized by Dtr. In most cases, the ‘offending’ king is assessed positively by the narrator, making it unlikely that these actions were viewed negatively.”<sup>72</sup> This, however, oversimplifies Dtr’s evaluative technique. Dtr, after all, evaluates David both positively and negatively. These despoliations need to be considered in the wider context of the monarchic history: Solomon’s amassing incomparable wealth into the royal and divine treasuries, followed by Shishak’s despoliation of the treasuries during Rehoboam’s reign all the way to Nebuchadnezzar’s final despoliation. Mullen’s observation that despoliation seems to occur as a punishment for cultic failure (e.g., failure to remove the high places) even in the case of kings whom Dtr gives generally positive evaluations still seems nearer the mark.<sup>73</sup> If Dtr really considered the “holy” things holy, it is

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<sup>72</sup> Paul S. Evans, “The Function of the Chronicler’s Temple Despoliation Notices in Light of Imperial Realities in Yehud,” *JBL* 129 (2010) 36.

<sup>73</sup> E. Theodore Mullen, “Crime and Punishment: The Sins of the King and the Despoliation of the Treasuries,” *CBQ* 54 (1992) 231–48. On p. 247 he writes: “In each instance, the account of the despoliation of the temple and palace treasuries provided a vehicle by which the deuteronomistic writer could comment on the lightness of the reign of individual kings. As such, the notice serves as a part of the ‘punishment’ of historical judgment delivered from deuteronomistic ideology. This ideology in turn was necessitated, with the exception of Hezekiah, by the failure to purify and consolidate worship in Jerusalem and to remove the *bāmôt*. In the case of

difficult to imagine that he would have viewed their repeated falling into Gentile hands as a positive—or even neutral—development.

Indeed, one might argue that the one trait that good and bad kings in Israel and Judah shared in common (Josiah excepted) was their collective and individual failure to safeguard Yhwh's glory—his name and holiness (hence, Dtr's consternation over good kings' failing to remove the high places). The royal and temple treasuries along with their treasures were representations of Yhwh's "good treasury" in the heavens. As such, their despoilment was a visible sign of a more disturbing theological reality: through its idolatry and failure to observe Deuteronomy Judah failed to safeguard Yhwh's glory and consequently Yhwh's anger was being "treasured up" against the people and the monarchy (cf. 2 Kgs 22:13).

While it is true Dtr does not single out temple despoliation as a sin (i.e., a crime) to which he specifically attaches a negative evaluation, these despoliations do appear to be a punishment for failure to fully safeguard Yhwh's glory/holiness in the cult (Hezekiah is a special exception that proves the rule). In other words, the despoliation notices are an unmistakable bellwether of Judah's overall decline.

The kings of Judah, far from being kings who would "go before [Israel] and fight [its] battles" (1 Sam 8:20), emerge as relatively impotent "treasurers," whose chief power lay in their leading (or not leading) the people into sin. The despoliations of the royal and temple treasuries under the later Judahite kings ultimately cannot be separated from the first

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Hezekiah, the despoliation notice serves to introduce the failure of the king to remain firm in trusting Yahweh, and the "punishment" exacted includes the loss of the treasuries of the temple and palace as well as the Assyrian attack."

despoliation by Shishak and the last by Nebuchadnezzar. The repeated despoliations of the treasuries of Yhwh's house cannot be viewed as a positive development—any more than the exile itself can be seen as positive.

#### 5.3.4 *Shishak (Sheshonq) “Takes” the Treasures (1 Kgs 14:26)*

Solomon is hardly offstage, when the impregnable “treasuries” of the temple and the Davidic monarchy are plundered for the first time. Following the account of the split between Jeroboam along with the northern kingdom and Rehoboam along with Judah, Dtr reports that in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, “Shishak [Sheshonq] came up against Jerusalem and took the treasures [אֲצֻרֹתַי] of Yhwh's house and the treasures [אֲצֻרֹתַי] of the king's house and took—all of it he took—and he took all of the shields of gold which Solomon had made” (1 Kgs 14:26). Rehoboam is then forced to make inferior bronze replacements for these shields. As Walsh observes, this is “a fitting emblem of the downturn in Judah's fortunes since Solomon's day and Judah's religious sin of replacing the worship of Yahweh with that of other gods.”<sup>74</sup>

Perhaps Shishak's invasion of Judah and despoilment of the royal and temple treasuries is highlighted for another reason. The name Shishak (שִׁשַׁק) —a hebraization of the Egyptian name Sheshonq (ššnq)—in a slightly altered form (שִׁשַׁק), served as an “atbash” cipher for Babel (בָּבֶל, i.e., Babylon) at the time of the exile (see Jer 25:26). Dtr is thus already looking forward to the last despoliation of royal and temple treasuries already at the

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<sup>74</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 207.

moment of their first despoliation. Egypt and Sheshonq foreshadow Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. The name נְבֻכַדְנֶצְצַר evokes “Babel” and the noun אֲנַר suggests “Nebuchadnezzar.”

### 5.3.5 Asa “Takes” the “Treasures” for Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 15:18)

Asa is one of the few kings of Judah or Israel whom Dtr can single out for his generally good conduct (1 Kgs 15:11). But Dtr shows that even the best of kings have faults that, in most cases, offset or nearly negate their merits. Dtr describes Asa’s cultic reforms as ambitious, setting a positive precedent for later kings like Hezekiah and Josiah. He removes the abhorrent קִדְשִׁים, the carved images which his ancestors (presumably Abijam, Rehoboam, and Solomon) had made, ousts his grandmother as גַּבִּירָה, and destroys her carved asherah, burning it by the Wadi Kidron (15:12-13). Unfortunately, however he fails to remove the high places (15:14), which, as Mullen notes, constitutes “a qualification of the otherwise positive evaluation,”<sup>75</sup> the “negative implications” of which “provide a commentary on the account of the war with Baasha that follows.”<sup>76</sup> Asa’s cultic “crime” of omission will be “punished” by his setting a very negative precedent: the use of the temple treasures as a bribe.

Dtr reports that Asa initially replenishes the plundered treasures: “He brought the holy things of his ancestors and his own holy things to the house of Yhwh: silver and gold and

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<sup>75</sup> Mullen, “Crime and Punishment,” 238.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

(sacred) implements” (1 Kgs 15:15). But when Baasha, king of Israel, threatens Jerusalem, Asa does not hesitate to re-plunder the treasuries to buy his way out of the threatening situation:

(18) Then Asa took all the silver and the gold which remained [הַנִּזְרִים] **in the treasuries** [בְּאִוצְרוֹתַי] of Yhwh’s house [and the treasures, אֲתֵּאוֹצְרוֹתַי]<sup>77</sup> of the king’s house and he gave them into the hand of his servants and king Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad ben Tabrimon ben Hezion, king of Aram, the one who dwells in Damascus, and said (19) “A covenant between me and you (as) between my father and your father. Lo, I am sending you a bribe [שָׁחָד] of silver and gold to you, overturn your covenant with Baasha king of Israel so that he may withdraw from me” (1 Kgs 15:18-19).

The ploy works and Ben-hadad removes the threat of Baasha and Israel (15:20-21).

Unfortunately, the long-term cost of Asa’s act will outweigh what is momentarily saved or gained. Walsh writes, “Asa’s reliance on foreign protection against Israel foreshadows the alliance of Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser, with its disastrous consequences for the Temple” (see 2 Kings 16).<sup>78</sup> Asa’s gambit buys more time for Judah, but sets a negative precedent for Judah’s later kings whose use of this “bribe” (1 Kgs 15:20-21) will—just as the “saving” acts of the earlier Judges failed to extricate Israel from its downward trajectory—ultimately fail to save Judah from the destruction that awaits it or to atone for its crimes. When Nebuchadnezzar’s forces come to Jerusalem to commence the exile of Judah, he—not the king of Judah—will bring out the “treasures” (2 Kgs 24:13) of Yhwh’s “house”: the initiative will be solely Nebuchadnezzar’s.

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<sup>77</sup> Missing in LXX.

<sup>78</sup> Jerome T. Walsh, “1 Kings” (NJBC; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) 170.

5.3.6 *Joash of Judah “Takes” the “Treasures” to Buy Off Hazael (2 Kgs 12:19)*

If nothing else, Asa’s willingness to buy Ben-Hadad’s protection with the wealth of Yhwh’s “treasuries” and Asa’s own was a lesson to the kings of Syria (and others) on how they could obtain quick wealth. Dtr, however, says nothing further about the royal or temple treasuries until his account of the reign of Jehoash, to whom he gives a generally positive evaluation (2 Kgs 12:2).

Jehoash emerges from the near-destruction of the house of David as a sign of hope to an ever-weakening Judah. In 2 Kgs 12:5-17, Dtr presents Jehoash’s positive reform of the temple’s finances for the repair, restoration, and maintenance of the temple, which as Begg notes, “narrates a positive cultic counterpart to the destruction of the Baal temple described in 2 Kgs 11:18” while “provid[ing] background for the subsequent presentation in 22:3-7.”<sup>79</sup> As Mullen observes, “These events clearly receive the support of the deuteronomistic writer and constitute the content for the positive aspect of the evaluation of his reign.”<sup>80</sup> However, Jehoash too, fails to remove the high places, and the people of Judah continue to offer sacrifice and incense at them (2 Kgs 12:3). Again this cultic sin of omission will be met with a punishment.<sup>81</sup>

After the usurper Hazael comes to power in Syria, he conquers Gath and subsequently goes up to attack Jerusalem (2 Kgs 12:18). Following precedent, “Joash king of Judah took all of the holy things that Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah his ancestors, kings of Judah,

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<sup>79</sup> Begg, “2 Kings,” 179.

<sup>80</sup> Mullen, “Crime and Punishment,” 239.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 239-40.

had hallowed and his own holy things and all the gold which could be found in the treasuries [בִּאֲצֵרוֹת] of Yhwh's house and of the king's house and he sent them to Hazael, and he withdrew from him" (2 Kgs 12:19).

Begg observes that "this brief incident links up with the preceding in that it too concerns the fate of the Temple under Jehoash, while as a 'despoliation notice' it foreshadows the final loss of royal and Temple treasures in 587."<sup>82</sup> Again this brief text, in its use of the *Leitwort* אֲצֹרֹת harks back to Solomon's (re-)establishment of the temple treasuries (1 Kgs 7:51), but more importantly, fore-echoes the name Nebuchadnezzar, anticipating the humiliating initiatives of this final despoiler of the royal and temple treasuries and exiler of Judah.

#### 5.3.7 Jehoash of Israel "Takes" Amaziah's "Treasures" (2 Kgs 14:14)

The reign of Amaziah marks a further development in Dtr's אֲצֹרֹת-theme. Amaziah, like his father Joash, is given a positive evaluation (2 Kgs 14:3), but he too fails to remove the high places (14:4). Cohn notes that Dtr sees "his acts [as] comparable not to David's but to those of his father Jehoash [Joash]."<sup>83</sup> Amaziah's "crime" of omission is met with a "punishment," i.e., "the conclusion of his reign is marked by disaster."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Begg, "2 Kings," 179.

<sup>83</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 99.

<sup>84</sup> Mullen, "Crime and Punishment," 241.

Amaziah's "punishment" begins when, flushed with success in his campaign against the Edomites (2 Kgs 14:7), he challenges Jehoash, king of Israel, to "come" so that they might "look each other in the face," clearly a hostile throwing-down of the gauntlet (14:8). Jehoash responds with a **משל** that is very reminiscent of Jotham's **משל** in Judges 9 (14:9-10). Dtr then notes, "But Amaziah would not hear [לֹא-שָׁמַע]" (2 Kgs 14:11), Israel and Judah's cardinal sin.<sup>85</sup> As a result of his unwillingness to "hear" the voice of reason, Amaziah and Judah are soundly defeated and the Judahite forces scattered (14:12).

The scene that follows is a strong foretaste of what Judah will experience under Nebuchadnezzar. First, Jehoash takes Amaziah prisoner and commences a partial destruction of Jerusalem (14:13). But this is not all: "Then he [Jehoash] took all of the gold and silver and all of the (holy) implements which could be found in the house of Yhwh and **in the treasuries** [וּבִצְרוֹת] of the king's house and hostages and he returned to Samaria" (2 Kgs 14:14). The royal and temple treasuries (צִירוֹת) have been mysteriously (providentially?) replenished sufficiently since Joash's time, but only to be plundered yet again under Amaziah.<sup>86</sup> Now it is the king of Israel who gets into the act of despoiling Yhwh's treasuries and those of the Judahite monarchy, a further development of the despoliation theme. For Amaziah the defeat

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<sup>85</sup> See especially 2 Kgs 22:13; Cf. Bowen, *Rejective Requests and Deadly Disobedience*, 95-97, 101-108.

<sup>86</sup> Begg ("2 Kings," 180) writes: "Jehoash likewise plunders the treasures of palace and Temple which had somehow been replenished following Joash's buying off of Hazael."



of Jerusalem and the despoliation of the treasuries proves to be “a punishment for the failure to remove the illicit places of worship.”<sup>87</sup>

Cohn argues that the northern king Jehoash is here depicted in a more favorable light than Amaziah his Judahite counterpart: “In all of this retribution, including the taking of hostages, J[eh]oash is not criticized. Indeed, wisdom is issued in his voice, while Amaziah is shown paying the price of his folly.”<sup>88</sup> He further notes that “unlike Amaziah who was not satisfied with his victory over Edom, Joash defeats Amaziah and departs.”<sup>89</sup> The whole story speaks to the weakening of Judah under its evil king, the *Leitwort* אִשָּׁרָה looking forward to those final moments when the Davidic monarchy’s failure will be complete with Nebuchadnezzar’s final despoliation and the exile.

#### 5.3.8 Ahaz “Takes” the Davidic “Treasures” of Yhwh for Tiglath-pileser (2 Kgs 16:7-8)

Beginning in 2 Kings 15, the theme of the despoliation of the Judahite treasures progresses from the buying off of Aramean kings to the involvement of a much more dangerous player and foe. For Dtr, the reign of the northern king Menahem marks the literary entry of the Assyrians. Menahem is obliged to buy off “Pul” (Tiglath-pileser III) to help him secure his kingship (15:19). Menahem exacts the required tribute of a thousand talents of silver from his people, successfully staving off exile for the moment (15:20). He temporarily preserves his kingdom, but—unfortunately for him—neither his kingship nor his life. Pekah

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<sup>87</sup> Mullen, “Crime and Punishment,” 241.

<sup>88</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 101.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

ben Remaliah, one of his officers, assassinates Menahem and usurps the throne (15:25). It is during Pekah's reign that Tiglath-pileser begins the exile of the northern kingdom (15:29; see §5.2.9). Hoshea ben Elah subsequently assassinates Pekah (15:30).

The kingdom of Judah scarcely fares better and, like Menahem of Israel, its kings are unable to avoid paying tribute. Jotham succeeds Azariah (15:32), and Ahaz succeeds Jotham (15:38). The latter "does right in Yhwh's sight," but fails to remove the high places (15:34-35). Ahaz both fails to do "right" (16:2) and to remove the high places (16:4), this in addition to "his walk[ing] in the way of the kings of Israel, and causing his son to pass through fire according to the abominations of the nations" (16:3; see §5.4.11).

On account of these particularly egregious failures to safeguard Yhwh's glory, and perhaps too Ahaz' related failure to trust Yhwh, especially in the face of the threat posed by Pekah and Rezin (cf. Isa 7:9), Yhwh refuses to safeguard the royal and temple treasuries. Rather than appealing to Yhwh and his covenant for salvation, Ahaz appeals to a foreign covenant, begging Tiglath-pileser for salvation: "Then Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, king of saying 'I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the palm of the king of Aram and from the palm of the king of Israel who have risen up against me.' And Ahaz took the silver and the gold which could be found <in the treasuries of [בִּצְרוֹת]>><sup>90</sup> Yhwh's house **and in the treasuries** [וּבִצְרוֹת] of the king's house and sent them to the king of Assyria as a bribe" (2 Kgs 16:7-8). Mullen concludes, "No doubt, this

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<sup>90</sup> See LXX.

action is to be interpreted as both a part of Ahaz's crime and a part of his punishment."<sup>91</sup> Cohn notes that Dtr's "focus is on the initiative of Ahaz,"<sup>92</sup> though it is the absence of any intervention by Yhwh to safeguard the temple that speaks loudest.

The episode results in Ahaz's subsequent incorporation of foreign elements into Judah's religious life and additional "nations"-inspired modifications to the temple (2 Kgs 16:10-18), the "house" which had legitimated by Yhwh's "glory" (1 Kgs 8:11). Dtr again invokes the legacy of Solomon as "temple builder" and "treasurer" here. Now, however, those treasuries are again being depleted rather than replenished, and the glory of Yhwh's incomparable house changed (cf. Ps 106:20; Jer 2:11; Hos 4:7) in accord with Solomon's post-temple-building cultic misdeeds. Ahaz's covenantal appeal to Tiglath-pileser the "father" of Israel's "exile" and his yielding up the contents of Yhwh's treasuries [אֲצֻרֹתַי] is ironically appropriate, given the exile that awaits Judah at the hands of its greatest despoiler, Nebuchadnezzar.

#### *5.3.9 Hezekiah, the Treasury, and Babylon (2 Kgs 18:15; 20:13-17)*

Early in Dtr's account of Hezekiah's exemplary life, he receives a "curious" incomparability notice: "In Yhwh God of Israel he trusted [בַּטָּח], such that after him there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah ..." (2 Kgs 18:5). The notice is not only curious in view of what will later be said about Josiah (2 Kgs 23:25), but also in view of what

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<sup>91</sup> Mullen, "Crime and Punishment," 242.

<sup>92</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 115.

immediately follows.<sup>93</sup> In 18:7, the narrator states that Hezekiah “rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him,” presumably a pious act of “trust” in Yhwh. But when Sennacherib comes up with his forces and completes the exile of the northern kingdom begun under Tiglath-pileser (18:9-12) and takes all of the “fortified towns of Judah” (18:13), Hezekiah quickly buckles, evincing an apparent lack of trust in Yhwh. By way of a letter, Hezekiah confesses to the king of Assyria: “‘I have sinned against you! Turn back from me and whatever you impose upon me, I will bear.’ Then Hezekiah gave up all the silver which could be found [in the treasuries of] Yhwh’s house and **in the treasuries** [וּבְאֲצִרוֹתַי] of the king’s house. At that time Hezekiah cut apart the doors of Yhwh’s house and the supports which Hezekiah the king of Judah himself had had overlaid and he gave them to the king of Assyria” (18:15-16).

Mullen notes that this act is “rather remarkable in light of the evaluation given by the historian ... From the actions of Hezekiah, it is apparent that his decision not to serve Assyria (v. 7b), which had been rewarded by Yahweh, had now been reversed. As a result, Sennacherib placed Judah and Hezekiah under tribute.”<sup>94</sup> In other words, Hezekiah’s faltering “trust” is immediately punished with the loss of the royal and temple treasures.

Fortunately for Hezekiah and Judah, the story does not end there. Hezekiah again puts his “trust” (בְּטַח) in Yhwh and he and Judah are miraculously delivered from Sennacherib

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<sup>93</sup> Janzen (*Violent Gift*, 232) wrestles with “the question of why Hezekiah’s great trust and proper cultic reform of [2 Kgs] 18:1-6—an act of repentance, although the narrative does not explicitly call it that—is met with invasion and siege.”

<sup>94</sup> Mullen, “Crime and Punishment,” 245.

[סנחריב], who is reportedly “killed by the sword” [בחרב] (19:7, 37) on account of his “reviling” (חרפת, 19:17, 23-24) Yhwh and the Assyrian kings’ rampant “destroying” [החרִיבוּ] of nations (19:18).<sup>95</sup>

Following Hezekiah’s miraculous recovery from his life-threatening illness, Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon sends emissaries with letters and a gift for Hezekiah. Hezekiah responds in Solomon-esque fashion by “show[ing] them his whole treasure-house: the silver and the gold and the balsam and the good oil, and the house of implements and everything which was found in his treasuries [באוצרותיו]—there was nothing which Hezekiah did not show them in his house and in all his domain” (2 Kgs 20:13).

The prophet Isaiah, upon becoming aware of this development, confronts Hezekiah and demands to know who the messengers were, where they had come from, and what they had seen (20:14-15). Hezekiah responds, “They saw everything which was in my house; there is nothing that I did not show them within my treasuries [באוצרותי]” (20:15). Isaiah then declares the consequences of Hezekiah’s vainglorious deed: “Hear the word of Yhwh: ‘Lo, days are coming when all that which is in your house and that which your ancestors **have treasured up** [אצרו] until this day shall be carried off and nothing shall remain’ says Yhwh” (20:17). Dtr here makes literary use of the plural noun form אוצר[ות] and the verb אצר in Isaiah’s prophecy as a wordplay that hints at the name of the one who will shortly fulfill

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<sup>95</sup> Garsiel (*Biblical Names*, 46-47) detects wordplay on the name “Sennacharib” in Isaiah’s oracle (2 Kgs 19:20-31) involving an interplay with חרב (“sword”), as well as his own death thereby (19:37).

Yhwh's decree and carry off Hezekiah's treasures along with his surviving descendants:  
Nebuchadnezzar.

*5.3.10 Nebuchadnezzar takes the "Treasures" (2 Kgs 24:13)*

Dtr's meticulous attention to the state of the temple treasury and its treasures reaches its culminating point in 2 Kings 24,<sup>96</sup> when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar commence the long-promised exile of Judah. Josiah's sons prove no better than his ancestors. Jehoiachin, Josiah's grandson, acceding at eighteen years old, rules all of three months before his surrender to the Babylonian siege that began under Jehoiakim. As the text now reads, Jehoiachin not only "goes forth [וַיֵּצֵא]" but "he brought forth [וַיַּבְרֵא] ... all of the treasures [אֲצֻרֹתַי] of the house of Yhwh and the treasures [אֲצֻרֹתַי] of the king's house and cut apart all the gold which Solomon the king of Israel made for the temple of Yhwh according to that which Yhwh had spoken" (2 Kgs 24:13).

Begg writes, "In a final fulfillment notice Dtr represents the Babylonian despoliation of the Temple as a realization of Isaiah's word to Hezekiah in 20:18."<sup>97</sup> Here too, Dtr's focus on the treasures from the time of Solomon onward and their continual despoliation from the time of Rehoboam onward reaches its climax in a wordplay on "treasures" and the name Nebuchadnezzar. Here, notes Garsiel, "the name is ... written as *nbwkn'sr* (נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר),

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<sup>96</sup> Marc Z. Brettler ("2 Kings 24:13-14 as History," *CBQ* 53 [1991] 541-552) suggests that the notice of 2 Kgs 24:13-14 originally described the situation under Zedekiah, perhaps as part of 2 Kings 25, or as a gloss between chapters 24-25.

<sup>97</sup> Begg, "2 Kings," 185.

whose last three letters ך, ם, and ר (r), form the noun ךַּשְׁר (אֶשְׁרָה; treasure).”<sup>98</sup> Here Dtr’s interest may be both in “exploiting”<sup>99</sup> the name Nebuchadnezzar and the idea of the אֶשְׁרָה, a word that seems to derive from the idea of tying or bundling harvested plants together for (food) storage.<sup>100</sup> The verb \*nšr, phonetically similar though etymologically unrelated to אֶשְׁרָה, in both Hebrew and Akkadian, denotes “watching” with the intent to “guard” or “protect.”

Through his use of paronomasia, Dtr uses the name “Nebuchadnezzar” as the ultimate exclamation point on his “treasury” theme. The despoiling of the royal and temple treasuries was both a “crime and punishment” for Judah’s monarchy. Just as Tiglath-pileser (III)’s name embodied the policy and legacy of “exile” (גִּלְדָּה) to which both Israel and Judah were subjected, so Nebuchadnezzar and his despoliations of the royal and temple “treasuries” (אֶשְׁרָה, אֶשְׁרָה) emblemized Yhwh’s refusal<sup>101</sup> to protect Judah and the Davidic dynasty inasmuch as Judah and its monarchy failed to safeguard Yhwh’s glory. The status afforded to Israel as Yhwh’s own עַם־סֹגֵלֵה was only advantageous to the degree that Israel kept the legislation of Deuteronomy.

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<sup>98</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 48.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Arabic ʿašara, “tie up,” ʿaišar, bundle of plants tied together (see *HALOT*, 82).

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Jer 27:6.

#### 5.4 Josiah: “Man” of God, “Fire” of Yhwh

The human figure dearest to Dtr in the whole history of Israel and Judah is Josiah. Dtr’s admiration for Josiah, however, is not based on his kingship, but rather on his repentance (“turning,” 2 Kgs 23:25) and positive “Deuteronomic” leadership. Only Moses and Joshua are said to have lead Israel as effectively as Josiah did in carrying out the legislation of Deuteronomy. Dtr, having the benefit of the hindsight of the exile of 587 BCE, cannot make of Josiah’s life a literary expiation for the sins of Israel and Judah and the kings who came before him, and does not even try. Dtr, rather, reveres and makes an example of Josiah’s willingness to enforce the legislation of Deuteronomy, even as he is offered no hope that his obedience will alter his or Judah’s appointed fate.<sup>102</sup>

For Dtr, Josiah is more a leader in the mold of Joshua than even David.<sup>103</sup> He is a more confident version of Gideon without the latter’s subsequent polygamy and cultic apostasy. He is David without moral failings and without a murderous disposition. He is the opposite of Solomon, who at the height of Yhwh’s “peace” apostatizes from Yhwh; instead, at the threshold of Judah’s assured exile, he demonstrates more heartfelt love and obedience (“hearing”) than any Israelite since the time of Moses and Joshua. The royal activity that Dtr remembers him for—warfare against so-called non-“Yahwistic” elements of Israelite and Judahite cultic praxis (Baal, the asherah, the worship of the sun and the heavenly hosts, etc.)—more nearly approaches the activity of Elijah and Elisha, two bearers of the title “man

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. On the didactic function of Josiah’s death in Dtr, see Leslie J. Hoppe, “The Death of Josiah and the Meaning of Deuteronomy,” *LASBF* 48 (1998) 31-47.

<sup>103</sup> On the points of similarity between Joshua and later royal figures, particularly Josiah, see Richard D. Nelson, “Josiah in the Book of Joshua,” *JBL* 100 (1981) 531-40.



of God,” than it does the often illicit royal activities of his predecessors. Dtr shows that Josiah is even superior to these men of God in his use of divine fire at Bethel and in the cities of Samaria, as stipulated by Deuteronomy, this making him the “man of God” par excellence.

Thus, in the section that follows, I will explore the intertwined onomastic literary connections that Dtr makes among Yhwh’s “unique” theophanic “fire,” the ritual “fire” with which Israel was to eradicate the cultic elements of the “nations,” the title “man of God,” and the name “Josiah” (and secondarily “Joash,” “Gideon” / “Jerubbaal,” and “Abimelech”). “Fire” emerges not only as a symbol of obedience to Deuteronomy, but paradoxically as a symbol of the worst kind of disobedience and the inherent destructiveness of monarchy. It is the very tool with which Judah and the symbols of its Davidic monarchy are finally destroyed.

#### *5.4.1 Yhwh as “Consuming Fire” (Deuteronomy 4–5; 9:3)*

At the outset of Deuteronomy, Dtr stresses that Yhwh was the God who, throughout the exodus and the wilderness period, was “walking before you along the way, seeking you out a place, leading you<sup>104</sup> with fire [בִּשְׁאֵל] by night by showing you the way in which you must walk, and with a cloud by day” (Deut 1:33-34). Israel was never to forget its theophanic experience of Yhwh at Horeb (i.e., how “the mountain burned with fire [בִּשְׁאֵל]” [5:23], their having seen his “glorious greatness and their having heard his voice from inside the fire” [מִתּוֹכ־הָאֵשׁ, 5:24; cf. 4:12, 33]). The memory of Yhwh’s theophanic fire was to work on hearts of the Israelites from generation to generation, inculcating his law, parallel to the way

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<sup>104</sup> Reading with LXX.

that Yhwh wrote that law on the stone tablets (cf. Deut 10:4). Deut 4:24 declares “Yhwh your God is a consuming fire [אש אכלה], a jealous God [אל קנא].” Deut 9:3 specifies how Yhwh as “consuming fire” would annihilate Israel’s enemies before them,<sup>105</sup> i.e. by his zeal.

The description of Yhwh as קנא<sup>106</sup> (“jealous” or “zealous”)<sup>107</sup> also has connections to his theophanic fire (see especially Deut 6:14-15; 32:21-22).<sup>108</sup> This “zeal” denotes in particular the “intolerance of rivalry or unfaithfulness.”<sup>109</sup> The implication of Deut 6:4-5 is that Israel was, in turn, to be zealous for Yhwh. Relatively few figures in Israel’s wider history,<sup>110</sup> or in Dtr, receive this commendation, at least in explicit terms. In Dtr this characteristic is ascribed to Elijah (by himself, 1 Kgs 19:10, 14) and Jehu (by himself, 2 Kgs 10:16) in the Elijah-Elisha cycle, and thus pertains to the “character zone” of the man of God. Just as Yhwh’s “zeal” involved the irruption of his theophanic “fire,” true zeal for Yhwh was also to involve the use of “fire” (see below, 5.4.2). Apart from Elijah’s making use of “divine

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<sup>105</sup> “But know today that Yhwh your God, he is the one crossing over before you: he is a consuming fire [אש אכלה] and he will annihilate them and he will subjugate them [יכניעם] before you, and dispossess them, and destroy them swiftly just as Yhwh has spoken” (Deut 9:3).

<sup>106</sup> He is so described not only here in Deut 4:24, but also in Deut 5:9; 6:15; 2 Kgs 19:31 (Isa 37:32), as well as Exod 20:5; 34:14; 24:19; Ezek 5:13; 39:25; Nahum 1:2; cf. Isa 9:7; 59:17; 63:15; Joel 2:18; Zech 1:14; 8:2.

<sup>107</sup> As Moshe Weinfeld (*Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991] 208) notes, English “jealousy” is derived from Latin *zelus*, and it is in its primary sense of “zeal,” rather than the later derived sense (i.e., not “jealous” > “envious,” “covetous”) that the term is to be understood here.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> E.g., Phineas, Num 25:11, 13. On the ethics of “zeal” for God in scripture and its historical (and ongoing) consequences for the problem of human violence, see John J. Collins, “The Zeal of Phineas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence,” *JBL* 122 (2003) 3-21.

fire” in his contest with Baal and his priests, only Josiah both exhibits and *maintains* “zeal” through the use of fire.

#### 5.4.2 “You Shall Burn their Carved Images with Fire” (Deut 7:5; 12:3)

The **דברים** statutes of the cult centralization legislation (in theory) made Israel themselves Yhwh’s surrogates in purveying Yhwh’s “consuming fire,” “executing Yhwh’s wrath” as 1 Sam 15:28 phrases it. The goal of this legislation, at least in part, was to make a sanctuary out of the land. To this end, Israel was to be Yhwh’s instrument in making a full end of the cult sites of the nations and their paraphernalia. The destructive “fire” used was to be a ritualized extension of the destructive theophanic fire of Yhwh’s “zeal” (Deuteronomy 4; 9:3) that would go before Israel and “consume” the nations: “But you shall do thus to them [i.e., the nations under the ban]: their altars you shall throw down, and their pillars you shall smash and their asherahs you shall hack to pieces [תגדעון] and their carved images you shall burn with fire [תשרפון באש]” (Deut 7:5) The above stipulation regarding carved images is reiterated in Deut 7:25: “The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire [תשרפון באש]. You shall not covet the silver and gold upon them, and you shall not take it to yourself lest you be ensnared by it.”

The legislation of Deuteronomy 12 is similar: “...but you shall throw down their altars and you shall smash their pillars and their asherahs you shall burn with fire [תשרפון באש], and the carved images of their gods you shall hack to pieces [תגדעון] and you shall destroy their names from that place” (Deut 12:3). Much of Dtr’s negative evaluation of Israel

and its leadership rests on their non-performance of the legislation of Deuteronomy 7 and 12, which Israel (including Judah) and its leadership, with few notable exceptions, fail to enact. Several figures do, however, distinguish themselves by their attempts to enact this legislation.

#### 5.4.3. The “Abomination of Yhwh”: Child Sacrifice (Deut 12:31; 18:10)

In stark contrast to Yhwh’s theophanic “fire,” and the ritual extension of the “fire” of his zeal legislated against the nations, stands the “fire” used in illicit child sacrifice. Yhwh forbade Israel to have any part of this “fire”: “You shall not do thus to Yhwh, because every abomination of Yhwh which he hates they have done to [or, for] their gods, including **burning** their sons and their daughters **with fire** [שָׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ] to their gods” (12:31). Deut 18:10 is equally explicit: “There must not be found among you **anyone who causes** his son or his daughter **to pass** [מַעֲבִיר] **through the fire** [בָּאֵשׁ].”

Although the historical relationship between Yhwh and the sacrifice of the firstborn is unclear, it is amply clear that Dtr disapproved of child sacrifices, including the rite of causing one’s son or daughter to pass through the fire (Deut 18:10; 2 Kgs 16:3; 17:17; 21:6), a practice which he nominally associates with the *MLK*-offering (2 Kgs 23:10; cf. especially 2 Kgs 17:3; cf. also 1 Kgs 11:7; Jer 32:35; Lev 18:21).<sup>111</sup> If Yhwh is the true “consuming fire,”

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<sup>111</sup> On the *MLK*-offering, see Otto Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff im Punischen und Hebräischen, und das Ende des Gottes Moloch = El Molk como concepto del Sacrificio Punico y Hebreo y el final del Dios Moloch* (ed. Carlos González Wagner and Luis Alberto Ruiz; Cabrero Madrid: Centro de Estudios Fenicios y Punicos, 2002); Klaus Koch, “Molek Astral,” in *Mythos im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt: Festschrift für Hans-Peter Müller zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Armin Lange, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Diethard Römheld; BZAW 278; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999) 29-50; Ed Noort, “Child Sacrifice in Ancient Israel: The Status Quaestionis,” in *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (ed. Jan N. Bremmer; SHAR 1; Louvain: Peeters, 2007) 103-25; Bennie H. Reynolds III, “Molek: Dead or Alive? The Meaning and Derivation of mlk and מֹלֵךְ,” in

i.e., the God of glory, then the illicit sacrifice of firstborn children “through fire” was the sacrilegious countertype of his fire. Just as cultic images were an affront to Yhwh, whose “image” was beyond range, Dtr seems to envision the “fire” of the *MLK*-offering as a mockery, perversion, or pale imitation of Yhwh’s incomparable “glory.”

#### 5.4.4 Eradicating “Trouble” with “Fire” (Judg 7:15, 25)

Israel faithfully subjected Jericho to the “fire” legislated against the nations in Deuteronomy (Josh 6:24). While the exemption of Rahab and her father’s house from חורבן showed that even those ethnically from the “nations” might receive Yhwh’s “lifesaving grace” (חסד) and escape Yhwh’s destructive “fire” (Deut 9:3), the ensuing episode shows that Israelites who do not keep the legislation of Deuteronomy can themselves be subjected to חורבן and Yhwh’s “fire.” As noted previously, Achan’s “troubling” of Israel by violating the חורבן-statues not only brought punishment on himself, but also led to the eradication of his entire “house.” In Josh 7:15, Joshua declares that the חורבן-offender, once discovered, would “be burned with fire [ישרף באש].” As Nelson observes, “burning was thought appropriate for the gravest sexual offenses (Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; 21:9) and seems to have been intended to extinguish the offender’s personhood by reducing him or her to the most infinitesimal form possible.”<sup>112</sup> Achan’s sin is labeled נבלה (“[destructive] foolishness”), a

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*Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. Karin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange and K.F. Diethard Römheld; NBS/SHR 112; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 133-50.

<sup>112</sup> Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1997) 105.

term elsewhere used of highly disordered sexual sins,<sup>113</sup> sins deemed worthy of fire or burning.

True to Joshua's word, Achan is identified as the "troubler" of Israel and the people stone his whole household and "burn them with fire" (7:25).<sup>114</sup> The "fire" of execution is both an extension of Yhwh's own theophanic fire (the fire of his "presence") and a symbol of the "fierceness of [his] anger," from which Yhwh then "turns away" (7:26). Not only does the "burning" of Achan the Judahite and his house "with fire" serve as a didactic lesson to Israel regarding Deuteronomy-observance in general and דבר in particular, it also ominously foreshadows the fate of Judah when Nebuchadnezzar's forces come with fire (2 Kgs 25:9), the end result of the people and its Davidic leadership's failure to follow the program prescribed in Deuteronomy, to "give glory to Yhwh" (Josh 7:19).

#### 5.4.5 "Fire Out of the Rock": Gideon, Son of Joash (Judg 6:21)

The narrative's treatment of Gideon and Abimelech represent two clear-cut examples of the literary use of names as antimonarchic polemic. Gideon, the protagonist of Judges 6–8 is the beneficiary of two literarily exploited names, "Gideon" and "Jerubbaal." That the

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<sup>113</sup> See discussion in §3.1; § 3.2; §3.2.1; §3.5.7.

<sup>114</sup> Reading with MT versus LXX. Robert G. Boling and G. Ernest Wright (*Joshua: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 6; New York: Doubleday, 1982] 220) note, "The versions show haplographies omitting all of this (LXX<sup>AB</sup>) or only the last half of it (Syriac, Vulgate). Losses triggered by the ubiquity of converted imperfections in Hebrew narrative, are ... the most common kind of scribal lapse. The apparent redundancy in MT, followed here, may have an explanation other than mere conflation."

emergence of the monarchy<sup>115</sup> is already in view is evident in Judg 6:15 (“I am the least in my Father’s house”), where Gideon expresses a sentiment nearly identical to what Saul says of himself in 1 Sam 9:21: “Surely I am only a Benjaminite, from the littlest of the tribes of Israel and my clan is the least of all the clans of the tribes of Benjamin.”<sup>116</sup>

Dtr’s wordplay on “Gideon” comes on the heels of his “Yhwh-Shalom” etiology:

“Then Yhwh [יהוה] said him: ‘Peace be to you. Do not fear. You shall not die.’ And Gideon built an altar there to Yhwh and it is called Yhwh-Shalom to this day” (6:23-24; see chapter four).<sup>117</sup> After Gideon builds an altar to Yhwh, Yhwh instructs him to “throw down the altar of the Baal which belong[ed] to [his] father and to **cut down** [תכרת] the asherah which [was] upon it” and in its place to “build an altar to Yhwh your God atop this stronghold,” and then to offer up a second bullock “as burnt-offering on the wood which [he had] **cut down** [תכרת]” (Judg 6:25).

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<sup>115</sup> M. O’Connor (“Judges” [NJBC; 2nd ed; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990] 133) observes that “the threshold of greatest importance to the writers and compilers of Judges is the Moses/monarchy threshold.”

<sup>116</sup> Clearly, the “humble refusal” of Yhwh’s “call” or “commission” (see Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2008] 90) is a feature of many of the biblical call narratives, e.g., Moses (Exod 3:11 [3:1-4:23]), Jeremiah (Jer 1:6), Saul [1 Sam 9:21], and even Solomon (1 Kgs 3:7)—“standard operating procedure,” according to Robert G. Boling (*Judges: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 6A; New York: Doubleday, 1975] 132). Here, however, Gideon’s words conform most closely to what we find in Saul’s story. Boling notes that “vastly disproportionate space is given to the eliciting of the dutiful response” and that the whole account is “deliberately reminiscent of the enlistment of Moses” (cf. Judg 6:16; Boling [Ibid.] adduces numerous parallels to Moses’s commissioning in Gideon’s call story). This story, then, points back to Moses and forward to Saul. Fittingly, Gideon’s career begins like Moses’s and ends like Saul’s.

<sup>117</sup> Or, “Gideon built there an altar for Yahweh and called, ‘He creates peace!’ (Boling, *Judges*, 129). Boling (Ibid., 134) suggests that the name יהוה שלום “retains the original verbal force” of the title צבאות יהוה. On the meaning and verbal force of the latter name, see Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973) 65-70.

The name Gideon (גִּדְעוֹן) may have originally denoted something like “young man”<sup>118</sup> or “he-man” (cf. Arabic *gada*<sup>ʿ</sup> or *jada*<sup>ʿ</sup>),<sup>119</sup> but in this story it is midrashically tied to the verb גִּדַּע “to hack.” Given, however, Gideon’s actions in “cutting down” [כָּרַת] the asherah and using it as firewood, the narrative suggests that גִּדְעוֹן means “hacker,” “hewer,”<sup>120</sup> or “feller.” Dtr does something similar with the name “Jerubbaal” (יִרְבֵּעַל), “Let Baal Contend (for me)” — a name that a Baal loyalist would presumably bestow on a child in hopes that the child would also grow up to be zealous *for* Baal. Dtr’s use of irony, then, is evident when Gideon’s father Joash surnames him (or renames him) “Jerubbaal” — not inappropriately in light of the “court proceedings” of 6:30-32 with its wordplay on רִיב and “Jerubbaal.”<sup>121</sup> There is here a heavy literary foreshadowing of Elijah’s “contention” with the

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<sup>118</sup> See *HALOT*, 180.

<sup>119</sup> This form of the Semitic \**gd*<sup>ʿ</sup> root continues to be used in modern Arabic. See Hans Wehr (*Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Arabic* [ed. J.D. Cowan; 4th ed.; Urbana, IL: Spoken Language Services, 1994] 137) who glosses *gada*<sup>ʿ</sup> as “young man, young fellow; he-man.”

<sup>120</sup> Boling (*Judges*, 130) suggests that the name Gideon is “a kenning of his original name Jerubbaal.” Whatever the case, the hero’s גִּדַּע-ing (i.e., כָּרַת-ing) is the narrator’s (Dtr’s) interpretation of Gideon’s רִיב at this stage of the narrative. See the subsequent discussion in this section.

<sup>121</sup> Judg 6:30-32: (30) Then the men of the city said to Joash, ‘Bring out your son that he may die, because he has thrown down the altar of **the Baal** [הַבַּעַל] and because he has **cut down** [כָּרַת] the asherah which was over it. (31) And Joash said to everyone who stood up against him: ‘**Will you** yourselves **contend** [תִּרְיִבוּ] **for the Baal** [לַבַּעַל]? If you yourselves must save him, whoever **will contend** [יִרְיִב] for him shall be dead before morning, if he is God let him contend [יִרְבֵּ] for himself because he [Gideon] has thrown down his altar, (32) On that day he named him **Jerubbaal** [יִרְבֵּעַל] saying ‘**Let Baal contend against him** [יִרְבֵּעַל בּוֹ], since he has thrown down his altar.’”



Baal-priests in 1 Kings 18,<sup>122</sup> in which Yhwh shows himself “God” (אלהים) by answering with “fire” (אש, 18:24, 38), as also of the later coming down of “fire” from heaven at the instigation of Elijah as “man of God” (איש-אלהים, 2 Kgs 1:9-16). Joash, however, is not your typical Baalist.<sup>123</sup> His speech is a carefully-worded gambit to save his son as well as incisive anti-Baal polemic. Moshe Garsiel notes the wordplay involving אש and implicitly אש (“fire”) associated with Joash (אש) in Judg 7:14 (“This is nothing but the sword of Gideon son of Joash (אש), a man (אש) of Israel ...”) and 7:16 (Gideon equipping his “men” with “torches,” [לפדים]).<sup>124</sup> In the latter text Garsiel proposes that the play on “fire” (אש) is “concealed” within the “substitute,” i.e., “torches.”<sup>125</sup> This wordplay anticipates Josiah (אשיהו).<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Niditch (*Judges*, 91) observes that “The interaction emphasizes the weakness of Baal and suggests the sort of contest motif found in Moses’ challenge to Pharaoh and in Elijah’s challenge to the priest of Baal.” The language employed in Judg 6:25-32 is clearly closer to the latter episode rather than the former. See discussion in chapter five.

<sup>123</sup> As J.P. Fokkelman (*Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* [trans. Ineke Smit; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1999] 127) indicates, “The father’s reaction is surprising, as he staunchly supports his son, challenges Baal to prove his divinity by fighting his own battles, and chases his own citizens off by means of a bluff.”

<sup>124</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 120.

<sup>125</sup> Garsiel (*Ibid.*) suggests that “this direct pun [i.e., אש] is likely to make the reader more alert to [midrashic name derivations] in the passage and find the other option [i.e., אש] lying concealed in the adjacent verses (16, 18), where the writer uses not the direct derivation but the substitute: “torches” (לפדים) – the torches given by Gideon to his followers when they assail the sleeping Midianites.”

<sup>126</sup> Fokkelman (*Reading Biblical Narrative*, 127) notes that information on Joash has been deliberately withheld from the audience at this point (ellipsis).

The name “Jerubbaal” can be alternatively understood as “Let Baal contend against him” (i.e., against Jerubbaal himself because of Gideon’s anti-Baal activities) as 6:32 glosses it, or, rather as 6:31 suggests, “Let Baal contend for himself,” the implication being that Yhwh and Baal are engaged in a kind of narrative theomachy.<sup>127</sup> Joash’s “surnaming” of Gideon cleverly changes—at least from the *synchronic* perspective of 7th and 6th centuries—what would seem to be a pro-Baal theophoric name into a polemically anti-Baal name. The literary effect of the wordplay on the name “Gideon” is much the same: a neutral name is changed in a Deuteronomistic anti-Baal polemic rooted in Deuteronomic law (Deut 7:5; 12:3). This same pattern emerges with other names (e.g., Saul and Samuel).

Polzin suggests that “the story means to emphasize through its hero’s names a basic tension concerning his loyalty towards Yahweh.”<sup>128</sup> According to Deuteronomic law, a basic test of loyalty to Yhwh was the performance of the cult purification requirements of Deut 7:5; 12:3.<sup>129</sup> Yhwh’s instructions and Gideon’s performance of those instructions in Judg 6:25-27 correspond to these laws, in which the verb **גָּדַע** is a key term. As Graeme Auld puts it,

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<sup>127</sup> As Vince Endris (“Yahweh versus Baal: A Narrative-Critical Reading of the Gideon-Abimelech Narrative,” *JSOT* 33 [2008] 176) notes, “if translated this way, the appellation is appropriate and suggests that Baal is contending for Baal’s self.”

<sup>128</sup> Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History. Pt. 1: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) 169.

<sup>129</sup> “But you shall do thus to them: their altars you shall tear down [וַיִּהָצְצוּם] and their pillars you shall smash to pieces and their asherahs **you shall hack to bits** [וַיִּגְדְּעוּם] and their carvings you shall burn with fire” (Deut 7:5); “And you shall tear down [וַיִּהָצְצוּם] their altars and smash their pillars to pieces, and their asherahs you shall burn with fire and the carvings of their gods **you shall hack to bits** [וַיִּגְדְּעוּם] and you shall destroy their name from that place” (Deut 12:3).

“anyone familiar with [Deut 7:5 and 12:3] can hear that echo.”<sup>130</sup> Here the narrator (Dtr) creates an etiology for the name Gideon rooted in Deuteronomic law, as he will for Samuel/Saul in 1 Sam 1:20 [and elsewhere].” Dtr had Deut 7:5 and 12:3 specifically in mind when he included this narrative,<sup>131</sup> as will further emerge in Dtr’s description of Josiah’s purge.

Dtr thinly veils the wordplay in question by using the near-synonym **כרת** rather than the verb **גדע** (as in Deut 7:5; 12:3), which creates a subtler play on the presumed meaning of “Gideon” rather than a straightforward paronomasia. Was this tactic purely a matter of literary sensibility? It was not in any case out of definite reluctance to use the verb **גדע**, which is used in the report of Yhwh’s oracle on the “hacking” of Eli’s “arms” (1 Sam 2:31). Dtr-approved cult reforms under Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah all employ the verb **כרת** (see 1 Kgs 15:13; 2 Kgs 18:4; 23:14), which, coupled with the use of **כרת** in the above etiological wordplay on “Gideon,” evidences a terminological consistency throughout Dtr.

#### 5.4.6 “Let Fire Come Out from Abimelech” (Judges 9)

In Judg 9:1, the narrative moves from Gideon’s monarchic idolatry to Abimelech and the “baals” (i.e., “lords,” with the Deuteronomistic literary connotation of “Baalists,” cf. 9:4) of Shechem. In 9:2, the former proposes to rule (**משל**) over the latter. Abimelech’s claim to

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<sup>130</sup> A. Graeme Auld, “Gideon: Hacking at the Heart of the Old Testament,” *VT* 39 (1989) 264.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Josiah Darby, “Gideon or Jerubbaal,” *JBQ* 31 (2003) 181-85. He argues that the narrative has Yhwh’s command in Deut 7:25 specifically in view.

“rule” is clearly rooted in his being Gideon’s son, and seems to presuppose that Gideon had not merely judged Israel, but “ruled” Israel as king (cf. Judg 8:28),<sup>132</sup> having accepted kingship in the very act of declining it (8:22-23; see chapter two). In this connection, Abimelech’s own name is also an important part of his claim to rule as dynast and another good example of a name appropriated by Dtr for antimonarchic literary ends. “Abimelech” is a theophoric name meaning “My Father [i.e., the god] is King.” Like other **בא**- names (e.g., Abner [“Father is Light”] son of Ner [“Light”]), the name readily lends itself to multiple understandings,<sup>133</sup> and Dtr exploits this ambiguity. Boling remarks that the **למלך** element of the name—normally understood as “king”—can also be alternatively understood as “My father is *mlk*.”<sup>134</sup> Elsewhere, Dtr will exploit<sup>135</sup> the phonologically similar forms **למלך** (*melek*) and **למלך** of the *MLK*-offering, to associate the monarchy with illicit child sacrifice—the “abomination of Yhwh.”

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<sup>132</sup> The text does not say that Gideon “judged” Israel. In fact, Dtr seems to have deliberately avoided saying this term, instead associating Gideon’s hegemony with the verb **משל** in Gideon’s less than sincere refusal to “rule” over Israel (Judg 8:23).

<sup>133</sup> Bluedorn (*Yahweh versus Baalism*, 192) charts many of the possible meanings of the name “Abimelech.”

<sup>134</sup> Boling (*Judges*, 162) correctly notes that “the problem is how to read the final element ... which the spelling conventions MT and the versions uniformly treat as *melek* [i.e., king]. While the noun remained in use as ‘king’ or ‘counsellor,’ *mlk* also became a noun designating, in one form or another, particular deities: e.g. Molech and Milcom. Thus the name Abimelech might be classed with names such as Abijah (my father is Yah), Abiel (my father is El), Abijam (my father is Yam), and Phoenician *ʿb(y)bʿl* (my father is Baal).” Boling concludes that Gideon “the Yahwist reformer” would not have likely “chosen a name for his son which to his mind would have carried so much pagan freight.” But as Dtr has shown, Gideon is no ordinary or perfectly pious reformer, and Dtr is not above exploiting any name for his own literary purposes. And it is anything but clear that Dtr fully distinguished the figure of the “king” from the abhorred “divine” figures listed above.

<sup>135</sup> See especially 2 Kgs 23:11.

In the context of the Judges 9 narrative, the theophoric name “Abimelech” alludes to both Yhwh and Baal<sup>136</sup> (the divine “father [אב]) as king, articulated earlier in Gideon’s declaration “Yhwh will rule over you” (Judg 8:23). It also plays on Gideon’s ironic (non-) refusal<sup>137</sup> to be king in the same declaration, despite his earlier and subsequent kinglike behavior,<sup>138</sup> particularly his kinglike polygamy (as we have noted), of which Abimelech was the disastrous fruit.

With Gideon’s self-avowed commitment to non-monarchic piety “undermined”<sup>139</sup> by the details of the narrative (e.g., his polygamy, oppression of other Israelites, his “kinglike” appearance, his “taking,” etc. as previously noted), his credibility further erodes in the face of his son’s name: “My Father is King.” Whether the implied “king” is Yhwh rather than Gideon himself, or whether he or his concubine named the child, the literary effect of the name is

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<sup>136</sup> Cf. Bluedorn, *Yahweh versus Baalism*, 192.

<sup>137</sup> Niditch (*Judges*, 106) observes, “Gideon has refused kingship, whereas his son, ironically named ‘My Father is King,’ will ambitiously and murderously pursue it.” This point constitutes additional evidence that Gideon had not really refused kingship.

<sup>138</sup> Katie M. Heffelfinger, “‘My Father is King’: Chiefly Politics and the Rise and Fall of Abimelech,” *JSOT* 33 (2009) 284. See previous discussion in §2.2.6 and §4.2.4. Gordon K. Oestle (*Legitimacy, Illegitimacy, and the Right to Rule: Windows on Abimelech’s Rise and Demise in Judges 9* [LHB/OTS 546; London: T&T Clark, 2011] 59-63) identifies nine ways in which Gideon “tak[es] on the trappings of kingship”: First, “Gideon request[s] an additional share of the booty plundered from the Midianites” (Judg 8:24-25) and “kings were often entitled to special portion of the plunder”; second, Gideon’s “setting up” of the ephod in his hometown “suggests his role as a cult patron or sponsor, a frequent royal initiative; third, Ophrah (Gideon’s hometown) is portrayed as ‘a type of capital city’; fourth, ‘the king’s interest in centralized worship’ is evident in Israel ‘whoring after’ the ephod ‘there’ (i.e., at Ophrah); fifth, polygamy (see Judg 8:31); sixth, having ‘seventy sons’ (8:30; cf. Ahab)—this ‘administrative’ number suggests that Gideon’s sons ‘shared some aspects of his rule’; seventh, the polysemy of ‘house’ in Judg 8:29; eighth, Gideon’s ‘personal appropriation of the symbols of kingship associated with the Midianite kings’ (8:21, 27); ninth, the naming of ‘Abimelech.’

<sup>139</sup> Heffelfinger (“My Father is King,” 285) writes: “Gideon does in fact appear kingly, and Gideon’s later activities are suspiciously kingly.”

emphatically negative. Dtr portrays a Gideon who is at first piously Deuteronomic pro-Yhwh, anti-idolatry, anti-Baalist, but who subsequently falls into idolatry, as well as a pious, king-killing, antimonarchic chieftain who behaves like a king and gives his son a royal name. The stage is thus set for the good father/evil son motif that will pervade Dtr.<sup>140</sup>

The narrative also exploits the meaning “My father [Baal] is king.” In Judg 9:6, “the baals [Baalists!] of Shechem” and “all of Beth-millo” assemble. Since Abimelech’s mother is from Shechem, and much of the assemblage is his own clan, he too is one of these “Baalists.” They “[go] and install Abimelech as king [וַיִּלְכוּ וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְמֶלֶךְ]” (9:6). This highly alliterative and polyptotonic phrase draws attention to the singularity of the occasion as an iterative and now *unveiled* wordplay on the name “Abimelech” (9:6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 22). Abimelech is Israel’s second *melek*; Gideon his father, was their first (Abimelech=“My father is king”). The detail that Abimelech—the ‘baal’— was made king “with” (עִם), i.e., “beside” the “terebinth of the pillar” probably suggests the presence of an asherah or some other cult apparatus considered idolatrous by Dtr. The placement of the ceremony at this “terebinth” or “oak of the pillar,” observes Oeste, “may well suggest that the narrator conceived of the coronation taking place inside the confines of the temple of Baal-berith. This coronation then identifies Abimelech not only with the Shechemites, but also with their deity.”<sup>141</sup> Dtr envisions Abimelech’s enthronement as an act of idolatry—a *de facto* re-enthronement of the defeated Baal (cf. Judg 10:6 in light of Judges 6 and 9).

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<sup>140</sup> Niditch, *Judges*, 106.

<sup>141</sup> Oeste, *Legitimacy*, 78.

Jotham's fable is not simply the "the clearest and most fundamental repudiation of kingship in the Old Testament,"<sup>142</sup> but also a socio-economic explanation of why kingship is intrinsically unproductive.<sup>143</sup> In the fable the king (Abimelech) is identified as the thorn bush (הַאֵטֶר, or perhaps "thorn tree"),<sup>144</sup> whom, in view of the more productive trees'

unwillingness to rule, the other trees invite to "reign" over them:

(14) Then all the trees said to the thorn bush: "Come, you, **reign** [מֶלֶךְ, or, be king] over us." (15) And the thorn bush said to the trees, "If you are in truth [בְּאֵמֶת] anointing me **as king** [לְמֶלֶךְ] over you, come put your trust in my shadow; but if not, let **fire** [אֵשׁ] come out from the thorn tree [from me] and consume the cedars of Lebanon." (16) And now, if you have dealt in truth [בְּאֵמֶת] and sincerity [וּבְתָמִים] and **have made Abimelech king** [וַתִּמְלֹךְ אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ] over you and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and with his house and if you have dealt with him according to the merit of his hand— (17) because **my father** [אָבִי] fought for you and risked his life and rescued you from the hand of Midian; (18) but you yourselves have risen up against **my father's** [אָבִי] house today and have killed his sons, seventy upon one stone **and have made Abimelech king** [וַתִּמְלֹךְ אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ], the son of his slave-girl, over **the "baals"** [i.e., Baalists, בָּעֲלֵי] of Shechem because he is your brother. (19) If you have dealt in truth [בְּאֵמֶת] and sincerity [וּבְתָמִים] with **Jerubbaal** [יִרְבֵּעַל] and with his house, then rejoice in Abimelech this day and let him rejoice in you. (20) But if not, may fire [אֵשׁ] come out from Abimelech and may it consume [וַתֹּאכַל] and consume the 'baals' [Baalists] of Shechem and the Beth-Millo and may fire come out from the 'baals' [Baalists] of Shechem and Beth-Millo and may it consume [וַתֹּאכַל] Abimelech. " (Judg 9:14-20).

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<sup>142</sup> Frank Crüsemann (*Der Widerstand gegen das Königtum: Die antiköniglichen Texte des Alten Testaments und der Kampf um den frühen israelitischen Staat* [WMANT 49; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978] 42) writes: "Dieses kurze Gespräch zwischen dem אִישׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל und Gideon enthält neben der Jothamfabel die deutlichste und grundsätzlichsste Ablehnung des Konigtums im Alten Testament."

<sup>143</sup> Jürgen H. Ebach and Udo Rüterswörden, "Pointen in der Jothamfabel," *BN* 31 (1986) 11-18.

<sup>144</sup> See Silviu Tatu, "Jotham's Fable and the Crux Interpretum in Judges IX," *VT* 56 (2006) 105-24.

Jotham's fable plays on his own name and that of "Abimelech." The wordplay involving Abimelech, אֲבִימֶלֶךְ and forms of מֶלֶךְ, stresses both the true nature of Gideon's role—that of "king"—and what Abimelech truly aspires to be: the latter does not simply desire, as he states, to "rule" over Israel (9:2), but to "reign" over Israel as dynastic king (after all, "my father [was] king"). Israel had asked that Gideon and his sons (and sons' sons) "rule" dynastically over Israel (8:22). Already here Israel finds itself experimenting with dynastic kingship.

We have elsewhere noted O'Connor's suggestion that the name Jotham ("Yhwh is perfect") implies a pun in the narrative: יוֹתָם is a יָתוֹם, a "fatherless child" (§4.2.2).<sup>145</sup> But the narrative also plays directly on the name "Jotham." Jotham's use of the phraseology "in truth and in sincerity" (בְּאֵמֶת וּבְתִמְיֹם, or, "truly and perfectly") plays on his own name (יֹתָם, "Yhwh is perfect"). Jotham argues that if Israel wanted to *legitimately* play the game of dynastic king-making, they would have made one of Gideon's other sons, perhaps Jotham himself as suggested by the pun on תִּמְיֹם and יוֹתָם, to "reign" as king. As it was, they did not deal "truly and perfectly" (בְּאֵמֶת וּבְתִמְיֹם) with Gideon's house, and slaughtered their proto-king's "legitimate" heirs. The "baals" ("lords," perhaps Baalists; cf. Judg 9:4) of Shechem—note the use of the term בְּעָלִי—also acted "insincerely" (not בְּאֵמֶת וּבְתִמְיֹם) against Yhwh's

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<sup>145</sup> O'Connor, "Judges," 134.



kingship,<sup>146</sup> since lesser kingship (human or arbored) is inevitably unproductive (as Gideon and Samuel both articulate in their own ways; see Judg 8:22-23; 1 Sam 8:10-18).

For Jotham, illegitimate monarchy can only end one way: in “fire.” Destructive “fire” will come out from the thorn bush on every one who does not “trust in his [the thorn bush’s] shadow” (9:15), i.e., fully rely on him and sanction his reign. The destruction of Israel resulting from the monarchy will be mutual for the people and the king (9:20). Not coincidentally, “fire” will emerge as a key theme in Dtr’s account of the late monarchy, where Josiah surfaces as a literary refraction of the Deuteronomistic “hacker” Gideon ben Joash who contends with Baal, endowed with the legitimate “fire” that destroys the cults of Baal, the asherah, and the northern kings (“the cedars of Lebanon”). This legitimate fire refracts the illegitimate “fire” that consumes the “Baal(ist)s of Shechem,” i.e., “the cedars of Lebanon.” Manasseh will shed innocent blood like no other (2 Kgs 21:16), while Judah will murder its Davidic kings (Joash, assassinated in the “house of Millo,” 2 Kgs 12:20; Amon, 21:23) and will even slaughter their own children with “fire” (16:3; 17:17; 21:6; 23:10). The kingdom of Judah itself will end in “fire” (2 Kgs 25:9).

While later in Dtr “fire” will be a sign of divine legitimacy, here in Jotham’s fable fire serves as a sign of “illegitimacy.” As Oesterle puts it, “If the original conditions under which the alliance between Abimelech and the Shechemites was forged were illegitimate, as Jotham has

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<sup>146</sup> The narrative never makes clear whether the Shechemites are Israelites or non-Israelites. I read the presence of a Baal-temple (Judges 9:4) in the story (and in the land), especially in the context of Israel’s “whoring” after the baals in Judges, as representing an Israelite rejection of, or at least an affront to Yhwh’s kingship and Dtr’s exilic audience would likely have read it similarly. It is possible, however, that the Shechemites represent non-Israelite descendants of Hamor (but compare massacre of the males in Genesis 34:25-26 and the apparent incorporation of the captive women and children in 34:29!) and perhaps this was the idea of the original story that Dtr has adapted to his own purposes.

already indicated, then mutual destruction would result.”<sup>147</sup> Oeste notes further, “This threat of mutual destruction in the form of fire consuming both parties links Jotham’s application with the fable (9:15; cf. 9:23-24). It also heightens the reader’s sense of anticipation as he/she waits to see how this complication will play itself out in the following narrative.”<sup>148</sup>

As Jobling notes, “The fable is strongly anti-monarchical, but it concerns the first beginning of the monarchy (the Gideon, not the Abimelech situation). The rest of the speech complains, not that the people have chosen a king, but that they have chosen the *wrong* king, stressing in particular Abimelech’s illegitimacy (v. 18).”<sup>149</sup> The fable is a warning to Israel, and arguably, *a warning and a reminder to Israelites in exile* who have experienced the negative facets of kingship firsthand.<sup>150</sup> Jotham’s fable warns that “once monarchy is in place by the people’s initiative (Gideon), it cannot—even from an anti-monarchical point of view—simply be ended by the people’s initiative.”<sup>151</sup>

Just as “the curse of Jotham predicts and assures the downfall” of Abimelech,<sup>152</sup> several of the details of Abimelech’s demise foreshadow Saul’s downfall.<sup>153</sup> The regnal notice

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<sup>147</sup> Oeste, *Legitimacy*, 68.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>149</sup> David Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative II: Structural Analyses in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup 39; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1986) 81.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Hanna Liss, “Die Fabel des Yotam in Ri 9,8-15: Versuch einer strukturellen Deutung,” *BN* 89 (1997) 12-18.

<sup>151</sup> Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative II*, 81.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Abimelech persuades “his arms-bearer” (נִשְׂא כֶּלִי) to “draw his sword” (שָׁלַף חֶרֶב) and kill him (Judg 9:54), so that it would not be said of him that a woman killed him. Saul too commands *his arms-bearer*

“When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel ...” (Judg 9:22) is very similar to the now corrupt regnal notice given for Saul in 1 Sam 13:1: “Saul [שָׂאֹול] was X years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel two years.” This latter notice opens the pericope in which Saul’s kingship will begin to be “delegitimated” and replaced. The next statement in Judges 9, “God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the baals [Baalists] of Shechem” (9:23) anticipates the departure of Yhwh’s spirit from Saul and the “evil spirit from Yhwh” that troubles him (1 Sam 16:14-15, 23; 18:10; 19:9). The removal of Yhwh’s spirit and the presence of an evil spirit was one of the clear signs of Saul’s delegitimation.<sup>154</sup> Dtr anticipates this event in telling Abimelech’s story,<sup>155</sup> but he is also hinting there at the violent last years of Judah’s Davidic monarchy.

Delegitimizing “fire” now comes forth out of Abimelech, the thorn-bush (Judg 9:15, 20, 49, 52). But just *how* “fire” comes out of the “baals” or “Baalists” of Shechem and the house of Millo to consume Abimelech constitutes the narrative’s major twist: Abimelech will not be killed by “fire” but retributively by a “stone.” As Oeste notes, “fire does indirectly lead

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(נִשָּׂא כָל יוֹם) to draw his sword (שֶׁלֶף חֶרֶב) and to thrust him through (1 Sam 31:5) to avoid an ignominious death, but when the arms-bearer recoils, he is forced to finish the job himself. Ken Stone (“Gender Criticism: The Un-Manning of Abimelech,” *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* [2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007] 194) notes other resemblances between Abimelech’s demise and Saul’s decline: “Although the reference to an ‘evil spirit from God’ may strike some readers as strange, similar references appear in 1 Sam (16:14; 18:10). In those texts too God sends an ‘evil spirit’ in a situation involving divine displeasure with the current ruler, specifically on that ruler—Saul—whose legitimacy as ruler has been undermined by God’s selection of David.”

<sup>154</sup> On the evil spirit as the sure sign of Saul’s “delegitimization,” see David Wagner, *Geist und Tora: Studien zur göttlichen Legitimation und Delegitimation von Herrschaft im Alten Testament anhand der Erzählungen über König Saul* (ABG 15; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005) 189-216.

<sup>155</sup> Stone, “Un-Manning of Abimelech,” 197.

to Abimelech's demise, as it is his intention to burn the tower of Thebez that draws him near enough for the woman of Thebez to strike him down (9:52).<sup>156</sup> The "one stone" mentioned in 9:5 and 9:18 on which Abimelech slaughtered his brothers anticipates the "single woman" אִשָּׁה אֶחָדָה and the "upper part of a millstone" (פֶּלֶחַ רֶכֶב) whereby he himself will be killed.<sup>157</sup> Abimelech, having set fire to Shechem (killing about a thousand men and women), attempts to "burn" the tower of Thebez with "fire [לְשַׂרְפוֹ בְּאֵשׁ]" (9:52). Unfortunately for Abimelech, the "fire" that now comes back to devour him is a millstone fired down by "one" woman.

Dtr also depicts the event of Abimelech's death (Judg 9:53-55) in terms very similar to Saul's (1 Sam 31:4-6): when death for both "kings" is certain, they order their armor-bearers to draw their swords and finish them off. Abimelech's armor-bearer does finish him off, while Saul in the end is forced to commit *hara kiri*. The importance of this particular episode for Dtr is underscored by his tying it to Uriah's death in 2 Sam 11:21 (Joab predicts that David will specifically cite this story when he hears tidings of the war and the battle connected with Uriah's planned death). If "fire" consumes both Abimelech and Saul in a figurative sense, it will consume David's house in a more literal sense (2 Kgs 25:9).

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<sup>156</sup> Oest, *Legitimacy*, 111.

<sup>157</sup> Graham S. Ogden, "Jotham's Fable: Its Structure and Function in Judges 9," *BT* 46 (1995) 301-8.

5.4.7 “Human Bones Shall Burn upon You”: The “Man of God” at Bethel (1 Kings 13)

Following his report of Israel’s separation from Judah and Jeroboam’s establishment of rival cult centers at Bethel and Dan, Dtr immediately polemicizes<sup>158</sup> against Jeroboam’s cult sites: “And lo, a **man of God** [אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים] came from Judah with the word of Yhwh to Bethel, and Jeroboam was standing over the altar to offer incense. Then then he cried over the altar with the word of Yhwh, and he said, ‘O altar, O altar, thus says Yhwh, lo a son shall be born to the house of David, **Josiah** [יְהוֹשִׁיָּהוּ] by name, and he shall slaughter [sacrifice] upon you the priests of the high places, the ones offering incense upon you, and **he will burn** [שָׂרַף > \*שָׂרַף] human bones upon you” (1 Kgs 13:1-2). As Walsh notes, “the Hebrew has the force of making the scene immediately present,”<sup>159</sup> i.e., וְהִנֵּה (“and lo!”).

Garsiel cites 1 Kgs 13:1-2 an example of a midrashic name derivation which is “constructed through the use of a substitute for the direct derivation.”<sup>160</sup> In this instance, the “direct” midrashic name derivation, “fire” (i.e., אֵשׁ) is replaced by its outcome – the verb “to burn [שָׂרַף]”. He further notes that שָׂרַף will be picked up as a *Leitwort* in 2 Kings 23 (see §5.4.14),<sup>161</sup> where Dtr no longer obscures the midrash of Josiah’s name or leaves it implicit. It should also be noted that here that אֵשׁ יְהוָה (which may or may not really mean “May Yhwh

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<sup>158</sup> Whatever else can be said for this episode, its polemic against Jeroboam and the Bethel cult is clear. Cf. Bertram Herr, “Der wahre Prophet bezeugt seine Botschaft mit dem Tod: Ein Versuch zu 1 Kön 13,” *BZ* 41 (1997) 69-78.

<sup>159</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 176.

<sup>160</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 102.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

reward,”  $\text{הו' + שׂא[ן]}$ ) also plays on  $\text{שׂאֵל הַיָּם}$ , the paronomasia using the parallelism of name elements to create an association between Josiah (cf.  $\text{שׂא}$  of Yhwh) and the figure of the “man of God” ( $\text{שׂא}$  of God), which figure, as we shall see in what follows, is closely associated with divine “fire.”

The Balaam-like<sup>162</sup> figure of the “man of God” in this pericope has been seen both sympathetically or antipathetically, i.e., as a pitiable dupe or as “a guileful, acquisitive schemer.”<sup>163</sup> Dismissing the man of God’s prophecy, however, as a mere *vaticinium ex eventu* somewhat misses the point. This pericope is a literary anticipation of Josiah with a literary function: to bring to the role of the “man of God” (later cast as Elijah and Elisha) into the character zone of Josiah. For Dtr, Josiah much more nearly resembles the zealous “men of God,” especially Elijah, Elisha, and—as a royal extension of their policies of “zeal”—Jehu, than do any of the other Davidides (including Hezekiah).

This episode (1 Kings 13), along with 2 Kings 23, forms a kind of *inclusio* around the Elijah/Elisha cycle and much of post-Solomonic monarchic material in which both Israel and Judah seal their respective fates through their idolatry. In this material, along with the phrase “man of God” ( $\text{שׂאֵל הַיָּם}$ ), “fire” ( $\text{שׂא}$ ) and/or “burning” serve as *Leitworte*. In addition,

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<sup>162</sup> Numerous parallels between the Balaam pericope (Numbers 22-24) and the “man of God” story (1 Kings 13), and between Balaam and the “man of God” respectively have been noted. See, e.g., Kenneth C. Way, “Animals in the Prophetic World : Literary Reflections on Numbers 22 and 1 Kings 13,” *JSOT* 34 (2009) 47-62; Hayyim Angel, “When God’s Will Can and Cannot Be Altered : The Relationship Between the Balaam Narrative and I Kings 13,” *JBQ* 33 (2005) 31-39; Pamela Tamarkin Reis, “Vindicating God: Another Look at 1 Kings xiii,” *VT* 44 (1994) 376-86.

<sup>163</sup> Reis, “Vindicating God,” 377.

Josiah emerges as a refraction of both Jeroboam standing over the Bethel altar and the Judahite “man of God,” when Josiah comes to Bethel with “fire.” But like the victories of the men of God, Elijah and Elisha, over Baalism, Josiah’s cult reforms meet with no lasting success.

#### 5.4.8 “*The Fire of Yhwh Fell*” (1 Kgs 18:38)

Divine “fire” is a prominent theme in the Elijah/Elisha Cycle. Here, too, this “fire” serves as a “legitimizing” sign (like Yhwh’s “legitimizing” spirit). In including this material, Dtr is seemingly less concerned with the “legitimacy” of the location of the contest (on Mt. Carmel, an emergency venue, as opposed to Jerusalem, the Deuteronomic ideal), than the “legitimacy” of Yhwh versus Baal.<sup>164</sup>

In the story of Elijah’s contest with the priests of Baal, “fire” is the final, climactic sign of Yhwh’s existence and superiority over an impotent—or non-existent—Baal, and another sign of the legitimacy of Elijah in his office as prophet/“man of God” (cf. 1 Kgs 17:18, 24). The narrative leaves no doubt about Yhwh’s potency: “Then the fire of Yhwh [אֵשׁ־יְהוָה] fell and consumed [וַתֹּאכַל] the burnt offering and the bones and the stones and the dust and the water and it licked up the water which was in the trench” (1 Kgs 18:38). Woods avers that this “fire” from heaven is, in fact, to be understood as lightning,<sup>165</sup> this

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<sup>164</sup> With respect to the interwoven theme of the “man of God” and the “fire of God,” Dtr delays “northern” illegitimacy as the *primary* legitimacy issue until his account of Josiah’s reforms. In any case, Carmel is not Bethel.

<sup>165</sup> Fred E. Woods, *Water and Storm Polemics against Baalism in the Deuteronomic History* (American University Studies 7, Theology and Religion 150; New York: Peter Lang, 1994) 101-3.

suggesting a “storm” contest between Yhwh and Baal. Walsh concurs, suggesting that lightning would have been “a most appropriate and impressive display of divine power, particularly in the larger context of the drought story, where the sky is still cloudless (see 18:41-44).”<sup>166</sup> Yhwh is the clear victor, and Baal the “storm god” the vanquished.

1 Kgs 19:1-18 also creates several literary parallels<sup>167</sup> and contrasts<sup>168</sup> between Elijah and Moses, including a reminiscence of the scene at Horeb in Deut 18:15-18,<sup>169</sup> in which Israel is granted prophets in response to its demand for human intermediation, and in which Israel is held accountable for “hearing” its prophets. 1 Kgs 19:8 places Elijah at “Horeb, the mountain of God.”<sup>170</sup> There, Elijah is a personal witness to a theophanic “earthquake,” “fire,” and the divine “voice” (19:12). The voice of Yhwh (a “tiny whispering sound” or “voice of a thin whisper”) summons Elijah, and in their subsequent conversation (19:13-18). Yhwh orders Elijah to continue in his prophetic role,<sup>171</sup> in spite of all that he has suffered. Like Moses (Exodus 32), Elijah must confront Israel’s nearly-total apostasy, even resorting to violence. Among the many kings of Israel and Judah, Jehu and Josiah most nearly resemble Elijah in

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<sup>166</sup> Walsh, *1 Kings*, 253.

<sup>167</sup> See Jacques Briand, “Élie et Moïse,” *MDB* 58 (1989) 30-31.

<sup>168</sup> See Moshe Reiss, “Elijah the Zealot: A Foil to Moses,” *JBQ* 32 (2004) 174-80.

<sup>169</sup> Michel de Goedts, “Elijah in the Book of Kings,” *SIDIC* 17 (1984) 13-18.

<sup>170</sup> On the significance of Elijah’s pilgrimage to Horeb, see William J. Dumbrell, “What Are You Doing Here?: Elijah at Horeb,” *Crux* 22 (March 1986) 12-19.

<sup>171</sup> Jürgen Vordran, “Elijas Dialog mit Jahwes Wort und Stimme (1 Kön 19,9b-18),” *Bib* 77 (1996) 417-24.



zeal for Yhwh, but Dtr appears to be more interested in Josiah's resemblance to Elijah, as we shall note.

#### 5.4.9 *"If I am a Man of God, Let Fire Come Down"* (2 Kgs 1:10, 12)

The contest between Yhwh and Baal continues in 2 Kings 1, when Ahaziah essays to consult Baal-zebub (the local manifestation of Baal at Ekron), rather than Yhwh, regarding his potentially-mortal injury. Here again, theophanic "fire" is the sign that Yhwh is God, not Baal. It is also a sign of Elijah's "legitimacy" (Elijah's word comes to pass; cf. Deut 18:15-22). The narrator notes that Elijah was "sitting on the top of a hill" (or mountain, **הר**). The mention of a "mountain," "man of God," and Yhwh's "fire" ("fire of God") evokes Horeb/Sinai, Moses ("man of God"; Josh 14:6; cf. Deut 33:1) and the theophanic fire that Israel first experienced at Horeb.

The captain of fifty attempts to order Elijah down from the mountain: "O man [**אִישׁ**] of God, the king orders you: 'come down!'" The captain's declaration sounds almost identical to: "O fire [**אֵשׁ**] of God, the king orders you: 'come down!'" it is the homophony between **אִישׁ** and **אֵשׁ** that provides the basis for the wordplay that follows: Israel, under the leadership of its evil king, is calling Yhwh's theophanic fire down upon itself. "Then Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, 'If I am a **man of God** [**אִישׁ אֵל הָיִים**], let **fire** [**אֵשׁ**] from heaven come down and consume [**וַתֹּאכַל**] you and your fifty,' and **fire** [**אֵשׁ**] came down from heaven and consumed [**וַתֹּאכַל**] him and his fifty" (2 Kgs 1:10). Ahaziah sends another

captain and another fifty<sup>172</sup> soldiers with similar results: “And Elijah answered and said to them, ‘If I am **man of God** [אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים], may fire [אֵשׁ] from heaven come down and consume you and your fifty.’ And **fire of God** [אֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים] came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty” (1:12). Ahaziah subsequently sends a third captain with a third company of fifty, but this time the captain of fifty begs for his life and the life of his fifty and is spared (1:13-15).

Fred Wood writes, “As we consider the blazing lightning that descends in the Mount Carmel pericope (1 Kgs 18), the text implies that fire that consumed these men was also lightning.”<sup>173</sup> The lightning both suggests Yhwh’s superiority over Baal and his storm-theophany, but also serves to elevate the figure of the אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים over Baal: the former wields the “fire” or “lightning” of Yhwh.

Additionally, the king’s ordering the man/fire (אִישׁ/אֵשׁ) of God to come down recalls the mutually destructive “fire” in Jotham’s fable suggesting that Israel and its monarchy would destroy each other. Now, monarchy is destroying Israel, and Yhwh will ere long destroy Israel and its monarchy. Even after the exile of Israel from the north, Yhwh will send Josiah with “fire” to Bethel and its cult.

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<sup>172</sup> The wordplay works the same way in 2 Kgs 1:11: “O man of God [אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים], sc. “Fire (אֵשׁ) of God”] thus says the king ‘come down.’”

<sup>173</sup> Woods, *Water and Storm Polemics*, 104.

#### 5.4.10 “Chariots of Fire” (2 Kgs 2:11-12; 6:17; 13:14)

The close association between the “fire” (אש) of Yhwh’s realm (cf. the אש אכלה and מוקדי עולם of Isa 33:14) and the figure of the “man of God” (איש האלהים) is strengthened in the stories of Elijah’s departure into heaven and Elisha’s subsequent activity. The 2 Kings 2 narrative states that while Elijah and his protégé Elisha were talking, there appeared “a chariot of fire [רכב אש] and horses of fire [סוסי אש]” which parted them and that “Elijah ascended by whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kgs 2:11). Elisha confirms his seeing the vision, crying: “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its riders!” (2:12). Woods suggests that the imagery here “is reminiscent of Baal, who ... is occasionally referred to by the epithet *rkb* <sup>‘rpt</sup>, ‘rider of the clouds.’”<sup>174</sup>

The vision has a lasting effect upon Elisha, who thereafter fully assumes Elijah’s role as איש האלהים (cf. 2 Kgs 5:8, 20; 8:4, 7). When the king of Syria, frustrated by Elisha’s prophetic ability in his military movements against Israel, besieges Dothan in order to take Elisha captive, the forces protecting Elisha seem hopelessly outnumbered by the Syrian “horses and chariots.” Seeing, these horses and chariots, “the attendant of the man of God [איש האלהים משרת],”<sup>175</sup> i.e., Elisha’s “lad” (נער), asks Elisha, “Alas, my master, how shall we fare?” Elisha takes this opportunity to reveal to his servant the reality of Yhwh’s theophanic “fire,” that had earlier been revealed to him—they are not outnumbered: “Then

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>175</sup> Reading with MT versus LXX. The latter apparently substitutes “Elisha” for the more ambiguous איש האלהים, the title that had previously belonged to Elijah. LXX makes this substitution as an attempt to ensure that there is no mistaking the identity of the איש האלהים in 2 Kgs 6:9-10, 15.

Elisha prayed and said, ‘O Yhwh, open his eyes that he may see.’ And Yhwh opened the eyes of the lad and he saw, and lo, the mountainside was filled with horses and **chariots of fire** [רכב אש] all around Elisha (6:17).” Here Elisha’s young man, the “man of God’s attendant,” is privileged with a view of what had been unseen by Israel since Horeb with few exceptions, i.e., Yhwh’s theophanic “fire,” this reiterating the thematic association between the “man of God” and the “fire of God.” As Begg indicates, Dtr’s language in 6:17 “recalls 2:12 and indicates that the fullness of Elijah’s role has passed to Elisha.”<sup>176</sup> Elijah’s initial attack on Baalism will be brought to realization through Elisha and Jehu,<sup>177</sup> with his noted “zeal” for Yhwh (2 Kgs 10:16), but it will not be a permanent victory.

Elisha’s life and career as עֲשֵׂה הַאֵלִים end on a note that deliberately recalls the moment of Elijah’s “enrapture” (*Entrückung*).<sup>178</sup> This time it is Jehoash (יְהוֹאָשׁ), the king of Israel, who fills the role of Elijah’s distraught servant: “My father, my father, Israel’s chariot and its rider” (2 Kgs 13:14; cf. 2:12). The theophanic fire that attended the “enrapture” of Elijah, as well as Elisha and his servant at Dothan, is now concealed. Jehoash alludes to the possible presence of heavenly beings, but there is no indication of the presence of theophanic fire. Elisha, the man of God, is not taken to heaven, but dies of his illness, just as the “fire” of

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<sup>176</sup> Begg, “2 Kings,” 177.

<sup>177</sup> Woods, *Water and Storm Polemics*, 103.

<sup>178</sup> C. Houtman, “Elia’s hemelvaart: Notities over en naar aanleiding van 2 Koningen 2:1-18,” *NTT* 32 (1978) 283-304.

Jehu's zeal is dying out among Jehu's descendants.<sup>179</sup> Elisha, unlike other characters described in 6:8-7:20—particularly unlike the king—comes off victorious,<sup>180</sup> magnanimously sparing his enemies (2 Kings 6:22-23).<sup>181</sup> But even Elisha's victory is fleeting.

As zeal for Yhwh disappears from the north with the disappearance of the figure of the אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּם, it revives a little in the south, particularly in the person of Josiah, who will extend Yhwh's war against Baal and other illicit deities to “the chariots of sun”—perhaps counterfeits of Yhwh's theophanic “chariot of fire”—to which he will set fire (2 Kgs 23:11). Ironically, Josiah, like (and unlike) Elijah and Elisha, will end up being taken away in a “chariot” (23:30).

#### 5.4.11 “Royal” Fire (2 Kings 16–17)

As Begg notes, Dtr presents Ahaz as something of “a negative foil for his exemplary successor, Hezekiah.”<sup>182</sup> According to Dtr, Ahaz's worst crimes included “walk[ing] in the ways of the kings of Israel, indeed ... caus[ing] his son to pass **through the fire** [בְּאֵשׁ], according to the abominations of the nations whom Yhwh dispossessed before the Israelites” (2 Kgs 16:3), doing this in direct violation of Deut 12:31 and 18:10. The sons of David were

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<sup>179</sup> Dtr assesses Jehu's descendants as “evil”-doers in the tradition of Jeroboam, 2 Kgs 13:1-2, 6, 11; 14:24; 15:9. If they are “zealous,” it is not according to what Dtr sees as “right.”

<sup>180</sup> Robert LaBarbera (“The Man of War and the Man of God: Social Satire in 2 Kings 6:8-7:20,” *CBQ* 46 [1984] 637-51) sees in 2 Kgs 6:8-7:20 a pointed polemic against the ruling elite in the northern kingdom, including the king, which extolls Yhwh's leadership as “Divine Warrior.”

<sup>181</sup> See Syngman Rhee, “2 Kings 6:8-23,” *Int* 54 (2000) 183-85.

<sup>182</sup> Begg, “2 Kings,” 181.

now direct violators of Deuteronomy's edict: "There must not be found among you anyone who causes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire" (Deut 18:10)

Cohn notes that "Ahaz's sin is portrayed as even more weighty than" that of Joram, the other Judahite king accused of following the cultic practices of the kings of Israel, whose apostasy is blamed on Athaliah, whom he married (2 Kgs 8:18).<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, "not only did he imitate Israelite kings, as if that would not be bad enough, but he sacrificed his son as a burnt offering in the manner of the dispossessed nations."<sup>184</sup> Not only is the difference between the kings of Judah and Israel disappearing, but there is now little or no difference between the kings of both nations and the Canaanite kings: Israel and Judah now have their "king[s] like the nations" who really are like the kings of the nations around them. Israel and Judah themselves have become indistinguishable from these nations. The "king" (מלך) engages in child sacrifice in the form of the *MLK*-offering (למלך). Although the precise nature of the *MLK*-offering is still unclear, Dtr seems keen to exploit the easy lexical/phonological association between מלך and למלך.

According to Dtr, the twin sins of "caus[ing] their sons and daughters to pass through the fire" and "us[ing] divination" (2 Kgs 17:17; Deut 18:10) continue unabated until Israel angers Yhwh to such a degree that he "remove[s] them from his presence [ויסרם מעל] (פניו)" (17:18; cf. Deut 18:16: "Let me not see this great fire any more ..."). Dtr sees the loss of the land as Israel's loss of Yhwh's presence, and he makes clear they have been steadily

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<sup>183</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 112.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

losing Yhwh's immediacy since Horeb. Yhwh is punishing Israel "in stages,"<sup>185</sup> and what has happened in the north will soon be replicated in the south.

*5.4.12 Manasseh's Passes His Son through the Fire (2 Kgs 21:6)*

In his prayer to Yhwh for deliverance from the Assyrians, Hezekiah implicitly acknowledges that the Assyrians have done a better job at consigning the gods of the nations to "fire" than Israel and Judah (2 Kgs 19:17). Manasseh's acts as king run counter to everything that Deuteronomy 7 and 12 proscribe. The "evil that he did in Yhwh's sight" was "according to the abominations of the nations" (2 Kgs 21:2), contra Deuteronomy's injunction: "when you have come into the land which Yhwh your God is giving you, you shall not learn to do the abominations of those nations" (Deut 18:9). Dtr further states: "he built up the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed" (2 Kgs 21:3), linking Manasseh back to Solomon's cultic failings (1 Kgs 11:7). Dtr also links his sin to Ahab's: "he raised up altars for Baal and made an asherah like Ahab made and worshipped the hosts of heaven and served them" (2 Kgs 21:3).

Nor does he stop there: Manasseh builds additional illicit altars "in the house of Yhwh, regarding which Yhwh said, 'in Jerusalem I will set my name'" (21:4), and builds "altars for the heavenly hosts in the courts of the house of Yhwh." Manasseh manages to "delegitimate" the temple in a way that none of his predecessors had done. The house which was uniquely Yhwh's now belongs to a variety of deities. As a result, Yhwh vows to "unbuild" Jerusalem

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 119.

(21:13), including the temple, in a way which even Josiah's reforms will not "re-legitimate" (23:27).

Deut 12:31 emphatically prohibited Israel from doing any of the abominations of the nations, noting as the worst of the nations' sins: "even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire [באש] to their gods." And, as noted previously, Deut 18:10 warns: "There must not be found among you anyone who causes his son or his daughter to pass through **the fire**" [באש]." Dtr reports that Manasseh "caused his son to pass through **the fire**" (2 Kgs 21:6). Where Deut 18:10-11 also forbids "the one using divination [קמס קמסים] ... the soothsayer [מעיין] and the charmer [ומנחש] and the practitioner of witchcraft [ומכשף], and the one casting spells, and the one consulting ['asking,' שאל] ancestral spirits, and the medium, and the one inquiring of the dead," Dtr states that Manasseh "practiced soothsaying [עוין] and consulted charmers [ונחש] ... and reinstituted (consultation of) the ancestral spirit [אוב] and the mediums [וידענים]—he multiplied evil-doing [הבררה לעשות הרע] in Yhwh's eyes by provoking him" (2 Kgs 21:6). In other words, Manasseh was at once the evil-doing Davidic king<sup>186</sup> and the very type of individual that Deut 18:10-11 outlawed. 2 Kgs 21:6 certainly recalls Saul's violations of Deut 18:10-11 amid his downfall (see chapter two), but also emphasizes that Manasseh was an even worse violator.

And Manasseh is not done: "And he placed the carved image of the asherah in which he had made inside the temple (regarding which) Yhwh had said to David and to Solomon his

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<sup>186</sup> See 2 Sam 11:27; 12:9; 1 Kgs 11:6; 14:21-23; 2 Kgs 8:26-27; cf. 2 Kgs 21:2, 16, 20.



son, ‘In this house and in Jerusalem I will place my name forever.’” Manasseh, more than any king in Judah or Israel, Davidic or non-Davidic, had failed to safeguard Yhwh’s “name” and glory. Dtr’s evaluation is unambiguous: “but they [Judah] did not hear, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations which Yhwh destroyed before the Israelites” (2 Kgs 21:9).

The point of no return has been reached: “Then Yhwh spoke through his servants the prophets saying, ‘On account of the fact that Manasseh king of Judah has performed these abominations, having done more evil than everything which the Amorites performed which were before him performed and having made even Judah to sin with his idols [בגל ולי], therefore thus says Yhwh God of Israel, ‘I am bringing an evil upon Jerusalem and Judah such that any who hear it [שמעו], his ears shall tingle’” (2 Kgs 21:11-12).<sup>187</sup> This was the very prophecy that preceded Eli’s “dethronement” and the near-extermination of his “unhearing” house (1 Sam 3:11).<sup>188</sup> Like the downfall of the Elides, Saul’s downfall and the loss of his kingship is a prefiguring of the fate of the Davidides and Judah.

Israel and Judah had refused to “hear” the “raised-up” prophetic intermediary of Deut 18:15-22, and now this failure to “hear” will be “required” (דרש) of them. The Israelites of Moses’s time, who were terrified of Yhwh’s glory, i.e., his theophanic “fire,” have

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<sup>187</sup> The use of the verb שמע in 1 Sam 3:11 and in 2 Kgs 21:12 constitutes a wordplay on the name “Samuel,” the name of the “raised up” prophet that Israel refused to “hear” in the matter of kingship. Under the monarchy, Israel and Judah have refused to “hear” Samuel’s successor prophets. See Bowen, *Rejective Requests*, 100-101. Thus Yhwh’s punishment for Israel’s refusal to “hear” is articulated in retributive language. See also Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel*, 60.

<sup>188</sup> This prophecy is also attributed to Jeremiah (see Jer 19:3).

descendants who exhibit no fear of passing their own children “through fire” as *MLK*-offerings. Yet, even if an antidote to Judah and its monarchy’s ills is no longer possible, Dtr intends to show that the Deuteronomic ideal (Deuteronomy 7 and 12) could still be enforced in Judah and in Israel’s former territory.

#### 5.4.13 Josiah’s Reform: Fight “Fire” with “Fire”(2 Kings 23)

Even though it is already too late, Josiah finally stands up and does what Dtr insists Israel/Judah and its leaders should have done from the beginning. Josiah exchanges Manasseh’s fire of child sacrifice (*MLK*-fire, 2 Kgs 21:6; cf. Deut 12:31; 18:10) for Yhwh’s “consuming fire” (Deut 9:3) and its ritual extensions as stipulated in Deuteronomy (7:5; 12:3). The degree of Josiah’s piety seems to match or nearly-match the impiety of Manasseh his grandfather. Josiah’s Deuteronomy-inspired “covenant”-making (2 Kgs 23:3)<sup>189</sup> stands in stark contrast to his royal predecessors’ ברית-making with Syria and Assyria.<sup>190</sup> Josiah is the embodiment of the punishing “fire” at which Judges 9 hints, whose ultimate source is Yhwh himself.

Garsiel sees the text of 2 Kings 23 as openly exploiting the name “Josiah” (יְשַׁעְיָהוּ) in reference to אֵשׁ (“fire”) and the verb שָׂרַף (“burn”),<sup>191</sup> this suggesting the midrashic meaning “Fire of Yhwh” or “Fire of God,” which is inextricably bound up with the “man of God”

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<sup>189</sup> Jehoiada’s “covenant” anticipates Josiah’s “covenant” (see 2 Kgs 11:17-21).

<sup>190</sup> See Luciano Lepore, “La storicità del ‘manifesto’ di Giosia,” *Bibbia e Oriente* 45 (2003) 3-33.

<sup>191</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 102.

figure in Dtr. Here in 2 Kings 23, Garsiel notes, the verb **שרף** “becomes a leitmotif describing the numerous acts of burning carried out by Josiah.”<sup>192</sup> This divinely-mandated “burning” begins when Josiah orders Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second order to “bring out of Yhwh’s house all the implements which were made for Baal and for the asherah and for all of the heavenly hosts and he [Josiah] **burned them** [**וישרפם**] outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron and transported their ashes to Bethel” (23:4).

After putting an end to (or “burning”)<sup>193</sup> the idol-priests of the high places (23:5), Josiah “brings out the asherah from the house of Yhwh to the outside of Jerusalem to the Wadi Kidron, and he **burned it** [**וישרף**] at the Wadi Kidron and crushed it to dust and threw the dust of it the graves the children of the people” (23:6). Josiah then “broke down [**וידיתן**] the houses of the ‘holy ones’ which were adjoining the house of Yhwh where the women wove housings for the asherah” (23:7) and “he polluted the high places” (23:8). Where Solomon built Yhwh’s house but subsequently imported illicit foreign cults (1 Kings 11), Josiah both undertakes to “repair” Yhwh’s house (2 Kgs 22:3-7) and to set the cult in order in accordance with Deuteronomy.

Josiah then turns his reform efforts against the “fire” of illicit child sacrifice: “Then he [Josiah] polluted Topheth which is in the Valley of Ben-hinnom so that no man [**איש**] might cause his son or his daughter to pass through the fire [**באש**] as a *MLK*-offering [**למלך**]” (2

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> MT has **והשבית** (“And he put an end to”); LXX reads καὶ κατέκαυσεν = **וישרף** (“And he burned”).

Kgs 23:10). The legislation of Deut 18:10—violated egregiously by both Israel and Judah (Deut 17:17),<sup>194</sup> and by Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:3)—is strictly implemented by Josiah. Moreover, Josiah himself applies “fire” to other cultic abominations: “He put an end to [or, “burned”]<sup>195</sup> the horses which the kings of Judah gave [נתנו מלכי יהודה] to the Sun at the entrance of Yhwh’s house near the chamber of Nathan-melech [נתן־מלך] the eunuch ... and the chariots of the Sun he **burned with fire** [שרף באש]” (2 Kgs 23:11).

Jotham’s parable suggested that monarchy would produce mutually-destructive “fire” from both the people and the king. Instead of Manasseh’s “fire” for child sacrifice—the fire of the *MLK*-offering, Josiah brings the “fire” of Yhwh to bear on Israel’s most idolatrous practices. Like the Baal-“hacking” of Gideon ben Joash (Jerubbaal), Josiah’s cultic reforms are Deuteronomy-inspired. Where Gideon’s activities anticipate the anti-Baalistic activities of the “men of God” (esp. Elijah and Elisha), Josiah’s efforts recall their activities. Josiah’s burning the “chariots of the sun” by “fire” represents a posthumous (albeit temporary) victory for those “men of God” and the “chariots of fire” of Yhwh’s realm that attended their efforts.

Next, Dtr states that Josiah “smashed the pillars and cut down [ויכרת] the asherahs and filled their places with human bones” (2 Kgs 23:14). Dtr’s use of the verb כרת links this episode to his earlier account of Gideon’s anti-Baalistic activities. While Gideon is the archetypal Deuteronomic “hacker” (כרת / גרע) of idolatrous cult paraphernalia, he is also the

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<sup>194</sup> Cf. Jer 32:35; Ezek 20:31; 23:37.

<sup>195</sup> MT has וישבת (“and he put an end to”); LXX reads καὶ κατέκαυσεν (“and he burned”). Cf. 2 Kgs 23:5.

facilitator of idolatry. Solomon built Yhwh's house at the place Yhwh chose, but then precipitated its (and Israel's) being filled with every type of idolatrous worship. Josiah was an even better Deuteronomic "hacker" than Gideon, and yet Josiah failed to reverse Israel's destructive path, and his own sons only hastened Israel's demise. For all their good intentions, Gideon and Josiah have "royal" offspring that ultimately overwhelm their "good" legacies and negate their merits.

In the face of Assyria's decline, Josiah extends his policy of reform even to the northern sanctuary at Bethel over which he can now exert some hegemony, treating Bethel like a Canaanite shrine:

(15) And also the altar which was at Bethel—the high place which Jeroboam son of Nebat made by which he caused Israel to sin—even that altar and he broke down [נהי] **and burned** [וישרף] the high place and he smashed its stones<sup>196</sup> and ground them to dust, **and he burned** [וישרף] the asherah. (16) Then Josiah turned and saw the graves which were there on the mountain, and he sent and he took the bones from the graves **and he burned** (them) upon the altar and he polluted it according to the word of Yhwh which **the man of God** [איש האלהים] proclaimed while Jeroboam was standing during the festival around the altar. Then he turned and lifted up his eyes upon the grave of **the man of God** [איש האלהים\* = ]<sup>197</sup> who proclaimed these words (17) and he said, "What is that gravestone that I see?" And the men of the city said to him, "This is the grave<sup>198</sup> of **the man of God** [איש האלהים] who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel." (19) Then he said, "Let him rest. Let no man disturb his bones." And so they left his bones alone with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria (2 Kgs 23:15-18).

This incident, of course, fulfills the prophecy of the Judahite "man of God" in 1 Kings 13 (particularly 13:1-2). As Cohn observes, "A trajectory of expectation opened at the very

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<sup>196</sup> Reading with LXX.

<sup>197</sup> Similarly, reading with LXX.

<sup>198</sup> Reading with LXX<sup>L</sup>.

beginning of the divided kingdom and arching over its history ever since here culminates in Josiah's action."<sup>199</sup> Moreover, these events serve to identify Josiah (יִשְׁיָהוּ), whose name now occurs in the text for the first time since 22:3,<sup>200</sup> less with the monarchs of Israel and Judah and more with the figure of the אֱלֹהֵי הָאֵלֹהִים and the "fire" (אֵשׁ) of God which legitimated them and their anti-Baalistic activities. The destruction verbs נָתַן and שָׂרַף again ground Josiah's actions in the legislation of Deuteronomy (Deut 7:5, 12:3), while the latter verb also again highlights Josiah as embodying "Yhwh's fire" (אֵשׁ יְהוָה, 1 Kgs 18:38; cf. Num 11:1, 3).

Josiah's "fire"-reforms are not finished. He goes on to enact these reforms on other cult sites in what had been the northern kingdom (2 Kgs 23:19), "slaughtering" (or, sacrificing! וַיִּזְבַּח) the priests officiating at the high places "upon the altars," and, in his final act as "Yhwh's fire," he "burns [וַיִּשְׂרֹף] human bones" upon those altars before returning to Jerusalem (23:20). The verb שָׂרַף occurs here for the seventh (or ninth)<sup>201</sup> time, rounding out the picture of Josiah's commitment to the ideals of Deuteronomy and the triumph of "Yhwh's fire" over all cultic rivals. For Dtr, Josiah is the one Israelite or Judahite king—and the only leader since Joshua—to fully safeguard Yhwh's glory. Even more than Elijah and Elisha,

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<sup>199</sup> Cohn, *2 Kings*, 159.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> MT has seven instances of שָׂרַף; LXX possibly suggests a *Vorlage* with nine—see notes 194 and 196.

Josiah is the “man of God” whose use of “the fire of God” matches Deuteronomy’s vision, centralizing the cult in Jerusalem.

As the capstone of Josiah’s reforms, Dtr commemorates the latter’s observance of an incomparable “Passover” (פסח), in accordance with Deut 16:1-8, this recalling Joshua’s obedience to Deuteronomy regarding the Passover (Josh 5:10-11),<sup>202</sup> at an important “rebirth” moment for Israel early in its history at Gilgal, where Yhwh had “rolled away” (גל ותי, cf. “exiled”) the “reproach of Egypt” (i.e., the “unhearing” wilderness generation; see Josh 5:9). Ironically, Josiah would hold his incomparable Passover at the threshold of another “unhearing” generation’s being “rolled away” into exile (see 2 Kgs 23:21-23).<sup>203</sup> Like Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha, however, Josiah’s efforts will not outlive him nor make Judah’s fate different than Israel’s.

The summary notice that concludes Josiah’s reign captures the paradox, with Dtr offering an incomparability notice for Josiah and repentance along with the proviso that none of his merits negated the sins of his father: “There was no king before him that **turned** [שׁב] to Yhwh [i.e., repented] with all his heart and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to the whole law of Moses; neither did any after him arise like him. Nonetheless,

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<sup>202</sup> Cf. Nelson, “Josiah in the Book of Joshua,” 534.

<sup>203</sup> The word “Passover” (פסח) here itself recalls Israel’s “leaping” (פסח) between “two branches” (1 Kgs 18:21) and Baal-priests “leaping” (פסחו) upon “the altar which they had made” (1 Kgs 18:26). Josiah, like “the man of God” Elijah, used the “fire of God” or “Yhwh’s fire” to put an end to Israel’s vacillation, and both made an apparent end of the kinds of cult sites, priests, and sacrifices that Yhwh (and Dtr) found so abominable. The great irony of Josiah’s incomparable lifetime achievements, however, is that none of them—including his incomparable “Passover”—would persuade Yhwh to “pass over” Judah (cf. Exod 12:17).

Yhwh did not **turn** [שׁב] from the blazing of his anger which his nose blazed against Judah over all of the provocations with which Manasseh provoked him” (2 Kgs 23:25-26). The wordplay on שׁוּב (שׁב) juxtaposes Josiah’s “turning” (repentance) with Yhwh’s refusal to “turn away” from his own anger. As Janzen puts it, “God explicitly reject[s] Josiah’s perfect act of repentance.”<sup>204</sup> Thus, to the question: “can Israel push Yhwh too far?” Dtr gives the resounding answer, “yes!”

Yhwh’s anger is such that he even his own “house” will not be spared: “I will cast off ... the house of which I said, ‘My name shall be there’” (2 Kgs 23:27). Yhwh rejects the “legitimated” visible symbol of the “land” as his “presence,” and of the “legitimate” Davidic “house” (2 Samuel 7) which he had accepted by “fire” (1 Kgs 8:11): *that house will now be rejected by “fire.”* Just as Yhwh’s rejection of Eli and his sons was marked by the loss of the Ark and the “glory,” Yhwh’s rejection of the Davidic monarchy will be marked by the loss of the temple and Yhwh’s “presence.” The post-Josiah narrative will prove to be anything but an “anti-climax.”<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 205.

<sup>205</sup> Cross (*Canaanite Myth*, 288-89) ascribes “the anti-climax” of Josiah’s reign to an exilic Dtr<sub>2</sub>, and many since have adopted this view. This view, however, seems to miss the point of the historical arc. Whether one wishes to follow the history of Israel’s creation from creation (Genesis) or from the threshold of entering the land (Deuteronomy, Joshua), the arc is still from losing Yhwh’s “presence” (Genesis 2-3) to losing Yhwh’s “presence” (2 Kings 25) or from gaining Yhwh’s “presence” (the “Land,” Deuteronomy-Judges) to “losing Yhwh’s presence” (2 Kings). In either case, it seems unlikely to me too that the arc of Israelite history, from a religious or literary standpoint, was ever intended to “climax” or “culminate” in Josiah.



5.4.14 “He Burned the House of Yhwh ... with Fire” (2 Kgs 25:9)

None of Josiah’s offspring sustains his reforms (2 Kgs 23:30-32, 36-37; 24:8-9, 18-19). Instead of giving rain in its season from his “good treasury,” Yhwh now sends famine (25:3) and “fire” via a foreign emissary. Just as the temple was “legitimated” by the fire of Yhwh’s “glory” (1 Kgs 8:11) its “delegitimation” or rejection (2 Kgs 23:27) will now be marked by “fire” of a destroyer: “And in the fifth month on the seventh day of the month—it was in the nineteenth year of the king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan captain of the guards who stands in the presence [ἐστὼς ἐνώπιον]<sup>206</sup> of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. Then he burned [וַיִּשְׂרֹף] the house of Yhwh with fire [בְּאֵשׁ] and the king’s house and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every large house he burned with fire [וְשָׂרֵף בְּאֵשׁ]” (2 Kgs 25:8-9).

Jerusalem’s destruction is virtually as thorough as Israel’s destruction of the Canaanites was supposed to have been. Nebuchadnezzar’s use of “fire” against the temple and Jerusalem is an ironic refraction of the divine “fire” that was supposed to go before Israel (Deut 9:3) to destroy its enemies and the extension of that “fire” that Israel was supposed to use against the cults of its enemies (7:5; 12:3). Instead, the “consuming fire” of Yhwh’s zeal erupted against Judah, Jerusalem and the Davidic monarchy. From its conception (2 Sam 7:2) and its legitimation by the fire of Yhwh’s theophanic glory (1 Kgs 8:11), the most visible symbol of the legitimacy and viability of the Davidic “house” was the “house of Yhwh.” For good measure, Dtr adds that the entire Babylonian army “broke down” (וַיִּתְּרֶם) the wall of

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<sup>206</sup> Reading with LXX against MT; cf. Jeremiah 52.

Jerusalem. Judah and Israel, ironically, are now broken down in the way that they were enjoined to break down the shrines of the Canaanites.

As noted previously, the land was Yhwh's "presence,"<sup>207</sup> from the time of Solomon, the temple emblemized Yhwh's "presence" as a residing "name"<sup>208</sup> or "glory" (1 Kgs 8:11, 43). By losing the land and the temple, Israel-Judah had lost Yhwh's "presence." Here we are reminded again of Jotham's fable (Judges 9) and the mutually destructive "fire" that was to come out from Abimelech (i.e., the monarchy) and the people. Rather than consuming Israel's enemies with Yhwh's "fire," Israel is being consumed with the "fire" of its enemies, just as it had allowed itself to be consumed with the fire of illicit sacrifices, like the *MLK*-offering.

Rather than being the expeller, Judah now finds itself the expelled. Now it is Jerusalem being burned with "fire" rather than Jericho, and it is Judah being burned in Jerusalem rather than destroying their Canaanite enemies by "fire" (see Judg 1:8), a destruction which made Israel's destruction of Benjamin by fire (Judg 20:48) pale in comparison. They have made themselves Yhwh's enemies and are "consumed" with the "fire" of his zeal (cf. Deut 4:24; 9:3).

## 5.5 Conclusion

The vividness of Genesis' description Yhwh's annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah by "fire" (Gen 19:24) may have been best appreciated by Judahites who had witnessed

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<sup>207</sup> See 1 Kgs 9:7; 2 Kgs 13:23 17:20; 21:2; 23:27; 24:3, 20; cf. Jer 7:15; 15:1.

<sup>208</sup> On the doctrine of the temple as the place of Yhwh's "name," see Deut 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23-24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2 1 Kgs 8:29, 43; 9:3; 2 Kgs 23:27; because Jerusalem is the place of the temple, it too is the place of Yhwh's "name"; see 1 Kgs 11:36; 14:21.

Nebuchadnezzar's annihilation of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple (2 Kgs 25:9), the visible emblems of David's "sure" house. They too, may have been best positioned to appreciate the truth of Jotham's "curse" (Judg 9:57), mutual destruction of a Baal-worshipping people and a Baalist king by "fire" that had its source in monarchic sins and the sins of the populace. Israel, Judah, and their monarchies had indeed "learned to do according to the abominations of the nations" (Deut 18:9-10; 2 Kgs 16:3; 21:2-9; see esp. 21:11; 1 Sam 8:19-20).

The lesson of Josiah's repentance, which was accepted (i.e., "heard," 2 Kgs 22:19) for him personally, but rejected on behalf of Judah, was this: it is possible for Israel/Judah to go too far. The oft-Balist, child-sacrificing monarchies of Israel and Judah and their Baal-worshipping, child-sacrificing subjects alike "cursed" Yhwh (cf. 1 Sam 3:13) rather than "glorified" him for such a long time and to such a degree that they made themselves a "curse" (2 Kgs 22:19; Deut 28:15, 45; Judg 9:27) in fulfillment of Yhwh's threat (1 Sam 2:30) and Jotham's "curse" (Judg 9:57). They preferred Baal as their father and god and their idolatrous human kings (cf. "Abimelech") rather than Yhwh should "rule" over them (Judg 8:23) and be their king (1 Sam 8:7), and preferred the "fire" and "glory" of the *MLK*-offering to Yhwh's own glory. Consequently, Yhwh's "glory" was exiled from Israel, Judah, and the Jerusalem temple (2 Kgs 25:9); Yhwh sent his "fire" upon the house and city where his name and glory should have always resided, and allowed both kingdoms to be sent into exile.

## Chapter Six

*“Is not my house established with God?” (2 Sam 23:5)*

*“The full have hired themselves out for bread” (1 Sam 2:5)*

### 6.1. Introduction

The foregoing chapters of this dissertation have noted Dtr’s thematic wordplay on “Saul” and “Samuel” in terms of the *Leitwort* שאל (“ask,” “request,” “beg”; chapter two); similar wordplay on “David” and “Jedidiah” in terms of אהב (“love”; chapter three) and his abundant wordplay on “Solomon” in terms of several prominent של-derived words (שלום, “peace,” שלם, “repay”) and supplemented by wordplay involving other similar-sounding words.<sup>1</sup> An additional chapter (five) was devoted to presenting Dtr’s thematic treatment of “exile” in terms of the roots כבד and גלה and the names “Ichabod” and “Tiglath-pileser”; of the despoiling of the royal and temple treasuries (אוצר) in terms of the name “Nebuchadnezzar”; and of the “fire”—the monarchic “fire” that came out from Abimelech (“my father is king”), the prototypical evil-doing dynastic son and Josiah, whose name Dtr makes a symbol of the Deuteronomic “fire” (אש) wielded by the “man of God” (Elijah, Elisha) and whose use of that “fire” showed “how things should have been done all along.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., משל, “rule,” “proverb” and שלמה (< שמל, “cloak”); see chapter four.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomic History* (trans. David J. A. Clines, Jane Doull, et al.; JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981); reprinted: Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004; trans. of *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (2nd ed.; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1957) 73-74.

In the following chapter I will contextualize what Dtr's literary treatment of the above-mentioned names—especially his treatment of “Saul”—would have meant for a target audience in ca. 560 BCE Babylon. I will further suggest that the onomastic wordplay in Dtr is intended to address contemporary leadership issues (and perhaps a leadership debate) among the exiles and related community decisions going forward. In this vein, I will also highlight Dtr's literary echoes of “Abiathar” (אַבִּיָּאֶתָר, “my father has left a remnant”), the name of the Elide priest who finally experiences the “dethronement” symbolized by Eli's tumbling to his death from his “throne” (1 Sam 4:18).

The fate of the house of Eli is not only a template of how Yhwh dealt with the house of Saul, but also (and perhaps especially) with the house of David. Thus, I will further note Dtr's use of the word “bread” in scenes that depict the shared fate for the houses of Eli, Saul and David, this echoing the name of David's hometown Bethlehem (“house of bread”). All of this has important implications for the “remnant” of the house of Israel's “sons” and “daughters” who have the way of life (obedience to Deuteronomy and Dtr) and the way of death (that their ancestors have already pursued) set before them in exile (Deut 30:19; cf. Jer 21:8). The fate of the houses of Eli, Saul, and David, has been—and may continue to be—the fate of the exiles and their children.

*6.1.1. “This Evil Is From Yhwh; Why Should I Have Hope in Yhwh Any Longer”? (2 Kgs 6:33): What Hope for Israel?*

The burning of Jerusalem and the house of Yhwh (2 Kgs 25:9), the breaking down of Jerusalem's wall (25:10), the exile of the “remnant” of Jerusalem to Babylon (25:11), the trial of Zedekiah and subsequent execution of his sons (25:6-7), the assassination of the pro-

Babylonian governor Gedaliah (25:22-25) and the flight of a large number of refugees to Egypt (25:26) gives Dtr's history a sense of finality ("doom and gloom," as Donald F. Murray puts it).<sup>3</sup> The question that this narrative makes exegetes grapple with is: does Dtr offer hope to Israel? In fact, this is one question that Dtr seems to pose to his exilic audience: *is there any hope for Israel?*

The answer to that question is: yes and no. Dtr does not offer the hope that some imagine, particularly in 2 Kgs 25:27-30, i.e., hope for—and in—a renewed Davidic dynasty.<sup>4</sup> To conclude otherwise is to conclude that Dtr has written an epic showing how human leadership—particularly human kingship—has rarely served Israel well,<sup>5</sup> only to give Israel hope for and in its reinstitution. What too of the many evil-doing members of the house of David? What of the devastating personal failures of David himself? What of the egregious cultic failures of Solomon, Rehoboam and most of their successors, especially Manasseh? What of the house of David's continued evil-doing, even as the dynasty falls into ruin (Jehoiachin and Zedekiah), and Ishmael's assassination (and, in Jer 41:7, mass murder) as he apparently aspires for monarchic power, this after the destruction of the temple and the collapse of the Davidic state? If Dtr were written to extol kingship or if the Deuteronomist had written approvingly of it overall—particularly of Davidic kingship—we might expect Dtr

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<sup>3</sup> Donald F. Murray, "Of All the Years the Hopes—or Fears? Jehoiachin in Babylon (2 Kings 25:27-30)," *JBL* 120 (2001) 245-65.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomium-Studien* (FRLANT 40; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1947) 52-64; Tiziano Lorenzin, "L'esilio: La fine di tutto?" *PdV* 46 (2001) 42-47.

<sup>5</sup> Of the thirty-nine kings of Israel (nineteen) and Judah (twenty), only eight are given any kind of positive evaluation and of them Dtr gives just two (Hezekiah and Josiah) an apparently "unqualifiedly" positive evaluation. And as we have seen, even these endorsements are not completely unqualified.

to supply much more evidence of human (and Davidic) kingship's desirability and functionality. Instead, from Solomon to Zedekiah, we are treated to a picture of a Davidic monarchy, decaying even under its good kings, with interludes detailing the unviability of the kingship that has been—of all things—divinely instituted in the northern kingdom (1 Kgs 11:29-39). Viewing Dtr's work as a whole, it is difficult to conclude that he saw human kingship, even at its best, as much more than a failed experiment.

But then, what hope does Dtr offer? He concludes the history in 2 Kings 25, with intimations of hope and encouragement for the exiles. Elsewhere, he has stressed the importance of obeying ("hearing") Deuteronomy, even in exile (e.g., Deut 30:10). Long suggests that "survival while ruled by the Babylonians been a matter of political debate among the Judeans"<sup>6</sup> and that "the writer holds fast to the basic ideological stance that informs the entire Dtr history" namely that "Yahweh demands *tôrâ*-centered obedience from his kings and from his covenant people."<sup>7</sup> Dtr, however, sees no hope in human kingship, Davidic or otherwise.

Long further concludes, "But the story of the monarchy is finally one of failure that was prophesied and fulfilled. It is a story of broken obligations, and probably told as both record and instruction."<sup>8</sup> The aforementioned "political debate" included a leadership dilemma for the exiles living after the death of Jehoiachin that Dtr must address lest the most horrific aspects of the foregoing history repeat themselves for the exiles. Thus, Dtr is both

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<sup>6</sup> Burke O. Long, *2 Kings* (FOTL 10; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991) 289.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

epic history and paranesis. Dtr saw the paranetic potential of the names “Saul,” “Samuel,” “David,” and “Solomon” (among others) and exploited them skillfully throughout his epic story of Israel’s history.

6.1.2. *What Kind of “Tidings”? (2 Sam 4:10; 18:19-31): An Epic for Israel’s Exiles*

The implied audience of the bulk of Dtr’s didactic narratives in their present form is one that has experienced total devastation at the hands of its enemies and exile to a land that is not its own (cf. Jer 5:18). The *most traumatic* and *climactic* events occur at the end of the history, beginning with the total destruction and exile of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrian kings (Tiglath-pileser III and his successors), this only to be surpassed by the detailed account of the destruction and exile of Judah, including the destruction of Solomon’s temple and David’s “eternal” dynasty. These facts, in particular, argue against the notion that King Josiah is, contrary to what Cross<sup>9</sup> and others since have argued,<sup>10</sup> the climax toward which all of Israelite history builds, and thus the great hero of an original pro-monarchic, pro-Davidic Deuteronomistic History. The commentators in question overlook the fact that Dtr depicts the incomparably pious Josiah’s death *as a part* of—even a step in—Yhwh’s “removing” Judah and “casting off” Jerusalem and the temple from his presence (2 Kgs 23:25-30). That Josiah is himself the victim of the blunt force trauma depicted in Dtr’s final movement and that Josiah can spare only himself (“gathered to [his] grave in peace” after a

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<sup>9</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973) 274-89.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981) *passim*.



violent demise; 2 Kgs 22:20), but not also his people the consequences of earlier monarchic sins suggests that Dtr views human kingship as fundamentally unessential at best and the source of Yhwh's wrath at worst.

David Janzen is nearer the mark when he calls the “trauma that the exiles have undergone” the “master narrative of Dtr.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, “this suffering that the exiles have endured and continue to endure is not without reason—indeed, from the standpoint of the master narrative, no suffering of Israel is—and can lead exilic readers, once they understand the logic in history that the master narrative advances, to a clear understanding of truth, at least as the narrative portrays it.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Dtr has a *kerygma*, as Wolff long ago noted,<sup>13</sup> but that *kerygma* may be less about the “return” or “repentance” of the exiles,<sup>14</sup> than it is about Israel's ongoing leadership situation, which after the time of Joshua is in a nearly constant crisis mode. Given Dtr's relentless emphasis on human leadership and its results—the final result for both Israel and Judah being exile from the land—it is appropriate to view the entire history as an extended reflection on human (vis-à-vis divine) leadership. After the deaths of Zedekiah and Jehoiachin, (the last ruling Davidides) in Babylon, we can well imagine that the

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<sup>11</sup> David Jansen, *The Violent Gift: Trauma's Subversion of the Deuteronomistic Narrative* (LHB/OTS 561; New York/London: T&T Clark, 2012) 3.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Hans Walter Wolff, “Das Kerygma des deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerks,” ZAW 73 (1961) 171-86.

<sup>14</sup> Although one can regard the “return” or “repentance” as an important part of Dtr's *kerygma* in the final analysis, one should not over-emphasize its prominence. There can be no “return” to the land without covenant obedience (“hearing”) on the part of the exiles and its leadership. In other words, Dtr stresses the need for hearing Yhwh and his Torah first and foremost, as that with which the exiles can survive and even live a good life in exile, but without which the exiles' lives will continue to hang in the balance.

issue of Israel's human and divine leadership was as pressing of a question for Israel/Judah as it had ever been.

*6.1.3. "What Was the Manner of the Man Who Came Up to Meet You and Told You These Words?" (2 Kgs 1:7): The Ongoing Leadership Question in Exile*

Jehoiachin's handing himself over to Nebuchadnezzar and his forces when the latter came to Jerusalem and besieged it (2 Kgs 24:10-11) made an already weak Davidic monarchy even weaker. The Babylonian puppet Mattaniah-Zedekiah then facilitates and accelerates the destruction of what is left of Davidic monarchic power when he subsequently revolts from Nebuchadnezzar his overlord (2 Kgs 24:20). Dtr's conclusion in 2 Kings 25 makes a point of just how precarious the very existence of the Davidic line has become. Zedekiah is taken to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah where "justice is executed upon him" (2 Kgs 25:6). The Babylonians slaughter Zedekiah's dynastic sons "before his eyes"<sup>15</sup> and put out his own eyes before they fetter him and haul him unceremoniously away to Babylon (2 Kgs 25:7). Zedekiah, David's descendant, is now like the "blind" Jebusites barred from "house of Yhwh" (see 2 Sam 5:8), i.e., barred from kingship, just as Saul's son Mephibaal was so excluded as one of the "lame."<sup>16</sup> Thus ends the Davidic dynasty as a political reality.

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<sup>15</sup> Note the irony of this event ("before his eyes") in view of the phrase "before the eyes of this sun" in Nathan's prophecy regarding David's wives (2 Sam 12:11) and the fulfillment of that prophecy (2 Sam 16:22). Whereas the latter event occurred very near the end of David's kingship, the former event marks the end of David's dynasty.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Identity of 'the Blind and the Lame' (*iwwer ûpisseah*) in 2 Samuel 5:8b," *CBQ* 63 (2001) 23-30; Jeremy Schipper, "Reconsidering the Imagery of Disability in 2 Samuel 5:8b," *CBQ* 67 (2005) 422-34.

Dtr also pointedly mentions Ishmael ben Nethaniah and his assassination of Gedaliah, the Babylonian-appointed Judahite governor of what had been Judah (2 Kgs 25:22-25). Ishmael is of the “royal seed” (25:25) and thus a potential claimant to the throne, which plausibly explains why Dtr mentions him. However, Dtr says nothing of his fate. The Jeremiah account describes Ishmael as acting on behalf of Baalis, king of the Ammonites (Jer 40:14), and suggests that he escaped to Ammon after he was forced to flee from Mizpah.<sup>17</sup> Ishmael’s “terroristic”<sup>18</sup> assassination of Gedaliah and its fallout suggest the existence of a Davidic faction (and perhaps factions) outside of Jehoiachin’s immediate family that were aspiring to and vying for monarchic power amid the chaos<sup>19</sup> in spite of Babylonian hegemony, as well as the existence of other factions of Judahites—which plausibly would have included Gedaliah himself<sup>20</sup>—who may have opposed the reinstitution of the Davidic monarchy.<sup>21</sup> Dtr himself may have belonged to, or may have been sympathetic with such an “anti-Davidic” faction.

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<sup>17</sup> On Ishmael’s connection to Baalis and the Ammonite royal family, see Abraham Malamat, “Naamah, the Ammonite Princess, King Solomon’s Wife,” *RB* 106 (1999) 35-40.

<sup>18</sup> On Ishmael’s assassination as a precedent for terrorism and an event condemned by the biblical record, see A. Ammassari, “Un precedente biblico del terrorismo,” *Bibbia e Oriente* 20 (1978) 241-44.

<sup>19</sup> Eric Peels, “The Assassination of Gedaliah (Jer 40:7-41:18),” in *Exile and Suffering: A Selection of Papers Read at the 50[th] Anniversary Meeting of the Old Testament Society of South Africa OTWSA/OTSSA, Pretoria August 2007* (ed. Dirk Human and Bob Becking; OTS 50; Leiden: Brill, 2009) 83-103.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Joel Weinberg, “Gedaliah, the Son of Ahikam in Mizpah: His Status and Role, Supporters and Opponents,” *ZAW* 119 (2007) 356-68.

<sup>21</sup> Francesco Bianci, “Godolia contro Ismaele: La lotta per il potere politico in Giudea all’inizio della dominazione neobabilonese (Ger 40-41 e 2Re 25,22-26),” *RivB* 53 (2005) 257-75.

If the survival of the Davidic line is thus in question in the new paradigm of Babylonian domination and Judahite statelessness, the leadership situation of the survivors in exile is, to say the least, unclear. That a powerful and influential faction of Judahites in Babylon continued to harbor dreams of a Davidic restoration is abundantly evident in the books of Haggai and Zechariah, and by the time period described in Ezra-Nehemiah (the early Persian period),<sup>22</sup> there appears to have been a clamor for the Davidic dynasty to be reestablished in the person of Sheshbazzar<sup>23</sup>/Zerubbabel.<sup>24</sup> It is unlikely that this pro-Davidic faction sprang up *ex nihilo* among the exiles during Zerubbabel's rise to prominence.

Contra Von Rad,<sup>25</sup> the final notice on Jehoiachin in 2 Kgs 25:27-30 is not a declaration of Dtr's hope in the restoration of the Davidic monarchy, but rather a description of the deposed monarch's improved fortunes personally prior to his death, with important implications for the Judahites living in Babylon.<sup>26</sup> Nowhere in his history does Dtr ever indicate that a king against whom he has pronounced an overall evaluation as an "evil"-doer, ever turned and repented. Specifically, there is no indication in 2 Kgs 25:27-30 at all that,

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<sup>22</sup> See Ezra 2:2; 3:2, 8; 4:2-3; 5:2; Neh 7:7; 12:1, 47.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Paolo Sacchi, "Re vassalli o governatori? Una discussione," *Henoch* 23 (2001) 147-52.

<sup>24</sup> Whether these two figures are actually the same (so, Aryeh Bartal, "Again--Who was Sheshbazzar? [Hebrew]," *BM* 24 [1979] 357-69; Magne Saebø, "The Relation of Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel: Reconsidered," *SEÅ* 54 [1989] 168-77) or not (so, Andrew E. Steinmann, "A Chronological Note: The Return of the Exiles under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel [Ezra 1-2]," *JETS* 51 [2008] 513-22) remains an open question. If not, they might have been closely related (e.g., uncle-nephew; so Menachem ben Yashar, "On the Problem of Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel [Hebrew]," *BM* 27 [1981] 46-56).

<sup>25</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *Deuteronomium-Studien* (FRLANT 58; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1947) 52-64.

<sup>26</sup> C.T. Begg, "The Significance of Jehoiachin's Release: A New Proposal," *JSOT* 36 (1986) 49-56.

even if Jehoiachin's personal fortunes had improved before his death, that he repented, changed his "evil"-doing, or that he was fully "rehabilitated"<sup>27</sup> in his moral or cultic behavior. If the evil-doing Jehoiachin did anything intelligent, it was to submit to Nebuchadnezzar and Babylonian hegemony rather than to fight, just as Gedaliah later urges the Judahite remnant to do<sup>28</sup> ("dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, so that it may go well with you," 2 Kgs 25:24),<sup>29</sup> in contrast to Zedekiah's ill-advised actions of revolt. But Jehoiachin's immediate capitulation to the Babylonians only emphasizes how utterly weak and wretched the Davidic monarchy had become (see chapter five). There is no evidence whatsoever that Dtr promotes or advocates Jehoiachin's becoming a "cornerstone" for the rebuilding of the Davidic dynasty (cf. Ps 118:22). In fact, Dtr's depiction of Jehoiachin's final state of house arrest suggests a Babylonian attempt to keep him and his sons from *ever* reigning again.

Earlier in his history Dtr included notices that Yhwh preserved portions of the Davidic kingdom "for David's sake" (1 Kgs 11:12-13; 32, 34; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:19; 19:34; 20:6). The last such notice occurs in the story of Yhwh's deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem from the Assyrian threat during Hezekiah's time (20:6). From Hezekiah's son Manasseh on, no such notices appear, even as Isaiah's prophecy regarding Hezekiah's "sons" (20:17-18) hastens to fulfillment.

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<sup>27</sup> Pace Jakob Wöhrle, "Die Rehabilitierung Jojachins: Zur Entstehung und Intention von 2 Kön 24,17-25,30," in *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt: Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Jakob Wöhrle, Rüdiger Schmitt, and Ingo Kottsieper; AOAT 350; Münster: Ugarit Verlag, 2008) 213-38.

<sup>28</sup> On the significance of Gedaliah's advice, see C.T. Begg, "The Interpretation of the Gedaliah Episode (2 Kgs 25,22-26) in Context," *Anton* 62 (1987) 3-11.

<sup>29</sup> Begg, "Jehoiachin's Release," 54.

The destruction of the temple puts an exclamation mark on Yhwh's declaration in 2 Kgs 23:27: "I will remove Judah from my presence just as I removed Israel from my presence and **I will reject** [וְיִסְרֹם] **this city** which I chose, Jerusalem, **and the house** concerning which I stated, 'my name will be there.'" The rejected "house" here clearly alludes to the temple, but the temple is itself the symbol *par excellence* of the house of David and the dynastic promise. Thus 2 Kgs 23:27 alludes to rejected kingship, or the rejection of the Davidides *from* kingship. The verb יִסְרֹם is, of course, the term that Yhwh uses to describe Israel's rejection of his kingship (1 Sam 8:7; cf. 10:19), his own rejection of Saul's kingship (1 Sam 15:23, 26; 16:1), Israel's rejection of his (Yhwh's) covenant (2 Kgs 17:15), and his resultant rejection of Israel (17:20). 2 Kgs 23:27 and the story of its fulfillment (2 Kings 24–25) speak volumes regarding Dtr's view of covenant "entitlements" as they pertain to the Davidic dynasty, as well as to the "house" and "city" where Yhwh deigned to put his name. It would be hard to conceive a more emphatic rejection of all of Israel's and Judah's royal houses than what we find in 2 Kgs 23:27.

Dtr's message is directed to the Judahite exiles of the post-Jehoiachin period, i.e., to the exiles living in Babylon *after* "all the days of [Jehoiachin's] life" (2 Kgs 25:29-30), since Dtr "clearly implies Jehoiachin's death while detained at the pleasure of his Babylonian masters."<sup>30</sup> Dtr directs his narrative toward a community at a crossroads, a community pondering—perhaps debating—who will lead it and how it will be led going forward, but also

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<sup>30</sup> Murray, "Jehoiachin in Babylon," 260. Here Murray also notes, "Simple everyday pragmatics ... lead the reader to infer that 'all the days of his [Jehoiachin's] life' had filled their full tale within the still melancholy circumstances prevailing at the conclusion of the book."

a community still inclined toward Davidic leadership—this in spite of the trauma of exile that it is experiencing.

In Deut 30:11-14, Moses deemphasizes the need for the kinds of intermediaries that Israel “asks” or “demands” so as to put distance between itself and Yhwh.<sup>31</sup> In other words, the divine commandment is not hidden or distant so that Israel needs to ask “who shall go up to heaven for us...?” (30:11-12).<sup>32</sup> Rather, “the word is very near” to Israel, even in “[its] heart and in [its] mouth, that it may perform it” (30:14). This agrees with the picture presented in Deuteronomy 5 of Yhwh’s initial willingness to have an unmediated (or relatively unmediated)<sup>33</sup> relationship with Israel (see Deut 5:24), a relationship (and “presence”) from which Israel quickly retreated, “asking” for prophetic mediation (Deut 18:16). What the exiles now really need to “ask” is: “have a people ever heard the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire as you have and lived?” (Deut 4:33; cf. 5:26). What was their ancestors’ opportunity—an opportunity that was squandered—is now the exiles’ opportunity, i.e., for a renewed and a more direct relationship with Yhwh (Deut 4:31-36; 30:11-14). In other words, Israel should (ideally) have a monarch-free (though perhaps not a prophet-free) relationship with Yhwh, in Yhwh’s “presence.” Just as Yhwh once “took for himself a nation from the

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Erik Aurelius, “Heilsgegenwart im Wort. Dtn 30,11-14,” in *Liebe und Gebot: Studien zum Deuteronomium: Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Lothar Perlitt* (ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spiekermann; FRLANT 190; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 13-29.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the “divine council” language of Isaiah 6:8: “who will go for us?”

<sup>33</sup> Moses is in the picture from the beginning. Deuteronomy 5 (especially v. 24) suggests that Yhwh wishes to reveal himself to Israel, i.e., to have Israel in his “presence.”

midst of a nation” (Deut 4:31), he can do so again and will do so again, but only on condition of Israel’s covenant obedience (cf. Deut 4:37-40).

Begg notes that “the original readers of the finale of Dtr. would not have failed to get the message that what happened with Jehoiachin might also happen with themselves, if, as Gedaliah had urged—and Jehoiachin is certainly presupposed here as having done—they ‘serve’ the king of Babylon.”<sup>34</sup> For Dtr, the answer to the ongoing leadership question (as a practical matter) lies in persuading the exiles to serve the king of Babylon. He also understands—and Zedekiah’s and Ishmael’s rebellions are proof of this—that this was exactly what most of the exiles were disinclined to do. Instead, they want a king, a Davidic king. But this “demand,” in Dtr’s view, is precisely what has led to the present problem and will, if allowed to persist, exacerbate the exiles’ present problems, rather than solve them. Another part of the answer to the leadership question lies in *dissuading* the exiles from demanding kingship. But even a convincing argument against monarchy still leaves open the question of who should lead the community and how.

In Deut 18:15-22, Moses makes clear that the consequence for Israel of its “asking” that Yhwh’s physical presence (his voice) be removed from them, was that they will ever after be under a strict obligation to “hear” the prophet(s) that Yhwh would “raise up” after Moses. The first prophet whom Dtr depicts as being “raised up” (1 Sam 1:23; cf. 1 Sam 3:20) after the loss of the Moses-Joshua leadership continuity is Samuel. At the same time, Dtr also

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<sup>34</sup> Begg, “Significance of Jehoiachin’s Release,” 54.



emphasizes that Israel refused to “hear” Samuel, particularly in the matter of kingship (1 Sam 8:19). Israel “asks” rather (cf. 8:10; 10:22; 12:17-19) for additional, intermediary leadership.

As I have noted elsewhere,<sup>35</sup> the repeated wordplay on the name “Samuel” in terms of the verb שָׁמַע suggests that Dtr wishes his audience to see Samuel as a “raised up” prophet “like Moses” that Israel had promised to hear but did not. But does Dtr also wish his audience to see himself (Dtr) as the “prophet like Moses”? Polzin has made an important observation on precisely this point: “The ‘prophet like Moses’ is the narrator of the Deuteronomistic History, and through him, the Deuteronomist himself. The Deuteronomist uses Moses to explain by a hortatory law-code the wide-ranging implications of the Decalogue; this same author [also uses] the Deuteronomic narrator to explain in an exemplary history the wide-ranging implications of the lawcode.”<sup>36</sup>

My view is compatible with Polzin’s: Dtr wishes his audience to see him as a new Moses (a law-giver), *but also as a new Samuel*. Dtr is another raised-up prophet “like Moses,” but also *like Samuel*. This has important implications for the exiles’ reception or non-reception of Dtr’s message. If they “hear” Yhwh’s voice as speaking to them through this new Moses/Samuel, it will go well for them. But if the exiles fail to hear Dtr, it will certainly be “required” of them, as it had been from their parents and grandparents in Jerusalem, and even from some of them personally (Deut 18:19). Israel had “asked” to “hear” Moses rather than

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<sup>35</sup> Matthew L. Bowen, *Rejective Requests and Deadly Disobedience: The Literary Utilization of Deut 18:15-17 in 1 Samuel and Its Function within the Deuteronomistic History* (MA Thesis, CUA, Washington, DC, 2009) 20-21.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: Seabury, 1980) 61.

hear Yhwh's voice, had also refused to "hear" Samuel in the matter of kingship and been granted a king. Human kingship has now failed. Dtr now attempts to dissuade Israel-Judah from "asking" wrongfully again. After all the exiles have experienced, will they refuse to "hear" Dtr and "ask" or "beg" for yet another human king? A Davidide?

From Dtr's perspective, the Horeb generation was fittingly representative of succeeding generations of Israelites who had "asked amiss" (cf. 1 Sam 12:19) and refused to "hear." The Israelites of the exile, many of whom had witnessed with their own eyes the spectacular catastrophe of the 587 BCE exile, had experienced an instance of divine intervention in history comparable to the exodus and Yhwh's self-revelation at Horeb/Sinai. No previous generation of Israelites was thus better positioned to make use of the lessons of hindsight. The exiles have observed what happened to the puppet king Zedekiah and the last vestiges of the Judahite state and are now bereft of the human kingship that their ancestors had "demanded." Thus, the kinds of things this generation might "ask," in Dtr's view, could be and ought to be appreciably different than what their ancestors had demanded of old.

Janzen writes, "When Israel has poor leadership or none at all, says the narrative, it commits the sorts of actions that result in the trauma of destruction and exile."<sup>37</sup> In other words, for Dtr, the trauma of exile bears directly on the issue of leadership *in the present* and *going forward*. Leadership has always been the issue for Israel, and what kind of leadership Israel will have is still the question. Dtr uses the near-simultaneous destructions of the temple, the Davidic dynasty, and Jerusalem and the trauma that the exiles have experienced to show

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<sup>37</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 125.

them that human kingship—especially Davidic kingship—cannot and should not be looked to as a cure-all solution for the community’s ills.

Monarchic covenant faithfulness has proven unsustainable in both the long-term and the short-term: even the best kings (e.g., Hezekiah and Josiah) could not instill covenant faithfulness in their sons. Saul, David, and Solomon—Israel’s first kings and men of renown—each fail spectacularly in their various ways, thereby laying the behavioral bases (e.g., monarchic self-will, “taking,” cultic apostasy, bloodshed of innocents, and institutionalized idolatry) for Israel’s eventual exile. *For Dtr, the very names of its most significant monarchic figures told the story of why human kingship has failed Israel*; or rather, why Israel has failed itself by “demanding” leadership on its own terms, rather than Yhwh’s.

6.1.4. *“I Indeed Said That Your House ... Should Walk Before Me Forever, But Now...” (1 Sam 2:30): The Rejection of the Elides as a Model for the Rejection of “Eternal” Dynasties*

It has been common to read the downfall of Eli and his sons as a literary foreshadowing of the downfall of Saul and his sons; the story is less often read as a literary foreshadowing of the fall of the royal houses of the northern kingdom, and still less as a literary foreshadowing of the downfall of the house of David. There are, however, some very good reasons for seeing the story of Eli as an anticipation of and a kind of thesis statement regarding not only the fall of Saul’s house and that of the short-lived northern dynasties, but perhaps *especially* for the fate of the house of David. Regarding 1 Samuel 1–7, Polzin observes: “Ostensibly about the fall the rise of *priestly* houses, these chapters are also an

extended introduction to the rise and fall of *royal* houses.”<sup>38</sup> In other words, the story of Eli’s house and its “eternal” priesthood is less about priesthood than it is about the “eternality” of the promises made to monarchic houses.

Dtr cites Yhwh’s revocation of an “eternal” promise in 1 Sam 2:30. That revocation seems to presuppose the **ברית כהנת עולם** (“covenant of an eternal priesthood”) that Yhwh had conferred upon Phinehas in Num 25:13 or something like it (Eli’s genealogy is not clearly delineated in Dtr, although 1 Chr 24:3 makes the Elide Ahimelech one of the sons of Ithamar). But this revocation also anticipates the giving (and revocation) of an eternal promise to David (2 Samuel 7). The revocation of the “eternal” promise to Eli’s priestly line serves notice to every “house,” including (and perhaps *especially*) the house of David, to whom Yhwh also makes “eternal” promises, that Yhwh not only can, but *will* modify, nullify, revoke, or otherwise abrogate covenants and promises when the parties to his covenant and the recipients of his promises treat him lightly (i.e., curse him) by their disobedience to the covenant (i.e., failure to keep the legislation of Deuteronomy) and acts of unfaithfulness. Barbara Green writes: “We are working with a riddle: are dynastic sons a viable solution to Israel’s leadership crisis in the sixth century? Can ancient promises be seen as entitlements when those receiving them have been proven not only unfaithful but self-destructive over time? Are foundational violations of the leadership easily reversed? The answer to all of these queries seems to be ‘no.’”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 127.

<sup>39</sup> Barbara Green, *King Saul’s Asking* (Interfaces; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003) 15.

Green's above queries articulate the mid-sixth century dilemma that the exiles faced: whether to "ask" or "beg" Yhwh for a renewal of their erstwhile monarchy or rather to seek some other form of leadership and guidance. Much of Deut 28:36-62 seems to have their difficult plight in view: "Yhwh will force you and the king which you shall raise up [תִּקְיֶם] over yourselves to go to a nation which you do not know (nor your ancestors) and you shall serve other gods there: wood and stone" (Deut 28:36).

By now, the exiles know that they have become the מַשַּׁל ( "proverb") among all nations as warned of in Deut 28:37 and 1 Kgs 9:7 and have experienced the fulfillment of the futility-curses enumerated in Deut 28:37-45. They also know the identity of the nation (גִּי) of which Moses spoke (28:49) who would besiege them to the point of death and exile them. Dtr has a definite view as to why curses came upon Israel whenever they did so: "because you would not hear [שָׁמַעַתָּה] the voice of Yhwh your God" (Deut 28:62). Exiles, like Mephibaa, Abiathar, and whoever remains of the house of David, live in fear; the soles of their feet have no rest; and their very lives hang in the balance, while many of their kin are once again in Egypt as at the first (Deut 28:63-68; cf. 17:16). Their subjection to "the curses written in this book," i.e., Deuteronomy and Dtr, is all the proof they need that Yhwh's anger has flared against them and that he has "uprooted them from their land" (Deut 29:27-28).

If, as Deut 30:1-10 anticipates, there is to be a "turn" in Israel's fortunes or any "return" to the land,<sup>40</sup> it must be preceded by a "return to Yhwh" (cf. Deut 30:2; 2 Kgs 8:46-

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<sup>40</sup> On שׁוּב as a key term here (Deut 30:1-10) and in 1 Kgs 8:46-51, see Amos Frisch, "Repentance and Return: A Literary-Theological Study of Three Biblical Texts (Deut. 30:1-10; I Kings 8:46-51; II Chronicles

53).<sup>41</sup> Israel will have to (finally) “love” Yhwh as he has “loved” Israel (and as they and their “beloved” kings have failed to do thus far). Moses declares, “You shall return and hear Yhwh’s voice” (Deut 30:8; cf. 30:2). Israel must “love” Yhwh and must “hear” his voice this time. There ought not to be any dilemma for Israel at this point: Israel must choose and rely on Yhwh’s “instruction” rather than human kingship. He—not the Elides, Saulides, or even the Davidides—is Israel’s national “treasure.”

## 6.2. “I Saw a Great Disturbance ... But I Did Not Know What It Was” (2 Sam 18:29): Name and *Leitwort* as National Story for, and Warning to, the Exiles

The foregoing study of Dtr’s thematic use of names in wordplay with *Leitworte* suggests that he is not only aware of the meaning and ironic potential of the names of the most important royal figures in Israel and Judah’s history, but also that he recognized—and wanted his audience to recognize—the story implicit in these names. Beyond this, and perhaps most importantly, Dtr wanted the lessons of these name-stories to be remembered, observed, and taught.

As I shall note below, Dtr describes a shared fate for the houses of Eli, Saul, and David. Two of the key terms that Dtr uses to describe this fate are **יָרָה** (verb, “remain,” “be left over; noun, “remnant”) and **לֶחֶם** (“bread”). Contemplation of the shared fate of these

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30:6-9),” in *Studies in Bible and Exegesis 4* (ed. B. Kasher, Y. Sefati, and M. Zipor; Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University, 1997) 129-48.

<sup>41</sup> Pace J.G. McConville (“1 Kings viii 46-53 and the Deuteronomic Hope,” *VT* 42 [1992] 67-79), I do not see Deut 30:1-10 and 1 Kgs 8:46-53 as representing necessarily differing views on the issue of a potential return to the land, which, as he notes, the latter text does not specifically offer. In any case, for Dtr, repentance (“turning”) in exile necessarily precedes any possible *return* to the land.

“house[s] of bread,” should lead the exiles to contemplation of their own fate, a contemplation that ought, in turn, to determine what it is the exiles do not “ask,” “demand,” or “beg” (שאל) of Yhwh regarding their future leadership. The “surety” of the house of Israel—the survival of its sons and daughters—depends on whether the exiles “hear” Dtr’s warning.

#### 6.2.1. *Beloved Houses of Bread: Dynastic “Remnants” in Peril (2 Kgs 25:29)*

The penultimate scene of Saul’s life has him eating “bread” while awaiting eminent death (1 Sam 28:20-25). When the stagelights go dark on Dtr’s story, David’s descendant Jehoiachin has eaten “bread” continually at Evil-Merodach’s table until his own death (2 Kgs 25:29). The punishment of the house of David, in fact, ends up being the same as that which befell the house of Saul: the kingdom is “torn”<sup>42</sup> (קרע)<sup>43</sup> like a cloak (שלמה; cf. the robe [מעיל] of the Eli-Samuel-Saul stories, 1 Sam 15:27-28), the very antithesis of the Solomon’s incomparable “peace” and the eternal dynastic “peace” (שלום) that he boasted would rest upon the house of David (1 Kgs 2:33). Moreover, the two houses’ fates are linked in another

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<sup>42</sup> The image of a torn cloak is an appropriate image given the fact that the tearing of clothes is often done in the OT as a sign of grief or mourning, in recognition of a permanent, negative change in affairs (e.g., treason; rape, 2 Sam 13:19; death, Josh 7:6; 1 Sam 4:12; 2 Sam 2:1, 11; 13:31; or impending death, Judg 11:35; 1 Kgs 21:27; 2 Kgs 18:37; 19:1; 22:11, 19; cf. 2:12). Indeed, once the “cloak” (שלמה) of Israel’s integrity (שלום) was “torn,” Israel and Judah were never the same.

<sup>43</sup> Jeremy Schipper (“‘Significant Resonances’ with Mephibosheth in 2 Kings 25:27-30: A Response to Donald Murray,” *JBL* 124 [2005] 525) writes: “While קרע refers often to the tearing of clothes, there are only four other places in the Bible outside of 1 Kings 11 where it refers to the (always divine) ‘tearing apart’ of a kingdom (1 Sam 15:28; 28:17; 1 Kgs 14:8; 2 Kgs 17:21). In all four occurrences, the torn kingdom refers either to the realm of Saul or to that of David.”

crucial aspect, which we will now consider. This shared fate, as Schipper notes, “does not bode well for the future of Davidic kingship.”<sup>44</sup>

Jotham’s precarious status as the sole “remnant” (i.e., **וְיֹתֵר יֹתֵם**, Judg 9:5; cf. “Jether” in Judg 8:20) of Abimelech’s “monarchic” purge sets the stage for other endangered “remnants” that we meet throughout Dtr. In 1 Sam 2:36, Yhwh declares to Eli: “It shall come to pass that everyone **who is left** [**הַנּוֹתָר**] in your house [**בְּבֵיתְךָ**] shall come and do obeisance to him [the Zadokite priest] for a piece of silver and a loaf of **bread** [**לֶחֶם**], and shall say, ‘Please install me in one of the priestly offices so [that I may] eat a morsel of **bread** [**לֶחֶם**].’” The expression **הַנּוֹתָר** here, as elsewhere, evokes and plays on the name “Abiathar” (i.e., “my father prospers” interpreted as “my father remains [as a remnant]”), the Elide who is finally deposed as priest in 1 Kgs 2:26-27, leaving his own life and the future of the Elides hanging in doubt.<sup>45</sup>

We encounter **יָהָר** in the “house”-context again when David informs Abigail with a solemn oath that if she had not come out to meet him there would not have “remained [**נִתְּוָר**] for Nabal, by the light of morning, one who pisses against the wall” (1 Sam 25:34; see chapter three). In fact, Nabal dies anyway, David takes his wife, and there is nothing left to Nabal or

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 526.

<sup>45</sup> Similarly-worded or -themed oracles of destruction are delivered to Jeroboam and Ahab of Israel. Ahijah directs Jeroboam’s wife to tell Jeroboam: “Therefore, I [Yhwh] am bringing evil upon **the house** of Jeroboam, and I will cut off from Jeroboam he that pisses against the wall, whether bondsman or freedman in Israel; and I will burn up what is left of the house of Jeroboam as when dung is burned until it is gone” (1 Kgs 14:10). In 2 Kgs 10:11, 17, previous oracles pronounced by Elijah (1 Kgs 21:21; 2 Kgs 9:8) against Ahab *are* fulfilled. See also the description of the destruction of the house of Baasha (1 Kgs 16:11).



his house. David will similarly destroy Uriah's house ere we realize that David and his dynastic sons are the בני-בניעל sons that Dtr has repeatedly warned of.

Not long after his consolidation of royal power, David is said to have asked "Is there indeed anyone remaining [נותר] to the house of Saul, that I may perform lifesaving grace [חסד] for Jonathan's sake?" (2 Sam 9:1), seemingly expecting a negative answer.<sup>46</sup> The verb יתר here reminds us of Yhwh's pronouncement against the house of Eli and presages the fate of the house of Eli, which is falling from its position of power, like Eli from his "throne" (1 Sam 4:18), and whose existence will hang in the balance beginning with Abiathar's (אבייתר) survival (1 Sam 22:20-23) and later removal from office (1 Kgs 2:26-27). A template begins to emerge here of the "house" that was once eternally "chosen," but whose very existence now hangs in the balance. Saul's house is as Eli's house. But so too David's house will be like Saul and Eli's house and the house of Israel itself will be like the houses of Eli, Saul, and David (in peril), and potentially like the houses of the northern kings (extinct).

The post-Zedekiah, post-Jehoiachin exiles in Babylon would have sensed the poignancy of the "report" that comes to David in 2 Sam 13:30: "Absalom has killed all the king's sons and **not one of them remains** [ולא נותר מהם אחד]." Although this nightmare-scenario passes quickly for David, he now realizes that the nullification of the so-called "unconditional" promise of 2 Sam 7:11-16 (see especially 1 Kgs 2:3-4) is a real possibility.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Serge Frolov and Vladimir Orel, "On the Meaning of 2 Sam 9,1," *BN* 73 (1994) 31-32.

<sup>47</sup> See also 1 Kgs 8:25; 9:4-11.

The exiles in Babylon must see that “life and death” has been “set before” them as well (Deut 30:19). They too must grasp the urgency of the message of Dtr’s Moses: “Therefore, choose life, that you and your posterity may live” (Ibid).

Dtr resumes use of the verb יָתַר in the context of endangered posterity in a winding down scene of his history, as he lays some of the blame for the exile at the feet of Hezekiah, who has foolishly shown his treasures to emissaries from Babylon (see chapter five). This time, the oracle comes through Isaiah and the focus is Hezekiah’s Davidic dynastic sons: “Lo, days are coming when everything that your ancestors have treasured up until the present time shall be carried off to Babylon and **nothing shall remain** [לֹא־יִוָּתַר דָּבָר]. And some of your sons who have issued forth from you whom you have sired shall be taken and shall become eunuchs [or officers] in the palace of the king of Babylon” (2 Kgs 20:17-18). Materially-speaking, nothing will remain of David’s dynasty. Only a remnant will survive, most of them living under the watchful eye of the Babylonian king in his court. Their lives will hang in the balance.

Not only will the house of David end up as an endangered “remnant” [יָתַר] like the house of Eli, but the house of Judah, which itself had been the “remnant” of the house of Israel in the land, now becomes an endangered “remnant” whose lives hang in the balance: “And then Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, exiled the remnant [יָתַר] of the people which were left in the city and the deserters who deserted away to the king of Babylon, and the remnant [יָתַר] of the craftsmen” (2 Kgs 25:11). The house of Judah, the house of David, the

house of Saul, and the house of Eli share a common fate: insecurity rather than “surety.” Their lives all hang in doubt (Deut 28:66).

When, Mephibaal, in 2 Sam 9:6, does “obeisance to” David, and when, in an act of “lifesaving grace” (רָסַח) for “Jonathan’s sake,” David declares to Mephibaal, “I will restore to you every field of Saul your father, and you yourself shall eat bread [לֶחֶם] at my table always” (2 Sam 9:7, see also the reiteration of this promise in 9:10), we are reminded of Yhwh’s promise/threat to Eli that the members of his house would “do obeisance” for bread (1 Sam 2:36). Saul’s house shares the same fate as Eli’s. Mephibaal is little different from a conquered king living in exile in the court of his conqueror under the latter’s watchful eye.

We come now to the shared fate of Judah and the Davidic monarchy. As he wraps up his history, Dtr notes that “on the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine prevailed in the city and there was no bread for the people of the land” (2 Kgs 25:3). This notice illustrates how far Judah and Israel had fallen from their apex under Solomon, whose “bread” commissaries (1 Kgs 4:7, 5:7) were able to procure bread sufficient to feed not only Solomon’s “house” but Hiram of Tyre’s entire “house” as well. In those days, the Davidic monarchy was an abundant “house of bread” (בֵּית־לֶחֶם). Now the house of Israel has been exiled, the house of Judah is empty of “bread,” its inhabitants are starving, and what is left of its Davidic monarchy is powerless to do anything about it.

Just as Mephibaal the son of Saul, groveled for “bread” (and his life) at David’s table (2 Sam 9:6-7; LXX 2 Sam 9:10 vs. MT), now Jehoiachin the Davidide eats bread at the table of the king of Babylon (2 Kgs 25:29). While Dtr does not state that Jehoiachin “worshipped”

or “groveled” for his “bread,” he does allude to Jehoiachin’s confinement in “prison” and the latter’s “prison clothes” (25:29)—hardly a better situation overall. Jehoiachin’s situation in the Babylonian court (certainly at first and perhaps afterward) is just as precarious as Mephibaal’s position in David’s court: both spend the rest of their lives as captives under house arrest. As Schipper notes, Mephibaal and Jehoiachin are linked not only by the terms אכל (“eating”) and לחם (“bread”), but also by the word תמיד: “The word ‘continually’ (תמיד) is used twice to describe both Jehoiachin’s and Mephibosheth’s eating habits within the court of a political enemy (see 2 Kgs 25:29, 30 and 2 Sam 9:7, 13 respectively).”<sup>48</sup>

And just as David’s performing “lifesaving grace” (חסד) toward Mephibaal for “Jonathan’s sake” did not mean the restoration of Mephibaal or any of the Saulides to the throne of Israel, Evil-Merodach’s “speaking positively” to Jehoiachin and setting his “throne” above the “thrones” of other exiled kings did not entail his restoring Jehoiachin or his sons to the throne of Judah. The “throne” upon which Jehoiachin sits amidst the exiled kings in Babylon sitting upon their thrones, is clearly not “the throne of his kingdom” spoken of in Deut 17:18 and 2 Sam 7:13 (cf. 1 Kgs 2:12; Esth 1:2). Moreover, the dynastic promise that the Davidic “throne” would be “established” (2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kgs 2:45; 9:5; see also Psalm 89:4)—Jehoiachin’s own name *means* “May Yhwh establish”—is not fulfilled here. In other words, Dtr gives no indication in 1 Kings 25 that Jehoiachin or his “throne” were “(re)established,” because, in fact, they were not.

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<sup>48</sup> Schipper, “Significant Resonances,” 524.

Thus, as Begg notes, “with all his privileges Jehoiachin remains quite constricted; his good will notwithstanding Evil-Merodach is not about to let Jehoiachin out of his sight.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, Evil-Merodach places Jehoiachin under house arrest with its restrictions and benefits precisely *because* he does not want Jehoiachin to reestablish his throne and kingdom. Rather, Evil-Merodach wants Jehoiachin right where he can see him to ensure that there will be no Zedekiah-like “funny business,” on his part.

The key point that the above pericope makes about the monarchy is that Jehoiachin ends up like Mephibaal (2 Samuel 9),<sup>50</sup> out of power and on a bread ration (2 Kgs 25:29), just as Zedekiah, in his own way, ends up like Mephibaal and the Jebusites: the “blind and the lame” excluded from Yhwh’s “house”<sup>51</sup>—his presence. As Murray observes, the narrative “does not necessarily imply that Jehoiachin was honored as the king’s constant table companion, merely that he was made his dependent pensioner.”<sup>52</sup> He further notes that “[even] if Jehoiachin had become a client favored above others (25:28b), yet he still remained completely beholden to a foreign patron, who kept him with a measured generosity (25:30) as a detainee in Babylon (בבבל, 25:28bB).”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Begg, “The Significance of Jehoiachin’s Release,” 52.

<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., J.J. Granowsky, “Jehoiachin at the King’s Table: A Reading of the Ending of the Second Book of Kings,” in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Danna Nolan Fewell; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) 173-88.

<sup>51</sup> Ceresko, “The Identity of ‘the Blind and the Lame,’” 23-30; Schipper, “Significant Resonances,” 524.

<sup>52</sup> Murray, “Jehoiachin in Babylon,” 259.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

“Even more significantly,” according to Begg, “2 Kgs 25.27-30 makes no reference to the personal privileges accorded Jehoiachin being extended, whether in the present or for the future, either to his sons or to his people as a whole. Such observations suggest that Evil-merodach's initiative has to be seen as a matter of limited import even for Jehoiachin himself and quite without significance for anyone else.”<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Yhwh is not said to take any action in 2 Kgs 25:27-30.<sup>55</sup> Evil-merodach is the sole actant.<sup>56</sup> Dtr gives us no indication then that Yhwh intends, much less has begun to act, to reestablish Davidic kingship via Jehoiachin's release from prison. If there is any “lifesaving grace” being shown in this instance, it is by Evil-merodach, much as David shows “lifesaving grace” (לִפְדּוּת) to Mephibaal by keeping him under close surveillance and under house arrest, rather than exterminating him and thus making a complete end of Saul and Jonathan's house.

Murray further observes: “Babylonian favor toward Jehoiachin, albeit that it exalts him above other captive kings, has its limit, namely, that of his remaining a modestly pensioned client in perpetual detention in Babylon. Crucially, this is a limit that in our text the Davidic monarchic line never promises to transcend, either in the person of Jehoiachin, who dies while still in this state, or in the person of a son and heir, who might have lived to see restoration.”<sup>57</sup> Why, then, does Dtr bother to mention Jehoiachin or his fortunes at all? First of all, Dtr demonstrates that priestly and royal houses and the houses of Israel and Judah are

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<sup>54</sup> Begg, “The Significance of Jehoiachin's Release,” 52.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

<sup>56</sup> Murray, “Jehoiachin in Babylon,” 251-52.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 263.

partakers in a similar fate: dependent on “bread” provided by the good graces of the very powers that keep their lives hanging in the balance (cf. Deut 28:66). The house of David ends up in much the same state as those of Saul and Eli in 2 Samuel–1 Kings: “standing[ing] in peril every hour,” to use Paul’s words (1 Cor 15:30). Those royal and priestly houses experience what Moses foretells regarding the house of Israel in Deut 28:66: “Your life shall be **hanging in doubt** [הלֹא־אִים] before you, you shall be terrified night and day and **you shall have no confidence** [וְלֹא־תֵאֱמָר] in your life.” They have become an *unsure* house, indeed!

In a real sense, Yhwh’s declaration that the “remnant” of Eli’s house will “do obeisance ... for a shekel of silver and a morsel of bread” (1 Sam 2:36) was also a prophecy regarding the remnant of Saul’s house (2 Sam 9:7, 10; cf. 1 Sam 28:20-25), and especially the remnant of David’s house (2 Kgs 25:3, 29). Dtr shows that the common fate of three “dynastic” houses was to be removed from power, with a representative from each house eating “bread” (לֶחֶם) thanks to the benevolence of a superior party. Recalling that David’s hometown was Bethlehem (בֵּית־לֶחֶם; literally, “house of bread,” 1 Sam 16:4; 17:5; 20:6, 8), perhaps we can see Dtr offering a less-than-subtle commentary in 1 Sam 2:36; 2 Sam 9:7 (and LXX 2 Sam 9:10); and 2 Kgs 25:29 on royal houses in general, and the house of David in particular: they are “houses of bread” in a pejorative sense. The “bread” of which Jehoiachin and the remnant of the “house” of David partakes is not the “bread of the presence” from which David ate (1 Sam 21:1-6) or the “bread of the presence” from Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 7:48). Jehoiachin, Zedekiah and the Davidic remnant eat “bread,” cast off from Yhwh’s “presence,” exiled, excluded from kingship. Ironically, the reversal of fortune that leads to

Mephibaal eating “bread” at David’s table, where David had once begged the “bread of the presence” from Abiathar’s father Ahimelech (the Elide), “re-reverses” with the remnant of the “house” of David the Bethlehemite again eating “bread,” but now outside Yhwh’s “house” (temple, kingship, and presence).

Nevertheless, Dtr mentions Jehoiachin and his improved fortunes because the Israelites and Judahites in exile are “beloved” (Deut 7:6-9; 13; 23:5; cf. Deut 4:37; 10:15),<sup>58</sup> just as Jehoiachin’s improved fortunes hint at possibilities for themselves. Schipper writes, “Although it offers little significant hope for the restoration of the Davidic monarchy, 2 Kgs 25:27-30 does suggest that vanquished Israel may survive, and even live well, in exile.”<sup>59</sup> Even though he has “cast” them “off,” Yhwh still loves the exiles (“he will love thee,” Deut 7:13; cf. Jer 31:3), including surviving Elides, Saulides, and Davidides, though he does not love their deeds or their performances as Israel’s and Judah’s intermediary leadership.

The scenes of “bread”-famine during Zedekiah’s time (2 Kgs 25:3) and Jehoiachin eating “bread” outside of Yhwh’s “presence” continually at the Babylonian king’s table (25:29) are poignant and appropriate refractions of the scene of “beloved” David fasting for his unnamed, sick, infant son by Bathsheba, lying on the ground before “the elders of his house,” refusing to eat “bread” (2 Sam 12:16-17) and then, after the death of this son (the first of his sons to die), his coming to his “house” and “asking” (לִשְׁאֹל) for and eating “bread”

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Paul’s expression “beloved for the ancestors’ sakes” (Rom 11:28).

<sup>59</sup> Schipper, “Significant Resonances,” 529.



(12:20-21). David's "beseeching God" for his son and his refusal to eat also refracts "beloved"<sup>60</sup> Hannah's "begging" God for a son and refusing to eat (1 Sam 1:7-8) and her subsequent eating (1:18) after her "begging" is granted. It is this latter scene that Dtr uses to make some important comments on David's (and Jehoiachin's) surviving "sons" and Israel's "begging" for one (or more) of them.

6.2.2. *"My Begging That I Have Begged" (1 Sam 1:27): Shealtiel ben Jehoiachin?*

2 Kgs 25:27-30 might appear to "know nothing" about "a son and heir of Jehoiachin,"<sup>61</sup> but other parts of Dtr hint at this possibility—and not positively. Later biblical texts tell us about Zerubbabel (Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 23; Ezra 3:2, 8; 5:2; Neh 12:1), Jehoiachin's grandson. In these Persian-era notices, Shealtiel, Jehoiachin's son, survives as a (mere) genealogical datum. As noted earlier, there was early Persian-era fervor among at least some Judean exiles for a monarchic restoration in the person of Zerubbabel. Dtr addresses an exilic audience living in the years after 560 BCE, following Jehoiachin's death.<sup>62</sup> Jehoiachin himself is no longer an issue, and Zerubbabel will not be one for a few years yet. Does the text of Dtr ever, anywhere, make Shealtiel the issue? Not overtly, but, I propose, yes.

Dtr's לנשׁ-texts regarding Israel's "asking for" or "demanding" intermediaries (e.g., Deut 18:15-17; 1 Samuel 1–2; 8–12) definitely anticipate and address the issues pertaining to Israel's "asking" for kingship, and the disastrous consequences that followed the granting of

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<sup>60</sup> See 1 Sam 1:5.

<sup>61</sup> Murray, "Jehoiachin in Babylon," 261.

<sup>62</sup> Begg, "Significance of Jehoiachin's Release," 54.

that request in the person of Saul, but might these texts also have *an additional* “requested” or “demanded” son in mind? Polzin astutely observes that “the taunting and provocation of monarchic neighbors provide the motivating background” of 1 Samuel 1.<sup>63</sup> He further notes that “this dimension of the text” helps the reader understand “the narrator’s depiction of Hannah’s childlessness as ‘the LORD had closed her womb.’”<sup>64</sup> That this was the situation at the end of the Judges-era is the plausible implication of the 1 Samuel 1 narrative, but let us transpose this situation to the exile, to the time period just after the death of Jehoiachin, sometime after 560 BCE: is exilic Israel being taunted and provoked by its monarchic neighbors/captors (as the author of Psalm 137 thinks)?

With the deaths of Zedekiah and Jehoiachin in Babylon, David’s posterity was, in every earthly sense, “cut off ... from upon the throne of Israel” in consequence of the fact that his house had rarely “taken heed” or “walked” in accordance with the legislation of Deuteronomy (1 Kgs 2:4; 8:25). In practical terms, the “house of David” as a dynasty was at an end. The temptation for a “taunted” community in exile whose last ruling dynast has died (assuming Jehoiachin’s uncle Zedekiah was now also dead) leaving no designated leader or regnant-to-be, would be to do as Hannah does in 1 Samuel 1, i.e., to “beg” for a son: a dynastic “son,” i.e., a “king.” Here is where the ostensible Saul/monarchy issue becomes the Shealtiel/monarchic renewal issue.

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<sup>63</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 26.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

The wordplay on the *Leitwort* שאל in 1 Samuel 1–12 and elsewhere, while alluding to the Saul of Israel’s history overtly, also refers, I suggest, covertly to the Shealtiel of Israel’s exilic present. Like the name “Saul,” the name “Shealtiel” is derived from the *Leitwort* שאל. Significantly, the Hebrew Bible attests only three names derived from the verb שאל: Saul (שׂאול, “asked,” “requested,” i.e., from God), Shealtiel (שְׁאֵל־תִּי־אֵל, “I have asked [him] of God”)<sup>65</sup> and Sheal/Isheal (שְׁאֵל/שׂאֵל, attested only in Ezra 10:29). Moreover, the names “Saul” and “Shealtiel,” the Bible’s only two שאל-names belonging to persons of “historical,” and particularly of monarchic significance, *mean essentially the same thing*. These facts alone urge us to seriously consider a potential Saul-Shealtiel wordplay in Dtr.

The force of the argument of the Saul-Samuel stories to the exiles in the years following 560 BCE is that Israel has been down this road before—i.e., “asking” or “demanding” intermediaries and dynastic sons—and has no need to do so again. In other words, history—Israel’s history with its cycles brought on by changes in its leadership situation (prophets, judges, kings)—need not, and should not, repeat itself.

Thus the wordplay on Samuel and Saul throughout 1 Samuel 1–12 (and perhaps elsewhere) appears to have an important, practical function with respect to Dtr’s exilic audience that goes well beyond literary ornamentation. In particular, the extended wordplay on the verb שאל pertains not only to Israel (and Judah’s) past leadership situation, i.e., “demanding” intermediaries, but also to its (then) *present* leadership situation. One of Dtr’s

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<sup>65</sup> See, e.g., *BDB*, 982.

purpose major purposes in writing his history is to show the post-560 BCE exiles that “asking,” “demanding,” or “begging” for intermediary leadership—particularly for a king—did not end well for Israel and Judah in the past, and that it will not end well if they persist in doing so again. More particularly, Dtr’s literary demonstration is necessary precisely because of the exiles’ desire, not just for a king, but for a Davidid: “Shealtiel,” the son of Jehoiachin. It is further possible that some exiles, Benjaminites perhaps, were still hoping for a Saulide king.<sup>66</sup> If so, the basic issue of “asking” for “Saul” was not only a literary memory, but also a *present* issue.

The story of Hannah’s “begging” for a “son” is very suggestive in this regard. The narrator’s depiction of Hannah (“favored,” “graced,” 1 Sam 1:18) evokes Israel/Judah, the “beloved” (1:5; see chapter 3) but “taunted” community in exile.<sup>67</sup> 1 Samuel 1 contains seven instances of wordplay on forms of שאל and the names “Samuel” and “Saul” (1 Samuel 2 adds two more such references). Of these seven, three are expressed as first person perfect forms, together with one noun form (which sounds very similar to a first person perfect): “from Yhwh **I have begged him** [שאלתי]” (1 Sam 1:21); “And Yhwh has given me **my begging** [שאלתי] which **I have begged** [שאלתי] (1:27); and “But also I have **lent him** [השאלתיו] to Yhwh” (1:28).” This repetition of שאלתי evokes not only “Samuel” and

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<sup>66</sup> See Diana V. Edelman, “Did Saulide-Davidic Rivalry Resurface in Early Persian Yehud?” in *The Land That I Will Show You; Essays on the History and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East in Honour of J. Maxwell Miller* (eds. J. Andrew Dearman and M. Patrick Graham; JSOTSup 343; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001). See also Green, *King Saul’s Asking*, 31-32.

<sup>67</sup> Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 26.

“Saul,” but also “Shealtiel.” If Dtr is aiming at an audience of “taunted” exiles living in the wake of Jehoiachin’s death (post-560 BCE), they could not have missed hearing the name that the repetition of שאל־תִּי was meant to echo: שאל־תִּי־אֵל.

The final iteration of the שאל־wordplay in 1 Samuel 1 is also suggestive: הוּא שְׂאוּל. לִי־הוּא, “he is ‘Saul’ to Yhwh” (1 Sam 1:28).<sup>68</sup> On one level, Samuel is both “begged” from and “loaned” to Yhwh, as Saul will be “demanded” from Yhwh later (1 Samuel 8). On another level, “Shealtiel” is also a potential “Saul,” a newly “begged-for” or “demanded” king, with the capacity to set in motion events that will not, in Dtr’s view, end well for the exiles, just as the monarchic cycle did not end well for them.

Thus, Eli’s words to Hannah—“May Yhwh grant **your begging** [שְׁאֵלֶךָ] which **you have begged** [שָׁאַלְתְּ] from him” (1 Sam 1:17)—could be construed as a warning to the exiles who are either “begging” or tempted to “beg” (or “demand”) a king from Yhwh: Yhwh *may* indeed grant what they insist upon, as he has in the past. But what if Yhwh does grant Israel leadership by dynastic “sons” again? If he does, it will be “according to all that [they] have begged/asked/demanded [שָׁאַלְתְּ]” (Deut 18:16), just as the exiles themselves have seen. What these exiles do or do not “ask” is crucial to the future survival of the “children of Israel,” the rising generation of sons and daughters who in their turn might see sons’ sons and daughters’ daughters if the community can be persuaded to arrive at wise leadership decisions.

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<sup>68</sup> See chapter two.

6.2.3. “What Does the Sound of this Disturbance Mean?” (1 Sam 4:14): The Peril of Dynastic “Sons”

It is fitting that, on the eve of the inauguration of monarchic kingship in Israel under Saul, a “man of Benjamin” (1 Sam 4:12)<sup>69</sup>—words that conjure up both royal images<sup>70</sup> and the Benjaminite בְּנֵי־בִלְיָעַל from Judges 19–20—comes bearing tidings to Eli on his “throne” that his two sons—themselves בְּנֵי־בִלְיָעַל (1 Sam 2:12)—are dead. As Green notes,<sup>71</sup> just as Eli had earlier addressed—and “adopted”—his replacement Samuel (1 Sam 3:6, 16), Eli here too addresses the messenger as “my son” (בְּנִי, 1 Sam 4:16).<sup>72</sup> This is a play on “Benjamin” in v.12 and it is precisely how Saul will address David later (1 Sam 24:16). The same term will add pathos to David’s lament for his slain son: “O my son Absalom, my son, my son! Would that I had died in your place, Absalom, my son, my son!” (2 Sam 19:1 [ET 18:33]). The exiles are to hear in the tidings brought to Eli of the deaths of his sons, as in the tidings brought to David of his sons Amnon (1 Sam 13:30–37) and Absalom (1 Sam 18:19–33), a message about the deaths of their own sons and daughters. Royal sons—dynastic

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<sup>69</sup> As Green (*King Saul’s Asking*, 29) notes, “That the messenger is a Benjaminite, unnamed, gives the careful-reading and resourceful rabbis of later centuries the space to identify him as the young Saul. In our riddling mode the runner’s identity is shrewdly observed. It helps us make the transition from the ‘old sons’ of Eli, including the much-asked Samuel, to the new son Saul, whom we will be meeting shortly.”

<sup>70</sup> The name “Benjamin” suggests the meaning “son of the right hand” (*BDB*, 122), although “Benjamin” is usually now taken to mean “son of the south.” Still, the יָמִינִי (“right hand”) is abundantly attested as a royal image: see Pss 16:11; 80:17; 110:1; Jer 22:24. Benjamin is Israel’s first royal tribe.

<sup>71</sup> Green, *King Saul’s Asking*, 29.

<sup>72</sup> Notably, the expression בְּנִי (“my son”) is the key term in the royal (adoption?) formula of Ps 2:7: “You are my son (בְּנִי אֶתֶּר): Today I have begotten you,” which was seemingly part of the acclamation ceremony of the Davidic king in Judah (cf. 2 Sam 7:14). In a sense, Eli “adopts” his replacements (Samuel; 1 Sam 3:6, 16; and a “man of Benjamin,” i.e., “Saul,” 4:12); Saul will similarly “adopt” his replacement (i.e., David; 1 Sam 24:16).

sons—are a peril to their own sons and daughters (cf. 1 Sam 8:11-18). For Dtr, dynastic sons are both Israel's most persistent problem (cf. the בני־בל יעל) and a standing warning to the exiles of their own fate and the fate of their children, should they continue to “ask,” “beg,” or “demand” such sons. Deuteronomy and Dtr, however, envision something better for them: “You are **children** [literally, sons, בני־ם] to Yhwh your God” (Deut 14:1; cf. Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14).

Eli's sons, Samuel's sons, Saul's sons, the sons of the abortive northern dynasties, David's sons—the lesson for exilic Israel is that dynastic leadership does not work. In other words, regarding the “rule” of the “sons and [the] sons' sons” (Judg 8:22), Israel ought to have taken Gideon's counsel, “I will not rule over you, and my son rule over you—the Lord shall rule over you” (8:23), even if Gideon himself and his son Abimelech (later) did not abide by it.

Even David, once the man after Yhwh's own heart (1 Sam 13:14), taught his sons by his sins (the mistreatment of women, murder), while the sins of his sons—Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah and Solomon—fundamentally shaped the future of Israel and Judah. The incomparably pious kings Hezekiah and Josiah sired evil sons who fail to perpetuate their reforms. Hezekiah, for all his merits, sires the worst of the kings of Judah—arguably the worst of the kings of both Judah and Israel. Ahab, for whom Dtr reserves some of his harshest criticism, was before all else a dynastic son. Beginning with the period of the Judges, we are

introduced to a frequent pattern of good father/evil son.<sup>73</sup> Even the best of kings (e.g., Hezekiah, Josiah) show no evidence of being able to instill any covenant faithfulness in their royal sons.

6.2.4. “What are These Testimonies, Decrees, and Judgments”? (Deut 6:20) *The Peril of Untaught and Mistaught Sons and Daughters*

On more than one occasion, Dtr stresses the importance of Israel’s inculcating the lessons of Yhwh’s intervention in Israel’s history to its children. For Israel in exile this was of the utmost importance, not least because these lessons had not been sufficiently taught in preceding generations, a failure which was a major contributing factor to the exile.

These lessons were above all contained in Moses’s “law” or “instruction” (תּוֹרָה) that Deut 31:9-13 envisions being read regularly to the people, and particularly to Israel’s “children,” so that all might “learn to fear Yhwh your God.” The practical outcome of Israel’s “fear[ing] Yhwh your God” is its “keep[ing] all of [Yhwh’s] decrees and commandments, which [Moses] commands you—you and your son and your son’s son all the days of your life so that days may be prolonged” (Deut 6:2), in other words, a kind of “dynastic” covenant obedience among all of the families of Israel.

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<sup>73</sup> Susan Niditch (*Judges: A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2008] 106) writes: “the narrator prepares for the traditional pattern of good father/evil son,” which she notes occurs in Lev 10:1-2 with Aaron, but also with Eli (1 Sam 2:12-17, 22) and Samuel (1 Sam 8:3). If we can indeed classify Gideon as a “good father,” then we can see Dtr using the “good father/evil son” pattern as a literary trope that not only anticipates Israel’s forthcoming “demand” for kingship,” citing the corruption of Samuel’s sons (this against the backdrop of the corruption and evil-doing of Eli’s sons), but also looks ahead to the “good father/evil son” scenario (e.g., Hezekiah/Manasseh, Josiah/his sons) that surfaces repeatedly in his evaluation of Israel’s and Judah’s kings. The Gideon-Abimelech story in its present form is Dtr’s reflection on the monarchy threshold.



The failures of the “house of David” (dynasty) began as a failure in David’s “house,” i.e., a failure in teaching at home. The exiles must now heed Moses’s injunction: “Drill them into your children and talk about them in your house and when you are traveling on road and when you go to bed and when you arise” (Deut 6:7). If things are to be set right in the house of Israel/Judah collectively, every detail of the covenant and its legislation will have to be taught—and taught correctly—in each individual “house.” In other words, national failure has been caused by failure at home at the monarchic level and amongst the general population. And so, national success will only emerge from success at home: properly taught sons and daughters.

Dtr knows that the future hinges on exilic Israel’s apprehending the lessons of the past: “In the future, when your son asks you [שאלך] saying, ‘What are these testimonies and decrees and judgments which Yhwh our God has commanded you?’ You will say to your son, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and Yhwh brought us forth with a mighty hand’” (Deut 6:20-21; see also 11:18-19). Israel must teach its children about Yhwh’s interventions in its history: his saving acts (the exodus) and his punishment (the exile). Dtr mentions unimpeachable physical testimonies (e.g., the memorial stones of Josh 4:6, 21), that are to guide Israel’s “asking” in the right direction. Teaching not only the “sons” but the “sons’ sons” is the key (Deut 4:9).

Moses’s charge to the wilderness generation in Deut 4:9 might just as well have been addressed to the exiles: “Only take great care to yourselves and take very great care of your soul, lest you forget the things which your own eyes have seen.” Israel has been punished precisely because they have forgotten Yhwh’s previous saving miracles—not to mention his

constant “lifesaving grace” (חסד)—a situation that can only be remedied by “remembering” Yhwh and his covenant. The key to Israel’s remembering Yhwh is its constantly teaching to (inculcating Deuteronomy in) its sons and daughters. If the teaching moments (i.e., “asking” moments) at home (בבית) are met with appropriate teaching (Torah), the “children of Israel,” its sons and its daughters, its sons’ sons, etc. need never again “ask” for a “Saul” or a “Shealtiel.”

And just as importantly, “destructive sons” (בני בל יעל) or “sons of wickedness” (בני־עול), including the rapists of the Benjamin and especially David’s own sons will no longer “rape” (ענד) the children of Israel (2 Sam 7:10; 1 Kgs 12:7). For Israel in exile, the question should not be whose “sons and sons’ [should] rule over” Israel (Judg 8:22-23), but rather that of instructing the “children of Israel” so that they might “hear” and obey, and so have “sons” or “sons’ sons” to teach after them. A future for Israel’s “children” hinges on exilic Israel’s faithfulness in teaching the next generation the lesson that it has learned firsthand: the way of obedience to Deuteronomy is life, disobedience to Deuteronomy is death (Deut 30:15, 19; 2 Kgs 23:27; cf. Jer 21:7-8).

#### 6.2.5. “Suring”-up the House of Israel/Judah (1 Kgs 11:38)

The exiles have their work cut out for them. If Amnon (אמון) and his ruin symbolize the unreliability of dynastic sons (בנים) as the building blocks (אבנים) of the “sure” house (בית נאמן, 1 Sam 2:35; 25:28; 2 Sam 7:16; 1 Kgs 8:25-26; 11:38)—dynastic “sons” easily becoming “destructive sons” (בני־בל יעל)—and if the eternal “peace” (שלום) of the

Pharaoh-like, temple-building dynast Solomon is nomistic disloyalty (1 Kgs 11:1-11) and all the consequences that such disloyalty brings, Israel in exile will do well to *not* “return that way” (cf. Deut 17:16; cf. Jeremiah 40).

Ahimelech had once lauded David’s incomparable faithfulness (נֶאֱמָן) among the servants of Saul (1 Sam 22:14)—faithfulness that did not extend to David’s observance of Yhwh’s covenant as king (cf. 2 Samuel 11; 12:9-14). David’s sins begat unfaithfulness in his sons (cf. Amnon) that made his house “unsure” in the near term (2 Samuel 13–20), and, beginning with Solomon’s apostasy (1 Kings 11), ever less “sure” with the ensuing years, as Nathan’s prophecy in 2 Sam 12:10 is fulfilled.

Yhwh, on the other hand, was ever “the faithful God” (אֱלֹהֵי הַנֶּאֱמָן), i.e., the God who is faithful to the covenant and the “one who keeps covenant and lifesaving grace with those who love him” (Deut 7:9). In other words, Yhwh was the one “faithful” king on whom Israel should have always relied. Israel had experienced David’s truism, “Yhwh will bring back (שׁוֹב) to each his (covenant) righteousness [אֲתֵּצֵדֶקָתוֹ] and his (covenant) faithfulness [וְאֵת־אֱמֻנָתוֹ]” (1 Sam 26:23), just as David himself experienced this when Yhwh “repaid” him (שָׁלַם; 2 Sam 12:6) for “despising” Yhwh (12:10) and “treating [him] with utter contempt” (12:14). Israel (led by its kings) and Judah (led by its kings) had been neither “righteous” nor “faithful” with respect to Yhwh’s covenant, but had “hated” both Yhwh and his covenant (cf. Deut 5:9; 7:10).

Dtr’s paranesis is clear: only to the degree Israel is willing to “hear” and to be faithful to Yhwh’s covenant, will the “house of Israel” be a “sure house” (בֵּית נֶאֱמָן). Accordingly,

the exiles should not preoccupy themselves with whether or not Yhwh will maintain the Davidic covenant, but instead focus their efforts on keeping the Torah and covenant that Moses gave them, even if this means serving the king of Babylon, “so that it might go well with them.” Ultimately, in Dtr’s view, there are no covenant entitlements to the “unhearing,” including the idolatrous house of David, from which “the sword [would] never depart” (2 Sam 12:10). And if there are no covenant entitlements, there is no “surety,” and consequently no hope for Israel in its human kings: “those who despise me, shall be treated lightly” (1 Sam 2:30). With the deaths of Zedekiah and Jehoiachin in Babylon, Samuel’s prophecy was also fulfilled: “but if you do evil you shall come to an end, both you and your king” (1 Sam 12:10).

### **6.3 Conclusion: “What is the Thing That Has Happened, My Son?” (1 Sam 4:16)**

The Book of (1-2) Samuel is often praised for its literary intricacy. The findings of this study suggest that this observation can be extended to the entirety of Dtr. Taken as a whole, Dtr is a monumental literary achievement. Biblical scholarship will continue to debate its merits (or lack thereof) as “history” in the strictest sense of that term, i.e., as a scientifically accurate representation of “what happened,” especially in Israel’s distant past. However, that debate should not be allowed to eclipse or obscure what the text is attempting to say in its individual narratives or in the sum of its parts. If the observations that I have tendered in this work are correct, then Dtr has much to say to the exiles who survived Judah’s devastation.

Human intermediary leadership has not served Israel well. Janzen is correct in his assessment that “The narrative explains that no leadership office, not even one where God can choose the leader, will successfully lead Israel unless the individual rulers can enforce cultic

and nomistic loyalty in Israel.”<sup>74</sup> Even the nomistic loyalty that Josiah was able to command and enforce as king, was gone from Judah as soon as he was gone (2 Kgs 23:30-32). Janzen further observes: “We see a decline in Judah as in the other tribes, and it is simply not clear by the end of Judges that merely changing the kind of leadership in Israel will save the nation from its worship of other gods and exile. And, of course, by the time we reach Kings we reach kings we see that when Israel has a monarchy the people will simply end up doing what is right in the kings’ eyes.”<sup>75</sup> If the exiles insist on “asking” for or “demanding” a king, history will repeat itself—or worse. Israel and Judah’s long history has been a lesson in the consequences of “asking,” a lesson that has gone on long enough. In the years since their “asking” at Horeb and “demanding” at Ramah (רָמָה), Israel has indeed received “according to all that it asked” (Deut 18:16), i.e., according to all that it “demanded” (1 Sam 8:10; 12:17, 19).

The house of Israel is now like the houses of Eli, Saul, and David. Israel’s ancestors are like Abiathar (“my father has left a remnant”) and the exiles themselves are the “remnant” and the sons and daughters of the “remnant” that Nebuchadnezzar deported to Babylon. The “bread” they eat is not the bread of Yhwh’s presence, but the bread of captivity eaten by the Elides (1 Sam 2:36), Mephibaal (2 Sam 9:7, 10), and Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 25:29; cf. Isa 51:14), a benefaction of their Babylonian overlord. The house of Israel is no longer the “Bethlehem”

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<sup>74</sup> Janzen, *Violent Gift*, 129.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

of monarchic (Davidic) abundance (1 Kgs 4:7; 5:7; cf. 2 Kgs 25:3) or the “house” of Yhwh’s presence, but a “house of bread” whose very existence hangs in the balance.

If whether to “demand” a reinstitution of Davidic kingship was indeed still the/an issue among the exiles post-560 BCE, Dtr could have made no better argument: to “demand” Shealtiel is to re-demand Saul and all of his successors, and to ignore history’s lesson. But the lesson of Dtr is not just meant for Israel’s “exiles” in Babylon around 560 BCE, but for all Israel’s “exiles” wherever and whenever they might find themselves “cast off” from Yhwh’s “presence” (פֶּנִּי).<sup>76</sup> Israelites of all times and places can read Dtr, and see that Yhwh has done and will do to and for Israel “according all that you [collectively and individually] have demanded” (Deut 18:16), when they first insisted on removing themselves from his presence.

Israel’s “sons” and “daughters” must be more astute than the blind, deaf, and overheavy Eli on his throne. They now know what the sound of **the disturbance** [הַדְּבָרִים] means” (1 Sam 4:14; 2 Sam 18:29) and what “the thing that has happened” is (1 Sam 4:16). They are the exiled “remnant of the disturbance [or, remnant of the rabble, הַדְּבָרִים]” (2 Kgs 25:11)! The only way of life is nomistic fidelity: “hearing” Yhwh’s law (Deuteronomy) and its promulgator (Dtr). That way must be inculcated from generation-to-generation: from Israel to its sons and daughters, and to sons’ sons and daughters’ daughters, etc. The children of Israel must henceforth “ask” aright and not amiss.

There are covenant blessings, but no covenant entitlements: Israel is “beloved,” but it must reciprocate Yhwh’s “love.” “Is the young man Absalom safe”? Can Israel’s children be

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<sup>76</sup> 1 Kgs 9:7; 2 Kgs 17:20; 23:7.

“safe” or can Israel have “peace?” Yes, but not by walking in the obduracy of its heart.

Israel’s heart(s) must be “completely with” Yhwh (see 2 Sam 11:4) and not just in word (1 Kgs 8:61). Israel’s “glory” (Yhwh) may “go into exile” from them or send them into “exile” from him. Yhwh and his law are Israel’s true “treasure,” and even in the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, Yhwh can open his “good treasury” to the exiles.

During Ben-Hadad’s siege of Samaria, the king of Israel (or his messenger) states to Elisha: “This evil is from Yhwh. Why should I have hope in Yhwh any longer?” (2 Kgs 6:33). With the same sentiment, perhaps, being voiced by exilic audience, what answer does Dtr give the exiles? The same as Elisha’s response to the messenger: “Hear the word of Yhwh!” (2 Kgs 7:1; Deut 4:10; 12:28; 31:12; Josh 3:9; 1 Kgs 22:19; 2 Kgs 20:16; cf. Deut 6:4). Israel must hear Dtr (Deut 5:24-27, 29; 18:15-22). All will come about according to what Israel (collectively and individually) “demands” (Deut 18:16; 1 Sam 8:10): the way of life or the way of death.

## Chapter Seven Conclusion

### 7.1 Findings

Here I will synthesize and summarize the results of this exploration of Dtr's literary exploitation of names in connection with *Leitworte*. Dtr manifests an acute awareness of the meanings and potential meanings of names. He shows special interest in the names of Israel's first kings (Saul, David, Solomon) and other key figures in the establishment of the monarchy (e.g., Samuel, Nathan, Bathsheba, etc.). He also develops themes involving the names of non-Israelite kings (Tiglath-pileser and Nebuchadnezzar) whose imperial policies realize Yhwh's punishment of Israel and Judah. Moreover, in noting the ironic significance of Josiah's reign and reform he creates ironic meaning for the king's name in terms of the "fire" mentioned in Deut 7:5, 25; 12:3 and other texts. The exploitation of the name "Ichabod" is likewise particularly important in addressing the Israel's history to his exilic audience in terms of their present situation.

Using *Leitworte* ("lead words"), Dtr repeatedly exploits the names of several (though by no means all)<sup>1</sup> of the key figures who shape Israel's history, and does so at important

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<sup>1</sup> Manasseh is perhaps the most notable exception. Dtr cites Manasseh and his sins as the worst of Judah's kings (2 Kings 21) and as the reason that Yhwh would not "turn from the fierceness of his anger" (2 Kgs 23:12), and yet does not use his name *per se* to make or reinforce any particular point. Gen 41:51 briefly exploits the name "Manasseh" in terms of the verb נָשָׁח ("to forget"): "And Joseph called the name of the first born Manasseh [מְנַשֶּׁח], 'because God has caused me to forget [נָשַׁח] all of my toil and all of my father's house.'" This text presents "Manasseh" as a participial substantive meaning "one who causes to forget," similar to the name "Menachem" ("one who comforts," i.e., "comforter"). One could make an argument that in 2 Kings 21 the name "Manasseh" functions as a transparent, standalone pun like "Abel" (אָבֵל, "vapor," "transitory") in Genesis 4: Manasseh "caused the people to forget" Yhwh and his covenant. There is, however, no direct textual evidence that the name "Manasseh" functions in this way (though there is also not any direct evidence that the name



moments within his narrative. In some instances, his exploitative interpretations of names go well beyond/deviate from what can be considered scientific etymological plausibility, creating or suggesting meanings for names based on their constituent sounds. In particular, Dtr exploits names thematically to bolster his argument that Israel's "demand" for human kingship was a fundamental wrong-turn in its history.<sup>2</sup> Thematic wordplay on the names of the key players in the establishment and termination of monarchy in Israel thus emerges as an important element of Dtr's narratology.

In chapter two, I showed how, appropriately, some of Dtr's richest and most literarily complex onomastic exploitations involve the name "Saul." This name, which means "Requested," i.e., by parents who have besought a deity for a son, is exploited in the narrative as if it in fact meant "Demanded" by a people who insisted on having a king (1 Sam 8:10; 10:22; 12:17-19), i.e., "demanded" dynastic "sons" (see Judg 8:22-24). Narrative anticipation of "Saul"—his character zone—begins very early in Dtr, at least as early as Deut 18:16, with

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"Abel" actually functions in this way either). Dtr thus betrays no inclination to exploit the name "Manasseh" at all (which, of course, is attested abundantly throughout Dtr as a tribal name). Thus we have at least one case in which Dtr apparently opts not to engage in wordplay on a name. Perhaps Dtr believed that a name which means "one who causes to forget" required no additional commentary in the context of Manasseh's complete and total apostasy.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Noth (*The Deuteronomistic History* [trans. David J. A. Clines, Jane Doull, et al.; JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981]; reprinted: Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004; trans. of *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* [2nd ed.; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1957]) states: "Dtr. brings the monarchy into his work in a manner designed to make clear that this institution was a late innovation, inappropriate by nature and hence categorically objectionable, and that it accomplished a positive good only under isolated, outstanding representatives." My analysis of Dtr's use of wordplay involving names and *Leitworte* largely confirms Noth's view of the treatment of the monarchy in Dtr.

the people's "request" for human (prophetic) intermediary leadership in place of the immediate presence and leadership of Yhwh himself.<sup>3</sup>

I further proposed that beginning in Deut 18:16, Dtr's use of לָשׂוּ as a *Leitwort* illustrates the increasing distance that Israel and its leadership places between itself and Yhwh. In Josh 9:14-15, the failure of Joshua and Israel's leadership to "ask" Yhwh's counsel results in an illicit treaty with the Gibeonites, a people with whom the early monarchy's most important figures—Saul, David, and Solomon—all have significant interactions: David will use Saul's alleged violation of this treaty as a pretext to purge much of the latter's house (2 Sam 21:3-14), while at Yhwh's bidding, Solomon later makes his famous "request" for wisdom at Gibeon (see below).

In Dtr's description of the period of the Judges, the *Leitwort* לָשׂוּ continues to highlight the deteriorating leadership situation in Israel (Judg 20:18, 23), this anticipating both Israel's "demand" for kingship that eventuates in Saul the Benjaminite as Israel's first full-fledged king, as well as the tribe of Judah's subsequent assumption of royal power under David. Both "royal" tribes, Benjamin and Judah, are cast in an unfavorable light in these stories. The transition of leadership from the Judges, the last of whom is Samuel (prophet, priest, and judge), to kingship in Saul is the climax of this part of Dtr and is particularly hinted at via Dtr's use of לָשׂוּ.

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<sup>3</sup> Perhaps Dtr has Saul and the monarchy in view in Deut 4:32, where Deuteronomy stipulates what Israel is to "ask."

It further emerges that Dtr's Samuel birth narrative (1 Samuel 1–2), far from being a revamped Saul birth narrative,<sup>4</sup> cunningly plays on three names: שְׁמוּאֵל, שָׁאוּל, and שָׁאֵל תִּיאֵל. This multifaceted wordplay serves to connect Israel's "request" for prophetic intermediaries at Horeb to Israel's imminent "demand" for human kingship (additional human intermediary leadership) and (perhaps) to exilic Israel's "begging for" a Davidic dynastic "son" (i.e., Jehoiachin's son Shealtiel, "I have asked God [for him]") or even a surviving Saulid<sup>5</sup> versus other forms of leadership, including perhaps the prophetic guidance being offered by Dtr himself.<sup>6</sup>

Dtr's use of שָׁאֵל further shows how the distance between Yhwh and Israel's monarchy increases over time. Saul at first eschews asking Yhwh's guidance (1 Sam 14:19), but becomes increasingly frustrated when Yhwh does not respond to his "asking" (1 Sam 14:37; 28:6). The self-willed Saul only sees the futility of his self-seeking when rebuked by Samuel's ghost for his final illicit inquiry—"why do you **ask** me?" (28:16). David, by contrast, succeeds in his cultic "asking" (1 Sam 23:2, 4; 30:8; 2 Sam 2:1, 5:19, 23), but then after having consolidated royal power over Israel, ceases to "ask" Yhwh (i.e., after 2 Sam

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<sup>4</sup> Pace, e.g., J. Alberto Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (trans. J.S. Bowden; OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1989) 186; P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *1 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 8; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980) 65; Christophe Lemardele, "Saül le nazir ou la légende d'un roi," *SJOT* 22 (2008) 47-62.

<sup>5</sup> Diana V. Edelman, "Did Saulide-Davidic Rivalry Resurface in Early Persian Yehud?" in *The Land That I Will Show You; Essays on the History and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East in Honour of J. Maxwell Miller* (eds. J. Andrew Dearman and M. Patrick Graham; JSOTSup 343; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001) 69-91; Barbara Green, *King Saul's Asking* (Interfaces; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003) 31.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (New York: Seabury, 1980) 61.

5:19, 23).<sup>7</sup> The verb לָקַח also constitutes an important linking term in David's procurement of several "wives" (Abigail, 1 Sam 25:5, 8; Michal, 2 Sam 3:13; and Bathsheba, 2 Sam 11:7). Yhwh viewed David's "taking" in the latter instance as particularly egregious, convicting David of having "despised" him (12:9-10) and having "treated [him] with utter contempt" (12:14). David's actions, in turn, set an important precedent for Solomon and his successors.

As the power of the monarchy increases, the prophets begin to recede to society's periphery (cf. Elijah during Ahab's reign) or assume the role of royal counselors (cf. the prophets of Ahab's court apart from Micaiah).<sup>8</sup> Human counsel supplants divine counsel (2 Sam 14:18; 16:23; 20:8). Even Nathan the prophet becomes a "wise" counselor who colludes with an equally "wise" Bathsheba to have Solomon placed on the throne, a plan which eventuates in Adonijah's being executed with his unfortunate "request" for a member of the royal harem as the pretext (1 Kgs 2:13-25). Yhwh, at this point, essays to close the distance between the monarchy (now Solomon) and himself (and thus between the people and himself) by appearing directly to Solomon, enjoining Solomon to "ask" of him (1 Kgs 3:5). Yhwh is apparently pleased when Solomon "asks" for wisdom (3:10-14), but Solomon's subsequent

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<sup>7</sup> In 2 Sam 21:1, a different expression is used. After three long years of famine, David finally obtains an oracle by "seeking Yhwh's face" [וַיִּבְקֹשׁ ... אֶת־פָּנֵי יְהוָה]—an oracle that he uses as a pretext to promote his own interests by handing over seven of Saul's male descendants to the Gibeonites for execution. The text gives no indication as to how this cultic inquiry is made or by whom. That it took three years for the inquiry to be made is itself suggestive of increased and increasing distance between Yhwh and the monarchy and Yhwh and Israel.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Polzin (*David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History* [ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993] 174) states: "From the beginning of the History through David's establishment of Jerusalem as his royal capital in 2 Samuel 6, the consistent language for inquiring of God is 'to ask of (*šā'al b'*) God [or the LORD].'" This usage abruptly changes with David's accession to the throne and increasing reliance on human counsel. See further *ibid.*, pp. 173-78.

idolatry and multiplication of wives (1 Kings 11) makes clear his rejection of Yhwh's gift of wisdom and sets the Israelite and Judahite monarchies that succeed him on a path to ruin. Israel thus gets all that it had "asked" in the beginning (Deut 18:16, its first "pleasing" request) and all that it "demanded" ever after.

In chapter three, I explored Dtr's exploitation of David's name (דָּוִד, "Beloved")<sup>9</sup> in terms of the verb אָהַב ("love"),<sup>10</sup> showing how this exploitation constitutes a key element of Dtr's commentary on the emerging monarchy. Dtr suggests that David ascends to Saul's kingship as "Beloved" of his deity (Yhwh) because he is the object of the providential "love" of almost every person around him: Saul (1 Sam 16:21), Jonathan (18:1, 3; 20:17; 2 Sam 1:26), Michal (18:20, 28), Saul's servants (18:22), and all of Israel and Judah (18:16). David's response to Yhwh's beneficent "giving"<sup>11</sup> and the one-sided "love" of which he is the beneficiary is to become the unreciprocating monarchic "taker" that Samuel warned about when Israel first made its "demand" for kingship (1 Sam 8:10-18). David "despises Yhwh" and "treats [him] with utter contempt" (2 Sam 12:9-10; 14), thus activating against his house the threat first pronounced against Eli and his house ("those who despise me shall be treated lightly," i.e., "cursed," 1 Sam 2:30). David's misdeeds set the negative precedent for monarchic "taking" by his sons that results in violence in his "sure" house in the short term,

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001) 266-69.

<sup>10</sup> Moshe Garsiel, *Biblical Names: A Literary Study of Midrashic Derivations and Puns* (trans. Phyllis Hackett; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1991) 542-43.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., David's inappropriate monarchic "taking" is highlighted by the wordplay involving "Nathan," נָתַן, and לָקַח, in 2 Sam 12:4, 7-11.

while apostasy on the part of his heir is not merely personal, but also cultic—an apostasy that became national. The sword never departs from David’s house, just as Nathan predicted (2 Sam 12:10).

I further illustrated how Dtr not only tells David’s story in terms of the verb אָהַב, he also applies the אָהַב-theme to Solomon’s life, in order to show how the latter, like his father, began well, but also to show how Solomon, to an even greater degree than his father, failed. Dtr thus informs us that the name “Jedidiah” (יְדִידְיָהּ, “Beloved of Yah”) is given to Solomon, an additional name that suggests that he, like David, is the object of Yhwh’s “love” (“and Yhwh loved him,” 2 Sam 12:24). Dtr also says of Solomon-Jedidiah that “Solomon loved the Lord ...” (1 Kgs 3:3). At the height of Solomon’s glory, the visiting queen of Sheba exclaims, “Yhwh has loved Israel forever!” (10:9). In terms of national prestige, things would never get any better for Israel.

This positive portrait of Solomon, however, only makes Dtr’s description of Solomon’s personal and cultic apostasy stand out all the more starkly, and makes his sins appear all the more egregious. Again, אָהַב serves as the key term: “Solomon **loved** many foreign women” (1 Kgs 11:1); “Solomon clung to [their gods] in love” (11:2). “Beloved” David’s sins are exacerbated by “beloved” Solomon and in turn by “beloved” Israel and Judah. Joshua had warned Israel to “take great care to love Yhwh” and not to “cling” to the “nations”—their women or their gods (Josh 23:11-16; cf. 22:5); Solomon, and subsequently

Judah and Israel, did both, failing to reciprocate Yhwh's "love"<sup>12</sup> as mandated by Moses in Deuteronomy<sup>13</sup> and by Joshua. Ironically, the Davidides and Judah end up just like the Jebusites whom David's soul "hates" (2 Sam 5:8): outside of Yhwh's presence (in exile, with the temple destroyed), deposed from kingship.<sup>14</sup>

In chapter four, I described how from the outset, Dtr is also manifestly concerned with Israel's "integrity" or "peace," both internally and with Yhwh, as embodied in its covenant with Yhwh. Dtr holds up Solomon as the living symbol of an ideal "peace" (שלום) for Israel (1 Kgs 5:4-5), but also as the primary agent of the loss of that same "peace": he fails to keep his heart "completely" (שלם) with Yhwh (1 Kgs 11:4), contravening his own counsel (1 Kgs 8:61) to the people. His Israelite and Judahite successors by-and-large follow suit. The "peace" from Yhwh that Solomon boasts will be upon "David, and his posterity, and his house and his throne" (1 Kgs 2:33) turns, among his descendants, into something quite different from what he envisioned (2 Kgs 20:19; 22:20; see further below). Dtr's thematic wordplay on "Solomon," as on "David" and "Saul," like Dtr's much briefer evaluations of later kings, suggests, that "the monarchy *per se* could have been a positive factor in Israel's history but in fact served only as a catalyst in its downfall."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See Deut 4:37; 7:7-9, 13; 10:15; 23:5.

<sup>13</sup> See especially Deut 5:10; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Identity of 'the Blind and the Lame' (*iwwer ûpisseah*) in 2 Samuel 5:8b," *CBQ* 63 (2001) 23-30; Jeremy Schipper, "Reconsidering the Imagery of Disability in 2 Samuel 5:8b," *CBQ* 67 (2005) 422-34.

<sup>15</sup> Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 64.

In chapter five, I explored how Dtr creatively exploits the name of the king for whom Dtr appears to have the highest regard, “Josiah” (יְשַׁאִי),<sup>16</sup> in terms of “fire” (אֵשׁ). This wordplay recalls the Deuteronomic “fire” wielded by Dtr’s “man of God” (אִישׁ אֵלֹהִים) figures (e.g., Elijah and Elisha), the fire with which Israel was supposed to destroy the cults and sanctuaries of the Canaanites in the land (Deut 7:5, 25; 12:3), as Gideon/Jerubbaal “son of Joash” once did after witnessing “fire” come out of the rock (Judg 6:23, 25-32). Josiah, as “man of God” and “fire of Yhwh,” did “no more than show how things should have been done all along.”<sup>17</sup> The “fire” that makes an end of the kingdom of Judah, its monarchy, and the temple, was, in a sense, a final, fatal manifestation of the fire that Jotham foresaw coming out of Abimelech (“my father is king,” Judg 9:20; cf. 9:49, 52), the prototype of the evil-doing dynastic son and forerunner of dynastic sons like Manasseh who brought Yhwh’s just judgment upon Judah. Ironically then, Josiah’s name was not only the sign of how things should have been done (a Deuteronomic “fire of Yhwh”), but also of Yhwh’s intentions regarding Judah on account of its mostly evil-doing Davidic dynasty.

In the same chapter, I further suggested how Dtr development of thematic exploitations of the names of several foreign kings, especially Tiglath-pileser of Assyria and the imperial policy of “exile” (גָּלוּ)<sup>18</sup> that he first imposed upon Israel. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon consciously followed Tiglath-pileser’s precedent when the former exiled Judah. Via

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<sup>16</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 102. Cf. pp. 185-186.

<sup>17</sup> Noth, *Deuteronomic History*, 73-74.

<sup>18</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 47-48.



onomastic wordplay, Dtr further emphasizes the fact that Nebuchadnezzar's final despoliation of the temple "treasury" (אֹצֶר) punctuates the long story of the decay of Judah's monarchy and its destruction. Royal "houses"—including the house of David—emerge as houses of "bread" (cf. Bethlehem), i.e., deposed houses whose existence hangs in the balance, whose "remnants" (cf. יִתְר) eat "bread" as the beneficiaries of more powerful sovereigns.

Among all of the thematic wordplays in Dtr, perhaps no name/*Leitwort*-exploitation emerges as more important to Dtr's antimonarchic message than the wordplay involving the name "Ichabod" (אִיכָבֹד). "Where is the glory?" is the question that Phinehas's dying wife asks in the very naming of the son and heir of a soon-to-be-deposed priestly house in response to the Ark of the Covenant's being "exiled" (גָּלוּ; see 1 Sam 4:21-22). Hers is the kind of plaintive question that one can well imagine on the lips of the Judahite exiles who witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem temple, the burning of the temple, and the carrying away of the Davidic royal family with their own eyes.

Dtr formulates Yhwh's response: "Those who honor [glorify] me, I will honor [glorify], but those who despise me I will treat lightly [curse]" (1 Sam 2:30). Their ending up as a "curse" (see, e.g., 2 Kgs 22:19) is a final proof that the Davidides and the people have both "despised" Yhwh and not "loved" him. Dtr's uses the story of Ichabod and the Ark to make the point that Yhwh alone is Israel's "glory," not its human leadership (especially the monarchy). The monarchy in the past has been almost completely unable to "honor" or "glorify" Yhwh, but rather has lead Israel and Judah (and the house of David in particular) to "despise" Yhwh and to "treat [him] lightly" (cf. 1 Sam 2:31; 2 Sam 12:9-10, 14). Yhwh has

“cursed” Israel, allowing the “heaviness” of its monarchic houses to bring Israel and Judah to ruin.

In chapter six, I concluded that Dtr can offer the exiles no positive hope for the monarchy’s reinstitution. In fact, he seems to suggest that “asking” for Shealtiel and the Davidides (or perhaps any remaining Saulides)<sup>19</sup> is not the answer to their leadership woes. Rather, “hearing” Dtr’s prophetic, Deuteronomy-inculcating message<sup>20</sup>—what Israel did not do when Yhwh “raised up” Samuel as prophet—is the solution. Exilic Israel’s best hope, then, lies in “hearing” Yhwh’s voice (the voice speaking to them in Dtr’s message) and in teaching its children and childrens’ children to “hear” (Deut 6:4) so that they—collectively, familially, and individually—may (re)enter, in some sense, Yhwh’s “rest” (Deut 12:9; cf. Psalm 95:7-11).

## 7.2 Originality of Contribution

While wordplay in ancient Near Eastern texts<sup>21</sup> and wordplay involving proper names in the Hebrew Bible<sup>22</sup> have been studied previously, a comprehensive analysis of Dtr’s use of onomastic wordplay as a specific and important feature of his narratology has not—to my knowledge—heretofore been undertaken. My study shows that Dtr not only uses onomastic wordplay in his classical “etiological” formulations (e.g., Josh 5:9; 7:26; Judg 6:32; 1 Sam

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Edelman, *Saulide-Davidic Rivalry*, 69-91; Green, *King Saul’s Asking*, 31.

<sup>20</sup> Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, 61.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., Scott B. Noegel, ed., *Puns and Pundits: Wordplay in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Literature* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, *passim*.

1:20; 4:19-22; 7:12; 2 Sam 5:20; cf. 2 Sam 12:24-25),<sup>23</sup> but also in connection with *Leitworte*<sup>24</sup>—key words that identify and draw the reader’s attention to his most important themes such as: the consequences of Israel’s “asking” for intermediary leadership, particularly human kingship, for Israel’s relationship with Yhwh; the failure of Israel and Judah’s monarchies and people to whole-heartedly “love” Yhwh and why this failure brought Israel under a “curse”; the tearing of Israel’s “peace” with Yhwh and the “peace” between Israel and Judah; and the decay of the monarchy as evident in the despoliation of the royal and temple “treasuries” and the eventual “burning” of the house of Yhwh with “fire”—the sure sign that the “glory” had gone into exile from Jerusalem and its temple, and its Davidic dynasts with it.

While a number of studies have noted the anticipatory wordplay on the name “Saul” and **לשׁו** in the Samuel narrative regarding Israel’s “demand” for kingship,<sup>25</sup> no study of which I am aware (apart from my 2009 Masters’ thesis)<sup>26</sup> attempts to connect Israel’s “request” for prophetic intermediation with Hannah’s “begging” for a “son” (1 Sam 1:17, 21, 27-28) who emerges as not only a “raised up” prophet,<sup>27</sup> but also a “raised up” judge<sup>28</sup> and a

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<sup>23</sup> For a thorough study of classical etiological formulations in the OT, see Burke O. Long, *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament* (BZAW 108; Berlin, Töpelmann, 1968).

<sup>24</sup> Martin Buber, “Leitwort Style in Pentateuch Narrative,” in *Scripture and Translation* (ed. Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig; trans. Lawrence Rosenwald and Everett Fox; ISBL; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, 114); idem, *דרכו של מקרא: עיונים בדפוסי-סגנון בתנ"ך* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1964) 284.

<sup>25</sup> E.g., Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 22-26.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew L. Bowen, *Rejective Requests and Deadly Disobedience: The Literary Utilization of Deut 18:15-17 in 1 Samuel and Its Function within the Deuteronomistic History* (MA Thesis, CUA, Washington, D.C., 2009).

<sup>27</sup> In response to Hannah’s “begging” (**לשׁו**) for a “son,” Eli blesses her with the benediction that Yhwh might “raise up” his word (1 Sam 1:23). Cf. Stanley D. Walters, “Hannah and Anna,” *JBL* 107 (1988) 385-412. In 1 Sam 3:20, Samuel is “confirmed to be a prophet of Yhwh.”

priest on the eve of Israel's "demand" for additional human intermediary leadership, i.e., kingship (1 Samuel 8). The importance of these "asking" moments for Israel's and Judah's future for the remainder of Dtr is repeatedly emphasized through the wordplay on שְׁמוּאֵל, שְׂאוּר, and the verb שָׁאֵל, while as noted in chapter 6, Dtr sees clear ramifications in these moments in history for the exiles in Babylon, Jehoiachin's son Shealtiel (שְׁאֵל־תִּיָּאֵל), and the leadership dilemma that the exiles face going forward. Thus, 1 Samuel 1 is not a Saul birth narrative that has been converted into a Samuel birth narrative, but a carefully crafted narrative that both looks back to Israel's "asking" for a prophetic intermediary at Horeb (Deut 18:16) and forward to Israel's "demand" for monarchy (1 Samuel 8–12). And yet this richly allusive pericope not only anticipates Saul and the problems incurred by Israel's "demand" for monarchy, but also Israel's present leadership dilemma: whether to continue to "ask" or "beg" Yhwh for Davidic leadership, i.e., Shealtiel, or "hear" Yhwh's instruction and its Moses-like, Samuel-like promulgator, Dtr himself.

Previous studies have not observed how earlier texts in Dtr (Deuteronomy-Judges) also use the term שָׁאֵל in connection with Israel's ongoing leadership problem and thus in anticipation of the much greater problem that Israel's "demand" for a king (Saul) will pose. Similarly, other studies, as far as I can determine, have not followed Dtr's continued use of the *Leitwort* שָׁאֵל beyond the traditional bounds of the Saul story (i.e., after Saul's death in 1 Samuel 28). Whereas, for instance, the use of שָׁאֵל in the David story, not only recalls Saul

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Judg 2:16, 18.

and the problems that his kingship brought to Israel, but also highlights new problems associated with dynastic kingship, including not only the royal misappropriation of women (Michal, Abishag), but also royal intrigue and fraternal rivalry for the throne (e.g., Adonijah's "one little request" of Solomon). This study has also attempted to shed new light on Solomon's "asking" for wisdom at Gibeon, a place (and a people) particularly associated with Israel's leadership's first failure to "ask" Yhwh's guidance, and whose people, the Gibeonites, are intertwined with Saul and his "house."

Other studies have noted the literary connection between David's name (understood as "Beloved")<sup>29</sup> and the narrator's use of the verb אָהַב, and at least two other studies have highlighted the fact that the narrator goes to great lengths to avoid making David the subject of the verb אָהַב, i.e., he refrains from mentioning David's own "loving."<sup>30</sup> My study has shown that the one critical exception to this *Tendenz*, preserved in LXX and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam 13:21, is the exception that proves the rule: David's opting for an enabling "love" for his rapist son Amnon instead of reciprocating the love of others, including Yhwh (2 Sam 12:9-10, 14), for him.

I have further shown that Dtr incorporates Solomon into the above theme by reporting that Solomon was also given the name "Jedidiah," which makes not only Solomon's "love" for Yhwh (1 Kgs 3:3), in light of David's failure to do so, both ironic and eventually tragic as Solomon redirects his "love" to foreign wives and gods (1 Kgs 11:2). In this way, father and

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<sup>29</sup> Halpern, *David's Secret Demons*, 266-69.

<sup>30</sup> Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible's First Story* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993) 148-51; Tod Linafelt, "Private Poetry and Public Eloquence in 2 Samuel 1:17-27: Hearing and Overhearing David's Lament for Jonathan and Saul," *JR* 88 (2008) 507.

son are bound together *by name* as the supreme beneficiaries of Yhwh's "love" ("Beloved" and "Beloved of Yhwh") in their beginnings, but also in their tragic non-reciprocation of that "love."

Jerome Walsh has noted how the wordplay שלום/שלם and שלמה in 1 Kings extends beyond the Solomon story proper.<sup>31</sup> In this study we have seen that Solomon and the building of the temple is, like Saul, anticipated in the story of the illicit Gibeonite treaty ("And Joshua made peace with them ...," Josh 9:15, 22-27). The entangling nature of an illicit "peace" with Canaanite peoples (Josh 10:1, 4) thus becomes quickly evident. The Joshua story is also a harbinger of the problems that illicit marriages, like those contracted by Solomon, produce and exacerbate.

In this dissertation, I have also attempted to demonstrate that Dtr has Solomon's broken "peace" in view throughout the remainder of his post-Solomon narrative. For example, Dtr's negative view of Solomon's boast of eternal dynastic "peace" (1 Kgs 2:33) is particularly evident in the account of the incomparably pious Hezekiah who seems satisfied with the future exile of Judah and the deportation of his own royal sons to Babylon so long as there is "peace and truth in my days" (2 Kgs 20:19). Likewise, Solomon's boast of "peace" from Yhwh is the backdrop against which Dtr wishes us to read the account of pious Josiah who is killed by Necho (23:29-30) after Huldah's oracle that he would "be gathered to [his] grave in peace" (22:20). Dtr demonstrates conclusively that the "peace" of 1 Kgs 2:33 failed to materialize as Solomon anticipated it.

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<sup>31</sup> See Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996) 210.

In addition, my examination of שלום/שלם as a *Leitwort* in this study has drawn out an important key to understanding Dtr's overall literary message: the eternal dynastic "peace" that Solomon boasted would be "upon [David's] posterity, and upon his house, and upon his throne ... peace for ever from Yhwh" (1 Kgs 2:33) is, by the end of Dtr, devoured by the "sword" that Nathan predicted would "never depart" from David's house (2 Sam 12:10). The exiles had unimpeachable testimony that no Israelite, not even the Davidic king, could "have peace though ... walk[ing] in the imagination of [one's] heart" (Deut 29:19).<sup>32</sup>

Moshe Garsiel has noted how Dtr's narrative interprets Josiah's name (יְחִיָּהוּ) in terms of the noun אֵש ("fire") and the verb שָׂרַף ("burn").<sup>33</sup> In this study I have extended Garsiel's observations to suggest that Dtr makes the Josiah's name both a fitting sign of the latter's Deuteronomic<sup>34</sup> cult reforms by "fire,"<sup>35</sup> and Yhwh's determination to have the Judahite monarchy burned to the ground by "fire" for its sins.<sup>36</sup> As this study has shown, Yhwh's intention comes to pass with Nebuchadnezzar's "burning" of Jerusalem and the house of Yhwh—Jerusalem's ever-present monument to the Davidic dynasty—with "fire" (2 Kgs 25:9), the worst possible realization of the "fire" that Jotham in his fable declared would "come forth from Abimelech" (Judg 9:20; cf. 9:49, 52)—"my father is king"—the horrific

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<sup>32</sup> A phrase notably adapted by Jeremiah and used to describe the apostasy that he witnessed: see Jer 3:17 ; 7:24; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12.

<sup>33</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 102.

<sup>34</sup> See especially Deut 7:5, 25; 12:3.

<sup>35</sup> 2 Kgs 23:3-20.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 9:7; 2 Kgs 23:27.

prototype of the evil-doing dynastic son—sons against whom Dtr levies negative evaluations with few exceptions.<sup>37</sup>

In this study I have also extended Garsiel's identification of paronomasia involving the non-Israelite, non-Hebrew name "Tiglath-pileser" and גל, <sup>38</sup> as well as the similarly foreign "Nebuchadnezzar" and נבוצר, <sup>39</sup> to show that these associations are of thematic importance in Dtr. The prominent use of the verb גל in the early chapters of 1 Samuel in connection with Yhwh's self-revelation to Eli's house<sup>40</sup> links up with the *Leitwort* כבוד, particularly at Sam 2:27-31 and 1 Sam 4:21, this culminating in the exile of Yhwh's glory from Israel with the taking of the ark, commemorated by the naming of "Ichabod" (אִי־כָבוֹד): "the glory has gone into exile." Both of these *Leitworte* are subsequently tied to David and his house in 2 Sam 6:21.

The analysis of Dtr's use of onomastic wordplay involving various *Leitworte* in this dissertation confirms suggestions by Polzin,<sup>41</sup> Green,<sup>42</sup> and others that the material in 1 Samuel 1–4 is not merely a story about the house of Eli, but also about Israel and Judah's royal houses. The wordplay suggests that Dtr has the house of David particularly in view here.

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 63-64.

<sup>38</sup> Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, 41-42.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>40</sup> In addition to 1 Sam 2:27, see, e.g., 1 Sam 3:7, 21.

<sup>41</sup> Polzin (*Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 64) calls 1 Samuel 1–7 an "overture to monarchic history" and Eli's falling backwards off of his throne, "toppled by his own weight and age," in 1 Sam 4:18, "the Deuteronomist's view of kingship in a nutshell." See also Green, *King Saul's Asking*, 29.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Green, *King Saul's Asking*, 31-32.



More than any other “house,” including the house of Eli, David and his sons “despise” and “dishonor” Yhwh (cf. 1 Sam 2:31). The Babylonian exiles’ situation—their being a “curse” and without “honor” or “glory”—is particularly attributable to the failures of the Davidic monarchy.

At a minimum, this dissertation has presented strong evidence that Dtr considers names and their meanings (or potential meanings) important in telling Israel’s story. This study has further shown the need to consider Dtr’s thematic use of words tied to the etymology and/or the meaning of the names “Saul,” “David,” “Solomon,” etc. My work thus adds to a growing body of literature that demonstrates the sophisticated literary ways in which Dtr tells his version of Israel’s history. Artful allusions and intertextuality abound throughout. The whole of Dtr is a carefully crafted epic, rather than a haphazard, slapdash, or clumsily-edited amalgamation of disjunctive and disparate materials.

Israel’s story so far has also been a lesson in the consequences of being “like the nations” (Deut 18:9-10; 1 Sam 8:5, 20). They find themselves “cast off” from Yhwh’s “presence” (פָּנֵי, 1 Kgs 9:7; 2 Kgs 17:20; 24:20). “They did not hear” Samuel or any of the other prophets that Yhwh raised up (2 Kgs 21:9) and their ears still “tingle” (21:12; cf. 1 Sam 3:11; Jer 19:3). Yhwh’s “love” for Israel, however, is still evident, perhaps not least in the very existence of Dtr’s message. Yhwh is still trying to reach them.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, Dtr is an onomastic lesson on monarchy and nomistic fidelity. Saul (“Demanded”): “demanded” human intermediary leadership is no replacement for the nearness (the “presence”) of Yhwh or his kingship. David (“Beloved”): covenant promises and blessings—Yhwh’s “love”—are not entitlements. Yhwh “loves”

Israel, but Israel must reciprocate that “love” through nomistic fidelity and obedience. If Israel “despises” Yhwh or “treats [him] contemptuously,” Israel will be cursed or treated lightly, i.e., it will remain “cast off.” Solomon (“His Recompense”, “His repayment,” “His peace,” etc.) is living proof that neither Israel nor its leaders may walk in obduracy of heart and have “peace” (Deut 29:19). There is no unconditional, eternal “peace”—contrary to Solomon’s boast (1 Kgs 2:33). In fact, when pushed far enough, Yhwh burned Judah and the Davidic temple (“the house of Yhwh”) to the ground with divine “fire” (שֶׁנִּי; cf. לִי שֶׁנִּי), doing so even in spite of Josiah’s repentance and nomistic fidelity.

In the final analysis, Dtr’s history is not only a monumental literary epic, but also incisive paranesis. Dtr evidently sees (or foresees) the power of well-written literature to shape thinking on a wide scale—even on a national scale. His concern for names and their meanings (or potential meanings) attest a strong belief in the power of individuals not only to shape national history, but to make a shipwreck of it. Figures that he himself lionizes on one level are also capable of great evil (Saul, David, and Solomon) that leads to greater evil or are guilty of a disturbing lack of concern for posterity (Hezekiah). In the end, even the incomparable Josiah’s piety can earn him and Judah no reward other than his own being “gathered to [his] grave in peace” (2 Kgs 22:20) and certainly no eternal dynastic peace. Conversely, even kings of the abominated “nations” (Tiglath-pileser, Nebuchadnezzar) can serve as blunt instruments in Yhwh’s hand, imposing imperial policies that punish Israel and Judah’s for the evils of their dynastic “sons.” In Noth’s words then, the monarchic figures that could have, and indeed should have, “been a positive factor in Israel’s history ... in fact

served only as a catalyst in its downfall.”<sup>43</sup> For Dtr, the exiles’ “begging” for Shealtiel or any other human leader should be out of the question. Dtr saw names as a signs (*nomen est omen*), and he wanted all of what remained of “beloved” Israel to know that it has already received “according to all that [it] demanded” (Deut 18:16), and might do so again.

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<sup>43</sup> Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 64.

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