

The Relationship between the Glory of YHWH and the Spirit of YHWH in Ezekiel 33-48*

PIETER DE VRIES (VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT, AMSTERDAM)

ABSTRACT

Ezekiel is not only the prophet of the glory of YHWH but also of the Spirit of YHWH. What is the relationship between these two concepts? I restrict myself in this article to the last part of Ezekiel (33-48). In this final part of the book, we see how the Spirit of YHWH, who transforms and revives Israel, paves the way for the return of the glory of YHWH portrayed in the last vision. In the final vision, we read of a stream of water flowing from the temple. The water starts from the place where the כְּבוֹד of YHWH is present. This water must be related to the Spirit of YHWH. Not only the people but also the land is transformed. The message of the transformation of a community by the Spirit of YHWH is followed by the final vision where the glory of YHWH is evidently present in the sanctuary and even the land itself is transformed by the Spirit of YHWH; this is the climax of the message of Ezekiel. The presence of the רִיחַ of YHWH in the hearts and lives of the people of Israel is closely related to the presence of the כְּבוֹד of YHWH in the sanctuary. All is summarized in the name of the city: YHWH is there.

Keywords: Ezekiel, glory of YHWH, spirit of YHWH, hypostasis, temple vision.

A INTRODUCTION

Clearly, the concept of the glory of YHWH (כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה) is the most fundamental concept of the Book of Ezekiel. It is true that the concept of the Spirit (רִיחַ) of YHWH does not have such a fundamental place in Ezekiel as does the concept of the glory of YHWH. Ezekiel is first and foremost the prophet who saw the glory of YHWH. Nevertheless, we must recognize that the concept of the Spirit of YHWH is very important to Ezekiel. It is with good reason that he has been called not only the prophet who saw the glory of YHWH, but also the prophet of the Spirit of YHWH.¹ In this article, I analyze the theologically relevant references to רִיחַ in the last part of Ezekiel. Apart from the occurrences of רִיחַ in the

* To cite: Pieter de Vries, "The Relationship between the Glory of YHWH and the Spirit of YHWH in Ezekiel 33-48," *OTE* 28, no. 2 (2015): 326-350.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2015/v28n2a7>

¹ Daniel I. Block, "The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of *RWH* in the Book of Ezekiel," *JETS* 32 (1989), 28; Wilf Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 187-190.

sense of "side" in Ezek 42:16-20, all the occurrences of רִיחַ in the last part of Ezekiel are theologically significant.

By far the majority of the theologically relevant references of רִיחַ in the last part of Ezekiel occur in the vision of the Valley of Dry Bones (Ezek 37:1-14). The only theologically relevant reference to רִיחַ in the final vision occurs in Ezek 43:5. We find this reference in the literary subunit that describes the return of the glory of YHWH to the new temple. In this article, I will also pay attention to what is said in the final vision about the water flowing from the temple. Although in that passage (Ezek 47:1-12) the רִיחַ is not mentioned explicitly, we shall see that both its presence and the presence of the כְּבוֹד YHWH are presupposed there.

B THE PREPARATION FOR THE RETURN OF THE GLORY OF YHWH

Ezekiel 33 is the turning-point of the book of Ezekiel. Its content is closely related to Ezek 24, the closing chapter of the first part of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 24 predicts the fall of Jerusalem, while we read in Ezek 33:21 how the fact of this fall is announced to the prophet by a fugitive from Jerusalem. In Ezek 33:21, we find the last instance in Ezekiel where the name of Jerusalem is mentioned. Apparently, for the prophet this name is so intimately bound up with the sinful past that the people must distance themselves from it. We do not encounter the name of Jerusalem in Ezekiel's prophecies of restoration and salvation.²

The prophecies against the nations are placed between Ezek 24 and 33. This placement indicates that the content of this section must primarily relate to the chapters that follow, in which the restoration and salvation of Israel are proclaimed. Ezekiel 33:11-20 makes clear that salvation can never be separated from repentance. In Ezek 33:11, we find the most urgent call to repentance in the whole book. YHWH here swears an oath that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He connects his own name and innermost being to this attitude.³ This most urgent of calls is also the last call to repentance in Ezekiel. In Ezek 33:22, the mouth of the prophet is finally opened. From now on, the prophet will bring a message of hope and salvation. Until this point in the book, only glimmers of hope have been seen (Ezek 6:8-10; 11:41-21; 16:60-63; 17:22-24; 28:24-26). Repentance is necessary for exiles. Hereinafter, Ezekiel announces that YHWH himself will give to the people of Israel the ability and willingness to repent. It is in this way that the glorious future will become reality. In this context Ezekiel speaks about the spirit. Mostly it is the Spirit of YHWH and at other times the spirit of Israel renewed by the Spirit of YHWH.

² Pieter de Vries, "Ezekiel: Prophet of the Name and Glory of YHWH – The Character of His Book and Several of Its Main Themes," *JBPR* 4 (2012): 107-108.

³ In Ezek 14:6 and 18:32, we find calls to repentance. In Ezek 18:32, just as in Ezek 33:11, YHWH states that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but in that instance this statement is not confirmed with an oath.

The restoration of Israel is portrayed in Ezek 34-48, whose climax is the return of the glory of YHWH to the new temple. This return is inextricably linked to the renewal of the people and the land of Israel by the Spirit of YHWH. It is the last part of Ezekiel in particular that shows the close connection between the glory of YHWH and the Spirit of YHWH. Ezekiel 34-48 is the counterpart of Ezek 8-11, the chapters that describe the departure of the glory of YHWH. The restoration is more than a return to the *status quo ante*. Back-sliding from YHWH will no longer be a possibility in the future that is prophesied.

The unit of Ezek 34-48 has a chiastic structure:⁴

- A 34:1-31 A prophecy of the kingship of YHWH and a renewed Davidic monarchy
- B 35:1-36:15 A prophecy consisting of two tableaux in which the land of Israel is claimed against foreign oppressors
- C 36:16-38 An anthology concerning the spiritual transformation of Israel and blessings connected therewith
- D 37:1-14 The central vision of Israel's spiritual and political transformation
- C' 37:15-28 A sign act concerning the political transformation followed by an anthology of blessings flowing therefrom
- B' 38:1-39:29 A prophecy in two tableaux in which the safety of Israel against foreign oppressors is affirmed
- A' 40:1-48:35 A vision affirming the return of the glory of YHWH to a new temple and the ultimate kingship of YHWH in a renewed land and a new city

This structure reveals the fundamental nature of the third vision of Ezekiel.⁵ This is the only vision in which the glory of YHWH is not mentioned, but in this vision the Spirit of YHWH plays a fundamental role. While we have two references to הוּי in Ezek 36, there are ten such references in Ezek 37:1-14.⁶ Nowhere else in Ezekiel do we find such a high number in one literary unit.⁷ It is tempting to see it as no mere coincidence that the total number of references

⁴ Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (VTSup 76; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 128.

⁵ The first vision is found in Ezek 1-3, the second in Ezek 8-11, and the fourth and final in Ezek 40-48.

⁶ Ezek 36:26, 27; 37:1, 5, 6, 8, 9 (4x), 10, 14.

⁷ In Ezek 1:4-28, we find six such references.

to רִיב in Ezek 36-37 is twelve.⁸ In other parts of Ezekiel, too, we find this number twelve.⁹

The fact that Ezek 37 explicitly foretells the removal of the traditional animosity between Judah (representing the south) and Ephraim (representing the north), with the result that there will be a single people to whom one king will be given, is an indication that the number of twelve references of רִיב is not without intent.¹⁰ Not only in Ezek 37 but also in the final vision, the equality of all the twelve tribes of Israel is stressed. This is part of the future restoration effected by the Spirit of YHWH and finally accomplished with the return of the glory of YHWH.

Given the inner logic and structure of the book of Ezekiel, there is no fitting place to mention the glory of YHWH in Ezek 36-37. Ezekiel 8-11 describes the departure of the glory of YHWH from the old temple in Jerusalem. Only after a new temple is erected as his dwelling-place can and will the glory of YHWH return. As we shall see later, this will be in a new temple that is separated from the new city. The significance of Ezek 36-37 is that it shows us the necessary preparations for the return of the glory of YHWH. The content of these chapters makes clear that the people of Israel, who have been characterized many times as a rebellious house (בֵּית מְרִי) heretofore, will be totally renewed.¹¹ The effect of this total renewal will be that a future turning-away

⁸ Perhaps – but here I am a little more hesitant – it is not without significance that when we count the number of occurrences of the verbs פּוֹץ and קִבֵּץ in close proximity, we arrive at a total of twenty-four (Ezek 11:16, 17 (3); 20:23, 34, 41 (5); 22:15, 19-20 (3); 28:25 (2); 29:12-13 (3); 34:5, 12-13 (6); 36:19, 24 (2)). When these verbs occur in each other's environment, they are always used in the context of exile and restoration.

⁹ Twelve of the fourteen dates given in Ezekiel have to do with what is known as the word-event formula. In Ezek 8-11, we find twelve occurrences of the verb רָאָה. Pieter de Vries, *De heerlijkheid van YHWH in het Oude Testament en in het bijzonder in het boek Ezechiël* (Heerenveen, NL: Groen, 2010), 72, 488. The number is not as significant in Ezekiel as the numbers seven and twenty-five. These numbers and their multiples appear quite often in Ezekiel.

¹⁰ This fact can also be seen as an indication that Ezek 36:23b-28 forms part of the original text of Ezekiel. Because Ezek 36:23b-38 is not found in Papyrus 967, Johan Lust has argued that it is a later addition. Johan Lust, "The Ezekiel Text," in *Sôfer Mahîr: Essays in Honour of Adrian Schenker* (VTSup 110; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 161. However, Floyd V. Filson has argued that the putative format of the source from which it was copied made it possible that a homoioteleuton was the reason why the scribe skipped such a long passage. Floyd V. Filson, "The Omission of Ezek 12:26-28 and 36:23b-38 in Codex 967," *JBL* 62/1 (1943), 27-32.

¹¹ Apart from the occurrence in Ezek 44:6, we find that all the references to בֵּית מְרִי occur in the first part of Ezekiel. The first of these references is in Ezek 2:5 and the last is in Ezek 24:3.

from YHWH will be impossible. The desire to do so will be completely taken away. Thus, a situation will be created such that the glory of YHWH can dwell permanently in the midst of the people of Israel.

C PREPARATION FOR THE RETURN OF THE GLORY OF YHWH: THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT OF YHWH (EZEK 36:25-27)

For Ezekiel, Israel's history is a record of constant failure to comply with the divine will. Salvation is only a possibility because of the regard that YHWH has for the honor of his name.¹² As early as Ezek 11:14-21, the spiritual renewal of Israel has been announced.¹³ In Ezek 36, a much broader description of this renewal is given: YHWH will gather his people from the nations (Ezek 36:24). Being spiritually unclean, they will be cleansed with water (Ezek 36:25). In order that the glory of YHWH can return to the new sanctuary, the people of Israel must be clean both in the cultic and the moral sense.

We can see a parallel between Ezek 36:25 and Num 8:15. In Num 8:15, we read how Moses cleanses the Levites in order that they may serve in the tabernacle. In Ezek 36:25, the whole people of Israel is cleansed by YHWH himself in order that they will in future be able to enter the outer court of the sanctuary and will be able and willing to serve YHWH. YHWH uses his רוח as instrument to cleanse the people.

The people of Israel will receive a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 36:26). The giving of a new heart (לב) and a new spirit (רוח) are inseparably connected to each other. Nevertheless, there is a difference. While YHWH promises Israel that he will give a new heart *to* them (וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב חָדָשׁ), he assures them that he will place a new spirit *in* them (וְרוּחַ חָדָשׁ אֶתֶן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם).

While it is stated in Ezek 36:26 that YHWH will place a new spirit in the people Israel, in Ezek 36:27 he explicitly assures them that it is his own Spirit that he will give within them. Now we learn that the רוח mentioned in Ezek 36:26 is the רוח of YHWH himself. The verbal sentence found in Ezek 36:27 does not open with the verb as usual, but with the object, namely וְאֶת־רוּחִי (my Spirit). This word order emphasizes "my Spirit." We ought to translate it: "And my Spirit I will give within you." After this statement, we read the result of the gift of the Spirit of YHWH. This result is that the people of Israel will walk in the statutes of YHWH and obey his rules (Ezek 36:27).

There is a close relationship between the prophecy of the gift of a new spirit, connected with the gift of the Spirit of YHWH himself in Ezek 36:26-27,

¹² Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (vol. 2; trans. David M. G. Stalker; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1965), 227.

¹³ Pieter de Vries, "The Relationship between the Glory of YHWH and the Spirit of YHWH in the Book of Ezekiel. Part One," *JBPR* 5 (2013): 125, 126.

and Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant in Jer 31:31-34. Apart from the commonality of the word *רִוּחַ*, there are striking linguistic parallels between these two passages. Ezekiel appears to be influenced by Jeremiah.¹⁴ Ezekiel does not use the word "covenant" (*בְּרִית*) in this context, but he does mention God's covenant with Israel elsewhere. For Ezekiel, too, the return from exile is due to the covenant and to the covenant faithfulness of YHWH (cf. Ezek 16:60-61). In Ezek 37, we read of the covenant of peace that YHWH will make with his people. That covenant will be an eternal covenant (Ezek 37:26). In remembering his original covenant with Israel, YHWH renews his covenant. While the word "covenant" is (just as in Ezek 11:20) not used in Ezek 36, we find the covenant formula in Ezek 36:29.¹⁵

In his covenant faithfulness, YHWH will maintain and renew his covenant. His only reason for doing so is the vindication of his own name (Ezek 36:20-23). An essential part of the renewal of the covenant and the new exodus is the gift of the Spirit. In Ps 51:13 (12), we find David's prayer for a clean heart and willing spirit. At issue here is moral and inner renewal by God's Spirit. Ezekiel predicts in Ezek 36 that in the future, in conjunction with material bliss, such a renewal will happen on a national scale. In the future, the boundaries of the physical Israel will be conterminous with the borders of the spiritual people of YHWH.¹⁶ What in Ps 51:13 (12) is stated in an individual context as a prayer is in Ezek 36:26-27 formulated as a promise guaranteed by YHWH himself for the whole people of Israel. Of course, the renewal of individuals is a part of the national renewal. In the future, every member of the people of Israel will receive the Spirit of YHWH within him.

For Ezekiel, the Spirit of YHWH is the central gift of the new age. The renewal wrought by his Spirit is the answer of YHWH to the sins of Israel that were the cause of the exile. The gift of the Spirit as an abiding presence in the hearts of the members of the people of YHWH is the crowning blessing of the new age.¹⁷ The fact that Israel will be the people of YHWH and that YHWH will

¹⁴ Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* 2, 235; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 353; Daniel I. Block, "The View from the Top: the Holy Spirit in the Prophets," in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (ed. David Firth and Paul D. Wegner; Nottingham: Apollos, 2011), 196.

¹⁵ De Vries, "Relationship," 126.

¹⁶ Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 361.

¹⁷ Walter Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (vol. 2/3; 4th rev. ed.; Stuttgart: Ehrenfried Klotz Verlag, 1961), 33; Charles H. H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 276; Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," in *Biblical and Theological Studies* (ed. Samuel C. Craig; Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968), 149. In the latter article, Warfield draws a

be their God is indissolubly related to the gift of the Spirit. The Spirit gives substance to the covenant relationship and is its seal.¹⁸ In Ezekiel's expectation of a future bliss, the Spirit of God is not just a one-off gift, but becomes a good which cannot be lost.¹⁹

Ezekiel strongly emphasizes that the new future for Israel is solely possible due to YHWH and not at all based upon better behavior on Israel's part. As I noted in the first part of my article, Ezekiel has been called, in recognition of this emphasis, the Calvin of the OT.²⁰ YHWH himself takes responsibility both for Israel's transformation and for the future covenant relationship and blessings.²¹ Changed behavior is not the condition but the fruit of work of YHWH. In Ezek 33:11, we find the most emphatic but also the last call to repentance in the book of Ezekiel.²²

From Ezek 34 onwards, we only read about the transforming and renewing activities of YHWH. He is creating a new people with a new king and a new city and above all a new temple. I would emphasize that this does not allow us to conclude that the call to repentance has no real significance for Ezekiel. The significance of the call to repentance in the first part of Ezekiel is underlined in the last part, among other ways, by the fact that we find in Ezek

strong distinction between what he calls the theocratic and the individual Spirit. More than Warfield does, I emphasize the corporate nature of the promised renewal. In the promised future, the theocratic and the individual work of the Spirit of YHWH will cohere.

¹⁸ Block, "View from the Top," 202.

¹⁹ We find the same expectation in the writings of other prophets. Werner H. Schmidt, *Alttestamentlicher Glaube* (11th rev. enl. ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2011), 157.

²⁰ De Vries, "Ezekiel," 103. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Calvin, who is known for his emphasis on the glory and sovereignty of God, has also been characterized as the theologian of the Holy Spirit. "But above all he gave to the Church the entire doctrine of the Work of the Holy Spirit, profoundly conceived and wrought out in its details, with its fruitful distinctions of common and efficacious grace, of noëtic, aesthetic and thelematic effects, – a gift, we venture to think, so great, so pregnant with benefit to the Church as fairly to give him a place by the side of Augustine and Anselm and Luther, as the Theologian of the Holy Spirit, as they were respectively the Theologian of Grace, of the Atonement, and of Justification." Benjamin B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine* (ed. Samuel C. Craig; Philadelphia, Pa.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1980), 21. In Calvin's emphasis on the Spirit of God, too, we can detect a relationship between him and Ezekiel.

²¹ Willem VanGemerem and Andrew Abernethy, "The Spirit and the Future: A Canonical Approach," in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (ed. David Firth and Paul D. Wegner; Nottingham: Apollos, 2011), 339.

²² See note 2.

36:32 two imperatives whereby Israel is called upon to be ashamed (בושׁוּ) and confounded (וְהִכְלִמוּ).

The Spirit of YHWH is the instrument YHWH uses to purify and renew his people.²³ Only by the infusion of the Spirit of YHWH will the people of Israel be enabled and made willing to serve YHWH. The repentance to which the people of Israel are called becomes a reality by the gift of the Spirit of YHWH.²⁴ Only after the people of Israel have received the Spirit of YHWH do they come to a sincere confession of sin as stated in Ezek 36:31: "Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations." Loathing oneself for one's sins is for Ezekiel an essential element connected with the gift of the Spirit of YHWH and renewal by the Spirit of YHWH.

There are many parallels between the Holiness Code of Leviticus and Ezekiel.²⁵ Given this, the difference of emphasis between Ezek 36:31 and Lev 26:40-42 is striking. When we compare these two passages, we see that in Ezekiel the priority of the work of YHWH is emphasized more than it is in the Holiness Code. In Leviticus, it is first confession of sins by the people that is mentioned and only then is it stated that YHWH will remember his covenant. For Ezekiel, confession of sin is the *fruit* of the life-giving work of the Spirit of YHWH. It does not precede YHWH's remembering of the covenant. Moreover, in Jer 31 we see that shame for sin is a fruit of the work of YHWH (Jer 31:19), but Ezekiel is in this respect even more outspoken than Jeremiah.²⁶ While Jeremiah points to the compassion of YHWH, Ezekiel speaks only in terms YHWH's determination to vindicate his own name. The gift of the Spirit must be seen in

²³ Lloyd R. Neve, *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Tokyo: Seibunsha, 1972; repr. Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, 2011), 49.

²⁴ In her commentary on Ezekiel, Margaret S. Odell points in this context to Augustine. Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel* (SHBC; Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 422. Augustine (*Conf.* X, xxix, 40) said: "Give what you enjoin, and enjoin then what you will." I give here my own translation of the Latin text. I used *Confessiones*: Latin text with Dutch translation by Dr. A. Sizoo. 2nd rev. ed. Delft: W.D. Meinema, 1948

When we try to understand and describe the relationship between the responsibility of man and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit at work in man, we are approaching the boundaries of a pure biblical-theological approach to the data. Reflection upon this relationship always has a more or less systematic-theological character.

²⁵ De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 303, 305, 397, 493-495; Michael A. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code* (LHBOTS 507; New York: T&T Clark, 2009).

²⁶ De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 397.

that context. Its result is that the people of Israel will know YHWH, or to quote exactly: “Then they will know that I am YHWH” (Ezek 36:38).²⁷

D PREPARATION FOR THE RETURN OF THE GLORY OF YHWH: THE VISION OF THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES (EZEK 37:1-14)

Even more fully than at the end of Ezek 36, we see in Ezek 37:1-14 how fundamental the work of the Spirit of YHWH is to the accomplishment of the spiritual transformation of the people of Israel. Nowhere else in the Book of Ezekiel do we see such a deliberate play on the variety of meanings of רִיחַ as in Ezek 37:1-14: the vision of the Valley of Dry Bones. The account of the vision (Ezek 37:1-10) is followed by an oracular pronouncement of salvation (Ezek 37:11-14). In Ezek 37:1-14, רִיחַ occurs with the meanings of “spirit,” “breath,” “wind” and “side.” Stated slightly differently, we encounter רִיחַ in this unit with a meteorological, a theological and an anthropological meaning.

Ezekiel 37:1 starts with the words: הַיְתָה עָלַי יַד־יְהוָה (the hand of YHWH was upon me). By means of this expression, this unit is connected to the appearances or visions of the glory of YHWH.²⁸ Although the Masoretic accents suggest otherwise, we have to take יְהוָה and בְּרוּחַ together.²⁹ רִיחַ יְהוָה (the Spirit of YHWH) must be seen as a stereotyped term in this clause, of which YHWH or the hand of YHWH is the subject.³⁰ It is by or in the Spirit of YHWH that the prophet is brought to the valley (הַבְּקָעָה).

This introduction also makes clear that of all the shades of meaning of רִיחַ that occur in this literary unit, the meaning “Spirit of YHWH” is the most fundamental one. The word הַבְּקָעָה (the valley) connects this unit with Ezek 3:22-27: the final part of the calling vision of the prophet. There, we find two occurrences of הַבְּקָעָה (Ezek 3:22, 23). Because the reference is to a particular

²⁷ The phrase “אָנִי יְהוָה” occurs 201 times in the OT, 87 of them in Ezekiel. De Vries, “Relationship,” 120, note 40. The expression “יָדַע בִּי־אָנִי יְהוָה” is even more typical of Ezekiel. Out of a total of 80 references in the OT, 64 of them are found in Ezekiel. To this figure of 64 must be added the five cases in which we have the expression “יָדַע בִּי־אָנִי אֲדַנְי יְהוָה.” When we include these references, we have 69 occurrences in the book of Ezekiel out of a total of 80 in the OT.

²⁸ See De Vries, “Relationship,” 114-116.

²⁹ See De Vries, “Relationship,” 110, note 3.

³⁰ Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48* (WBC 29; Dallas, Tex.: Word Book Publisher, 1990), 182. When we take the hand of YHWH as the subject, we have – as we might expect – a female verb-form in the first clause of Ezek 37:1 but a masculine form in the second part. Because of the preference of the Book of Ezekiel for masculine forms, this is not a fundamental objection. See De Vries, “Relationship,” 119, 124. Also, if we understand יְהוָה as the subject, then רִיחַ must be interpreted as the רִיחַ of YHWH.

valley, one may infer that the meaning is that the same valley is where Ezekiel was first commended to perform symbolic acts (Ezek 3:22-5:17).³¹

In Ezek 37:1b-3, the condition of Israel is compared with scattered dry bones. Ezekiel 37:4-8a describes a positive, transformational event. The prophet is commanded to prophesy to the bones (Ezek 37:4). YHWH promises that he will place רִיחַ in them (Ezek 37:5). In Ezek 37:5, רִיחַ can be understood both as "spirit" and "breath." Certainly, there is a close connection here between the human and divine רִיחַ. When Ezekiel prophesied, a sound was heard, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together (Ezek 37:7).

Out of a total of 32 occurrences of קוֹל (sound, voice) in Ezekiel, we find 18 of them in the visions of the glory of YHWH. Eleven of them occur in the calling vision. Therefore, with the use of the word קוֹל too, a connection is suggested between the vision of the dry bones and the visions of the glory of YHWH, and especially a connection with the calling vision. The same can be said of the word רַעַשׁ. Of the five occurrences of רַעַשׁ (rattling), we find two of them in the calling vision (Ezek 3:12, 13) and one in the vision of the dry bones (Ezek 37:7). In connection with the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel, we find three references to קוֹל in Ezek 33 (Ezek 33:4, 5, 32). This first reference to קוֹל after Ezek 33 makes clear that the prophetic ministry of Ezekiel will bear fruit.

After Ezekiel has prophesied to the bones, we read in Ezek 37:8b: וְרִיחַ אֵין בָּהֶם (there was no spirit/breath in them). רִיחַ can be seen here as referring both to the human and divine Spirit. Kutsko sees a parody here of idols and their images. The reformed bones lack רִיחַ, just as idols do.³² Although having a certain degree of transformational effect, the prophesying of Ezekiel seems in the first instance to be fruitless. In Ezek 37:9, Ezekiel receives the command to the prophecy not to the bones, but to the רִיחַ. In Ezek 37:10, both Ezekiel's obedience to this command and its wonderful result are reported.

When YHWH commands Ezekiel to prophesy to the רִיחַ, רִיחַ can be understood both as "spirit/breath" and "wind."³³ In name of the Lord YHWH, Ezekiel has to tell the רִיחַ to come from the four directions of the wind (רוּחוֹת). The winds may represent the divine Spirit or breath that blows in every corner or the earth.³⁴ A relationship is suggested here with the calling vision of the prophet, in which we see a link between the סְעָרָה (windstorm) and the רִיחַ

³¹ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 451.

³² John Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (BJSt 7; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 101-149.

³³ Richard E. Averbeck, "Breath, Wind, Spirit and the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament," in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (ed. David Firth and Paul D. Wegner; Nottingham: Apollos, 2011), 35.

³⁴ Block, *Chapters 25-48*, 377.

הַחַיָּה (Spirit of life).³⁵ Both in Ezek 37:9 and 10, רוּחַ takes the article. Whereas before this point in Ezek 37 רוּחַ has denoted wind or breath/spirit in general, now, with the definite article, the רוּחַ is clearly the רוּחַ that will blow on the dry bones and bring them to life. הַרוּחַ must be understood here, just as in Ezek 1:12, 20, as the Spirit of YHWH.³⁶

The two stages of the vision in Ezek 37:10 chime with the two stages of the creation account in Gen 2:7. There, we read that YHWH God first formed the man of dust from the ground and then breathed the breath of life (נְשָׁמַת (חַיִּים)) into his nostrils. Both in Gen 2:7 and Ezek 37:10, the verb נָפַח (breath) is used. The parallels between Ezek 36-37 and Gen 2 stress that there is a relationship between the giving of life in creation and the giving of life in recreation. While it is true that the word רוּחַ is not used in Gen 2:7, we do read already at the beginning, in the account of creation in Gen 1 that the Spirit (רוּחַ) of God was hovering over the face of the waters (Gen 1:2). We can conclude that the same power of the Spirit of God/YHWH that was manifested in creation is manifested in recreation, and more particularly in the moral recreation, of man.

The two stages in which the resurrection to life of the people of Israel occurs also correspond to the two stages of the calling of the prophet. According to Ezek 1:28, the prophet responded to the vision of the glory of YHWH by falling on his face. In this state, he heard a voice commanding him to stand up so that the glory of YHWH could speak to him (Ezek 1:1). It is the רוּחַ that enables the prophet to obey this command when He enters the prophet and sets him on his feet (Ezek 2:2). A similar experience is recorded in Ezek 3:23-24. As we saw already in the former article, the prophet is the model for the people of Israel.³⁷ This vision assures the prophet himself that his prophetic labors will bear fruit.³⁸

In Ezek 37:1-10 we have the vision, while the explanation follows in Ezek 37:11-14. Verse 11 plays a pivotal role: it is the turning-point of the whole literary unit and explains the occasion for the vision. The restoration of the people of Israel from exile will be as the raising of dried-out human bones to become living persons. The explanation of the vision ends with YHWH's assurance: "And I will give my Spirit within you (וַיִּתְּתֵי רוּחִי בְכֶם), and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am

³⁵ Averbeck, "Breath," 35.

³⁶ De Vries, "Relationship," 117-119. Of the total number of thirty occurrences of רוּחַ in status absolutus, eight bear the article (Ezek 1:12, 20 [2]; 5:2; 37:9 [2x], 10 [2x]). With the exception of Ezek 5:12, רוּחַ refers to the Spirit of YHWH. In Ezek 5:12 רוּחַ has the meaning "wind." The context in which רוּחַ is used here requires the article.

³⁷ De Vries, "Relationship," 120.

³⁸ Renz, *Rhetorical Function*, 209.

YHWH; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares YHWH" (Ezek 37:14). In Ezek 37:14 the announcement of Ezek 36:27 — "I will put my Spirit within you" (וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֵּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם) — is repeated in slightly different words. This shows us that the vision of Ezek 37:1-10 and its explanation in Ezek 37:1-14 must be seen as an exposition of the announcement given in Ezek 36:26-27.

The occurrences of רִיחַ both in Ezek 36:27 and Ezek 37:14 refer to the breath and Spirit of YHWH as the source of life. Used of man, the term רִיחַ in Ezek 36-37 is close in meaning to the breath of life given to man at his creation. No life is possible apart from this רִיחַ. That is true of natural life but also — as we can see even more clearly — true of a moral life that is pleasing to YHWH. The future deliverance of Israel and the moral renewal connected with this deliverance is depicted in Ezek 37 as a resurrection of the dead wrought by the Spirit of YHWH.³⁹

E THE SPIRIT AND THE FACE OF YHWH (EZEK 39:21-29)

Between the announcement of the miraculous return and moral renewal of the people of Israel in Ezek 36-37 and the final vision of the prophet in which he sees a new temple, a new land and a new city in Ezek 40-48, we find in Ezek 39-39 a description of the demolition of the hostile powers who sought to destroy the people of Israel after their return to the promised land. Ezekiel 38-39 can be seen as a fully-fledged commentary on Ezek 28:24-26, the passage which is the crux of the whole Book of Ezekiel.⁴⁰ What was briefly mentioned there is elaborated here, namely that YHWH will judge the nations in order that both the nations and Israel may know YHWH. In his judgments of the nations, YHWH displays his glory (Ezek 28:22) and vindicates his holiness before the eyes both of the nations and of Israel (Ezek 28:22, 25; 38:16, 23; 39:27).

Assisted by seven (N.B.) allies, Gog of the land of Magog and prince of Meshech and Tubal leads a final attack on the land and people of Israel. Using images from past invasions, Ezekiel describes the attack led by Gog. This attack is not caused by Israel's sins as in former days, but is used by YHWH to display and vindicate his glory among the nations more clearly than ever before. Without any assistance by Israel, the enemies are completely destroyed. The only task for Israel is to bury the bones of the slain.

³⁹ It is tempting to see the newness of this act of YHWH also reflected in the language of Ezek 37. The use of *qātal* and *weqātal* forms where *wayyiqtol* forms would be expected is a feature of Late Biblical Hebrew that occurs throughout the Book of Ezekiel (9:7; 13:6, 8; 19:12; 20:22; 25:12; 40:24, 35; 41:3, 8, 13, 15; 42:15). In Ezek 37:1-14, we find this feature five times: this is the highest density in Ezekiel. See Mark F. Rooker, *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the book of Ezekiel* (JSOTSup 90; Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1990), 100-105; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37* (AB 22a; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1997), 749.

⁴⁰ De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 329, 330.

The nations surrounding Israel once witnessed how YHWH invited the Babylonians to punish the people of Israel. Now YHWH demonstrates that when the Babylonians had conquered Israel and destroyed Jerusalem and its temple, it was not he himself who was defeated. YHWH allows Gog and his allies to invade the land to plunder it in order to destroy them. So YHWH will vindicate himself before the eyes of the nations and they will know that he is YHWH (Ezek 38:23).

In the past, the people of Israel had defiled the land by their idolatry, sexual impurity and social injustice. After the attack and defeat of Gog, the land is polluted by the corpses. This time, the pollution is caused by the people of Israel and is not moral but cultic, and is caused by the nation's enemies. According to the Mosaic legislation, purification is thus required (see Num 19:11-22). By burying the bones, the people of the Israel of the future will – in contrast to their forefathers – not pollute but cleanse the land.

Here we see a concrete result of the renewal of the people by the Spirit of YHWH and their receiving of the Spirit of YHWH. By glorifying himself (הִתְכַבֵּד) in this way, YHWH will bring it about that the people of Israel receive a name (Ezek 39:13). Thus Israel has a share in the glorious acts of YHWH.⁴¹ It is remarkable that in Ezek 39:13 we do not see a connection between the glory of YHWH and his own name, as is usual in the OT, but rather we see a relationship between the glory of YHWH and the name of people of Israel.⁴²

In the context of the relationship between the glory of YHWH and the Spirit of YHWH, it is especially Ezek 39:21-29 that is important. This passage is not only the conclusion of the Gog pericope but also the bridge to the final vision of Ezekiel.⁴³ Both the קְבוּרָה (Ezek 39:21) and the רִיחַ of YHWH (Ezek 39:29) are mentioned in this unit. Ezekiel 39:21-24 and Ezek 39:25-29 are two tableaux of a balanced and symmetrical whole.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Block, *Chapters 25-48*, 470.

⁴² De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 127.

⁴³ Ezekiel 39:21-29 is the interpretative conclusion of the Gog pericope. Certainly, this unit combines typical Ezekielian language with some linguistic features unique within the book of Ezekiel (e.g. שְׁבִית יַעֲקֹב; רָחַם). That is no reason to deny the Ezekielian authorship of this unit. The special position of this unit within the book of Ezekiel can be regarded as the explanation for this. Daniel I. Block, *Beyond the River Chebar: Studies in Kingship and Eschatology in the book of Ezekiel* (Eugene, Oreg.: Cascade Books, 2013), 122-124, 150-156.

⁴⁴ Block, *Chapters 25-48*, 479.

<i>Event</i>	<i>21-24</i>	<i>25-29</i>
A כְּבוֹד of YHWH / mighty acts of YHWH	21a	25
B Reaction of those who are the object of the acts of YHWH	21b	26-27
B' Acknowledgment formula (connected with the Exile)	22-23a	28
A' Hiding/revealing of the face of YHWH, and outpouring of his רִיחַ	23b-24	29

These tableaux show us the relationship between the manifestation of the **כְּבוֹד** of YHWH and the fact that he no longer hides his face from the people of Israel. Closely related to this last fact is the outpouring of the Spirit of YHWH mentioned in Ezek 39:29. Nowhere else in Ezekiel is the close relationship between the **כְּבוֹד** of YHWH and רִיחַ of YHWH as clearly visible as here. This occurrence is very important because of the bridging function that Ezek 39:21-29 has with regard to the final vision of Ezekiel: the vision of the return of the **כְּבוֹד** of YHWH. What was already made clear in Ezek 36-37 is repeated here: the return of the **כְּבוֹד** of YHWH is only possible once the רִיחַ of YHWH is given to or poured out upon the people of Israel.

By the complete destruction of Gog and his allies, YHWH displays his glory among the nations (**וְנִתְתִּי אֶת־כְּבוֹדִי בְּגוֹיִם**) (Ezek 39:21). **כְּבוֹד** always refers to the **כְּבוֹד** of YHWH in conjunction with the verb **נָתַן** and syntactically is in these cases always the object of the sentence. In all the other cases where the **כְּבוֹד** of YHWH is the object of **נָתַן**, it never contains the element of hypostasis.⁴⁵ Because of the fact that **נָתַן** in Ezek 39:21 is connected with the preposition **בְּ**, Daniel I. Block thinks of **כְּבוֹד** almost as an objective, concrete reality like the glory that went before the people of Israel during their wanderings through the wilderness and that took up residence in the sanctuary.⁴⁶ I am more hesitant than Block to see this element in Ezek 39:21. When used in the sense of hypostasis, as is the case with the other occurrences of the **כְּבוֹד** of YHWH in Ezekiel, the **כְּבוֹד** of YHWH is always connected with the temple or with the heavens as its dwelling place. Nevertheless, I do not completely reject Block's proposal that also in this passage **כְּבוֹד** has the notion of hypostasis.

In Ezek 39:21, **כְּבוֹד** is deployed above all in the sense of the mighty and glorious power of YHWH. This is undergirded by the words parallel to **כְּבוֹד** in Ezek 39:21, namely **מִשְׁפָּט** (judgment) and **יָד** (hand). Also, Block says that if the prophet initially had the sight of the glory of YHWH as an objective, concrete reality, he quickly moves from the visual image to the experience of his interfering presence in human history.⁴⁷ The glory of YHWH is revealed in the return of the house of Jacob and in YHWH's mercy on them. In these mighty

⁴⁵ 1 Sam 6:5; Isa 42:8; 48:11; Jer 13:16; Mal 2:2; Ps 115:1.

⁴⁶ Block, *Chapters 25-48*, 480-481.

⁴⁷ Block, *Chapters 25-48*, 481.

acts in which his glory is manifested, YHWH shows that he is jealous for his holy name. In a secondary sense, the notion of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH as a hypostasis may be present here.⁴⁸

The judgment upon Israel is worded in Ezek 39:23-24 with the expression that YHWH hides his face (*סָתַר פָּנָיו*) from the house of Israel. The departure of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH, narrated in Ezek 8-11, was the concrete expression of the hiding of the face of YHWH. The result was the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. That YHWH hides his face no longer is not only seen in the fact that he manifests his *כְּבוֹד* among the nations, but also – and, we may say, even more so – in the outpouring of his *רוּחַ* upon the house of Israel.

In the past, YHWH had poured (*שָׁפַךְ*) out his wrath (*חֲמָה*) and indignation (*זַעַם*) on the house of Israel because of their sins and transgressions against him (Ezek 7:8; 9:8; 14:19; 20:8, 13, 21, 33, 34; 22:22, 31; 36:18).⁴⁹ The outpouring of blood (*דָּם*) by the house of Israel is especially mentioned as the cause for this (Ezek 16:38; 18:10; 22:3, 6, 9, 12, 27; 23:45; 33:25; 36:18). Besides, it is stated that the lovers of Israel's youth (the Egyptians) had poured out their whoring lust (*תִּזְנוּת*) upon her (Ezek 23:8).

The outpouring of his Spirit by YHWH is the reverse of the outpouring of his wrath and indignation.⁵⁰ It causes the end of the outpouring of blood, of whoring lusts and of any other form of unrighteousness, because after Israel has been gathered in from all the nations, the Spirit of YHWH makes Israel able and willing to walk in the statutes of YHWH. The fact that YHWH no longer turns

⁴⁸ The fact that the name (*שֵׁם*) of YHWH is mentioned in Ezek 39:25 can serve as an argument that *כְּבוֹד* in Ezek 39:21 also has the notion of hypostasis. In the OT, we find many indications of a close relationship between the *שֵׁם* of YHWH and the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH. De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 127. Although not to the same degree as the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH, the *שֵׁם* of YHWH may have the features of a hypostasis. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (trans. Frederic H. Cryer; ConBOT 18; Lund: Gleerup, 1982. Also the use of *פָּנָיו* (face) in Ezek 39:23, 24, 29 can be adduced as an argument that *כְּבוֹד* in Ezek 39:21 may have hypostasized traits. We may point to the close relationship between the *פָּנָיו* of YHWH and the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH as a hypostasis in Exod 33:12-23. De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 143. However, in the overall context of Ezek 39:21-29, the notion of a hypostasis for *כְּבוֹד* in Ezek 39:21 can at most be secondary.

⁴⁹ In the first half of Ezekiel, we encounter the expression *שָׁפַךְ חֲמָה* seven times (Ezek 7:8; 9:8; 14:19; 20:8, 13, 21; 22:22). It is tempting to see this as no mere coincidence, given the importance of the number seven in the book of Ezekiel. In Ezek 20:33, 34, we find the expression *חֲמָה שֶׁפֹּכָה*.

⁵⁰ Not only in the book of Ezekiel but also throughout the whole prophetic corpus, the verb *שָׁפַךְ* is used almost exclusively in a negative sense: the outpouring of blood, fornication, anger.

away his face, the manifestation of his glory and his hand, and the outpouring of his Spirit, all refer to the same action of YHWH.⁵¹

The Spirit of YHWH is the manifestation of his very being.⁵² In Ps 139:7, the psalmist confesses that it is not possible to escape from the Spirit or face of YHWH. In Ps 104:29-30, YHWH's hiding of his face is seen as the cause of death or the end of life of creatures, and the sending of his Spirit as the cause of the giving and renewal of life. Just as in Ps 104:24-26 and 139:7, so in Ezek 39:29 the close relationship between the Spirit and the face of YHWH is expressed. In Ps 51:13 (11), the psalmist expresses his fear that God will take his holy Spirit from him. The Spirit of YHWH signifies the presence of the very being of YHWH as the cause of joy and gladness (Ps 51:14 [12]).⁵³

The notion of the outpouring of the רִיחַ shows us that רִיחַ must be seen in this context as a kind of objective divine reality that imbues men.⁵⁴ We can even say that in this context, the רִיחַ is regarded as a kind of liquid. The verb שָׁפַךְ is used literally in the OT of ash (Lev 4:12), blood (either in sacrifice [Exod 29:12] or murder [Gen 9:6]) or other pourable substances (Exod 4:9). When he outpours his Spirit, YHWH is present in his very being among and within men. In the OT, we have six occurrences of the expression of the outpouring of the רִיחַ of YHWH. Three times, the verb שָׁפַךְ is used.⁵⁵ The outpouring of the רִיחַ of YHWH inaugurates the new age of salvation.⁵⁶ We see this element in all the occurrences of the announcement of this event in the OT.⁵⁷

The final age, the age of salvation, is the age of the Spirit. The Spirit of YHWH, which was only imparted intermittently under the OT dispensation, will

⁵¹ In my article on the relationship between the glory and the Spirit of YHWH in the first part of the Book of Ezekiel, I have already pointed to the fact that the hand of YHWH and the Spirit of YHWH share the connotation of power. They are closely related concepts. De Vries, "Relationship," 114-116.

⁵² Jamie A. Grant, "Spirit and Presence in Psalm 139," in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (ed. David Firth and Paul D. Wegner; Nottingham: Apollos, 2011), 35.

⁵² Block, *Chapters 25-48*, 141.

⁵³ Neve, *Spirit of God*, 74 argues that the Spirit of the presence of the fullness of the being of YHWH appeared for the first time in the exilic period. He thinks that prior to that, it only referred to the mind, power or will of YHWH. This seems to me to be an overstatement. In particular, Ps 51:13 (11) points in another direction. Positing Ps 51 in the exilic period would make Neve's argument a case of circular reasoning.

⁵⁴ Cf. De Vries, "Relationship," 111, 112.

⁵⁵ Isa 32:15 (with the verb עָרַה); 44:3 (with the verb יָצַק); Ezek 39:29; Joel 3:1, 2 (2:28, 29); Zech 12:10.

⁵⁶ Scobie, *Ways of Our God*, 275.

⁵⁷ Joel 3:1, 2 (2:28, 29) is the closest parallel to Ezek 39:29. Usually, Ezek 39:29 is seen as an allusion to Joel 3:1, 2 (2:28, 29). However, the reverse is also possible, due to uncertainties in the dating of the material.

in the final age be the possession of all God's people. The outpouring of the Spirit is the sign and seal of the renewed covenant of YHWH. It is a mark of the ownership of YHWH. As the sign and seal of the renewed covenant, the outpouring of the Spirit is also the guarantee of new life, peace and prosperity.⁵⁸ By pouring out his Spirit on Israel, YHWH guarantees that the destruction of the city and the temple will never happen again. Through all subsequent ages, Israel will live in peace and prosperity in the land, walking in the statutes of YHWH.

The outpouring of the Spirit of YHWH is the answer of YHWH to the Exile. Psalm 51: 12 (10) speaks of the presence of YHWH in the form of his Spirit in the individual believer. When the promise of the outpouring of his Spirit is fulfilled by YHWH, he is present in and with the whole people of Israel, and indeed in a more abundant way than ever was the case before. Never will there be any cause to fear that YHWH will hide his face and take away his Spirit. When YHWH pours out his Spirit, he will make known his holy name and will not let his holy name be profaned any more (Ezek 39:7).

The promise of the outpouring of the Spirit surpasses the gift of the Spirit mentioned in Ezek 36-37. In Ezek 36:27, the Spirit enacts moral transformation; in Ezek 37:10 he gives life, signifying the return from exile and spiritual rebirth. Ezekiel 39:29 alludes to the challenge uttered by Moses: "Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them" (Num 11:29).

In accordance with Joel 3:1, 2 (2:28, 29) we must suppose that the gift of prophecy is given to the whole people. In the redeemed land, there will be a prince (the title of kingship is not accorded to the ruler in the final vision). There will be priests (a high priest will no longer be necessary).⁵⁹ Prophets are no longer needed, because all Israelites will be prophets. While Ezekiel had in his own day to warn of false prophetesses (Ezek 13), in the age of salvation false prophecy will never be a danger again.⁶⁰

Because the Spirit of YHWH is the manifestation of his very being, we can say that in the future YHWH will be present in the hearts of Israel in the way of a kind of hypostasis. The presence of YHWH in the hearts of his people by means his Spirit, has a counterpart in his presence by means his glory in the future temple. So we now turn of the final vision of Ezekiel.

⁵⁸ Block, *Chapters 25-48*, 488; Block "View from the Top," 204, 205.

⁵⁹ De Vries, "Ezekiel," 102, 103.

⁶⁰ In Isa 32:15, the outpouring of the Spirit can be seen as a reversal of the outpouring of a spirit of deep sleep in Isa 29:10.

F FINAL VISION: THE MEASURE OF THE SANCTUARY AND ITS OBJECTS

It is clear that once YHWH has conquered Gog, Israel will never again be frightened or assaulted by any enemy. The hiding of YHWH's face was expressed in the destruction of the city and its temple. This was only possible because the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH had departed from the sanctuary. When YHWH has outpoured his Spirit and no longer hides his face from Israel, the only thing that will still be lacking is a new sanctuary as the abode to which the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH can return. In Ezek 36-37 and Ezek 39:21-29, a description is given of how YHWH will have prepared the people of Israel, by the giving and outpouring of his Spirit, for the return of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH to a new sanctuary. Although a new sanctuary was already promised in Ezek 37:26-27, in Ezek 40-48 the reality of this sanctuary with a new city and a renewed land is portrayed in detail. In contradistinction to the former situation, the sanctuary lies outside the city. The sanctuary is the center and the city is subordinated to it.⁶¹

Both the city and the sanctuary lie in a sacred square, 25,000 cubits long and 25,000 cubits broad, as described in Ezek 45:1-6. Unique to the HB is the emphasis here not only on the holiness of the sanctuary but also its environment. The holy square is called *קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים* (Ezek 45:3; 48:12). The only difference in the designation of the adytum, or innermost part of the sanctuary, is the absence of the definite article. The most holy place is called *קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדָשִׁים* (Ezek 41:4).

The city, which itself is a square of 4,500 cubits long by 4,500 cubits broad (Ezek 48:16), is located in the southern part of the greater square. This part itself is 25,000 cubits long and 5,000 cubits broad. The sanctuary, too, has the form of a square. Its length is 500 cubits and its breadth 500 cubits (Ezek 42:16-20; 45:2). The form of a square is very important in the Book of Ezekiel. Like the number twenty-five and its multiples, it is a symbol for holiness and sanctity.

We cannot be completely sure whether it is the quarter of the priests or the quarter of the Levites, both of which are 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits broad, that is located at the northern side of the sacred square. I prefer the view that the quarter of the priests, in whose midst the sanctuary is situated, forms the middle part of the sacred square. If so, then the sanctuary, having the altar as its own center, is at the very center of the sacred square.⁶² Block prefers the view that the quarter of the priests is located to the north side. His argument is that we see an ongoing gradation of holiness as we move from the south to the north. There is an intensification of holiness and sanctity running from the city and its suburbs in the south to the quarter allocated to the Levites and the

⁶¹ De Vries, "Ezekiel," 106, 107.

⁶² De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 368.

quarter of the Zadokite priests in the north, and in the middle of it lays the sanctuary.⁶³ I leave it to the reader to decide which view he or she prefers.

Just as the victory of Gog was solely the work of YHWH, the same is true for the new sanctuary. While in the case of the building of the tabernacle (Exod 25:1-9) and Solomon's temple (1 Chr 29:1-9) preparations are mentioned in the form of the gathering of materials, this is not the case with the sanctuary in the final vision of the book of Ezekiel. The final bright future of Israel is exclusively the product of the monergistic actions of YHWH.⁶⁴

The sanctuary that Ezekiel sees in his final vision is not built by man.⁶⁵ The only thing Ezekiel has to do is to measure and describe it. Apart from the outer wall surrounding the whole complex of the sanctuary, the tables where the sacrifices are slaughtered, the altar and the table in the holy part of the sanctuary, only measures of length and breadth are given. What is really important is that in moving from the outer wall to the holy of holies, there is an increasing degree of holiness. In the tabernacle in the wilderness, there were three spheres of holiness; in Solomon's temple five; and in the sanctuary that is shown to Ezekiel, seven (note that number again). We may speak, then, of graduated holiness. The key function is the sacrificial service.

Apart from the outer wall, which stresses the border between the sanctuary inside and all that lies outside, the only heights is mentioned are of those objects of the sanctuary that have directly to do with the sacrificial service. These are the four tables used for the slaughtering of the sacred animals, the table for the bread and the altar. All these objects are constructed as squares. The breadth and the length of the four tables is a cubit and a half (Ezek 40:42), those of the table for the bread two cubits (Ezek 41:22) and those of the altar hearth twelve cubits (Ezek 43:16). Thus the centrality of sacrificial service is underlined in more than one way.

G THE FINAL VISION: THE RETURN OF THE GLORY OF YHWH

Between the description of the sanctuary itself (Ezek 40:6-42:20) and the description of the altar and its initiation (Ezek 43:12/13-27), we have the report of the return of the *קְבוֹד* of YHWH to the most holy place (Ezek 43:1-11/12).⁶⁶ Just as the *קְבוֹד* of YHWH left the sanctuary from the east, it now returns from

⁶³ Block, *Beyond the River Chebar*, 180.

⁶⁴ Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation* (OBT; Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1979), 95; Jacqueline E. Lapsley, *Can These Bones Live? The Problem of Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel* (BZAW 301; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 160-173.

⁶⁵ De Vries, "Ezekiel," 107.

⁶⁶ Ezekiel 43:12 can be interpreted both as the end of the description of the sanctuary followed by the report of the return of the *קְבוֹד* of YHWH and as the beginning of the legislation that follows. De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 358.

the same direction (Ezek 43:3-5). When the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH has entered the most holy place, the prophet is lifted up by the Spirit (*רוּחַ*) and brought to the inner court of the temple. It may be said that because he is enabled by the *רוּחַ* of YHWH to be in the right location, the prophet sees that the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH fills the sanctuary or house of YHWH and hears the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH speaking out of the most holy place (Ezek 43:5-6). In this way, the relationship between the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH and the *רוּחַ* of YHWH is indicated in the final vision. Apart from its uses in the meaning of "side" (Ezek 42:16-20), this is the only occurrence of the word *רוּחַ* in the final vision of Ezekiel.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the chariot with the cherubim is not mentioned in the final vision of Ezekiel. The new sanctuary replaces the function of the chariot with the cherubim. The same word *כִּסֵּא* (throne) that is used in Ezek 1:26 and 10:1 for that chariot is used in Ezek 43:7 for the sanctuary. This also serves to explain for the elaborate and detailed description of the sanctuary found in the final vision of Ezekiel. The new sanctuary is both the place of the throne of YHWH and the place of soles of his feet (Ezek 43:7). In the Book of Ezekiel, these designations are not used for the old temple in Jerusalem. The only reason that that temple is mentioned by the prophet at all is to lay bare Israel's contempt of YHWH in having defiled his name. The discontinuity between the old and the new sanctuary is emphasized in Ezekiel.⁶⁷

No king or priests are involved in the return of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH to the temple. Here too, we see the difference between the old and new sanctuary. David had brought the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6). Given that no human involvement or preparation at all is mentioned with regard to the building of the sanctuary, the return of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH is solely an action of YHWH himself. That the new sanctuary has no ark must not be seen in any way as a deficiency. The absence of the ark from the new sanctuary stresses that only the presence of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH itself matters and not a physical symbol of it.

The presence of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH in the new sanctuary makes the dwelling of YHWH in the midst of the people of Israel a reality. In the future, his holy name will not be defiled any more (Ezek 43:7). No sacrifices whose blood must be brought into the holy place or the most holy place will be needed any more. Once the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH has entered the sanctuary, the eastern gate of the outer court will be shut forever (Ezek 45:1). Never will the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH leave the temple again.

The appropriate response of the people of Israel to the return of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH as described by Ezekiel is that they are ashamed (*nip'al* of *פָּלַם*) of all the iniquities they have committed (Ezek 43:10, 11). In Ezek 36:32, we find this reaction described as commanded. There, it is a consequence of the gift of

⁶⁷ De Vries, *Heerlijkheid*, 360.

the רִיחַ of YHWH.⁶⁸ So the inward gift of the רִיחַ of YHWH and the outward manifestation of the קְבוֹד of YHWH both lead to being ashamed. By means of the shared root כָּלַם, a link is made between the gift of the רִיחַ of YHWH and the קְבוֹד of YHWH.

H THE FINAL VISION: THE TEMPLE RIVER

Indirectly, as I shall show now, there is a strong hint as to the working of the רִיחַ of YHWH in the vision of the temple river in Ezek 47:1-11. In Ezek 47:1, the prophet sees water flowing from underneath the threshold of the sanctuary eastward. The prophet's excitement at the scene is reflected by the literary quality of the report, just as it was in his first vision of the קְבוֹד of YHWH.⁶⁹ The placement of this passage before the subdivision of the land among the tribes is essential. The water flowing from the sanctuary makes the tribal allotments equally fertile.

The main obstacle to be overcome is the barren wilderness of Judah. Now, YHWH restores this wilderness to the state that surpasses her remote past, even though that past already had an Edenic character (Gen 13:10). The Dead Sea is known for its inability to support fish, but after the stream of water from the sanctuary has reached it, it teems with a great variety of fish comparable to the fish stocks of the Mediterranean Sea (Ezek 47:10). On the banks of the river and the shores of the Dead Sea (which name is no longer appropriate), all kinds of trees grow.

The symbolism of water in reference to the Spirit of God is not as obvious in the Hebrew as is sometimes claimed, but some passages certainly suggest a connection (Isa 44:3; Neh 9:20).⁷⁰ The main symbolic connection between water and Spirit is the life-giving property of water. Ezekiel 36 sets out a connection between the moral renewal of the people of Israel by the Spirit of YHWH (Ezek 36:27) and the gift of fertility to the land (Ezek 36:29-30).

The water originates from the place where the קְבוֹד of YHWH is present. The connection between the קְבוֹד of YHWH and the water flowing from underneath the threshold of the sanctuary is made by the word מִפֶּתַח (threshold). The word מִפֶּתַח occurs four times in the Book of Ezekiel. Three times, it is connected with the departure of the קְבוֹד of YHWH from the sanctuary (Ezek 9:3; 10:4, 18). This last occurrence of מִפֶּתַח in Ezek 47:1 is inseparable from the fact that the קְבוֹד of YHWH is present in the most holy place of the sanctuary. The stream of life-giving water flowing from under the threshold is a result and fruit of this presence.

⁶⁸ See page 5.

⁶⁹ Block, *Chapters 25-48*, 689-690.

⁷⁰ Hildebrandt, *Spirit of God*, 62-66.

The final vision of the Book of Ezekiel ends with the name of the new city. In Ezek 39:16, the new name for the city is given as Hamonah, a name derived from the word *הַמֶּזֶן*, a noun meaning "roar," "murmur," "crowd" or "abundance." While in the first part of the Book of Ezekiel *הַמֶּזֶן* is connected with the sin of Jerusalem and of the land (Ezek 5:7; 7:12-14; 23:40-42), in Ezek 39 it relates to the glorious victory of YHWH over the armies of Gog and his allies. Hamonah as a city (Ezek 39:16) derives its name from the valley of the *הַמֶּזֶן* of Gog, where the bones of the soldiers of the armies of Gog and his allies are buried (Ezek 39:15).

The final name given to the new city, however, is far more glorious than the name Hamonah that it has already received. This name is not Jerusalem or New Jerusalem, but "YHWH is there" (Ezek 48:35). In this name, both the presence of YHWH in the form of his *כְּבוֹד* in the sanctuary and his presence in the form of his *רוּחַ* in the hearts of his people come together, although the emphasis must fall on the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH as being identical with YHWH himself more than his *רוּחַ* is. In the final vision, the city is subordinated to the sanctuary, but its name is programmatic for the whole vision.

I CONCLUSION

A deliberate play on the different meanings of *רוּחַ* is clearly part of the agenda of Ezekiel. Characteristic of Ezekiel is the great prominence that he gives to the *רוּחַ* of YHWH. The way in which Ezekiel refers to the *רוּחַ* of YHWH can be seen as a hint that the *רוּחַ* of YHWH was regarded by the prophet as a kind of independent or at least semi-independent personality. Although this point must not be overemphasized, it must not be overlooked either.

The *רוּחַ* of YHWH energizes Ezekiel to stand up before the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH and to do his work as a prophet. In this respect, the prophet is a model for the people of Israel. It is the *רוּחַ* that as the central gift of the new age accomplishes the moral renewal of Israel. The *רוּחַ* enables the people of Israel to live in accordance with the statutes and ordinances of YHWH. By the outpouring of the *רוּחַ*, all the people of Israel are made prophets.

For Ezekiel, the gift of the *רוּחַ* of YHWH is a prerequisite for the return of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH. Only because the people of Israel are renewed by the *רוּחַ* of YHWH will they no longer defile his holy name. The abiding and never-ending presence of the *כְּבוֹד* of YHWH is only possible because the people of Israel are renewed by the *רוּחַ* of YHWH and have received his *רוּחַ*. Fundamental to the enabling of the presence of the *רוּחַ* of YHWH in the hearts and lives of the people of Israel is the acknowledgment of their iniquities. In terms of systematic theology, we can say that Ezekiel emphasizes godly sorrow for sin as a result of the presence and the work of the Spirit of God.

The river flowing from underneath the threshold of the sanctuary is an indirect reference to the רִיחַ of YHWH. So, indirectly, Ezekiel portrays the רִיחַ of YHWH also as a source of renewal of the land of Israel and especially of the Judean Desert and the Dead Sea. The fact that the river flows from underneath the threshold of the sanctuary indicates that the presence of the כְּבוֹד of YHWH in the most holy place is its source. There are several connections between the presence of the כְּבוֹד of YHWH in the sanctuary and the רִיחַ of YHWH working and abiding both in the hearts of the people and the land.

The message of the transformation of a community, followed by the final vision where YHWH is evidently present in the sanctuary and the city, is the center and climax of the message of YHWH to Ezekiel. The presence of the רִיחַ of YHWH in the hearts and lives of the people of Israel is closely related to the presence of the כְּבוֹד of YHWH in the sanctuary. These are the reasons that the new city can be named *YHWH is there*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Leslie C. *Ezekiel 20-48*. Word Biblical Commentary 29. Dallas, Tex.: Word Book Publisher, 1990.
- Augustine, Aurelius. *Confessiones*: Latin text with Dutch translation by Dr. A. Sizoo. 2nd rev. ed. Delft: W.D. Meinema, 1948.
- Averbeck, Richard E. "Breath, Wind, Spirit and the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament." Pages 25-37 in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*. Edited by David Firth and Paul D. Wegner. Nottingham: Apollos, 2011.
- Block, Daniel I. "The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of *RWH* in the Book of Ezekiel." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32/1 (1989): 27-49.
- _____. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.
- _____. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998.
- _____. "The View from the Top: The Holy Spirit in the Prophets." Pages 173-207 in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*. Edited by David Firth and Paul D. Wegner. Nottingham: Apollos, 2011.
- _____. *Beyond the River Chebar: Studies in Kingship and Eschatology in the Book of Ezekiel*. Eugene, Oreg.: Cascade Books, 2013.
- De Vries, Pieter. *De heerlijkheid van YHWH in het Oude Testament en in het bijzonder in het boek Ezechiël*. Heerenveen: Groen Publishers, 2010.
- _____. "Ezekiel: Prophet of the Name and Glory of YHWH – The Character of His Book and Several of Its Main Themes." *Journal of Biblical and Pentecostal Research* 4 (2012): 95-109.
- _____. "The Relationship between the Glory of YHWH and the Spirit of YHWH in the Book of Ezekiel. Part One." *Journal of Biblical and Pentecostal Research* 5 (2013): 109-127.

- Eichrodt, Walter. *Theologie des Alten Testaments*. Volumes 2/3. 4th rev. ed. Stuttgart: Ehrenfried Klotz Verlag 1961.
- Filson, Floyd V. "The Omission of Ezek. 12:26-28 and 36:23b-38 in Codex 967." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 62/1 (1943): 27-32.
- Grant, Jamie A. "Spirit and Presence in Psalm 139." Pages 135-146 in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*. Edited by David Firth and Paul D. Wegner. Nottingham: Apollos, 2011.
- Greenberg, Moshe. *Ezekiel 21-37*. Anchor Bible 22a. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1997.
- Hildebrandt, Wilf. *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995.
- Klein, Ralph W. *Israel in Exile: A Theological Interpretation*. Overtures to Biblical Theology. Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1979.
- Kutsko, John. *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel*. Biblical and Judaic Studies 7. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000.
- Lapsley, Jacqueline E. *Can These Bones Live? The Problem of Moral Self in the Book of Ezekiel*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 301. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000.
- Lust, Johan. "The Ezekiel Text." Pages 153-167 in *Sôfer Mahâr: Essays in Honour of Adrian Schenker*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 110. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- Lyons, Michael A. *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code*. Library Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 507. New York: T&T Clark, 2009.
- Mettinger, Tryggve N. D. *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies*. Translated by Frederic H. Cryer. Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series 18. Lund: Gleerup, 1982.
- Neve, Lloyd R. *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament*. Tokyo: Seibunsha, 1972; repr. Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, 2011.
- Odell, Margaret S. *Ezekiel*. Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2005.
- Renz, Thomas. *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 76. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Rooker, Mark F. *Biblical Hebrew in Transition: The Language of the Book Ezechiel*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 90. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990.
- Schmidt, Werner H. *Alttestamentlicher Glaube*. 11th rev. enl. ed. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2011.
- Scobie, Charles H. *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology*. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, Mich., 2003.
- VanGemeren, Willem and Abernethy, Andrew. "The Spirit and the Future: A Canonical Approach." Pages 321-345 in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament*. Edited by David Firth and Paul D. Wegner. Nottingham: Apollos, 2011.

Von Rad, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology*. Volume 2. Translated by David M. G. Stalker. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1965.

Warfield, Benjamin B. "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament." Pages 127-156 in *Biblical and Theological Studies*. Edited by Samuel C. Craig. Philadelphia, Penn.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968.

Dr. Pieter de Vries, Faculty of Theology, Free University, Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands. *Email*: p.de.vries@vu.nl.